

Houston County Commissioners Meeting
Tuesday, February 4, 2020
Perry, Georgia

The Houston County Board of Commissioners met in regular session at 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday, February 4, 2020, at the Houston County Courthouse in Perry, 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, Director of Purchasing Mark Baker, Fire / HEMA Chief Chris Stoner, Assistant Chief David Newman, Chief Building Inspector Tim Andrews, Superior Court Clerk Carolyn Sullivan, County Engineer Brian Jones, Bill Parker, Ronnie Heald, Dan Perdue, David Walker, Larry Walker, John Hulbert, David "Skeet" Hulbert, Flint Energies VP of Cooperative Communications Marian McLemore, ADS Operations Manager Jeanne Moyer and Walton and Becky Wood.

Commissioner Robinson led the audience in the Invocation.

MSgt. Gerald Williams, US Air Force led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance and then detailed his 15-year military career. MSgt. Williams currently serves as a senior non-commissioned officer in the Material Management Career Broadening Program on Robins where he has been stationed since September of 2017 providing supply chain support for parts and material on the F-15, C-130 and C-5 aircraft. Prior to serving at Robins he was stationed for four years at McClellan Air Field in Sacramento, CA where he served as a Property Disposition NCOIC and International Courier; nearly four years at Kirtland AFB, New Mexico at the Air Force Nuclear Weapons Center; and four years at Pope AFB, NC where he was a Supply Technician supporting the C-130 aircraft. He has been deployed many times during his career including three times to Afghanistan. MSgt. Williams stated that the two reasons he decided upon a career in the military was first a long-standing family tradition of service and second the September 11, 2001 attacks that occurred while he was a sophomore at Auburn University which planted the seed in his mind. He thanked the Board and the community for its support of the military and its mission. He introduced his wife who was in attendance commenting that she was his rock. He expects to leave this summer for his next duty assignment at Hurlburt Field near Fort Walton Beach, FL.

Chairman Stalnaker recognized local attorney Mr. David Walker of Walker, Hulbert, Gray & Moore for his many years assisting the County on right of way matters for various road improvement projects. He described Mr. Walker, his firm and his family as friends and outstanding community servants. Chairman Stalnaker and Mr. Dunbar presented Mr. Walker with a plaque acknowledging him as an honorary engineer for his support. Mr. Dunbar characterized Mr. Walker as a Christian, a scholar and a gentleman. Mr. Walker was accompanied to the meeting by his wife Deborah, his daughter Mary Katherine, his brother and law partner Larry Walker, partners John and David 'Skeet' Hulbert, partner Kellye Moore and other family and friends.

Mr. Walker thanked the Board and Mr. Dunbar for honoring him and for retaining his firm for such important work over the years. He also thanked County Engineer Brian Jones and staff members Ronnie Heald and Bill Parker for their partnership on past projects.

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Chairman Stalnaker then presented both Mr. McMichael and Mr. Thomson the framed remarks he made about them as he introduced them at last Thursday's Robins Regional Chamber of Commerce Pinnacle Awards ceremony. Mr. McMichael and Mr. Thomson were presented the Charlie L. Jones Lifetime Achievement Award for their many years of service to the community. Mr. McMichael will have served 24 years as an elected Commissioner at the end of his current term December 31, 2020 and Mr. Thomson will have served 21 years.

Motion by Mr. McMichael, second by Mr. Walker and carried unanimously by all to approve the minutes of the meeting of January 21, 2020.

County Attorney Tom Hall made a blanket statement for the benefit of all applicants for Special Exceptions for home occupations that even if the Board of Commissioners approves an application, neighborhood covenants may still impose certain restrictions upon or against home occupation businesses. These restrictive covenants are superior to any action taken by the Board of Commissioners. The actions taken by the Board will not change any provision within the covenant that prohibits any commercial or business activity.

Chief Building Inspector Tim Andrews presented Special Exception Applications #2310 - #2312, #2314 - #2315, #2317 - #2319 and #2321 - #2323.

Chairman Stalnaker closed the regular portion of the meeting and opened a Public Hearing.

Application #2310, applicants were present. There was no opposition.

