

**Houston County Commissioners Meeting
June 6, 2023
Perry, Georgia**

The Houston County Board of Commissioners met in regular session at 9:00 am on Tuesday June 6, 2023, at the Houston County Courthouse in Perry, Georgia, with Chairman Perdue presiding and Commissioners Byrd, Gottwals, Robinson, and Talton present. Also present were County Attorney Tom Hall, Director of Administration Robbie Dunbar, Director of Operations Brian Jones, Community Planner Jake Cox, Chief Building Inspector Tim Andrews, Director of Purchasing Mark Baker, Vanessa Zimmerman, Will Davis, Chief Financial Officer Danyelle George, and State Court Clerk Teresa Hathaway.

Chairman Perdue gave the Invocation and led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Colonel Eric Simon, Director of Public Affairs for the Air Force Reserve Command, spoke about his military career and current position at Robins Air Force Base. Col. Simon grew up in southern California, enlisted in the Army as a helicopter mechanic and later secured an ROTC scholarship to the University of Arizona. Following his commission as a 2nd Lt., Col. Simon changed duties, attended flight school, became a Blackhawk helicopter pilot, and deployed to the Middle East where he flew missions in support of US forces. Following his time as a pilot, Col. Simon transitioned from active-duty Army to the Air Force Reserves where he worked in California as a Hollywood Liaison Officer assisting with movies involving the United States military. Col. Simon then transferred to the Defense Information school at Ft. Meade Maryland as an instructor. A position at Robins Air Force Base became available a few years later as the Director of Public Affairs for the Air Force Reserve which brought Col. Simon and his family to our community. Col. Simon was very appreciative of the way he and his family have been received in Houston County and continues to be amazed at the pro-military feeling he and others new to Robins Air Force Base feel out in the community. Col. Simon concluded by recognizing the day being June 6th and remembering those who participated in the D-Day landings.

The Commissioners thanked Col. Simon for his service to our nation, remembering the D-Day anniversary, and sharing with those in attendance his very interesting and diverse military career and experiences.

Motion by Mr. Talton, second by Mr. Byrd and carried unanimously by all to approve the minutes from the meeting of May 16, 2023.

Chief Building Inspector Tim Andrews presented Special Exceptions Applications #2686 through #2695.

Chairman Perdue closed the regular portion of the meeting and opened a Public Hearing.

County Attorney Tom Hall made a blanket statement for the benefit of all applicants for Special Exceptions for home occupations that even if the Board of Commissioners approves an application, neighborhood covenants may still impose certain restrictions upon or against home occupation businesses. These restrictive covenants are superior to any action taken by the Board of Commissioners. The actions taken by the Board will not change any provision within the covenant that prohibits any commercial or business activity.

Applicant #2686 was present, there was no opposition.
Applicant #2687 was not present, there was no opposition.
Applicant #2688 was present, there was no opposition.
Applicant #2689 was not present, there was no opposition.
Applicant #2690 was present, there was no opposition.
Applicant #2691 was present, there was no opposition.
Applicant #2692 was not present, there was no opposition.
Applicant #2693 was not present, there was no opposition.
Applicant #2694 was present, there was no opposition.
Applicant #2695 was present, there was no opposition.

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There being no comments Chairman Perdue closed the Public Hearing and reopened the regular portion of the meeting.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Talton and carried unanimously by all to approve the following applications to include any and all stipulations as noted on the Zoning & Appeals recommendation and Section 95 Requirements staff report:

Application #2686	Gary Wade	Pressure Washing Business
Application #2687	Tisha Little	Candy & Cookies Business
Application #2688	John & Patricia Wilson	Mobile DJ Business
Application #2690	Warren Neary	Artwork Business
Application #2691	Paul Schofill	Construction Business
Application #2693	Calvin & Jessa Smith	Baked Goods Sales Business
Application #2694	Catrina Fornes	Small-Breed Dog Grooming
Application #2695	Carol Burton	Hypnotherapy Business

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Byrd and carried unanimously by all to table the following applications and send them back to Zoning and Appeals for further consideration:

Application #2689	John Donnelly	Ice Cream Truck Business
Application #2692	Tiffany White	Mobile Aesthetics Services

Mr. Andrews advised all applicants on the next step in the process which would be obtaining their business licenses through the Commissioner's office.

Chief Building Inspector Tim Andrews presented Rezoning Application # 2679.

Chairman Perdue closed the regular portion of the meeting and opened a Public Hearing.

Chairman Perdue recognized property owner Donnie Gilbert who had no comments.

As there were no comments Chairman Perdue closed the Public Hearing and reopened the regular portion of the meeting.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Gottwals and carried unanimously by all to approve the rezoning application #2679 as recommended by the Houston County Planning Commission:

Application #2679, Donnie Gilbert for rezoning from R-AG to C-2 on property located at 2136 Hwy. 41 North.

