

HARRIS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR SESSION

February 2, 2021

7:00 P.M.

Commissioners Present: Andrew Zuerner, Becky Langston, Susan Andrews, Bobby Irions.
Commissioner Absent: Rob Grant. Staff Present: Randy Dowling, County Manager; Russell Britt,
County Attorney; Nancy D. McMichael, County Clerk.

1. **CALL TO ORDER.** Chairman Zuerner called the Regular Session to order.
2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.** Chairman Zuerner led those in attendance in the Pledge of Allegiance.
3. **ANNOUNCEMENT.** Chairman Zuerner announced that Commissioner Grant is absent due a death in the family.
4. **MINUTES.** The motion to approve the minutes of the January 19, 2021, Regular Session was made by Commissioner Andrews, seconded by Commissioner Irions, and passed unanimously.
5. **OLD BUSINESS**
 - A. **Second Reading: Timber Ordinance.** Chairman Zuerner said this was the second reading of this proposed ordinance, which will repeal and replace the existing Article V of Chapter 4 of the Code of Ordinances. Russell Britt, County Attorney, said that upon further review, section 6(G) should be deleted from the document. Following discussion, the motion to approve the Timber Ordinance with the deletion of section 6(G) was made by Commissioner Andrews, seconded by Commissioner Langston, and passed unanimously. (Ordinance #21-01.)
6. **NEW BUSINESS**
 - A. **Proclamation: Georgia Day.** Chairman Zuerner said the Kings Gap Chapter of the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution had requested a Proclamation in honor of the State's 288th anniversary. He then read the document proclaiming Friday, February 23, 2021 as Georgia Day. The motion to approve the Proclamation was made by Commissioner Langston, seconded by Commissioner Irions, and passed unanimously.
 - B. **Appointment: Public Improvements Authority.** Chairman Zuerner said a vacancy exists on the Public Improvements Authority (PIA) due to a member having moved out of the County, and that Commissioner Grant has recommended an individual to be appointed to complete Patrick Callaway's term, which expires June 30, 2023. He also said that Commissioner Grant had requested the appointment move forward even though he was not in attendance. The motion to appoint Cheryl Rees to the Public Improvements Authority to complete the term of Patrick Callaway was made by Commissioner Langston, seconded by Chairman Zuerner, and passed unanimously.
 - C. **Request for Tax Refund.** Chairman Zuerner said that a request for tax refund in the amount of \$163.35 had been received from Matthew Bruce Clouser for the reason that he sold his vehicle after paying his vehicles taxes early; and that both the Tax Commissioner and the Board of Assessors agree with the request. The motion to refund the \$163.35 was made by Commissioner Andrews, seconded by Commissioner Irions, and passed unanimously.
 - D. **Financial Statement: November 2020.** There being no questions regarding the November financial statement, Commissioner Andrews requested that the financial statements be provided in a more timely manner. Clint Chastain, CFO, said that he has been working on the audit but that the December statement is almost ready for distribution. Discussion included that even with the additional expenses due to COVID-19, departments are still within their budget. The motion to approve the November 2020 financial statement was made by Commissioner Andrews, seconded by Chairman Zuerner, and passed unanimously.

