

**HARRIS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
PLANNING SESSION**

May 9, 2017

9:00 AM

Ellerslie Park Lodge, 3280 GA Hwy 85, Ellerslie

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

Chairman Lange called the meeting to order at 9 AM.

**Budget FY 17/18.** Chairman Lange said that the presentation of the proposed FY 17/18 budget is very thorough and in-depth. He then asked Randy Dowling, County Manager, to review the proposed budget. Mr. Dowling reviewed the FY 16/17 accomplishments, his memorandum, the overview, the county manager proposed reductions, the general fund revenues and expenditures, the long-term debt schedule, and statistical information. Discussion regarding specific departmental revenues and expenses did not occur. Mr. Dowling responded to questions and comments from the Board to include that to balance the budget, funds will need to be taken from General Fund, Water Works Fund, Jail Fund, Solid Waste Fund, and an increase in the millage rate. Discussion also included that justification is needed regarding the renovation to Public Works office, a portable building for Public Works, the need for a full time Yard Attendant to include frequency of pipe sales, and the need for a full time library position; and that at the Ag Building, hand rails are needed at the steps as well as a concrete pad where there is a drop-off. Commissioner Langston requested the total cost of Ellerslie Park, and Mr. Dowling replied it was about \$1.2 million. Mr. Dowling also said that a 3% salary increase had been included in the proposed budget, which includes adjusting the minimum start pay of all job grades. Regarding the Volunteer Fire Departments, consensus was to provide each VFD with their equipment stipend (of \$10,000) and let them decide how and when to use.

**Wireless Internet.** Randy Dowling, County Manager, said that County offices in Hamilton should be on Point Broadband wireless within three or so weeks and that the Ellerslie area will also soon be able to take advantage of Point Broadband's services. The Point Broadband contract for County offices will be on the upcoming Regular Session agenda.

**Ambulance.** Randy Dowling, County Manager, said that the welding of a 2012 chassis on a mid-1992s box has deteriorated to the point that the ambulance is parked, and that a quote has been received for welding the chassis on a 2003 box in the amount of \$29,500. There were no objections to moving forward with putting the chassis on another box.

**Hotel/Motel Tax.** Randy Dowling, County Manager, asked if there was interest in increasing the hotel/motel tax to 5%, and following discussion, there were no objections. Mr. Dowling is to research the issue further as to how the increase can be used. Discussion included that the Harris County Chamber of Commerce, per our agreement, is to provide quarterly reports to the BOC setting out how the funds it receives from the hotel/motel tax are used. It was reported that the COC has not provided such reports in quite some time, and the BOC requested that the COC be contacted about same. In addition, consensus was to pay for any County advertising using hotel/motel proceeds.

**Longevity/Compression Options.** Randy Dowling, County Manager, reviewed various options regarding the compression issues among employees due to the recent personnel study whereby multi-year employees are making the same as new employees. Discussion included the need for evaluations as a progress report and not for salary purposes. Consensus was to move forward with addressing the longevity/compression issue with the percentage of same and when to implement (July or January) yet to be determined.

**SPLOST.** Consensus was to hold the referendum for the next SPLOST in May of 2018, with the required discussions for same beginning in the fall of 2017, and for the length of time to be six years rather than five.

**PUD Moratorium.** Following discussion, which included that while there may be a time limit for the moratorium, there should not be one regarding when the draft amendment regarding PUD (Planned Unit Development), consensus was for Nancy McMichael, County Clerk, to check with John Taylor, County Attorney, regarding limitation as to the time frame for such a moratorium.

**Airbnb.** Consensus was to check with other counties to see how they handle this type of rental business, the transaction for which is over the internet, and how such can be regulated. Randy Dowling, County Manager, and Nancy McMichael, County Clerk, will check with their respective associations regarding same.

**ADJOURNMENT.** Meeting adjourned at 3:00 PM.

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J. Harry Lange, Chairman

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Nancy D. McMichael, County Clerk

**MINUTES APPROVAL.** The motion to approve the Planning Session minutes of May 9, 2017, was made during the Regular Session of May 16, 2017, by Commissioner Woods, seconded by Commissioner Andrews, and passed unanimously