

**Houston County Commissioners Meeting
Tuesday, December 17, 2019
Warner Robins Annex**

The Houston County Board of Commissioners met in regular session at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, December 17, 2019, at the Houston County Annex in Warner Robins, Georgia, with Chairman Stalnaker presiding and Commissioners Walker, Thomson, McMichael, and Robinson present. Also present were Attorney Tom Hall, Director of Administration Barry Holland, Director of Operations Robbie Dunbar, Director of Personnel Ken Carter, Fire / HEMA Chief Chris Stoner, Chief Building Inspector Tim Andrews, Houston County Development Authority member Mark Byrd, Houston County Development Authority Executive Director Angie Gheesling, Flint Energies VP of Member Solutions Rogee Roberson, Walton and Becky Wood, Ansel Peck

Commissioner Walker led the audience in the Invocation.

TSgt. Sarah Weede, US Air Force led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance and briefed the Board on her 8-year military career. She was born and raised in Texas and followed family tradition of military service going to basic training at Lackland AFB in San Antonio. Robins AFB was her first, and so far, only duty assignment. She has been with the J-STARS program that entire time since arriving in 2011. She has deployed twice in her career, once for six months to the Middle East and once to an undisclosed location. She is active in both the Warner Robins Heritage Society and the VFW Post in Perry. She marveled at how much the community loves its veterans and military members. TSgt. Weede is married with four children.

Chairman Stalnaker recognized Walton and Becky Wood who made a special presentation to Commissioner McMichael and Commissioner Walker honoring their military service. They presented both with two challenge coins and a framed picture of the same.

Motion by Mr. McMichael, second by Mr. Walker and carried unanimously by all to approve the minutes of the meeting of December 3, 2019.

Motion by Mr. McMichael, second by Mr. Thomson and carried unanimously by all to add Item 8A to the agenda for the cancellation of two vehicle orders and the approval to order two replacement vehicles.

The Commissioners voted in unison, with Commissioner Jay Walker abstaining, to approve the appointment of Commissioner Jay Walker as the 2020 vice chairman.

Chairman Stalnaker acknowledged and thanked Mr. Thomson for his service during the 2019 year as vice chairman.

Motion by Mr. Walker, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously by all to approve the adjustment of all County Officials salaries to the mandated minimum effective January 1, 2020 as outlined in a memorandum from Personnel Director Ken Carter dated December 6, 2019.

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Mr. Davis Cosey on behalf of the Katheryn G. Davis Family LP requested an abandonment of an unimproved and unused section of a county right-of-way originally planned to be used in the widening of SR96, but due to design changes remains unimproved and unused after the completion of the widening of SR96 project and the return of the Old Highway 96 right-of-way back to Houston County from the State. Pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 32-7-2(b)(1) the adjoining property owner was notified and a public notice of intent to abandon was advertised in the Houston Home Journal once a week for two weeks.

Motion by Mr. Walker, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously by all to authorize the Board of Commissioners to sign the Resolution and the Deed of Abandonment abandoning an unimproved and unused section of a county right-of-way described as follows:

All that tract or parcel of land, situate lying and being in Land Lot 75 of the Eleventh Land District of Houston County, Georgia, being known and designated as Parcel 'HC' containing 1.839 acres, on a land survey done by Lee R. Jones dated August 15, 2019, G.R.L.S. No. 2680 attached to the Resolution and the Deed of Abandonment as an exhibit.

Motion by Mr. Thomson, second by Mr. Walker and carried unanimously by all to approve the appointment of Ron Grace to another 3-year term on the Tax Assessors Board beginning January 1, 2020 and expiring December 31, 2022.

A second reading of an amendment to the Regulations for Access Management and Encroachment Control was presented by County Attorney Hall after which Chairman Stalnaker closed the regular meeting and opened a public hearing on the amendment. Speaking in favor of the amendment was Mr. Milo Ringe, 117 S. Amanda Place, Warner Robins who represented several other Carterwoods subdivision residents in attendance. He also presented a letter from Ms. Kimberly Cassel Pritchett of 139 Carterwoods Drive who also supports the amendment as a measure to control the traffic on the subdivision streets. Chairman Stalnaker remarked that the residents of the Carterwoods subdivision helped bring this issue to the forefront and that the amendment will help other areas throughout the county as well. He also stated that he is a strong advocate of a traffic signal at the intersection of Smithville Church Road and Houston Lake Road that would also help with the traffic flow and safety. Chairman Stalnaker then closed the public hearing and reopened the regular meeting and called for a vote.