Application #2311, applicant was present. There was no opposition.

Application #2312, applicant was present. There was no opposition.

Application #2314, applicant was present. There was no opposition.

Application #2315, applicant was present. There was no opposition.

Application #2317, applicant was present. There was no opposition.

Application #2318, applicants were present. There was no opposition.

Application #2319, applicants were not present as the application is recommended to be tabled.

Application #2321, applicant was not present as the application is recommended to be tabled.

Application #2322, applicant was not present as the application is recommended to be tabled.

Application #2323, applicant was present. There was no opposition.

As there were no comments Chairman Stalnaker closed the Public Hearing and reopened the regular meeting.

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Motion by Mr. Walker, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously by all to approve the following applications to include any and all stipulations as noted on the Zoning & Appeals recommendation and Section 95 Requirements staff report:

- #2310 – Jason Story – Handyman
- #2311 – Clay Holt and Susan Odom - Construction
- #2312 – Jesse Meister – Pressure Washing
- #2314 – Lakeithia Smith – Glass Repair and Installation
- #2315 – Jennifer Spence – Dog Breeding
- #2317 – Danna Stokes – Handyman and Home Inspection
- #2318 – Ben and Kimberly Simmons – Commercial Financial Consulting
- #2323 – Manuel Jay Becerra, Jr. – Vending Machine

Motion by Mr. Walker, second by Mr. Thomson and carried unanimously by all to table the following applications and send back to Zoning & Appeals for reconsideration:

- #2319 – Marcos Reid and Chakanis King – Pressure Washing
- #2321 – Ken and Mitzi Galason – Interior Design
- #2322 – John Whittington – Catering (BBQ)

Mr. Andrews gave the applicants approved for a home occupation instruction on the next step of the process which is obtaining their occupational business license from the Commissioner's office.

Mr. Walker presented a request for annexation from the City of Warner Robins.

Director of Operations Robbie Dunbar confirmed that the County's water meter currently in place was not a master water meter but rather an individual meter that he recommended leaving in the County's name thereby retaining the water customer.

Motion by Mr. Walker, second by Mr. McMichael and carried unanimously by all to concur with a City of Warner Robins annexation request, with the stipulation that it remain a Houston County water customer, for the property described as:

Tax Parcel No. 00077D 104000, totaling 2.95 acres, at Wrasling Way.

Chairman Stalnaker commented that although a recent amendment to the County's Regulations for Access Management and Encroachment Control prohibits permitting a new commercial driveway onto a county road that is used primarily for residential purposes, the property being annexed here has been zoned commercial for many years before the amendment was adopted.

Mr. Walker presented another request for annexation from the City of Warner Robins.

Motion by Mr. Walker, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously by all to concur with City of Warner Robins annexation request, with the stipulation that it remain a Houston County water customer, for the property described as:

1256 S. Houston Lake Road, Tax Parcel No. 000770 004000, totaling 1.2 acres

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Ms. Robinson presented a request for release of three bonds.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Thomson and carried unanimously by all to approve the release of the maintenance bond (Cadence Bank Letter of Credit #28413239717), expiring March 2, 2020 for Amelia Place Subdivision Phase 6; the release of the maintenance bond (Cadence Bank Letter of Credit #6130784) expiring February 22, 2020 for The Bluff at Riverbend Subdivision, Section 3, Phase 1 and to accept Chattahoochee Drive, 1498 ft. or 0.28 miles, at a speed limit of 25mph for maintenance purposes; and the release of the maintenance bond (Cadence Bank Letter of Credit #22008353) expiring February 22, 2020 for the Bluff at Riverbend Subdivision Section 3, Phase 2 and to accept Altamaha Way, 600 ft. or 0.11 mile, at a speed limit of 25 mph for maintenance purposes.

