

HARRIS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
Commission Chamber, Room 215, Harris County Courthouse
REGULAR SESSION
October 21, 2025
6:30 p.m.

Commissioners Present: Rob Grant, Susan Andrews, Greg Gantt (via telephone), Scott Lightsey, Bobby Irions. Staff Present: Clark Harrell, County Manager; Russell Britt, County Attorney; Andrea Dzioba, County Clerk; Elizabeth Barfield, Chief Financial Officer; Melissa Price, E911/EMA Director; Ashley Marston, Recreation Director; Mike Fuson, Assistant Recreation Director.

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 September 16, 2025 Regular Session was made by Vice-Chair Andrews, seconded by Commissioner Lightsey, and passed unanimously.
4. **PRESENTATION**

A. **Harris County Little League.** Chairman Grant and the Board of Commissioners recognized and presented Certificates of Recognition to the 8U Girls Softball District and State Champions and the 7U Boys Baseball District and State Champions as follows:

8U Girls Softball - Emmie Thomas, Allijo Cotton, Amelia Stocker, Aubrey Hewett, Bree Jones, Elizabeth Mack, Calynn Burdette, Emmy Green, Kamdyn Fowler, Landry Sparks, Preslee Frick, Scarlett Banker, Manager Daniel Thomas and Coaches Zach Stocker, Keeley Frick, Dustin Fowler, and Logan Mack.

7U Boys Baseball - Bodey Brown, Boone Hart, Chase Haffly, Cole Switzer, Griffin Bosco, Hayes Willis, JD Galli, Rhys Wright, Ryder Brewer, Welles Hill, Wesley Milner, Will Haag, Manager Cam Willis and Coaches Cody Milner, Randy Morris, Andy Willis, and Kenny Milner.

5. **APPEARANCE OF CITIZENS**
 - A. **Steve Howard - Airport Safety.** Mr. Steve Howard appeared before the Board and stated that he has lived in Pine Mountain for thirteen years; that he is here as the spokesperson for his neighbors; that he is a retired military pilot with over 5,000 hours of flying time and is experienced with FAA regulations; that he believe that there are safety concerns regarding aircraft flown in the Harris County Airport pattern that need to be addressed by the FAA; that there are safety issues that the Board and Airport can help eliminate; that the number of training flights has greatly increased; and that up to one hundred overhead approaches have flown into the Harris County Airport on many weekdays. Mr. Howard would like the Airport to implement procedures that would increase safety and reduce noise such as providing information to pilots about the residential area 1-2 miles off the departure end of Runway 09; that a preferred runway for departures and landings should be designated; that the Precision Approach Path Lights (PAPI) be repaired to prevent low final and high power approaches; that aircraft should maintain the runway centerline on takeoff; that the downwind pattern altitude be raised to 1,000 feet; that the base leg altitude should be listed as no lower than 500 feet; and that AOPA Noise Abatement Guidelines be posted in a prominent place.
 - B. **Chris Boyer - Harris County Airport.** Mr. Chris Boyer appeared before the Board and informed that Board that he is further out from the Harris County Airport but still in the pattern; that the increase in airport movement is obvious; that the Columbus Airport is closed currently which contributes to the volume of flights currently at the Harris County Airport; that fuel is purchased from the Harris County Airport which contributes to sales tax for the County; that at least two flight schools - Newnan and Auburn - are using the Airport; that he doesn't think that they are doing anything dangerous but that they could make improvements on their approach; and that pilots could maybe adjust their schedules.

Mr. John Willis appeared before the Board and stated that he has a plane at the Harris County Airport; that he agrees that there has been an uptick in traffic; that the increase brings people which brings business; that the uptick is at best temporary; that Columbus should be reopening their general runway soon; that there is room at the table for everyone; that any issues are not County issues but Federal issues; that the Board needs to investigate costs first before implementing additional regulations; and that the problem will take care of itself in time.

The Board requested that the County Manager review the list of information received with Lead Edge Design Group, the Airport Consultant.

6. NEW BUSINESS

A. Financials - Fiscal Year 2025 and First Quarter of Fiscal Year 2026.

Elizabeth Barfield, Chief Financial Officer, appeared before the Board and advised that the Fiscal Year 2025 audit is in process; that 92% of budgeted revenue was collected and 96% of budgeted expenses incurred. Ms. Barfield further advised that in Fiscal Year 2026 that a bond interest payment in the amount of \$334,000 has been made for the Public Safety Radio System and that \$410,000 has been paid for the Hudson Mill Road bridge repairs. Ms. Barfield stated reviewed the cash balances as of October 20, 2025 for the General Fund, Solid Waste Fund, Water Works, 2019 SPLOST, 2025 SPLOST, American Rescue Plan, TIA Funds 2013, Public Safety Radio System, 2023 TSPLOST, LMIG, and Airport. Ms. Barfield informed the Board that the immediate activities in Finance are the FY 2025 Audit, Payroll & Benefits - after the loss of the person in that position, the conversion to ADP for payroll, and managing cash.

Chairman Grant stated that the loss of the person in the Payroll & Benefits position was due to the death of a long term employee and that the Board appreciates everything that Finance and the Administration office have been doing.

