

**HARRIS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
REGULAR SESSION**

March 21, 2017

7:00 P.M.

Commissioners Present: J. Harry Lange, Jim Woods, Susan Andrews, Martha Chewning, Becky Langston. Staff Present: Randy Dowling, County Manager; John Taylor, County Attorney; Nancy D. McMichael, County Clerk.

1. **CALL TO ORDER.** Chairman Lange called the Regular Session to order.
2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.** At the request of Chairman Lange, Commissioner Chewning led those in attendance in the Pledge of Allegiance.
3. **MINUTES.** The motion to approve the minutes of the March 7, 2017 Regular Session and of January 5, 2017 Planning Session was made by Commissioner Chewning and seconded by Commissioner Langston. The vote on the March 7 Regular Session was four in favor (Chewning, Langston, Andrews, Lange), no opposition, and one abstention (Woods, who was absent from the meeting), and the vote of the January 5 Planning Session was unanimous.
4. **APPEARANCE OF CITIZENS**
  - A. **Steve Cavender & Susan Wilder: Pine Lake Subdivision Roads and Refuse in Yards.** Steve Cavender and Susan Wilder, citizens of Pine Lake Subdivision, appeared before the Board. Mrs. Wilder said that she is speaking for the residents of Pine Lake; that they are taxpayers and contribute a large sum of money toward ad valorem taxes and property taxes; that the ditches have not been cleaned/pulled in several years and the roads are in poor condition; that Code Enforcement does not go to the subdivision unless they are contacted; that there are abandoned vehicles and junk in a particular yard and nothing has been done; that they would like Code Enforcement to routinely drive through the area; and that regarding the roads, they would like to be contacted when road work or ditch work is going to be done. Mr. Cavender said he had no comments. Chairman Lange said that County personnel will check into these matters.
5. **OLD BUSINESS**
  - A. **Appointment: Library Board.** Chairman Lange said that a motion had been made during the March 7 meeting by Commissioner Langston to appoint Laura Seavers to the Library Board to complete the term of Warren Aldrich; that the motion had been seconded by Commissioner Chewning; that he had tabled action in order to allow the Library Board to comment on same; and that there were no objections from the Library Board. He then asked for a vote on the appointment. The vote on the motion to appoint Laura Seavers to the Library Board passed unanimously.
  - B. **Change Order #1: Road Extension Project in Hamilton Business Park; Harris Gray, Engineers.** Chairman Lange said that action had been tabled by Commissioner Chewning during the March 7 meeting pending receipt of more detailed information as to the work to be undertaken; and that the information had been provided. Commissioner Chewning said that the information provided answered her concerns. She then made the motion to approve the Change Order in the amount of \$7,700. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Langston, and passed unanimously. (Document can be found in "Contracts & Agreements" file as C&A #17-10.)
  - C. **Library Project: Overall Costs.** Chairman Lange said that the GMP agreement had been approved during the March 7 meeting in the amount of \$4,256,100; that the projected construction and completion of the building is \$5,226,000; that the difference is \$969,900; that the fund raising for the difference is moving ahead and looking positive; that the groundbreaking ceremony for the Library was held this afternoon with approximately 100 people in attendance; and that in order for the project to move forward, action is needed regarding the total overall costs. Lee Martin, project consultant with 2WR, was present to respond to questions and/or comments. Discussion included that it has been determined the storm room will hold about 30 people; that the contingency of \$200,000 will probably not all be utilized but is necessary for overages and other issues that may come up during construction; and that not only will the dumpster enclosure be demolished as part of the project and rebuilt by Prison labor, the sheds that house the mowers will also be moved (line item for deumpster enclosure includes material to build an enclosure for dumpsters and mower). The motion to include the overall costs for the project (\$5,226,000), which includes the various items totaling \$969,900 and not included in the GMP agreement, was made by Chairman Lange, seconded by Commissioner Andrews, and passed unanimously. (Document detailing overall costs can be found in "Miscellaneous Documents" file as MD#17-03.)
  - D. **Daesol Project Plat.** Chairman Lange said that the County had received electronic drawings for the Daesol project. He asked Scott Harris, of Harris Gray, who was present to provide hard copies of the survey for the County Attorney. Mr. Harris said that he will provide four copies of the survey.

6. **NEW BUSINESS**

A. **Requests for Tax Refund.** Chairman Lange read the two (2) requests for tax refund, as follows:

- (1) **Bethlehem Baptist Church:** Refund of \$77.56 due to the vehicle being a church van, which is exempt from ad valorem taxes. Both the Tax Commissioner and Board of Tax Assessors agreed with the request. The motion to approve this refund of \$77.56 was made by Commissioner Woods, seconded by Commissioner Langston, and passed unanimously.
- (2) **Creech, Williams A., Jr., and Barbara A.:** Refund of \$221.44 for fines, penalties and interest due to late payment of real estate taxes of \$217.5 for 2015 and \$3.86 for 2016 because tax bills for 2015 and 2016 were not mailed to taxpayer in a timely manner. Both the Tax Commissioner and the Board of Tax Assessors disagreed with the request because tax bills are due regardless of whether or not a bill is mailed and tax bills are available on line. Commissioner Woods tabled action pending information regarding the address on record, and Commissioner Chewning asked about the address provided on the transfer tax information form.