Before asking Ms. Robinson to present certain budget adjustments Chairman Stalnaker explained that the County recently completed its audit in late December and ended up with a very strong FY19. The Board had said that if the County did finish strong they would do something to reward the employees, department heads, elected officials and constitutional officers for their role in conservatively managing their respective budgets and expenditures. These budget adjustments will enable the County to cover the shortfall in the insurance and retirement programs while establishing some level of reserves for each going forward and also to provide for an unprecedented mid-year 2% pay adjustment which will be addressed in the next agenda item. He thanked all employees, department heads, elected officials and constitutional officers for their efforts during the past year.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Walker and carried unanimously by all to approve the following budget adjustments:

General Fund (100):

- Increase:

Other	1599-52.3900	Contingency – Other	\$200,000
Decrease:	100-13.5500	Fund Balance – Unassigned	\$200,000

- Increase:

Risk Management	1555-51.2400	Retirement Contributions	\$340,166
	100-13.5400	Fund Balance – Assigned	<u>\$559,834</u>
		Total	\$900,000
Decrease:	100-13.5500	Fund Balance – Unassigned	\$900,000

- Increase:

	9000-61.1000	Operating Transfers Out	\$3,000,000
Decrease:	100-13.5500	Fund Balance – Unassigned	\$3,000,000

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Internal Service Fund (600):

▪ Increase:

600-0000-39.1200 Operating Transfers In \$3,000,000

Increase:

Risk Management - Health 600-1555-52.1200 Professional Services \$3,000,000

Ms. Robinson presented a proposed salary adjustment.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. McMichael and carried unanimously by all to approve a two (2) percent salary adjustment to be effective for the March 10, 2020 pay period for all merit system employees, full-time county elected and appointed officials, and salary adjustments on supplements for all full-time employees receiving county supplements.

Mr. McMichael thanked Mr. Dunbar for explaining the FY19 budget year outcomes and the proposed pay adjustment to his employees at this morning's safety meeting.

Mr. Walker commented that the County's employees each serve the citizens in an outstanding way.

Mr. Thomson presented a request for approval of a bid on the joint LMIG projects.

Motion by Mr. Thomson, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously by all to authorize Chairman Stalnaker signing the Memorandum of Agreement with Warner Robins, Perry, Centerville, Hawkinsville, Pulaski County, Dooly County and Byron concerning the 2020 Joint LMIG road resurfacing and repair projects.

Chairman Stalnaker commented that this arrangement has been very beneficial to the County and each of the other entities as well.

Mr. Thomson presented an indemnification agreement between Mary and Claire Pikramenos and the Houston County Public Works.

Motion by Mr. Thomson, second by Mr. McMichael and carried unanimously by all to approve Chairman Stalnaker signing the indemnification agreement between Mary and Claire Pikramenos and the Houston County Public Works concerning the abandonment of an asphalt paved detour on the property listed in the agreement on Exhibit A.

Mr. Thomson presented a request for approval from Public Works to enter into a professional services agreement.

Motion by Mr. Thomson, second by Mr. Walker and carried unanimously by all to approve entering into a professional services agreement with Aquatic Escapes, LLC for managing the beaver population in specified areas of the County.

Chairman Stalnaker asked Mr. Holland to ensure that the invoice for these services be charged to the Animal Control Department.

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Mr. Thomson presented a request from Public Works to enter into an agreement for timber harvesting at the County Landfill.

Motion by Mr. Thomson, second by Mr. McMichael and carried unanimously by all to approve entering into an agreement with American Forest Management (AFM) for the timber harvest and sale on approximately 72-acres located at the Houston County Landfill.

Mr. McMichael asked if these areas being clear-cut would be replanted.

Chairman Stalnaker replied that they would be replanted at the appropriate time of year.

Mr. McMichael presented a request from the Engineering Department to extend a Cul-de-sac bond.

Motion by Mr. McMichael, second by Mr. Thomson and carried unanimously by all to approve the extension of the cul-de-sac bond (SunMark Letter of Credit #210230-05, expiring February 20, 2020) for Abingdon Cove of McCarley Downs Subdivision, Section 2, Phase 3. If the bond is not extended by February 20, 2020 the County will draw the bond and contract the work.

Mr. McMichael presented an Independent Contractor Agreement for the services of a local medical examiner.