B. Change Order - Harris County Public Safety Radio System Replacement.

Chairman Grant introduced the Change Order related to the Harris County Public Safety Radio System Replacement and advised that E911/EMA Director Melissa Price and Dominick Acuri from Televate were in attendance to present the information and respond to any questions. E911.EMA Director Melissa Price stated that they have finally received all of the lease information in but that they have had some items come up that need to be discussed. Dominick Acuri from Televate stated that they are recommending some changes to the system architecture; that all tower sites have been identified; that all lease agreements have been negotiated; that they are ready to move forward; and that there is a final design review scheduled for Thursday. Mr. Acuri made a presentation and briefly reviewed the diagram showing the tower sites and discussed their range; that the new tower to be built at Fire Station 6 has always been part of the plan to be built (250' tower); that the new tower at the 315 water tank site has also been part of the plan (190' tower); that the new tower to be built in Pine Mountain on the Department of Natural Resources site will be a new tower to replace the existing one and that the agreement has been negotiated and that there will be no recurring costs for this site (100' 3-leg lattice tower); that co-location will occur on the existing Northwest tower and that there will be no recurring costs for this site; that co-location will occur on the existing tower at Hopewell and that there will be no recurring costs for this site; that co-location on the existing tower at Creek Side and that there will be no recurring costs for this site; that co-location is desired at the Ellerslie site and that structural enhancement of \$33,750 is needed to replace steel members on the tower and that the lease agreement will be \$1,700 per month; that co-location is desired at the Goat Rock site and that the lease agreement will be \$1,700 per month; that co-location will occur at the Shiloh site and that the lease agreement will be \$1,900 per month; that co-location is desired at the American Tower site and that the monthly lease agreement has been negotiated down to \$2,950 per month from \$5,200 per month; that co-location is desired at Waverly Hall tower owned by SBA and that the monthly lease agreement right now is proposed at \$3,200 per month; that the original plan was to use a Hamilton site for RF site and E911 water tower for microwave link to Pine Mountain but that the water tower would need modifications; that they are recommending that a new tower be built at the E911 Center location instead of paying SBA \$3,400 per month; that the new tower at the E911 Center could provide the potential for revenue from call providers; and that proposed interoperability enhancements which would include control stations, mutual aid repeater, and gateway for dispatch monitoring at an additional cost of \$90,694.00.

Mr. Acuri advised that they are recommending approving all of the proposed leases except for Hamilton, the additional \$33,750.00 for the Ellerslie tower enhancements, the new tower at E911 and abandoning the Hamilton site for the current cost of \$354,604, and the interoperability enhancements for an additional \$90,694.00.

Discussion included whether the County could improve the structure at the Ellerslie site; whether there was a possibility of utilizing the observation tower at Ellerslie Park; that the County may be able to provide space on the new towers being built to others to help offset the cost; that the Board made it clear from the beginning that they wanted the interoperability and are disappointed that it now has an additional cost; that the County Manager wishes that he was involved at the beginning of the project; that County Attorney Russell Britt recommends that if anything is approved this evening that there be a contingency that the leases be reviewed and approved by him prior to finalizing agreements; that the Board thinks that all of these items should have been reviewed prior to the finalization of the project scope to avoid change orders; that the change order costs are expected to be spread through out the time frame of the infrastructure improvements; that there will have to be a tower behind E911 that isn't there now; and that the County needs to review what projects could be delayed in order to have funds to consider the change order and allow the attorney time to review the leases.

- C. **Transportation Investment Act of 2010 Project Agreement By and Between the Georgia Department of Transportation and Harris County - Man O'War Trail.** Chairman Grant introduced the item related to the agreement with the Georgia Department of Transportation related to Phase VII of the Man O'War Recreation Trail's last phase of trail construction if completed in its entirety - approximately 9.12 miles - and that the agreement provides a maximum amount of \$5,000,000 to be available to reimburse the County for expenditures related to the project. County Manager Clark Harrell stated that to complete the trail to the end will cost approximately \$6.63 million and that recreation grants are available and that the County is working with the River Valley Regional Commission (RVRC).

The motion to approve the Project Agreement by and Between the Georgia Department of Transportation and Harris County - Man O'War Trail, adopt the resolution, and authorize the Chairman, County Manager and County Clerk to execute the needed documents was made by Chairman Grant, seconded by Vice-Chair Andrews, and passed unanimously.

- D. **Agreement with Traylor Business Services Inc for Business Personal Property Verification Program.** Chairman Grant introduced the item related to a yearly contract with Traylor Business Services for the Business Personal Property Verification Program. The motion to approve the contract with Traylor Business Services, Inc for the Business Personal Property Verification Program was made by Commissioner Lightsey, seconded by Vice-Chair Andrews, and passed unanimously.

7. **COUNTY MANAGER.**

- A. **County Manager Correspondence.** County Manager Clark Harrell stated that unless the Board has any questions that he has doesn't have anything additional to discuss.

8. **COUNTY ATTORNEY.** County Attorney Russell Britt stated that he did not have any additional business to come before the Board this evening.

Chairman Rob Grant informed the Board that he was in receipt of an email commending Pam Jackson of the County's Tax Assessor's office and that stated how helpful she had been.

Vice-Chair Susan Andrews informed that Board that the Man O'War Trail was featured by Joyful Trails website and thanked Gloria Boyer, President of the Harris County Chamber of Commerce for letting them know about the Trail. Chairman Grant also advised that the Trail was mentioned in a recent class attended by himself and Commissioner Irions.

9. **REQUEST FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION.** County Manager Clark Harrell stated that he had a need for an executive session for personnel.

10. **RECESS FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION.** Chairman Grant made the motion to go into Executive Session for personnel at 8:09 p.m. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Irions, and passed unanimously.
11. **RESUME REGULAR SESSION.** The motion to go back into Regular Session was made at 9:00 p.m. by Commissioner Irions, seconded by Commissioner Lightsey, and passed unanimously.
12. **ADJOURNMENT.** There being no further business to discuss, the motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Lightsey, seconded by Commissioner Irions, and passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Rob Grant, Chairman

Attest:

Andrea Dzioba, County Clerk