

HARRIS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR SESSION

September 3, 2024
6:30 p.m.

Commissioners Present: Rob Grant, Susan Andrews, Greg Gantt, Scott Lightsey, Bobby Irions. Staff Present: Andrea Dzioba, County Clerk; Elizabeth Barfield, Chief Financial Officer; Brian Williams, Community Development Director; Brian Griffith, Public Works Director. Consultant: Amanda Rostin with Lead Edge.

1. **CALL TO ORDER**. Chairman Grant called the Regular Session to order at 6:30 p.m.
2. **INVOCATION / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** Vice-Chair Andrews gave the invocation. Chairman Grant led those in attendance in the Pledge of Allegiance.
3. **MINUTES** The motion to approve the minutes of the August 20, 2024 Regular Session was made by Vice-Chair Andrews, seconded by Commissioner Gantt, and passed unanimously.
4. **APPEARANCE OF CITIZENS**
 - A. **Tommy Hutcherson - Department Responses to Correspondence from Community Development**. Tommy Hutcherson, citizen who lives on Hudson Mill Circle, addressed the Board and advised that he has been on the Planning Commission for two years; that a packet of information related to a preliminary plat was sent to all departments and that no responses were received; that Brian Williams, Community Development Director, wasn't provided any feedback from any of the departments; that he wants to follow the UDC as "gospel;" that any precedence is gone since the UDC; that it is black and white not gray; and that he takes his responsibilities seriously. Discussion included that Brian Williams can fine tune his e-mail but that there is no recommendation to the Board on preliminary plats; that the UDC should be applied; and that departments can make recommendations with changes but that the school district and volunteer fire departments can't be compelled to do so. The Board expressed interest in seeing possible updates to the ordinance regarding the process.
 - B. **Dwight Langston - Financial Statements**. Dwight Langston, citizen who lives on Creekside Ct, addressed the Board and said that he researched from 2007 and forward; that financial statements have been provided monthly for approval; that he is appalled by the CFO's statement to be "patient;" that he is requesting that monthly financial statements be provided; that he wants to be provided information related to spending trends monthly; and that he wants to know if there was a negative trend this month rather than at the end of the fiscal year.
5. **NEW BUSINESS**
 - A. **Approval of the Airport CIP Five-Year Plan**. Chairman Grant introduced the item and stated that every year, the County's airport along with all other airports in Georgia must prepare and submit a five-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) to the Georgia Department of Transportation to remain eligible for funding. Amanda Rostin, Airport Consultant with Lead Edge Design Group, said that the plan must be submitted to Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) on an annual basis, by November 5th this year to remain eligible for funding; that it includes proposed Airport projects for the next five years (Fiscal Years 2026, 2027, 2028, 2029, and 2030); and that the plan can be changed at any time should the Board desire to make changes. Ms. Rostin reviewed the projects included in the Five-Year CIP - hangar site preparation in year 1; land acquisition and obstruction removal in year 2; runway and terminal apron overlay and construction of a replacement entrance road in year 3; new hangar area site preparation and paving in year 4; and parallel taxiway overlay in year 5. Ms. Rostin informed the Board that they were under no obligation to spend the funds.

A motion to approve the Airport CIP Five-Year Plan and authorize its submittal to the State was made by Chairman Grant, seconded by Commissioner Gantt, and passed unanimously.

B. **Request for New Driveway Crossing Across Man O'War Trail.** Chairman Grant stated that Mr. Mark Strozier, representing Mr. John Flory, is requesting a new driveway crossing across the Man O'War Trail off of Emily Drive. Mr. Strozier advised that Mr. Flory would like to be able to access both parts of his property which he can't do now due to a big creek that crosses the property and would like to be able to obtain driveway access across the trail from Emily Drive. Discussion included that except to build the driveway that there would not be large equipment using the driveway; that there would not be a change to the grade level; that Mr. Flory cannot current access both sides of the property; that if any issues occur to the undeveloped railbed that it could be repaired; that when developed that the area would need to be revisited with possible signage; that the crossing might have to be built back up later; and that the ordinance states that "new driveways or crossing may be permitted or approved only if the property to be accessed by the new driveway or crossing is otherwise landlocked;" and that the property has road frontage on US Hwy 27. Brian Griffith, Public Works Director, advised that the Road Department doesn't have any issue with the pipe permit but that long-term considerations with the pipe would be his concern. Brian Williams, Community Development Director, stated that the requested approval is for a driveway and not a road. A motion to deny the request for a new driveway crossing across the Man O'War Trail off of Emily Drive was made by Commissioner Gantt, seconded by Chairman Grant, and passed with four in favor (Grant, Andrews, Irions, Gantt) and one opposed (Lightsey).

C. **Bid Award: 2024 Local Road Assistance (LRA) and 2025 Local Maintenance Improvement Grant (LMIG) Projects.** Chairman Grant provided an overview of the agenda item related to the bid award for the 2024 Local Road Assistance (LRA) and 2025 Local Maintenance & Improvement Grant (LMIG) Resurfacing Program. Chairman Grant advised that GDOT approved the submitted roads; that bid specifications were developed, advertised, and distributed; and that the funds from GDOT in the amounts of \$1,103,024.00 and \$914,082.80 were received. On August 29, 2024, three (3) bids were received as follows:

Company	Bid Amount
Robinson Paving (Columbus, GA)	\$ 2,206,641.04
C.W. Matthews (Marietta, GA)	\$ 2,276,845.39
McLeRoy (Zebulon, GA)	\$ 2,495,046.10

He stated that the low bidder was Robinson Paving from Columbus with a bid of \$2,206,641.04. With the funds from GDOT in the amount of \$1,103,024.00 and \$914,082.90 and the state required 10% match (\$91,408.28) from TSPLOST, the total project budget is \$2,108,515.18 and that the remaining amount of \$98,125.96 needed to fully fund the project will also be funded by TSPLOST.

