

**Houston County Commissioners Meeting**  
**January 19, 2016**  
**Warner Robins, Georgia**

The Houston County Board of Commissioners met in regular session at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, January 19, 2016 at the Houston County Annex building in Warner Robins, Georgia with Chairman Stalnakar presiding and Commissioners Walker, McMichael, Thomson and Robinson present. Also present were County Attorney Tom Hall, Director of Administration Barry Holland, Director of Operations Robbie Dunbar, Personnel Director Ken Carter, Fire/ HEMA Chief Jimmy Williams, Administrative Secretary Dawn Ramirez, Walt and Becky Wood, Ansel Peck, Brooks Kiesler, Vivian Childs, MGRC Deputy Director Laura Mathis, MGRC Senior Government Services Specialist Greg Boike, and MGRC GIS Specialist Justin Futo.

Commissioner Walker led the audience in the Invocation.

MSgt. Scott Lee Dawson, Georgia Air National Guard, led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance and then detailed his 15-year military career. He has spent all fifteen years working for the 202<sup>nd</sup> Engineering and Installation Squadron and he explained that the mission of the 202<sup>nd</sup> is to design and install communications infrastructure throughout the southeast as well as other locations around the world. He indicated the main reason he joined the military was for the educational benefits. With two overseas deployments under his belt, he has enjoyed the many experiences traveling the world over the last fifteen years but has reached a rank now that has him spending more time in the office than on the road which he enjoys since he can now spend more time with his family.

Chairman Stalnakar asked for a motion to add a vehicle purchase for the Sheriff's Department as item #7.

Motion by Mr. Thomson, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously to add item #7 for a vehicle purchase for the Sheriff's Department to the agenda.

Motion by Mr. McMichael, second by Mr. Walker and carried unanimously by all to approve the minutes from the meeting of January 5, 2016.

Chairman Stalnakar recognized Middle Georgia Regional Commission Deputy Director Laura Mathis who introduced Greg Boike, Senior Government Services Specialist also with the Middle Georgia Regional Commission. Mr. Boike then briefed the Board on the ongoing process of updating the County's comprehensive plan which is meant to be a 20-year policy guide for the physical development and redevelopment of the County. The County is required to update the plan every ten years and it must be completed by the February 28, 2017 deadline in accordance with the Georgia Planning Act of 1989.

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Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Thomson and carried unanimously by all to concur with the City of Warner Robins annexation request for the property known as 121 Beulah Church Road, Tract #2, Parcel #000780 230000, Land Lot #133 of the 10<sup>th</sup> Land District of Houston County, totaling 1 acre, as shown on a survey by Waddle & Company dated November 7, 1997, and recorded in Plat Book #51, page 189.

Motion by Mr. Walker, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously to approve the appointment of Randa R. Parker to the Board of Health filling the unexpired term of Herman Ragan Sr. to begin January 19, 2016 and expire on December 31, 2016.

Mr. Walker commended Mr. Herman Ragan Sr. for his long service to the Board and commented that Ms. Parker brings a wealth of experience to the position.

Motion by Mr. Thomson, second by Mr. McMichael, and carried unanimously by all to approve the bid of the traffic signal installation contract to Wilburn Engineering of Newnan. The installation is to be at the intersection of SR127 and Moody Road/Wingfield Way in the amount of \$193,697. This is a SPLOST 2006 funded project.

Chairman Stalnakar thanked GDOT Commissioner Russell McMurry and other DOT staff and commented that this signal would greatly serve the citizens traveling through this area. Director of Operations Robbie Dunbar stated that it would take approximately three to four months for the signal installation.

Motion by Mr. McMichael, second by Mr. Thomson and carried unanimously by all to approve Chairman Stalnakar signing the professional services contract with Butler, Williams and Wyche to perform audit services for the County in Fiscal Years 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 and optional year 2021 at the annual fee of \$66,930. If the County were to receive and expend more than \$750,000 of federal funds in any given year, a Single Audit is then required and a fee of \$7,500 would also apply.

