

Houston County Commissioners Meeting
May 19, 2020
Perry, Georgia

The Houston County Board of Commissioners met in regular session at 3:00 p.m. on Tuesday, May 19, 2020, at the Houston County Courthouse in Perry, Georgia, with Chairman Stalnaker presiding and Commissioners Walker, Thomson, McMichael and Robinson present. Also present were County Attorney Tom Hall, Director of Administration Barry Holland, Director of Operations Robbie Dunbar, Director of Personnel Ken Carter, Director of Purchasing Mark Baker, Chief Building Inspector Tim Andrews, and Shirlyn Granville.

Commissioner Walker gave the Invocation, and then led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Stalnaker explained that the regularly scheduled meeting in Warner Robins at the Annex building for 6:00 p.m. was changed to 3:00 p.m. at the Perry Courthouse Jury Assembly Room out of necessity to maintain the proper social distancing required during this pandemic

Motion by Mr. McMichael, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously by all to approve the minutes of the meeting of May 5, 2020.

Mr. Walker presented a request from Director of Operations Robbie Dunbar to eliminate one part time ground maintenance position and to make a change to the Facilities Superintendent position.

Motion by Mr. Walker, second by Mr. McMichael and carried unanimously by all to approve the elimination of one part-time ground maintenance position in the Public Buildings Department and the change of the Facilities Superintendent position from a Grade 24 to a Grade 25 effective June 2, 2020.

Mr. Walker presented a request from Chief Stoner to begin recruiting and staffing the new fire station at Lake Joy.

Motion by Mr. Walker, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously by all to approve the creation of three Corporal positions (Grade 17) and one Firefighter position (Grade 15) in the Fire Department effective June 2, 2020. There are no additional funds required for these positions in the FY20 budget.

Chairman Stalnaker reiterated that funds for these positions were available in the current FY20 budget and that no new funds would be required to be added to the FY21 budget.

Mr. Walker presented a request for the approval and acceptance of the Coronavirus Emergency Supplemental Funding Grant.

Motion by Mr. Walker, second by Mr. Thomson and carried unanimously by all to approve Chairman Stalnaker signing and accepting the FY20 Coronavirus Emergency Supplemental Funding (CESF) Grant #2020-VD-BX-0452 through the Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Assistance in the amount of \$58,008.

Mr. McMichael commended Community Planner Jake Cox for his efforts in securing these grant funds.

Mr. McMichael presented a request for approval of a bid on the Tidwell Road Emergency Culvert Replacement project.

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Motion by Mr. McMichael, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously by all to approve the award of the Tidwell Road Emergency Culvert Replacement project to LeClay Construction of Perry in the amount of \$52,943.12 with a one-week temporary road closure.

Mr. Dunbar confirmed that the project would be completed and paid for by the end of June.

Mr. McMichael presented a request from District Attorney Hartwig to purchase a copier and equipment to upgrade the courthouse security system.

Motion by Mr. McMichael, second by Mr. Walker and carried unanimously by all to approve the purchase of one Xerox C8035 copier from GDP Technologies in the amount of \$4,885 and the purchase of one NVR, eight disk drives and a battery back-up device from CDW-G in the total amount of \$4,027.70. District Attorney Hartwig will reimburse the County for the total of \$8,912.70 from forfeiture funds.

Chairman Stalnaker asked Mr. Baker to ensure that the reimbursement check from DA Hartwig was received before ordering the approved equipment.

Mr. McMichael presented a request from Public Works to add a length of Hill Road to the Houston County Road Inventory.

Motion by Mr. McMichael, second by Mr. Thomson and carried unanimously by all to approve the addition of the 0.29-mile (1,516 LF) extension of Hill Road to the Houston County Road Inventory.

Mr. Thomson presented a request from Public Works for the temporary closure of Moss Oaks Road at the Big Indian Creek Bridge.

Motion by Mr. Thomson, second by Mr. McMichael and carried unanimously by all to approve the temporary 90-day (maximum) closure of Moss Oaks Road at the Big Indian Creek Bridge beginning on the planned June 1, 2020 commencement of construction by Reeves Construction Company.

Chairman Stalnaker asked Mr. Dunbar if this temporary road closure would affect the school buses running this Fall.

Mr. Dunbar replied that they have coordinated with the Board of Education and that although it would likely overlap with the start of the school year there was very little school bus traffic on Moss Oaks Road.

Mr. Thomson presented a request for approval of a change order on the Environmental Health Department Building project.

Motion by Mr. Thomson, second by Mr. Walker and carried unanimously by all to approve Change Order #1 on the Environmental Health Department Building Emergency Remediation/Renovation project with International City Builders, Inc. of Macon adding \$25,060 to the original contract price of \$872,086 amending the contract price to \$897,146. There will be no change in contract time.

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Mr. Thomson commented that the change in flooring to the LVT would be much better in both quality and durability.

Chairman Stalnaker commented that the State of Georgia has brought some funds to the project that would offset much or all of this added cost. He also mentioned that he has asked Walt Exley, one of the County's building inspectors, to keep a daily watch on the construction. He thanked both Mr. Exley and Mr. Andrews for that effort.

Mr. Thomson presented a request from Public Works for approval of Task Order 002 on the Elberta Road widening project.

Motion by Mr. Thomson, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously by all to approve Chairman Stalnaker signing Task Order Number 002 for a term of six months under the Agreement for Consultant Services with Luster National, Inc. of Atlanta for right-of-way acquisition services on the Elberta Road widening project.