The motion to award the bid to Robinson Paving in the amount of \$2,206,641.04 for the resurfacing of Warm Springs Road (from SR 315 to the Eilerslie VFD), West Bon Acre Road (from US 27 to Fortson Road), Mountain Hill Road (1,100 feet +/- each side of the I-185 bridge), Barnes Mill Road (from Mountain Road to Fortune Hole Road), and Fortune Hole Road (from US 27 to Johnson Mill Road) and authorize the Chairman and County Clerk to execute the necessary documents was made by Chairman Grant, seconded by Commissioners Irions and Lightsey, and passed unanimously.

D. **Financial Update.** Elizabeth Barfield, Chief Financial Officer, addressed the Board and advised that she has positive news to share, that they are very close to having things resolved, and that this evening that she would like to talk about the County's cash position. She stated that there have been no significant radical movements; that the difference between FY 2023 and FY 2024 is less than \$1 million dollars; that although cash balances are stable that the County has done a lot over the past several years - renovations to the Courthouse, a new Public Works facility, a new Fire Training Center, Rails to Trails, the purchase of many Sheriff's vehicles, establishing water lines (Hadley Drive, Sky Meadow, and Green Drive), a new EMS/VFD Facility, Northwest Harris Business Park, and a new Water Works building. She advised that in the upcoming budget that there is \$4.1 million coming out of the ARP funds, completing the Public

Works facility, continuing the Courthouse renovations, working on the US Hwy 27 waterline, and that very little funds are coming out of the General Fund. Ms. Barfield advised that in July and August there have been significant expenses paid from SPLOST and that General Fund expenses have been normal; that cash balances have remained stable; and that the County is in great shape. Discussion included that they have been completing 200+ bank reconciliations; that lots of work can create a lot of issues; that some of the issues with Caselle includes communication between the modules; that they are working to resolve all of the issues with Caselle; that they have changed some processes to help alleviate some of the issues that they have been having; that she is expecting another phone conversation with Caselle tomorrow; that each Department Head can see an accurate accounting of their budget-to-actuals; that Finance is up-to-date on cash receipting and accounts payable; that there has not been negative feed back from Department Heads; that there is a contract with Caselle and that they have been working with several departments at Caselle; that she sees the issues and problems that they have been having with Caselle and that she will continue to monitor and possibly make additional decisions if needed related to the system in the future. The Board would like her to continue to let Caselle know how disappointed they are with the issues that the County has been having and that changes can be made in the future if desired.

- E. **Harris County Board of Health Body Art Fee Schedule.** Chairman Grant introduced the item related to the proposed Harris County Board of Health Body Art Fee Schedule and stated that as required by O.C.G.A. §31-3-4(a)(6) that the proposed fee schedule needs to be approved by the county governing authority for the fees to be charged by the Harris County Health Department.

The motion to approve the proposed Harris County Board of Health Body Art Fee Schedule was made by Chairman Grant, seconded by Commissioner Lightsey, and passed unanimously.

- F. **Consider Extending Number of Places on Board of Family and Children Services to Seven and Make Appointments for New Positions.** Chairman Grant advised the the Board discussed expanding the Board of Family and Children Services to seven. He received from School Board the recommendation of Shelia Baker to be appointed that would cover the #2 category (Appropriate school personnel) and that the Sheriff's office is recommending Gabe Brown who is a Sargeant in CID for appointment and that he would cover the #3 (Emergency responders) or #4 (Law enforcement personnel) category and that he is an active employee in the Sheriff's Office. Discussion included that the Board has discussed not having employees on committees but that the State references this type of position to serve on the Board.

The motion to appoint Shelia Baker, Assistant Superintendent for the Harris County School District, to serve as an additional member on the Board of Family of Children Services was made by Vice-Chair Andrews, seconded by Commissioner Irions, and passed unanimously.

The motion to appoint Gabe Brown, a Sargeant with the CID Division of the Sheriff's Office, to serve as an additional member on the Board of Family of Children Services was made by Vice-Chair Andrews and seconded by Commissioner Irions.

Additional discussion included that they previously discussed not having employees appointed to committees; that this board is a bit different because it is specific in the categories that are desired; and that it violates the spirit of having employees on boards.

The motion passed with three in favor (Grant, Andrews, Irions) and two opposed (Gantt, Lightsey).

6. **COUNTY MANAGER.** County Clerk Andrea Dzioba provided a brief update related to the fire at the Solid Waste Transfer Station and advised that an insurance adjustor came out last week and that a structural engineer is expected to be out this week to inspect the structure. Chairman Grant stated that he has talked with Recreation about honoring the Little League softball and baseball teams at the next meeting or at one of the meeting dates in October.

7. **COUNTY ATTORNEY**. Russell Britt, County Attorney, stated that he did not have any additional business to come before the Board this evening.
8. **ADJOURNMENT**. There being no further business to discuss, the motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Lightsey, seconded by Vice-Chair Andrews, and passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 7:47 p.m.

Rob Grant, Chairman

Attest:

Andrea Dzioba, County Clerk