

## Houston County Commissioners Meeting

May 2, 2023

Perry, Georgia

The Houston County Board of Commissioners met in regular session at 9:00 am. on Tuesday May 2, 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, Director of Personnel Ken Carter, Community Planner Jake Cox, Chief Building Inspector Tim Andrews, Fire/HEMA Chief Christopher Stoner, Utility Director Terry Dietsch, Houston County Public Library Director J. Sara Paulk, Director of Purchasing Mark Baker, Senior Purchasing Clerk Vanessa Zimmerman, Facilities Superintendent Michael Phillips, and Grounds Maintenance Supervisor George Felder.

Commissioner Robinson led the Invocation.

Commissioner Byrd led the Pledge of Allegiance.

SSgt. Caffey, 5<sup>th</sup> Combat Communications Group, spoke about her background and military career. She was born in Memphis TN and at an early age knew she wanted to join the US Air Force. She joined at age 20 and trained as a vehicle mechanic. Her first duty location was Okinawa which was followed by orders to South Korea. SSgt. Caffey was then given orders to report to Robins Air Force Base (RAFB) in June of 2021 as part of the 5th Combat Communications Support Squadron at RAFB. She enjoys Robins and her work as a member of the 5<sup>th</sup> MOB. SSgt. Caffey grew up in the Atlanta area so coming to RAFB made her feel like she was coming home.

Each of the Commissioners thanked SSgt. Caffey for her service and what she does to support those on the front lines through her maintenance expertise. They also commended her enthusiasm for her career, being in the military and for her kind words about Robins Air Force Base and Houston County.

Mr. George Felder, a grounds maintenance supervisor in the Public Works Department, was recognized by Chairman Perdue and the Board of Commissioners for the great job he does in keeping the landscaping around County buildings and roads. They also commented on the way he keeps the flower beds looking. Chairman Perdue read a plaque that was given to Mr. Felder in recognition of the great work he does. Commissioners Byrd, Gottwals, Robinson, and Talton. Facilities Superintendent Michael Phillips thanked him for his work and attention to detail and expressed their appreciation for his efforts in making Houston County look great for citizens and visitors to our County.

Motion by Mr. Talton, second by Mr. Byrd and carried unanimously by all to approve the minutes from the meeting of April 18, 2023.

Chief Building Inspector Tim Andrews presented Special Exception Applications #2680 through #2685.

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

Special Exception #2680, applicant was present, there were no comments.

Special Exception #2681, applicant was present, there were no comments.

Special Exception #2682, applicant was present. Chairman Perdue reiterated to Mr. Lewis that any plants sold in his business would have to be grown on site.

Special Exception #2683, applicant was not present, there were no comments.

Special Exception #2684, applicant was present, there were no comments.

Special Exception #2685, applicant was present, there were no comments.

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

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 covenants could be more restrictive than any action or approval 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.

Motion by Mr. Talton, second by Ms. Robinson 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:

#2680	Kenneth & Constance Meredith	Real Estate Home Inspection Business
#2681	Colleen Kemper	Inflatable Rentals Business
#2682	James Lewis	Plant Nursery & Sales Business
#2683	Derrick Bundren	Landscaping Business
#2684	Randall Allen	Building & Home Materials Delivery
#2685	Allison Penland	Mobile Pet Grooming Business

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

Motion by Mr. Gottwals second by Mr. Talton and carried unanimously by all to approve the reappointment of the following to the Library Board with a term of 07/01/2023 thru 06/30/2027:

Ms. Pam Yates

Ms. Wilhemenia Jackson-Sibley

Ms. Emily Silva

Chairman Perdue recognized those in attendance who were being reappointed to the Library Board.

Mr. Byrd voiced his appreciation for their service to the community through their service on the Library Board.

Commissioner Byrd presented a request from the City of Warner Robins for annexation of property located at 954 Hwy 96.

