

**HARRIS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
CALLED JOINT SESSION**

March 14, 2020

10:30 AM

Commissioners Present: Becky Langston, Susan Andrews, Rob Grant, Harry Lange. Commissioner Absent: Andrew Zuerner. Staff Present: Randy Dowling, County Manager; Nancy D. McMichael, County Clerk.

Others Present: Roger Couch, Justin Finney & Shelia Baker (Board of Education), Karen Norman, Sandy Wilson, Darrel Enfinger (Department of Public Health), Monty Davis & Mike Cardwell (911/EMA), Bucky Searcy (EMS), Mike Jolley (Sheriff), Stephen Waskey (Recreation), Julie Brown (City of Hamilton), Jim Trott (Town of Pine Mountain), Rich Scott (City of Shiloh), Michael Harris (Town of Waverly Hall), Charles Sweat & Kim Tharp (Chamber of Commerce), State Representative Vance Smith, State Senator Randy Robertson, Michael Spencer (Waverly Hall PD), Richard McKinney (Antioch VFD), Skip Wyatt (Ellerslie VFD), Ricky Hood (Hamilton VFD), Byron Hawkins (NW Harris VFD), Andy Kober & Wayne Holloway (Pine Mountain VFD), Jack McClung (Pine Mountain Valley VFD) and approximately 13 others whose names are unknown.

1. **Welcome**. Roger Couch, School Superintendent, welcomed everyone to the Board of Education meeting room.
2. **Call to Order**. Chairman Langston called the Called Meeting to order and thanked everyone for attending this joint meeting for the purpose of discussing the COVID-19 virus, aka Coronavirus, and thank Mr. Dowling and Mrs. McMichael for pulling the meeting together on such short notice. She then asked several individuals to speak.
3. **Comments**.

Karen Norman, with the local health department, distributed information regarding basic prevention measures for COVID-19 and reviewed same, which including washing hands often with soap and water; if soap and water are not available, use hand sanitizer; avoid touching face; avoid close contact with people who are sick; stay home if sick; cover cough/sneeze with tissue (then throw it away); and clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces. She also said that as of yesterday (March 13), there were 42 cases of COVID-19 in Georgia with one death, but this morning there are 64 cases; that there will be drive-thru testing sites, at least one for each district, and the one for Harris County will be in Muscogee County. She also announces the Board of Education has closed schools through April 6 and that the Harris County Library will also be closed at least until the beginning of April.

Randy Dowling, County Manager, said that state athletic associations have cancelled their respective sport seasons; that the Georgia Department of Corrections is issuing requirements for the prison and the inmates housed therein; and that he had held a Department Head meeting yesterday (March 13) to discuss what each department is or is not doing. He reviewed the precautionary actions each department is taking, the majority of which is washing hands, using hand sanitizer, and wiping down surfaces.

Randy Robertson, State Senator, said the Governor has declared a state health emergency, and the legislature is to go back on Monday to vote to amend the budget. He also reiterated that if you are sick, stay home.

Vance Smith, State Representative, said that the best thing to do is to stay calm; that there should be a core group with one person from each organization so that all have the same message; that the President has designated tomorrow (March 15) as a National Day of Prayer; that with the State of Emergency, there will be resources for local governments, so track and document everything; that there will be federal funds and that state has a "rainy day" fund that can be used.

Roger Couch, School Superintendent, said that as an abundance of caution in the best interest of students and the community, the schools and all related activities have been cancelled until April 6; that there will be food distribution in five location; that schools will have limited personnel; and that Justin Finney is the main point of contact.

Shelia Baker, Assistant Superintendent for Support Services, said that Park Elementary will be preparing food for children ages 0-18 to pick up at the school Monday through Friday from 11 AM to 12 noon; that bagged food will also be prepared for delivery to five locations in the county, also Monday through Friday 11 AM to 12 noon; that each bag will include lunch for the day and breakfast for the next; and that they are planning to delivery 1,000 meals.

Justin Finney, Assistant Superintendent for Transportation & Bus Services, said there will be limited personnel at each of the schools; that work will be available for students via internet or hard copies; that anyone going to the schools should call first to arrange to pick up materials; that they have a message system to keep parents and staff informed as to what it going on; that School Resource Officers will be on duty at the schools as a security precaution because people will be dropping by for various needs.

Bucky Searcy, EMS Chief, said that protocol has been established for first responders in that they can respond to cardiac arrests, wrecks with injuries or when requested by EMS; that EMS has the ability to decontaminate areas and is waiting on more supplies; that the COVID-19 is very contagious, much more so than the A & B flu strains; that there are about 100,000 ICU beds in the United States and 92% of those are currently in use; that symptoms include dry cough, fever, and shortness of breath; and that he had provided Nancy McMichael with a 7-page listing of antimicrobial products for use against COVID-19 that she can send to anyone who requests it; that people must take responsibility; that should one develop symptoms call your primary care physician first - do not go to the ER; that in 99% of the cases, the virus will run its course with taking Tylenol and staying hydrated; that one should not shake hands and should frequently wash hands.

Darrell Enfinger, Department of Public Health, said that people should use common sense; that 80-85% are mild cases; that if you don't meet the criteria (dry cough, fever, and shortness of breath), you won't be tested.

Representative Smith said that the Governor has also determined that temporary licenses may be given to doctors, nurses, and nurse practitioners from other states in the event such help is needed.

Charles Sweat, Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors Chairman, said that small community businesses will need help to survive in this pandemic, and the tax revenue will be affected as it related to FD Roosevelt State Park and Callaway Gardens.

Kim Tharp, Chamber of Commerce President & CEO, said that the Chamber is willing to be a voice in this matter and willing to get the message out; that the Chamber will remain open.

4. **Draft Document.** There being no further comments, Chairman Langston requested that Darrell Enfinger prepare a draft of the message to send out and to provide same to Randy Dowling.
5. **Closing Prayer.** Mike Jolley, Sheriff, gave a closing prayers.
6. **Adjournment.** There being no further business, Chairman Langston adjourned the meeting.

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Becky Langston, Chairman

Attest:

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Nancy D. McMichael, County Clerk