

**HARRIS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
BUDGET WORK SESSION III**

May 21, 2024
5:00 PM

Commissioners Present: Rob Grant, Susan Andrews (arrived at 5:09 p.m.), Bobby Irions, Scott Lightsey, Greg Gantt. Staff Present: Andrea Dzioba, Interim County Manager/County Clerk; Elizabeth Barfield, Chief Financial Officer.

CALL TO ORDER. Chairman Grant called the meeting to order and said the purpose was for the continued discussion of the proposed budget for FY 24/25.

Magistrate Court - Chief Magistrate Jennifer Webb advised that she would like the part-time Senior Magistrate Clerk to be made full-time which would request an additional amount included of \$30,786. She described some of the things that Magistrate Court handles including that about 95% of the cases that go through Superior Court are from Magistrate Court; that on the criminal side that they are the first point of contact; that they handle warrants from every law enforcement agency for Harris County; that they handle criminal cases as well as civil cases; that they handle multiple kinds of citizen disputes, code violations, and County ordinance violations; that they handle statements of claims, evictions, and garnishments; and that she should have requested that the part-time position be made full-time a while ago and that this position is the first point of contact for victims. Judge Webb advised that they have had a significant increase in cases and advised for informational purposes that between January to April of this year that Superior Court has had 153 filings, Probate Court has had 47 filings, and Magistrate Court has had 225 filings and that they have approximately 2,000 warrants on a yearly basis.

Extension Service - County Extension Agent Steve Morgan stated that there are no significant changes in his budget and doesn't have anything to add.

Prison - Warden Dexter Jenkins introduced himself to the Board. He advised that he would like the two new Correctional Officer positions and the one new Detail Officer added back in to the budget (\$195,310). Additionally, he has that the pickup truck that was removed from the budget be added back in for Detail usage (\$35,000). Warden Jenkins stated that no additional Correctional Officers have been added since 2015; that offenders are increasingly more violent than before; that they accept up to medium security prisoners; that there isn't any relief factor to easily manage time off for employees; that they need to utilize overtime to cover prisoner visitation on the weekends; that he could actually use four additional Correctional Officers but is only asking for two right now; and that he wants to ensure safety and security at the Prison. In response to a question, Executive Assistant Susan Jones advised that between July 1 and December 31 of 2023 that there have been 449 hours of overtime.

Public Works - Public Works Director Brian Griffith informed the Board that the line item for Repairs and Maintenance-Road Damage needs to be increased by \$70,000; that they would like the amount for the dump truck (\$208,000) that was removed from the SPLOST 2019 Fund added back in; that the CAT Leases on their equipment was not included in this budget (\$90,000) and would like to extend the leases on the equipment [mini excavator and two motor graders] under which they would get new equipment for those items under the five-year lease; and that a commitment would be needed now in the amount of \$98,781 to renew the lease during the next fiscal year during December of 2025. There was also additional discussion about benefits of completing paving/pothole repairs using the Public Works Department vs. contractors and the costs; needed personnel (\$121,520); what might be able to be accomplished by doing paving/pothole repairs in-house; the two requested speed detector traffic signs (\$30,000) that were taken out; and the needed Transportation Master Plan and how best to accomplish it.

Vehicle Maintenance - Vehicle Maintenance Director Bobby Ammons mentioned the new vehicle lift that is included in the proposed budget but also stated that he eventually needs a dependable vehicle (\$40,000) and that he has a need for a new full-time diesel mechanic (\$61,390). Discussion included that Vehicle Maintenance needs to be in charge of coordinating vehicle needs for all departments; that vehicles can be swapped around between departments; and that any future requests should be coordinated with Vehicle Maintenance.

Water Works Fund - Water Works Director Jeff Culpepper advised that there isn't anything that has been left out that was needed and requested and informed the Board that the County will need a separate wastewater crew with separate equipment at some point.

Recreation - Recreation Director Ashley Marston discussed the pool scoreboard and advised that it has been requested to be considered at the June 4, 2024 Board of Education meeting and that last time the cost was shared 50/50. In addition, she advised that she wanted to make sure that any unused but budgeted funds for Pine Mountain Valley Park this year carry over into the FY 2024-2025 budget so that the two years combined will be the expected \$500,000 total. Discussion included that a budget amendment may be needed if Recreation is unable to complete this year's projects but that it is expected that the amount included should be sufficient.

NEXT BUDGET WORK SESSION. Scheduled for 4:30 p.m. on Tuesday, May 28, 2024.

BUDGET PUBLIC HEARINGS. First Public Hearing will be held during the June 4, 2024 Regular Session, and the second will be held during the June 18, 2024 Regular Session, with adoption by resolution to follow.

ADJOURNMENT The work session adjourned at 6:14 p.m.