7. **COUNTY MANAGER**

- A. **Purchasing Policy.** Randy Dowling, County Manager, said that in October 2020, the Board had discussed increasing purchasing limits; that a new Purchasing Policy has been drafted and includes the increased limits of requiring no quotes for purchases from \$1,000 to under \$5,000; requiring oral quotes for purchases not less than \$5,000 or more than \$25,000; requiring written quotes for purchased not less than \$25,000 or more than \$50,000; requiring requests for bids, proposals, or qualifications for purchases of \$50,000 and over; and increasing emergency purchases up to \$50,000. He said that if approved, the policy will replace the current Purchasing Ordinance and go into effect on March 1, following staff training. Following discussion, the motion to rescind the current Purchasing Ordinance and approve the new Purchasing Policy was made by Chairman Zuerner, seconded by Commissioner Irions, and passed unanimously. (Document can be found in "Miscellaneous Documents" file as MD#21-01.)
- B. **Project Updates.** Randy Dowling, County Manager, said that the update report now includes a color-coded chart to show what projects are in progress, have been completed, not started, or at risk. He then reviewed various projects, as follows:
- (1) Replacement Telephone System for Courthouse, Administration Building and Community Development Building. Ongoing with completion expected soon.
 - (2) Ambulances for EMS. Two replacement ambulances should arrive in April.
 - (3) LMIG Road Resurfacing. Bids are due February 23, with Board consideration on March 2, and project completion by June 30, 2021.
 - (4) Restriping of County Roads. Bids are due February 23, with Board consideration on March 2, and project completion by June 30, 2021.
 - (5) Repair/Renovation of Five (5) County Bridges. Project is ongoing, and is to be completed by June 30, 2021.
 - (6) Melody Lakes Dam. Project started last Thursday with road closure with completion by June 30, 2021.
 - (7) Patching of County Roads. Bids are due February 23, with Board consideration on March 2, and project completion by June 30, 2021.
 - (8) Ellerslie Park. Alexander Paving has started work on the internal roads, drainage, and the turn lanes from Georgia 85; and that burning will start tomorrow, depending on the weather and the Georgia Forestry Commission.
 - (9) Scrap Tire Amnesty Events. Events will be held on Saturday, March 13 and March 20, from 8 AM to 4 PM, at the County's Transfer Station, and an informational flyer is being distributed and on the website.
 - (10) Water Works Administration Building. Project is underway with site and floor plans.
 - (11) Renovation of Old Library. With enough money having been donated, design has begun by Southern A&E, and it is anticipated the building could be occupied by December 2021.
 - (12) Land Use and Development Codes Update. Project is ongoing; several drafts have been released and more are forthcoming; the draft product should be ready soon with a final product ready for adoption by the Board on April 6.
 - (13) SPLOST. Record high in December at \$373,147, which is 92% of the budgeted collections with six months remaining.
 - (14) LOST. Record high in December at \$272,026, which is 80% of the budgeted collections with six months remaining.
 - (15) T-SPLOST. Collected \$117,356 in December, which is 77% of the budgeted collections with six months remaining.
 - (16) Single Family Building Permits. 23 permits issued in January for a total of 125 for this fiscal year.

- (17) Solid Waste Tonnage. A record high of almost 1,800 tons for the month of December.

8. **COUNTY ATTORNEY**

- A. **Resolution: Public Improvements Authority Language Revision**. Russell Britt, County Attorney, said that the recent planning retreat the Board discussed issuing long term debt to acquire funds to construct and renovate several County facilities and for other purposes due to the availability of low interest rates; that the needed funds could be borrowed through the County's Public Improvements Authority (PIA), but the enabling legislation to create the PIA in 1995 was narrowly written and needs to be amended to allow the PIA to borrow funds for general government purposes; that since the PIA was created by local legislation by the State's General Assembly, any revisions must be approved in the same manner; that a resolution has been prepared to send to the County's local legislative delegation to present to the General Assembly to approve during their current legislative session; and that after the PIA language is amended, the Board can finalize the projects to construct and renovate. Following discussion as to the amendment wording, Commissioner Langston said that she has concern with the PIA being able to borrow funds and paid back with taxpayer dollars; that she requested that the 1995 legislation be provided to the Board but she has not yet had a chance to review the documents; and that she would like to table this matter to the February 16 meeting. There was discussion regarding the use of the word "table" rather than "postpone", which is what the Commissioners' Rules of Order allow. Following discussion, Commissioner Langston said she would like to postpone action for a second reading on February 16. Discussion took place during which it was clarified that the PIA cannot borrow funds without an intergovernmental agreement with the County regarding the repayment of the funds using either General Fund dollars or future SPLOST funds, if approved by the voters; and that the PIA cannot issue bonds on their own when they do not have the ability to pay it back. Mr. Britt reminded the Board that the resolution is just to amend the enabling legislation. The second reading of the resolution will take place during the February 16 meeting.
9. **REQUEST FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION**. Commissioner Irions said that he would like an Executive Session to discuss a personnel matter, and Chairman Zuerner said that he would like to discuss real estate acquisition.
10. **RECESS FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION**. The motion to go into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing a personnel matter and real estate acquisition was made at 7:40 PM by Commissioner Andrews, seconded by Chairman Zuerner, and passed unanimously.
11. **RESUME REGULAR SESSION**. The motion to go back into Regular Session was made at 8:25 PM by Commissioner Andrews, seconded by Chairman Zuerner, and passed unanimously.
12. **ADJOURNMENT**. There being no further business, the motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Andrews, seconded by Chairman Zuerner, and passed unanimously.

Andrew Zuerner, Chairman

Attest:

Nancy D. McMichael, County Clerk