

**Houston County Commissioners Meeting**  
**June 20, 2023**  
**Warner Robins, Georgia**

The Houston County Board of Commissioners met in regular session at 5:00 pm on Tuesday June 20, 2023, at the Houston County Annex in Warner Robins, GA, with Chairman Perdue presiding and Commissioners Byrd, Gottwals, and Robinson present. Also present were County Attorney Tom Hall, Director of Administration Robbie Dunbar, Director of Operations Brian Jones, Community Planner Jake Cox, Director of Purchasing Mark Baker, Chief Financial Officer Danyelle George, Utility Director Terry Dietsch, Amanda Clark, Will Davis, and Mikki Quinones.

Commissioner Gottwals gave the Invocation.

Chaplain Jerry Bisping from the Houston Medical Center gave the Invocation, and then spoke about his position with Houston Medical Center. He started at the Medical Center in 2000 and said that the recent years going through the COVID experience in a medical setting was very difficult for everyone at the hospital. He read a passage of scripture out of the Old Testament, Habakuk 3:17-18 and gave an encouraging message related to these scriptures.

The Board thanked Mr. Bisping for his service to the community and those in time of need at the hospital and for his work and help during the COVID outbreak.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Mr. Gottwals to approve the minutes from the meeting of June 6, 2023. Upon voting, Mr. Byrd, Mr. Gottwals and Ms. Robinson voted yes. Motion approved.

Mr. Byrd presented a request for an additional day off on July 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2023 in conjunction with the observed July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday.

Chairman Perdue said that in the past this has taken place to allow County employees to have a longer time to be with their families.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Ms. Robinson to approve Monday, July 3, 2023 as a paid day off for Houston County employees. Shift workers scheduled to work those days will be given an additional day off, at a later date, with their department head's approval. Upon voting, Mr. Byrd, Ms. Robinson and Mr. Gottwals voted yes. Motion approved.

Mr. Byrd presented a request for approval of a bid on the sale of timber approved at the April 4, 2023 Board Meeting.

Mr. Byrd gave a range of the bids coming in for this work. He commented that the bidding process that the County uses has benefitted the citizens of Houston County.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Mr. Gottwals to approve a bid on the sale of timber at the landfill to Cedar Creek Timber Company of Wrightsville, Georgia, in the amount of \$156,459. The contract term is twelve months. Upon voting, Mr. Byrd, Mr. Gottwals and Ms. Robinson voted yes. Motion approved.

Mr. Byrd presented a request for approval of a bid on two Chevrolet Tahoe's for use in the fire department.

Chairman Perdue mentioned that with the long lead times on finding new vehicles, the Purchasing department had to go ahead and secure these vehicles while they were available.

Purchasing Director Mark Baker also spoke about the long lead times his department is experiencing in finding vehicles for the County, and that he was happy to find these for the County.

## Houston County Commissioners Meeting Continued from Page 239

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Ms. Robinson to approve the purchase of two Chevrolet Tahoe PPV's for use in the Fire Department from Brannen Motor Company of Unadilla at a total cost of \$94,800.00 for the two vehicles. One Tahoe at \$47,400.00, will be charged to 2018 SPLOST, and the second Tahoe at \$47,400.00, will be reimbursed by the Fire Reserve Fund. Upon voting, Mr. Byrd, Ms. Robinson, and Mr. Gottwals voted yes. Motion approved.

Mr. Byrd presented a request to hire Anthony Chestnut to fill the vacant Equipment Operator position at the Landfill.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Mr. Gottwals to approve hiring Anthony Chestnut to fill the vacant Equipment Operator position at a Grade 10 Step B effective June 21, 2023. Upon voting, Mr. Byrd, Mr. Gottwals and Ms. Robinson voted yes. Motion approved.

County Attorney Tom Hall conducted the first reading of a proposed amendment to the Houston County Code of Ordinances. The proposed amendment will add a new article to Chapter 62 – Traffic and Vehicles titled Article III – Truck Traffic and Truck Parking to the Code of Ordinances. This was a first reading only. No action was taken by the Board, nor was there a public hearing regarding the proposed amendment at this meeting.

