

HABERSHAM COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS' WORK SESSION
4:00 P.M., MONDAY, MAY 20, 2019
HABERSHAM COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING, CLARKESVILLE, GEORGIA

A work session of the Habersham County Board of Commissioners was held on Monday, May 20, 2019, at 4:00 p.m. in the Commission Conference Room of the Habersham County Administration Building in Clarkesville, Georgia.

Present: Chairman Stacy Hall; Commissioners Natalie Crawford, Dustin Meador, Jimmy Tench, and Ed Nichols; County Attorney Donnie Hunt; County Manager Phil Sutton; County Clerk Lindsay Underwood; Administrative Assistant/Deputy Clerk Melissa Shank Gragg; Individuals from the Media and Public.

Chairman Hall called the meeting to order at 4:01 p.m.

Chairman Hall led the Invocation.

Chairman Hall led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Hall made an announcement at the beginning of the work session clarifying that the work session is open to the public but is not a public hearing, and that discussion would be among the Commission and County officials. Although the public is certainly welcome, members of the public do not participate in the work session unless called upon.

TOPICS OF DISCUSSION:

a. FY2020 Budget Presentation/Discussion

County Manager Phil Sutton spoke about the FY2020 Budget stating that each Commissioner had submitted their budget recommendations. Finance Director Heidi Hook presented a spreadsheet that showed each of the recommendations of the Commissioners and County Manager. The goal of the work session was that the Commission reach a consensus. Discussion regarding position requests ensued. EMS Director Chad Black provided more information about position requests for his department. Mr. Sutton spoke about Drew Powell's position request for an additional investigator for the Public Defender's office, stating that Stephens and Rabun counties did not support the position, meaning the position's full cost and services would go to Habersham County. All agreed on the need for an additional investigator for the Public Defender's office but differed on whether the position should start on July 1 or January 1. Mrs. Hook suggested a compromise of budgeting the position for $\frac{3}{4}$ of the year, or eight months, and all agreed. It was suggested to wait until a future fiscal year on the request for a GIS Specialist, all agreed. There was discussion regarding the position request for an administrative assistant for the Senior Center. Mr. Sutton pointed out there is a substantial amount of paperwork that must be filled out for Senior Center grants, in addition to the opening of the new Wellness Center. All agreed they would revisit this position request in three months, after the opening of the new Senior Wellness Center, so they know more about the level of participation in programs and have a better understanding of what is needed.

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Chairman Hall pointed out he did not see the need for the classification/compensation study because they are already aware that positions are underpaid. He stated he sees the importance of the study, but if the County doesn't have the funds to follow through on the plan, it doesn't do any good. Mr. Sutton agreed with delaying the classification/compensation study until a future year.

Mr. Sutton explained the next steps in the budget process. Commissioner Jimmy Tench stated there were some items he may still want to discuss or consider. Chairman Hall pointed out it is not required to reach a consensus at that time, but it is preferred because of advertising requirements and public meetings that will take place in June. There was further consideration of the EMS position requests. All agreed to drop the hospital bond millage rate by .065 and increase the EMS millage rate by .226.

Once the Commission reached a consensus regarding the FY20 budget, there was a deficiency of \$179,152 in achieving that budget with the current millage rate. A 1.27% increase in the millage rate will be needed, which means an increase of \$7.62 per year for the average household of \$135,000. This will fund the grant match portion for six firefighters, two new deputies, a state contracted public defender investigator for $\frac{3}{4}$ of the year, a \$1 increase in pay for E911 dispatchers, among other items.

- b. Ratification of Placement of the Billy C. Massey Statue on Habersham County Airport Property and Discussion on Acrobatic Box Placement at the Habersham County Airport**

Commissioner Hall explained that this item was added to the previous meeting agenda and was tabled to allow the County Attorney to investigate whether the County followed proper procedure. County Attorney Donnie Hunt found that the County did follow proper procedure regarding placement of the Billy C. Massey statue at the Habersham County Airport and there were no further concerns or comments regarding the matter. The item will appear on the regular meeting agenda under Unfinished Business.

Mr. Sutton spoke about the FAA approved acrobatic box at the airport, stating the area the box covers is over the Industrial Park. Mr. Sutton pointed out that the FAA regulates air space and, therefore, has authority on this matter. Mr. Sutton also stated there was a similar situation in Rabun County where the County had appealed the FAA's decision and the FAA denied the appeal. There is someone on the agenda to speak at the regular meeting on this matter. Because the County has nothing to do with this matter, anyone with questions or concerns will be referred to speak with the FAA.

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c. Public Relations Advisory Board and Open Records/Meetings Training Discussion

County Clerk Lindsay Underwood spoke about a proposed Public Relations Advisory Board consisting of eight at large appointments, preferably with backgrounds in marketing or public information. Commissioner Ed Nichols asked why there would be eight people. Mrs. Underwood explained eight members was suggested considering some members may work full-time day jobs and may not always be able to attend, eight members would ensure there would be enough participation even when some had scheduling conflicts. Commissioner Crawford agreed that, in trying to schedule meetings, there had already been conflicts. All agreed that documentation establishing the Board would be revised to specify "up to eight members". Positions will be at large and will be advertised for 30 days. Chairman Hall stated there were two reasons for the Board, to assist and offer suggestions, and to be ambassadors to make sure the community receives clear facts and information.

Mrs. Underwood spoke about revisions to the Boards, Authorities, Commissions and Committees Policy adopted at the February 18, 2019 regular Commission meeting, which established consequences for those that did not meet training requirements. Mrs. Underwood stated there are several that still have not completed the required training. She gave possible options to address the matter and asked for Commission guidance. Chairman Hall stated he would prefer to notify those not in compliance, and their Board, that they will be removed from their position as of the Commission meeting following the County offered training that will be held in September if they are still not in compliance by that time. All agreed.

d. Second Amendment Sanctuary County Discussion

Chairman Hall spoke about a possible resolution establishing Habersham County as a Second Amendment Sanctuary County stating he was approached by Pete Davitto, who was in attendance, regarding this matter. Examples of three different resolutions were provided for Commission consideration. Chairman Hall stated he spoke with County Attorney Donnie Hunt and Sheriff Joey Terrell about this. Attorney Hunt stated the resolution can be done under Georgia law, but the examples provided were more symbolic and a resolution would need to clearly state what the County intends to do. He also pointed out that with the resolution the County would be agreeing to whatever the Sheriff's interpretation of gun laws may be. It was asked if any other counties in Georgia are doing this, none are. Commissioner Nichols asked why this is needed, Chairman Hall asked Mr. Davitto to speak on why we would be looking into this now in Georgia. Mr. Davitto stated his concern arose out of the Red Flag Bill that has recently passed in other states. Attorney Hunt asked if Mr. Davitto could provide the Bill number

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and asked for a copy of Mr. Davitto's research. Commissioner Crawford stated she would like copies as well. Mrs. Underwood will forward copies of the requested information to everyone. Chairman Hall stated his intent was to open dialogue on the matter and, although Georgia is more sympathetic to Second Amendment rights, there are concerns regarding the direction some other states are going.

COMMISSION DISCUSSION: None

Motion by Commissioner Nichols, seconded by Commissioner Mealor, and voted unanimously to adjourn.

ADJOURN: 5:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

By: _____
Chairman Stacy Hall

Attest: _____
County Clerk Lindsay Underwood

Posted by: County Clerk, Lindsay Underwood, on May 22, 2019