Chairman Perdue opened the floor for any public comments on the annexation request. There were no comments made.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Mr. Gottwals and carried unanimously by all to concur with the City of Warner Robins annexation request for property located 954 Hwy 96 containing 5 acres and also known as Tax Parcels #000780 041000 and #000780 040000 with the stipulations that any County utilities remain with the County. The property is currently zoned County R-AG and proposed zoning is City C-2.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Byrd and carried unanimously by all to approve the payment of the bills totaling \$4,689,490.96.

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

J. Sarah Paulk, Houston County Library Director, spoke about the summer reading program and associated activities planned this summer at the libraries in Houston County for students aged 0-17. Ms. Paulk brought the board up to date on the fact that the libraries are almost back to pre-covid numbers in terms of patrons served and using the libraries in Houston County.

Chairman Perdue thanked Ms. Paulk for encouraging kids to read over the summer.

Pam Yates, Houston County Library Board member, gave an update on the Friends of the Library Old Book Sale held recently which brought in an all-time high of \$65,000 in support for the library system. She thanked all of those who participated and volunteered in making this event and fundraiser for the library system such a success.

Mark Baker, Purchasing Director for Houston County, recognized Vanessa Zimmerman for her future appointment to the position of Purchasing Director pending Mr. Baker's retirement. Ms. Zimmerman, who is currently the Senior Purchasing Agent, has worked in the Purchasing Department for five years, and out of 30 applications for the position was chosen to be Mr. Baker's replacement.

Ms. Zimmerman thanked Chairman Perdue, the Board of Commissioners and those who interviewed her for this position and expressed how grateful she was to be given this opportunity.

Each Commissioner gave congratulatory comments and thanked Ms. Zimmerman and Mr. Baker for the work they do in the Purchasing Department to save County taxpayer money and advised Ms. Zimmerman she had big shoes to fill in her upcoming new position.

Chief Stoner advised that the GA EPD's burn ban went into effect May 1st and will remain in effect until September 30th for all outdoor burning except for agricultural or recreational purposes. Chief Stoner also spoke about the recently held Central Georgia Fire Fighter competition with participation from many area Fire Departments. Over 30 Fire Fighters from Houston County participated in the 911 Stair Climb to commemorate the fire fighters on 9/11 climbing 110 flights of stairs to rescue those trapped in the Twin Towers in New York. Houston County won the trophy for having the greatest number of fire fighters from a single department participating in the 911 Stair Climb. He also expressed his appreciation to all the community sponsors and businesses who helped make this event possible.

There being no further comments Chairman Perdue close the Public Comments portion of the meeting and opened Commissioner Comments.

Ms. Robinson thanked everyone for coming and commented that the meeting was short but very productive and thanked SSgt. Caffey for attending, speaking and staying for the entire Commissioners meeting.

Mr. Byrd commented about the recent Ed Dyson news article, *He Has Done So Much for So Many*, where he was recognized for his service in the community, as a long serving principal of Northside High School, and mentioned that April 29th is now recognized in Houston County as Ed Dyson Appreciation Day.

Mr. Talton expressed his thanks for all the new businesses that were approved at the meeting and for the County employees who serve the public with great skill, work ethic and attention to detail.

Mr. Gottwals spoke about the latest book he completed, *Everything Sad is Untrue* by Daniel Nayeri, and the need to view the world through other's eyes as was the theme of the book he mentioned. He also thanked everyone for attending and was thankful to live and work in Houston County.

Chairman Perdue gave an update on the FY22 audit and advised that the auditors came back with a clear report with no findings and no issues. The County is debt free, has increased reserves by \$5 million, and has total fund separation with money from Enterprise Funds not being funneled into the General Fund. He also gave a breakdown on the budget in regard to revenue and major expenses for the County and said that Houston County was on very firm footing with reserve funds available to cover 341 days of County operations should there be any disruption in revenue coming in. Chairman Perdue closed by saying that the very secure financial position that Houston County is in is a direct result of the great leadership and decisions made by previous Chairmen, Commissioners and Houston County staff.

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

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Robbie Dunbar  
Director of Administration

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Chairman

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Commissioner

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