A second reading and public hearing will be held at the July 5, 2023, 9:00 am Board of Commissioners meeting to be held in the Commissioners Boardroom, Houston County Courthouse, 201 N. Perry Parkway, Perry, Georgia at which time action may be taken by the Board.

Chairman Perdue advised that this amendment would limit the through traffic from trucks on Bear Branch Road, and that the Sheriff's Department was in favor of this change. He also stated that since some of this road was in the City of Perry, the City of Perry support had been needed as well.

Mr. Gottwals presented a Deed of Abandonment. The Houston County Board of Commissioners signed a Resolution of Right-Of-Way Abandonment on December 17, 2019 to abandon property on SR96 after the widening project. At that time Georgia Department of Transportation would not sign a deed to convey the property to Houston County. GDOT sent a letter giving Houston County all rights in and to old Highway 96 and the parcels acquired but not used for the road project. The title company for a new purchase of the property is requiring a deed from GDOT, which has been acquired by the closing attorney. The GDOT deed is to Houston County so the County must now deed the property once again to the new purchaser.

Motion by Mr. Gottwals, second by Mr. Byrd to approve the signing of a Deed of Abandonment of property described as:

All that tract or parcel of land, situate lying and being in Land Lot 75 of the Eleventh Land District of Houston County, Georgia, being known and designated as Parcel 'HC' containing 1.839 acres, on a land survey done by Lee R. Jones dated August 15, 2019, G.R.L.S. No. 2680 as shown by Exhibit "A", attached hereto and by reference made a part hereof.

This conveyance is subject to any easements for drainage or utilities presently existing within the above-described property. Upon voting, Mr. Gottwals, Mr. Byrd and Ms. Robinson voted yes. Motion approved.

Mr. Byrd presented a request for approval of a bid for the Water System Improvements to serve Sewell Road, Phase III project.

Houston County Commissioners Meeting Continued from Page 240

Chairman Perdue advised that the winning bid came in below the estimate.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Ms. Robinson to approve the award of the bid for the Water System Improvements to serve Sewell Road, Phase III to John R. Walker, Inc., of Macon in the amount of \$1,130,186.40. This will be an ARPA funded project. Upon voting, Mr. Byrd, Ms. Robinson and Mr. Gottwals voted yes. Motion approved.

Ms. Robinson presented a request to fill the vacant Utility Service Worker position in the Water Department.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Gottwals to approve the hiring of Carl Railey to fill the vacant Utility Service Worker position in the Water Department at a Grade 9 Step B effective June 21, 2023. Upon voting, Ms. Robinson, Mr. Gottwals and Mr. Byrd voted yes. Motion approved.

Ms. Robinson presented a request to update the Houston County Radar List.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Byrd to approve the signing of the updated Houston County Radar List. Upon voting, Ms. Robinson, Mr. Byrd, and Mr. Gottwals voted yes. Motion approved.

Ms. Robinson presented three contract renewals for Court Reporters in the Houston County Superior Court.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Gottwals to approve the signing of Independent Contractor Agreements with Joy Malone, Connie Montgomery, and Wendy Nelson to supply Court Reporting Services for the Houston County Superior Court. The term of these agreements will be July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024. Upon voting, Ms. Robinson, Mr. Gottwals and Mr. Byrd voted yes. Motion approved.

Ms. Robinson presented a contract renewal agreement with Christopher Gray to provide services as an Accountability Court Surveillance Officer for the Houston County Accountability Court.

Chairman Perdue said that he had the opportunity to attend an Accountability Court graduation and was moved by the stories he heard. He stated he was appreciative of the great work that Judge Lumsden and Katie Barrs did through this program to keep individuals out of prison, off drugs and in the workforce.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Byrd to approve the signing of the Independent Contractor Agreement with Christopher Gray to provide services as a Surveillance Officer for the Houston County Accountability Court. The term of this agreement is July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024. Upon voting, Ms. Robinson, Mr. Byrd and Mr. Gottwals voted yes. Motion approved.

Mr. Gottwals presented two Memorandums of Agreement for Therapeutic Individual and Group Counseling Services, Healthcare, Education, Clinical Evaluations and Recommendations with the Superior Court Accountability Court that are up for renewal.

