

Manager's Monthly Report Monday, March 18, 2019

Jail Study - Accommodation for Future Growth: In response to a request made by the Board of Commissioners and Sheriff, Precision Planning, Inc. has prepared a future space needs assessment to describe, in detail, the estimated growth of the Habersham County inmate population, and a professional assessment of the estimated costs associated with three possible options to address facility needs in order to house the expected jail population over the next 20 years. Those options are:

1. No jail expansion – do nothing but maintain the current jail and continue to house detainees at other County facilities when the population exceeds the current jail capacity.
2. Renovation of the current jail to meet expected inmate population growth.
3. Construction of a new jail on the currently available site to meet the expected inmate population growth.

The assessment answers the questions: Can the current facility be modified and renovated to accommodate the expected growth of the Habersham County inmate population? Over the next 20 years, what are the cost implications for the County's budget considering housing, medical expenses, transportation costs, etc.?

Liz Hudson of Precision Planning will present a report which assesses the existing jail's architectural and engineering systems, and will provide comments on the current conditions with a focus on potential liability issues related to classification of inmates, facility safety and security of current operations.

New Administration Building Move Schedule: Our current plan is to suspend office activities for the public only on Friday March 22nd in order to move into the New Administration Building located at 130 Jacobs Way.

1. Departments located in the current administration building, with the exception of Elections and Registration, as well as the Tax Assessors' office will begin moving on Thursday, March 21st and continue through Saturday, March 23rd.
2. Environmental Health will move from the Health Department building on Friday March 29th.
3. The Tax Commissioner's Office will then move from the HEMC Annex building on Friday April 5th. The reason for the delay in moving the Tax Commissioner's Office is due to their Mobile Home tax collection schedule, which requires they be available to collect taxes through April 1. We hope to avoid any public confusion that may result if the office were to change their location during that collection schedule, they will move after that collection period has ended.
4. The Election Office will move in Mid-April to accommodate their election schedule.

The Veterans Services Office will move from the HEMC annex to the Health Department building at the end of April.

GRAD Certification: The Development Authority has contracted with James Irvin of Foothills Land Design to get the Habersham Industrial Park certified as Georgia Ready for Accelerated Development (GRAD). The GRAD certification is a Georgia Department of Economic Development program for industrial sites giving prospects certainty that the site is zoned correctly, utilities are in place, environmental assessment has been completed, etc. Essentially, it's an announcement that all due diligence is complete and a project can start construction almost immediately.

Reed Property Design Proposal: The Development Authority has approved a proposal from James Irvin of Foothills Land Design to complete a design for the development of the Reed Property, purchased in 2016 and adjacent to the Habersham Industrial Park (HIP). The finished product will act as the master design for grading, drainage, erosion control, utilities, and roads. We anticipate getting approximately five new building pads on the Reed Property and expanding HIP Pad 3 to make it a larger, more attractive potential site as shown on the attached concept drawing.

Future Industrial Expansion: With the recent completion of the Industrial Park and approval of the design work for the development of the Reed Property, the Development Authority has begun discussion and exploration of future industrial and economic development needs. The Authority, in accordance with their mandate of creating jobs and economic growth, has begun planning for future needs and potential SPLOST projects.

Federal 14 CFR Part 13 Complaint Habersham County Airport: We have responded to the DOT Part 13 complaint on March 8 concerning a plane crash that occurred on December 5, 2019. The County's plan and schedule to address the penetrations outlined in the complaint are not the area where the accident occurred. The work associated with removing the high ground on the north side of the runway will require FAA/GDOT grant funding. We propose to the GDOT that a grant be written that would take the high ground and balance the low areas on the north side of the runway, eliminating steep and unmaintainable slopes within the primary surface. The grant would need to include costs related to export the additional dirt to alternate locations onsite. The most efficient locations for the export borrow would be in the replacement hangar area project, shown in current CIP, FY 21, or in the west hangar area project, as shown in current CIP, FY 22. Mitigation of penetrations will allow the County to improve the vegetation control on the steep slopes on the north side of the runway. This will be accomplished by mowing and/or herbicide treatments, if necessary.

United States Forestry Service (USFS) Helicopter: USFS has expressed interest in using Habersham Airport as a home base while their helicopter contract is active; from January to May and November. Since their helicopter contract is not continuous, they would like to mobilize a temporary office trailer for the duration of the contract. After their contract ends, the trailer would be removed from the site. USFS personnel and a contracted helicopter provide services that primarily include fire suppression, controlled burns, and wildlife resources. The Airport Commission has reviewed and approved the contract and recommends that the Commission approve the Land Use Agreement as well. In the event the agreement does not go as anticipated, the agreement can be terminated by either party.

Federal and State Grants: FY2018 was our most successful year in obtaining and executing grant-related projects. During FY2018 we received and spent \$7,874,379 in State and Federal Grants in 45 grant funded projects. There were 17 state grant items covering an assortment of departments for a total of \$2,017,866 state grants. Federal grant expenditures totaled \$5,856,513; including 26 federal grant projects. Some state and federal grants overlapped such as the GEMA and FEMA reimbursements for public safety and road maintenance expenditures during Hurricane Irma, and the Airport parallel taxiway grant has both state and federal components. For comparison, the grant expenditures for FY2017 we had \$1,384,560 in state grants, and \$3,361,878 in federal grants for a total grant expenditure in FY2017 of \$4,746,439.

Respectfully Submitted,

Phil Sutton, County Manager
Habersham County, GA