No action was taken on Agenda Item #3, the July 5, 2023 meeting will be held at the scheduled time.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Talton and carried unanimously by all to approve a Special Called Meeting Thursday June 29, 2023, at 9:30 a.m. in the Commissioner's Board Room at the County Annex located at 200 Carl Vinson Parkway, Warner Robins, Georgia.

Ms. Robinson presented two agreements granting access to the Juvenile Justice Building after business hours for the purpose of counseling.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Byrd and carried unanimously by all to approve the signing of agreements with CASA and Piedmont Counseling Services for the use of the Juvenile Justice Building after normal business hours for the purpose of counseling.

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Mr. Byrd presented a request to renew four Independent Contractor Attorney Agreements.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Mr. Gottwals and carried unanimously by all to approve the signing of Independent Contractor Attorney Agreements Between Glenda Harper and Houston County, Caralyn J. Huddleston and Houston County, Kameyan Sims and Houston County, and Olivia Williams and Houston County for a term of July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024 to provide legal representation to indigents appearing in Juvenile Court.

Mr. Byrd presented a request to enter into a design contract for the E911 warming kitchen remodel.

Chairman Perdue advised that all exterior corrective work at the 911 center has been completed. Work is now being done to remediate water damage to the inside. As part of this construction, a request has been made for improvements to the kitchen be made and to include showers whenever emergencies require staff to remain at the 911 center for extended periods of time.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously by all to approve the signing of the agreement with S.O.A, Inc. of Perry, Georgia, in the amount of \$12,500 with a time of 3 weeks from the Notice to Proceed. Funds for this portion of the project will be paid from E911 Funds.

Mr. Byrd presented a request from the City of Warner Robins to add two commercial properties to the Water Use Agreement between the Houston County Board of Commissioners and the City of Warner Robins.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Mr. Gottwals and carried unanimously by all to approve the addition of the two following commercial properties to the Water Use Agreement between the Houston County Board of Commissioners and The City of Warner Robins with the stipulations that the developer posts a bond covering 125% of construction cost for work performed on the Houston Water System, adherence of the rate structure approved by the Houston County Board of Commissioners on November 19, 2019, and the issuance of a utility permit to the City of Warner Robins based on all conditions being met according to "Houston County Utility Accommodations."

1. Starbucks, at 758 Highway 96, Warner Robins
2. Mavis Tires & Brakes 711 Highway 96, Warner Robins

Mr. Byrd presented a Contingency Amendment by the Georgia Office of Planning and Budget increasing the maximum award amount of the ARPA Grant Fund.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously by all to approve the signing and acceptance of the Contingency Amendment by the Georgia Office of Planning and Budget increasing the maximum award amount from \$3,230,700 to \$3,553,770.00.

Mr. Byrd presented a request for the New Bonaire Elevated Tank project to be added to the Count's ARPA projects.

Mr. Talton asked what the size of the tank would be.

Director of Operations Brian Jones advised a 1-million-gallon tank, the biggest in Houston County.

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Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Mr. Talton and carried unanimously by all to approve the New Bonaire Elevated Tank project being added to the County's ARPA Major Projects list in the amount of \$7,000,000.

Mr. Gottwals presented a request from the State Court Clerk to add a Deputy Clerk position to the Houston County Position Control Listing.

Mr. Gottwals advised this was long overdue with the increased workload that the State Court has been faced with.

Motion by Mr. Gottwals, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously by all to approve the addition of a Deputy Clerk position to the Houston County Position Control Listing and authorize the Chief Financial Officer to make the necessary budget adjustments.

Mr. Gottwals presented a request from the Fire Department to enter into contract for the annual fundraiser to benefit the Houston County Fire Department.

Mr. Gottwals commented that County Attorney Tom Hall is comfortable with the contract after certain changes had been made.

Motion by Mr. Gottwals, second by Mr. Talton and carried unanimously by all to approve the signing of the contracts with Cody Hensleigh Photography of Anniston, Alabama and Fire Rescue Support Team of Macon, Georgia for the annual Fire Department Fundraiser.

Mr. Gottwals presented a request from the Purchasing Department for approval of bids on two Ford Expeditions.

Chairman Perdue expressed his appreciation to Purchasing Department staff for locating these vehicles for the County.

Motion by Mr. Gottwals, second by Mr. Byrd and carried unanimously by all to approve the bid for one 2022 4WD Ford Expedition for \$54,525, charged to Water Capital Account, and one 2023 2WD Ford Expedition for \$54,220 charged to Host Fees, from Phil Brannen Ford of Perry.

Mr. Gottwals presented a request to fill the vacant Equipment Operator position at the Landfill.

Motion by Mr. Gottwals, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously by all to approve the hiring of Ciara Wynn to fill the vacant Equipment Operator Position at the Landfill at a Grade 10 Step B effective June 7, 2023.

Motion by Mr. Gottwals, second by Mr. Talton and carried unanimously by all to approve the appointment of Johanna Goff to the Library Board for a term starting 07/01/2023 through 06/30/2027.