Motion by Mr. Thomson, second by Mr. Walker and carried unanimously by all to approve an amendment to the Regulations for Access Management and Encroachment Control as adopted in the Code of Ordinance, Houston County, Georgia at Chapter 54, Article IV, Sec. 54-90. This amendment includes the addition of Paragraphs 3A-6 through 3A-10 to Chapter 3 titled Commercial Driveways of the Regulations for Access Management and Encroachment Control and shall read as follows:

3A-6 A Commercial driveway will not be permitted on any county road determined to be used primarily for residential purposes by the Houston County Public Works Department.

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3A-7 Should an owner desire to appeal the determination of Public Works regarding the classification that a road is primarily used for residential purposes, the owner shall file a notice of appeal with the Board of Commissioners of Houston County within five (5) days of the written decision of Public Works.

3A-8 The Board of Commissioners shall hear the appeal at a regularly scheduled meeting within thirty (30) days of receipt of the notice of appeal.

3A-9 The owner or his/her representative will be able to present his/her case to rebut the decision of Public Works that a road is used primarily for residential purposes. At the conclusion of the owner's presentation Public Works staff will present its case on the road being used primarily for residential purposes.

3A-10 The Board of Commissioners shall render a decision immediately or within thirty (30) days of the appeal hearing. The decision of the Board of Commissioners shall be given to the owner and the Public Works staff in writing.

Mr. Thomson presented a request from Public Works staff that the speed limit for Harner Road be reduced from its current rate of 40 mph to 30 mph due to the transition of that area from rural farm and timber parcels to residential lots.

Motion by Mr. Thomson, second by Mr. McMichael and carried unanimously by all to approve the reduction of the posted Harner Road speed limit from 40 mph to 30 mph effective January 7, 2020.

Chairman Stalnaker asked Mr. Dunbar to have a message board placed at the intersection of Harner Road and Sandefur Road notifying the traveling public of the reduction in speed limit at least two weeks prior to the effective date.

The County is currently improving the intersection at SR247 and Davidson Road while at the same time the Georgia DOT is widening a portion of SR247. In an effort to get both roads widened at the intersection, the County has agreed to assist the DOT with a portion of the cost to cover the topping layer of asphalt as well as the signing and marking for the State's portion. The County will pay the contractor, low bidder C.W. Matthews, directly for that work.

Motion by Mr. McMichael, second by Mr. Thomson and carried unanimously by all to authorize Chairman Stalnaker signing the agreement with C.W. Matthews Co., Inc. of Marietta, GA outlining the local participation of the County amounting to \$44,643 on the Georgia DOT's SR247 widening project near Davidson Road.

At the September 17th meeting the Board approved the award of a new 2020 Dodge Charger Pursuit vehicle for use in the Traffic Department from Ginn Commercial at a unit cost of \$28,706.42. We were recently informed that Dodge will not be manufacturing approximately 4,000 vehicles that they took orders on, including this one, and are retooling the line which means that new units will not be available for the better part of a year. A suitable Dodge Charger replacement cannot be found. The Sheriff's Department and Purchasing staff recommend replacing that vehicle with a 2020 Chevrolet Tahoe Pursuit vehicle that is readily available for purchase off the state-wide contract.

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In addition, at the September 17th meeting, the Board also approved the award of two new 2020 Dodge Charger Pursuit vehicles for use in the Patrol Division from Ginn Commercial at a unit cost of \$24,859. The Sheriff's Department and Purchasing staff recommend replacing both of these vehicles with 2019 Ford F-150 Super Crew FX4 trucks that are readily available for purchase.

Motion by Mr. McMichael, second by Mr. Thomson and carried unanimously by all to authorize the cancellation of the award of one new 2020 Dodge Charger Pursuit vehicle for use in the Sheriff's Department from Ginn Commercial unit cost of \$28,706.42; and the award of one new 2020 Chevrolet Tahoe Pursuit SUV for use in the Sheriff's Department Investigations Division to Hardy Chevrolet in the amount of \$36,194; and the cancellation of the award of two new 2020 Dodge Charger Pursuit vehicle for use in the Sheriff's Department from Ginn Commercial at a unit cost of \$24,859; and the award of two new 2019 Ford F-150 Super Crew FX4 trucks for use in the Sheriff's Department Patrol Division to Brannen Ford of Perry for the unit cost of \$34,282.40 or a total amount of \$68,564.80. SPLOST 2018 will fund the purchase of these vehicles.

The Sheriff's Department recently was involved in an accident that resulted in the total loss of one of their pick-up trucks in the Warrants Division. The accident was not our fault and the other party's insurance is settling the claim for \$25,000. Purchasing has found a suitable replacement vehicle that is immediately available from Ginn Commercial and recommends purchasing it for \$26,708.

Motion by Mr. McMichael, Second by Mr. Walker and carried unanimously by all to approve the award of one new 2019 RAM 1500 Classic SSV crew cab truck for use in the Sheriff's Department Warrant Division from Ginn Commercial of Covington, GA in the amount of \$26,708.