Motion by Mr. McMichael, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously by all to authorize Chairman Stalnaker signing the independent contractor agreement with Houston County Coroner Danny Galpin, Houston Healthcare, and Dr. Melissa A. Sims-Stanley providing for a local medical examiner to perform autopsies as required by the Coroner in the morgue at Houston Medical Center for deaths other than homicides and the deaths of children seventeen years of age and under.

Chairman Stalnaker commented that both he and Commissioner McMichael met with the Coroner, the District Attorney and representatives from each of the local law enforcement agencies recently to discuss contracting with Dr. Sims-Stanley for the medical examiner duties. District Attorney Hartwig's preference was to use Dr. Sims-Stanley in all cases other than homicides and the deaths of children age seventeen and younger whose cases he preferred to send to the GBI Crime Lab in Macon for autopsies. Everyone agreed to that stipulation. Chairman Stalnaker thanked Coroner Galpin for his efforts in finding a well-qualified individual to fill the local medical examiner's position.

Mr. McMichael presented a proposal for audit services.

Motion by Mr. McMichael, second by Mr. Thomson and carried unanimously by all to approve Chairman Stalnaker signing the contract with Butler, Williams & Wyche, LLP of Macon to perform audit services for the County in Fiscal Years 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024 and 2025 with an optional year 2026 at the annual fees outlined in their proposal dated January 22, 2020.

Motion by Mr. McMichael, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously by all to approve the payment of the bills totaling \$4,067,366.36.

Chairman Stalnaker closed the regular portion of the meeting and opened Public Comments.

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Superior Court Clerk Carolyn Sullivan thanked the Board for finding the funds to give the County employees a pay adjustment in the middle of the year.

Chairman Stalnaker and each member of the Board thanked Ms. Sullivan for the excellent management of her department's budget over the years.

Director of Personnel Ken Carter thanked the Board for the salary adjustment and also for shoring up the insurance and retirement programs since both are important parts of the employee's overall salary and benefits package.

Director of Operations Robbie Dunbar expressed his appreciation to the Board for the 2% pay adjustment on behalf of the Public Works and Fire Department employees remarking that this was the first time in his career with the County that a mid-year pay adjustment was given.

Chief Stoner also thanked the Board on behalf of the firefighters and staff members.

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

Chairman Stalnaker opened the meeting for Commissioners Comments.

Chairman Stalnaker agreed with Mr. Dunbar that this was the first time in his 47-year career with the County a mid-year pay adjustment had been made. He stressed that the employees were such a big factor in being able to do so and needed to be acknowledged.

Mr. McMichael remembered Mr. Ansel Peck who passed away on January 21st. He also commented that he was glad the Board could make the 2% pay adjustment and square away both the health insurance and retirement programs. He recognized and thanked Director of Personnel Ken Carter for his day-to-day efforts managing his department and the employee's needs.

Mr. Thomson remarked that several employees had expressed genuine appreciation for the 2% salary adjustment and also commented that he appreciated the recognition and award that both he and Mr. McMichael received at the Chamber's Pinnacle Awards ceremony.

Ms. Robinson thanked everyone for coming and also remembered Mr. Peck as a frequent contributor to the County's Board meetings. She remarked that a mid-year pay adjustment was a great way to recognize the County employees for their efforts and that the dedication of funds to the insurance and retirement programs accrued to their benefit as well.

Mr. Walker remembered Mr. Peck as a good man. He remarked that he was happy the Board could make the 2% salary adjustment and commented that as a member of the ACCG's pension board he has seen many governmental entities throughout the state of Georgia struggle with their pension programs but not here in Houston. Lastly, he congratulated Mr. McMichael and Mr. Thomson on receiving the Chamber's lifetime achievement award.

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Chairman Stalnaker reminded everyone about the upcoming 2020 Census and the importance of being counted. He acknowledged Mr. Walker's participation on the Pension Board and commented that the County always pays the full recommended contribution into the pension fund.

Mr. McMichael informed everyone that a record monthly collection of SPLOST dollars was achieved in December totaling over \$2.75 million dollars.

Chairman Stalnaker agreed that Houston's collections were up due to the good economy and that the whole state of Georgia's sales tax collections were also up.

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