Chairman Stalnaker remarked that he is pleased with Luster's progress on this job that has many parcels to acquire. The first phase, which they are working on now, is from Carl Vinson Parkway to Houston Road. The second phase will be from Houston Road to Northside Drive

Motion by Mr. Thomson, second by Mr. Walker and carried unanimously by all to approve the following reappointments:

Library Board:	Nicole Rosser	7/01/20 thru 6/30/2024
	George F. Nunn	7/01/20 thru 6/30/2024
	Shannon McNeal	7/01/20 thru 6/30/2024

Mr. Thomson commented that all three members have done a great job on the Library Board of Trustees.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. McMichael and carried unanimously by all to approve the appointment of Lt. Brian Blanton to the Middle Flint Behavioral Healthcare Community Service Board filling the unexpired term of Sheriff Cullen Talton effective May 19, 2020 and expiring October 15, 2022.

Ms. Robinson commented that the last in-person meeting held by the CSB was in early March and that they have been tele-conferencing since. Hopefully there will be an in-person meeting in June or July.

Ms. Robinson presented a request from the Houston County Public Defender's Office for approval of three independent contractor agreements.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Walker and carried unanimously by all to approve Chairman Stalnaker signing independent contractor agreements for the purposes of providing defense of indigent persons in cases where the Houston County Public Defender's Office has declared a conflict of interest with David G. Daniell, Jonathan Perry Waters, and Jeffrey L. Grube effective July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. McMichael and carried unanimously by all to approve the payment of the bills totaling \$1,804,775.77.

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Chairman Stalnaker opened the meeting for Public Comments.

Chairman Stalnaker recognized Shirlyn Granville and explained that she had called him with a concern that there was no absentee ballot drop-box located in the North end of the county and that she and others felt that there needed to be one in Warner Robins so that voters did not have to travel to Perry in order to use the one drop-box located at the Board of Elections. He explained that, as of this morning, there was now a drop-box established in the lobby of the County Annex Building. He thanked Board of Elections Chair Kathy Shelton, the other board members, and staff for engaging in a solution to the problem. He went on to comment that these are very trying times for elections and he commended the entire staff at the Board of Elections and the poll workers for the great job they are performing. He also explained that the Secretary of State just recently announced that the opening and scanning of ballots, but not the tally, could begin one week and one day prior to election day which he thought to be a wise move.

Ms. Granville thanked the Chairman, the Board of Commissioners, Elections Superintendent Debra Presswood and her entire staff for their efforts and for their due diligence installing the alternate drop-box in Warner Robins. She also reminded everyone to participate in the 2020 Census as it has major impacts on our community. Each Commissioner thanked Ms. Granville for her efforts within our community.

As there were no public further comments Chairman Stalnaker closed the Public Comments portion of the meeting.

Chairman Stalnaker opened the meeting for Commissioners Comments.

Chairman Stalnaker recognized Director of Operations Robbie Dunbar, Director of Personnel Ken Carter, Director of Purchasing Mark Baker and Chief Building Inspector Tim Andrews who were each in attendance and thanked them and their staffs for continuing to work through this entire pandemic crisis.

Chairman Stalnaker then reminded everyone that early voting is now taking place this week, Monday thru Friday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., at the Board of Elections office in Perry. It will continue there for the following two weeks through June 5th and will include Saturday May 30th from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. but will be closed on Monday, May 25th for Memorial Day. Other satellite locations at the Houston Health Pavilion Conference Center (old Houston mall) and at the Sonny Watson Health Sciences building at Central Georgia Technical College on Cohen Walker Drive will be opening for early voting May 26th through June 5th Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The Houston Health Pavilion will have early voting on Saturday May 30th as well from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. but the technical college will not be open for Saturday voting. He encouraged everyone to get out and vote either in-person or by absentee ballot.

He then remarked that the County's budget process is progressing but with the COVID-19 crisis the forecast for FY21 revenues was not great for either the local governments or the State of Georgia. He also reminded everyone that this coming Monday, May 25th, was Memorial Day honoring those men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice while serving in the U.S. military. The County offices will be closed on that day in honor of those who have fallen.

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Finally, he reminded everyone that the next Board meeting would be held on Tuesday, June 2nd at 9:00 a.m. in the Jury Assembly Room of the Perry courthouse and then would come back for the second meeting in June at 3:00 p.m. June 16th. There will also be a public hearing on the proposed FY21 budget at a time yet to be determined followed by a later meeting for formal adoption of the budget. It is likely that this will entail a special-called meeting for the budget adoption.

Ms. Robinson thanked everyone for coming to the meeting, or for watching by video, and reminded everyone that Monday is Memorial Day.

Mr. Walker thanked everyone for coming and remarked that it was great to recognize the outstanding department heads in attendance. He reminded everyone that it was a right and a privilege to vote in every election.

Mr. Thomson likewise thanked everyone for coming especially Ms. Granville. He also thanked Mr. Hall and Mr. Holland for their efforts and dedication during the pandemic crisis.

Mr. McMichael reiterated the importance of both voting in the upcoming election and participating in the 2020 Census. He asked everyone to remember his wife Diane who is in her eighth week of recuperating from her illness.

Motion to Adjourn by Mr. Walker, second by Mr. Thomson and carried unanimously by all, meeting adjourned.

Barry Holland
Director of Administration

Chairman

Commissioner

Commissioner

Commissioner

Commissioner