A second reading for an Alcohol License Application (Bonaire Liquor Store / Beer, Wine & Liquor) was presented by Director of Administration Holland after which Chairman Stalnaker closed the regular meeting and opened a public hearing on the application. The applicant was present with nothing further to add. There was no opposition. Mr. McMichael clarified that the required distance from the liquor store to the neighboring church was in compliance with Georgia law. Chairman Stalnaker then closed the public hearing and reopened the regular meeting and called for a vote.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Thomson and carried unanimously by all to approve the alcohol license application submitted by Nilam Kumar Patel representing Santoshi Krupa LLC dba Bonaire Liquor Store for the retail sale of beer, wine and liquor located at 200 Hwy. 96, Suite C, Bonaire.

A second reading for an Alcohol License Application (Hwy. 96 Stop & Shop / Beer & Wine) was presented by Director of Administration Holland after which Chairman Stalnaker closed the regular meeting and opened a public hearing on the application. The applicant was present with nothing further to add. There was no opposition. Chairman Stalnaker then closed the public hearing and reopened the regular meeting and called for a vote.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. McMichael and carried unanimously by all to approve the alcohol license application submitted by Ankit Kumar Patel representing Sai Ram 2019 LLC dba Highway 96 Stop & Shop convenience store for the retail sale of beer and wine located at 198 Old Perry Road, Bonaire.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. McMichael and carried unanimously by all to approve the payment of bills totaling \$4,820,390.61

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Chairman Stalnaker opened the meeting for Public Comments.

Walton Wood, 426 Sandefur Road, Kathleen thanked Mr. Dunbar for inviting him and his wife Becky to the Public Works Christmas party last week. He remarked that he enjoyed Mr. Horace Gilbert's rendition of 'Just a Closer Walk with Thee' and also Mr. Ellis Manson's invocation. He thanked the Board of Commissioners, department heads and Sheriff's Office for their fiscal responsibility as they go about conducting the County's business.

Ansel Peck, Burns Drive, Warner Robins congratulated Mr. Nilam Kumar Patel and his son Ankit on their successful businesses and commented that Mr. Patel is a man of integrity. He thanked Walton and Becky Wood for their many years of community involvement, for the framed photographs that they present to each military speaker at the Board meetings, and for recognizing Mr. Walker and Mr. McMichael for their military service.

Virginia Trimble, 301 Wexford Circle, Bonaire inquired about the status of the natatorium project. Chairman Stalnaker replied that although the 2018 SPLOST included \$7 million dollars for the natatorium project the dollars were still being collected for the project. He recently met with both Superintendent of Schools Dr. Scott and Warner Robins Mayor Toms in which moving the project along was a topic of discussion. The hope is that we can at least begin some engineering and design work during the 2020 year.

Chairman Stalnaker opened the meeting for Commissioners Comments.

Ms. Robinson thanked everyone for coming and participating in the meeting and wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Mr. Walker likewise thanked everyone for coming and wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. He also thanked Mr. and Mrs. Wood for their recognition of his military service stating that he was deeply honored.

Mr. Thomson remarked that it was good to see representatives from the Houston County Development Authority at the meeting and wished everyone a Happy New Year.

Mr. McMichael thanked Mr. and Mrs. Wood for their recognition of his military service. He then announced that he would not be seeking re-election to another term in office. He said that his service to this community began under then Chairman Sherrill Stafford who appointed him to the Planning & Zoning Board and six years later he ran for the Post 5 commission seat to succeed Calvin Maye. He commented that a lot of good things have happened over his seven terms in office which will culminate December 31, 2020 for a total of 28 years on the Board. He said that he has tremendous respect for the three Chairman that he has served under; Sherrill Stafford, Ned Sanders and now Tommy Stalnaker. The Board's many accomplishments during this time include massive infrastructure improvements including roads and buildings and of course the SPLOST programs that have been supported by Houston County voters over the years.

The support for Robins AFB has never been better and he was proud of that. He said that he will support whomever is voted to be his successor on the Board. Lastly, he wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

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Chairman Stalnaker said that there is a lot of hard work to do during his last year and he thanked Mr. McMichael for his service to community, his friendship, and the guidance which he has provided to him over the years.

Ms. Robinson commented that she appreciated his long service and his friendship. She was then excused from the meeting as she had another engagement to attend.

Mr. Walker thanked Mr. McMichael for his service and friendship and commented that this Board has served so long together that they were more like family.

Mr. Thomson commented that Mr. McMichael's successor will have big shoes to fill.

Chairman Stalnaker wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year and reminded everyone that the next Board meeting would be at 9:00 a.m. on January 7, 2020 at the courthouse in Perry.

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