Mr. Walker disclosed that the firm of Butler, Williams & Wyche has served as his personal and business accountant for a number of years. Attorney Tom Hall felt that Mr. Walker would not have a conflict precluding his participation in the vote for this contract award.

Motion by Mr. McMichael, second by Mr. Walker and carried unanimously by all to approve the payment of the bills in the amount of \$2,073,099.17

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Motion by Mr. Thomson, second by Mr. Walker and carried unanimously by all to approve the purchase of one 2016 Chevy Tahoe SUV (Police Package) for use in the Sheriff's Department-Patrol from Hardy Chevrolet of Dallas, GA in the amount of \$33,936 from the Statewide Contract. Although the insurance settlement has not yet been reached, once received those funds will offset a portion of this purchase.

Mr. Thomson explained that this purchase was necessary due to a traffic accident a few weeks ago that resulted in a total loss of a patrol vehicle. The County was not at fault and there will be a settlement, as yet undetermined, from the other party's insurance company.

Chairman Stalnaker mentioned that the accident occurred at the intersection of Hwy. 247 and Industrial Boulevard and he explained that the County has asked GDOT for a signal in the past but has been turned down more than once. The County plans to re-submit the request as a result of this accident.

Public Comments:

Mr. Ansel Peck, 109 Latham Drive, Warner Robins spoke of the importance of the pending vote for the Board of Education's E-SPLOST on March 1<sup>st</sup> and asked that anyone not already registered to vote do so by February 1<sup>st</sup> so that they may vote 'Yes' to continue the 1-cent tax that supports capital improvements to our school system. He also remarked that it is a blessing to have the new traffic signal approved for Moody Road and Hwy. 127. He felt that there was also a great need along Highway 96 near Houston County High School and urged the Board to lobby GDOT for those additional signals.

Chairman Stalnaker remarked that the County shares those concerns and has made the signal requests to the GDOT for several of these intersections in the past.

Commissioners Comments:

Chairman Stalnaker spoke about the County's recently completed FY2015 audit in which the County received an unmodified opinion, which is the best type of opinion a governmental entity can receive. He noted that the audit contained no findings in respect to internal control over the County's financial reporting; no material weakness; no significant deficiencies; and no non-compliance material to the financial statements. The County was able to increase the fund balance during FY2015 thereby increasing the days in reserve from 203 days to 239 days. He mentioned that the audit is available in its entirety online both on the County's website and through the state Department of Audits and Accounts as well. The Chairman thanked the commissioners for their efforts and credited the administrative staff, accounting staff, department heads, elected officials and most importantly the citizens for the County's financial position.

Mr. McMichael pointed out that expenditures for each and every department were on or under budget for the FY2015 year. He wished to publicly thank the Accounting Department for the outstanding job they continue to perform for the County's benefit.

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Ms. Robinson thanked all involved with the County's financial success and especially thanked those citizens who are actively involved with local government and striving to make our community a better place to live.

Mr. Walker expressed his thanks to the employees, department heads and elected officials as well as the other Board members.

Mr. Thomson also thanked everyone involved but credited the Chairman for his leadership style working with the employees and department heads to manage the budget as a team.

Chairman Stalnaker also spoke of a serious issue concerning the Title Ad Valorem Tax (TAVT). Houston County, along with many other counties in Georgia, has not fared well under the new TAVT system and has been experiencing loss of revenues on vehicle sales from the start. The Department of Revenue (DOR) has notified local governments that the local share of TAVT would be reduced from 45 percent of the total TAVT revenues collected to roughly 40.5 percent for the 2016 calendar year which would translate to an approximate 9 percent revenue reduction. Since the DOR considers local governments collectively instead of individually, those governments who are already experiencing revenue loss on vehicles are having their losses offset by a few larger local governments who have experienced an increase in revenues. Essentially the windfall in revenues that those other jurisdictions have enjoyed will create this further loss of revenues for other counties such as Houston. The General Assembly is aware of the issue and is considering some change or remedy.

Motion to adjourn by Mr. McMichael, second by Mr. Walker and carried unanimously by all.

Barry Holland  
Director of Administration

Chairman

Commissioner

Commissioner

Commissioner

Commissioner