B. **Radar List.** Chairman Lange said that GDOT had returned the list with revisions requested by the County. Nancy McMichael, County Clerk, said that of the roads the County requested to be added, GDOT did include some on the list but didn't include others for which GDOT recommended different speed limits; that basically if the roads not included by GDOT are to be on the list, then GDOT's speed limits must be used; that there should not be any unpaved roads on the list; and she recommended approval pending any corrections. Following discussion, which included that Grantham Road, Macedonia Church Road, and Rivers Road should be double-checked as to whether they are paved, the motion to approve the Radar list was made by Commissioner Woods, seconded by Commissioner Chewning, and passed unanimously.

C. **Financial Statements: December 2016 and January 2017.** The motion to approve the December 2016 and January 2017 financial statements was made by Commissioner Andrews, seconded by Commissioner Chewning, and passed unanimously.

7. **COUNTY MANAGER**

A. **Project Updates.** Randy Dowling, County Manager, brought the Board up to date on various projects, as follows:

- (1) **Ellerslie Park.** Bid documents in process of being prepared and should be completed soon. In response to a question, Mrs. McMichael said that she is waiting on the quantities list from the engineer before she can finalize the bid documents.
- (2) **Pine Mountain Ballpark Concession/Restroom.** Project has been completed and the 1999 SPLOST should soon be liquidated and closed.
- (3) **Library.** Groundbreaking held this afternoon with good turnout; permit has been received from State Fire Marshall and local permits should soon be obtained.
- (4) **Website.** Work is progressing on the new website with a lot of new content and is to be mobile friendly.
- (5) **SPLOST 14.** All five municipalities have approved and signed the agreement; each municipality will receive three checks - one for the accumulated funds, one for January's allotment, and one for February's allotment; and then they will receive their pro-rata share each month.
- (6) **911 Radio System Improvements.** Results of the assessment evaluation of the CAD system will be on the April 4 agenda, and TUSA has been talking with the radio system users.
- (7) **Budget.** Budget discussion with Department Heads are underway this week.

8. **COUNTY ATTORNEY**

A. **Resolution and Agreement: Talbot County Water.** John Taylor, County Attorney, reviewed the resolution and agreement regarding the purchase of water from Talbot County of up to 3,000,000 gallons a month to include that there is a current agreement which needs to be updated and replaced with this version; that the document has been received from Talbot County and he had made minor changes; and he recommended approval of same. The motion to approve the Resolution and the Agreement was made by Commissioner Woods, seconded by Commissioner Langston, and passed unanimously. (Document can be found in "Contracts & Agreements" file as C&A #17-11.)

- B. **Ante Litem Notice: Joshua Brown**. John Taylor, County Attorney, said that an ante litem notice, dated March 10, 2017 had been received regarding the claim of Joshua Brown of injures as the result of an incident that occurred on March 12, 2016. He explained the details of the incident and recommended that the Board deny the ante-litem notice, after which he will notify the County's insurance carrier of same. Following discussion, the motion to deny the ante-litem notice was made by Commissioner Langston, seconded by Commissioner Chewning, and passed unanimously.
- C. **Resolution: Moratorium on Issuance of Building Permits within Designated Area Below Melody Lake Dam**. John Taylor, County Attorney, reviewed the resolution drafted in response to the Commissioners' request for same, said that it is for 120 days and recommended approval of same. The motion to approve was made by Commissioner Chewning, seconded by Commissioner Woods, and passed unanimously.
9. **REQUEST FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION**. Randy Dowling, County Manager, requested an Executive Session for the purpose of discussing personnel issues.
10. **RECESS FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION**. The motion to go into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing personnel matters was made at 7:55 PM by Commissioner Andrews, seconded by Commissioner Chewning, and passed unanimously.
11. **RESUME REGULAR SESSION**. The motion to go back into Regular Session was made by Chairman Lange, seconded by Commissioner Chewning, and passed unanimously.
12. **OTHER**
- A. **Personnel: Salary and Classification Changes, Commissioners' Office**. Commissioner Chewning made the motion to approve the revised job description of Accounting Technician, to approve a new job description of Accounting Clerk, to add Accounting Clerk in Grade 12, to move Accounting Technician and Human Resources/Accounting Specialist from Grade 12 to Grade 14, and to increase the salary of the current Accounting Technician from \$13.22 to \$18.50. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Woods. Commissioner Langston said that while this particular employee does a good job and deserves a raise, she cannot vote to increase the employee's salary 39.4% when there are many other good employees providing vital services to the taxpayers and citizens of the County who will not receive a raise of 39.4%; and that she doesn't feel like it is fair to the other employees in the County. Commissioner Chewning said that in this case, it is not just the employee staying in the same job and having the same job description, but there are additional duties that are vital to the county that this employee will be performing. Commissioner Langston responded by saying that a 39.4% increase in pay is an exorbitant amount. The motion passed with four in favor (Chewning, Woods, Andrews, Lange) and one opposed (Langston)
13. **ADJOURNMENT**. There being no further business to discuss, the motion to adjourn was made by Chairman Lange, seconded by Commissioner Langston, and passed unanimously.

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 J. Harry Lange, Chairman

Attest:

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 Nancy D. McMichael, County Clerk