Motion by Mr. Talton, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously by all to approve the appointment of Titus Diamond to fulfill the unexpired term of Danny Carpenter on the Planning and Zoning Board. This term will begin 06/07/2023 and expire 09-06-2024.

Mr. Talton thanked Mr. Carpenter for his service on the Planning and Zoning Board. He also mentioned that incoming Board member Titus Diamond, former Chief Operating Officer with Flint Energies, will be a great asset to the Planning and Zoning Board with his knowledge of construction and building projects from his positions with Flint Energies.

Mr. Talton presented a request from the Georgia Department of Natural Resources to renew the Oaky Woods Wildlife Management Area lease.

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Chairman Perdue advised that County Attorney Tom Hall deleted any references to camping in the agreement with the GA Dept. of Natural Resources regarding Oaky Woods as there is no place or location designated for camping.

Motion by Mr. Talton, second by Mr. Byrd and carried unanimously by all to approve the signing of the renewal of the Oaky Woods Wildlife Management Area Lease Agreement for the 2023-2024 hunting season between The Georgia Department of Natural Resources and Houston County.

Mr. Talton presented a request to renew the Land Bank contract with the City of Perry.

Motion by Mr. Talton, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously by all to approve the signing of the Exercise of Option To Renew Intergovernmental Contract Between Houston County And City Of Perry Creating The Houston County Land Bank.

Mr. Talton presented a request from the City of Perry for Transportation Corridor Protection for the extension of Commodore Drive.

Chairman Perdue closed the regular portion of the meeting and opened a Public Hearing.

City of Perry Attorney, Brooke Newby, and City of Perry Engineer, Chad McMurrian, spoke about the need for the project and how it will help with traffic management and planning for Perry into the future.

County residents Jerry Davis, Andy Thompson, Brenda Evans and William Brewer, spoke in opposition to this road project. The reasons given were lowered property values, disturbing long-held family property and impacting farmland and pecan groves.

Chairman Perdue closed the Public Hearing and asked for comments from the Commissioners.

Mr. Byrd commented that it appeared a meeting was needed between City of Perry officials and affected property owners along the proposed Commodore Drive extension to better inform the property owners of the scope, reasoning and potential benefits to them of having this project move forward.

Chairman Perdue remarked that would be a good course of action to take and advised the City of Perry representatives that the County stands ready to help facilitate this meeting.

Motion by Mr. Talton, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously by all to table the Transportation Corridor Protection for the extension of Commodore Drive from GA Highway 127 to Saddlecreek Road.

Motion by Mr. Talton, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously by all to approve the payment of the bills totaling \$7,893,815.12.

Chairman Perdue opened the floor for Commissioner Comments.

Mr. Byrd commented on today being the anniversary of the D-Day invasion and remarked that Houston County, as the host County to Robins Air Force Base, takes very seriously the protection of the Base and support of those who work there. He also congratulated the Houston County Bears baseball team for winning the state championship game they recently competed in.

Mr. Talton thanked everyone for being here and was happy to see all of the new businesses being started in the County. He gave an update on his grandfather, Sheriff Talton, and advised that Sheriff Talton had been to his office and was getting out and about and getting better. He also thanked Chairman Perdue for all of the work he had done on the FY24 budget.

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Ms. Robinson mentioned the D-Day invasion and asked that everyone remember our military personnel in harm's way. She was glad to be a part of the County business that got handled today and for the new businesses that were approved.

Mr. Gottwals spoke of the need to remember D-Day and of those who participated in the landings. He was proud of Houston County's focus on being a pro-military community and hoped that the upcoming generations would take up this same focus.

Chairman Perdue gave a summary of the upcoming FY24 County budget and advised that the priorities will be 1) continued fiscal conservatism 2) Incorporating the merit system steps 3) a 3% COLA in October if the budget passes and 4) new positions where needed. Chairman Perdue advised that the revenues and expenses for the general fund balanced at \$75,944,781. He also gave revenue and expenditures of the E911 Fund, the ARPA Grant Fund, the Fire Fund, the Water Fund and the Solid Waste Fund. Chairman Perdue concluded his remarks by thanking Director of Administration Robbie Dunbar, Finance Director Danyelle George and Assistant Finance Director Will Davis for their help in putting together the FY 24 budget which will be presented in full at the June 20th budget public hearing. He also thanked Sheriff Talton and the staff of the Sheriff's Department for being flexible and making this budget happen.

Mr. Byrd thanked the County staff members and Chairman Perdue for their work on the budget and the taxpayers of Houston County.

Mr. Gottwals mentioned that the department heads did a great job in holding the line on their budgets and only making reasonable requests for their departments which helped tremendously.

Motion to adjourn by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Byrd and carried unanimously by all, meeting adjourned.

Robbie Dunbar
Director of Administration

Chairman

Commissioner

Commissioner

Commissioner

Commissioner