Motion by Mr. Gottwals, second by Ms. Robinson to approve the signing of two Memorandums of Agreement for Therapeutic Individual and Group Counseling Services, Healthcare, Education, Clinical Evaluations and Recommendations with Infinite Health Wellness LLC., and Empowered Living Counseling and Life Coaching LLC., both of Warner Robins. The term of these agreements will be July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024. Upon voting, Mr. Gottwals, Ms. Robinson and Mr. Byrd voted yes. Motion approved.

## Houston County Commissioners Meeting Continued from Page 241

Mr. Gottwals presented four Independent Contractor Agreements renewals to provide legal representation in cases where the Houston County Public Defender's Office has a conflict of interest.

Motion by Mr. Gottwals, second by Mr. Byrd to approve the signing of Independent Contractor Agreements with David G. Daniell, Jeffrey L. Grube, Carl Veline, and Jonathan Perry Waters for a term of July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024. Upon voting, Mr. Gottwals, Mr. Byrd and Ms. Robinson voted yes. Motion approved.

Motion by Mr. Gottwals, second by Ms. Robinson to approve the payment of the bills totaling \$3,812,423.38. Upon voting, Mr. Gottwals, Ms. Robinson and Mr. Byrd voted yes. Motion approved.

Chairman Perdue presented the FY 24 Budget and gave highlights regarding priorities for the County, County employees and new positions. Chairman Perdue covered the General Fund which balanced at \$75,944,781 for Revenue, and \$75,944,781 for Expenses. The Enterprise Funds (Solid Waste and Water) which balanced at \$13,305,686 for Revenue and \$13,305,686 for Expenditures in Solid Waste Funds and at \$8,795,000 for Revenue and \$8,795,000 for Expenditures in Water Funds, the E911 Fund at \$5,707,632 for Revenues and \$5,707,632 for Expenditures, Fire Fund at \$4,893,683 for Revenues and \$4,893,683 for Expenditures along with the ARPA Grant Fund with \$13,523,484 for Expenditures.

Chairman Perdue then closed the regular portion of the meeting and opened a Public Hearing on the FY24 Budget.

As there were no comments, Chairman Perdue closed the public hearing on the FY24 budget and reopened the regular portion of the meeting.

Chairman Perdue closed the regular portion of the meeting and opened the floor for general public comments.

John Schwendler spoke about a problem he is having with litter coming from a nearby commercial business into his yard. He stated that talking to the business owner has not resolved the issue, and he was now seeking the Board of Commissioners' help in dealing with the problem.

Chairman Perdue thanked Mr. Schwendler for attending and said that County Code Enforcement officials would be contacted to help resolve the issue.

There being no further comments, Chairman Perdue closed the public comments portion of the meeting and opened commissioner's comments.

Commissioner Byrd advised that he would be absent from the June 29th special called Commissioners meeting where the FY24 budget would be adopted. He wanted the minutes to reflect that he fully supports and approves of the FY24 Budget as presented. He also thanked the many County employees and Chairman Perdue who had helped developed the FY24 budget. Mr. Byrd mentioned the absence of a property tax increase, the continued investment in public safety and the much-needed COLA and merit increases to help retain employees. He thanked the taxpayers of Houston County for the trust they put into the Board and expressed his appreciation to Mark Baker, who will soon be retiring, for his service to the County as the Purchasing Director.

Houston County Commissioners Meeting Continued from Page 242

Commissioner Robinson thanked everyone for attending, commenting on how well and efficiently the meeting had been run and expressed how glad she was to serve the citizens of Houston County on the Board.

Commissioner Gottwals wished everyone a continued good and safe summer and mentioned how quickly it seems our kids grow up and encouraged everyone to spend time with their children this summer and enjoy that time together.

Chairman Perdue talked about a recent trip he, his family and another family had taken out west visiting various national parks and thanked County staff for handling the day-to-day County operations so well and efficiently during his absence. He closed by commenting how glad he is to live, work and raise a family in Houston County and that he would not want to live anywhere else and that he was very glad to be back home.

Motion to adjourn by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Gottwals to adjourn the meeting. Upon voting, Ms. Robinson, Mr. Gottwals and Mr. Byrd voted yes. Meeting adjourned.

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Robbie Dunbar  
Director of Administration

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Chairman

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Commissioner  
Mr. Talton was not in attendance,  
he does not sign.

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Commissioner

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