

**Houston County Commissioners Meeting**  
**April 5, 2022**  
**Perry, Georgia**

The Houston County Board of Commissioners met in regular session at 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday April 5, 2022, at the Houston County Courthouse in Perry, Georgia, with Chairman Stalnaker presiding and Commissioners Byrd, Robinson, and Walker present. Also present were County Attorney Tom Hall, Director of Administration Barry Holland, Director of Personnel Ken Carter, Director of Operations Robbie Dunbar, Director of Purchasing Mark Baker, Chief Building Inspector Tim Andrews, Fire/HEMA Chief Chris Stoner, Landfill Superintendent Terry Dietsch, Community Planner Jake Cox, County Engineer Ronnie Heald, District Attorney Will Kendall, Dan Perdue, Steve Williams, Jacqueline Rozier, Shane Gottwals, Walton and Becky Wood, Sheriff Cullen Talton, Chief Deputy Rape, Major Tommy Jackson, Major Dave Carrick, Capt. Ricky Harlowe, Capt. Randy Banks, Capt. Jon Holland, Capt. Mikki Quinones, Capt. Michelle Westbrook, Lt. Leo Frazier, Lt. Brian Blanton, Lt. Veronica Edens, Lt. Michael Zimmerman, Lt. Wayne Franklin, Lt. Ron Brainard, Lt. Bo Spivey, Brandi Clifton.

Commissioner Walker led the audience in the Invocation.

MSgt. Nicholas Andrus, USAF led the audience in the pledge of allegiance and detailed his 15-year military career. Originally from Pennsylvania, he went to basic training in May of 2007 beginning his military career. His first duty assignment was at Moody AFB, GA where he worked on combat search and rescue C-130s. He is an avionics mechanic by trade working on heavy cargo aircraft such as the C-130, C-5, and C-17. He met his wife Megan while stationed at Moody AFB and from there they went to Ramstein, Germany; McGuire AFB, NJ; and finally, to Robins AFB one year ago. He currently serves as a Quality Assurance Specialist with the 409th Supply Chain Management Squadron, 638th Supply Chain Management Group at Robins. He and his wife have three sons ages 5, 8, and 10 years old.

Chairman Stalnaker recognized Community Planner Jake Cox who serves as Houston County's United Way coordinator and has done so for many years. Mr. Cox has worked tirelessly to enhance and improve the County's United Way campaign. A high percentage of County employees are very giving through the campaign. Chairman Stalnaker thanked Jake for his leadership on this year's campaign as well as the many that have come before. Mr. Cox then introduced George McCanless, Lisa Berrian, and Clero Wright with United Way who presented the Chairman and Board with a ceremonial check representing the total of donations given by Houston County employees. Mr. McCanless also presented the Chairman with a few United Way gifts in honor of his pending retirement.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Mr. Walker and carried unanimously by all to approve the minutes from the March 15, 2022 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 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.

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Chief Building Inspector Tim Andrews presented Special Exception Applications #2592 thru #2605.

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

Special Exception #2592 Applicant was present there was no opposition.

Special Exception #2593 Applicant was not present there was no opposition. Recommended for tabling.

Special Exception #2594 Applicant was not present there was no opposition. Recommended for tabling.

Special Exception #2595 Applicant was present there was no opposition.

Special Exception #2596 Applicant was present there was no opposition.

Special Exception #2597 Applicant was present there was no opposition.

Special Exception #2598 Applicant was not present there was no opposition. Recommended for denial.

Special Exception #2599 Applicant was present there was no opposition.

Special Exception #2600 Applicant was present there was no opposition.

Special Exception #2601 Applicant was present there was no opposition.

Special Exception #2602 Applicant was present there was no opposition.

Special Exception #2603 Applicant was present there was no opposition.

Special Exception #2604 Applicant was present there was no opposition.

Special Exception #2605 Applicant was present there was no opposition.

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

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Byrd and carried unanimously by all to approve the applications listed below as recommended for approval to include any and all stipulations as noted on Zoning & Appeals recommendations and Section 95 Requirements staff report; and to table Applications #2593 and #2594 and send back to Zoning & Appeals for reconsideration; and, to deny Application #2598.

Special Exception #2592	Nicholas Maddox	Transport
Special Exception #2595	Megan Johnson	T-Shirts & Crafts
Special Exception #2596	Matt & Charity Rich	IT Support
Special Exception #2597	Derek & Alexa Wilson	Clothing & Accessories (Internet)
Special Exception #2599	Bruce Adriance	Woodworking
Special Exception #2600	Tyler & Monica Adsit	Hot Sauce & Spices
Special Exception #2601	Gary & Maria Somers	Photography & 3D Printing
Special Exception #2602	Steven Upshaw	Lawn Care
Special Exception #2603	Tiffany Beasley	Hair Salon
Special Exception #2604	Eric Jackson, Sr.	Contractor Specialist
Special Exception #2605	Eddie & Donna Nieves	Logistics & Transport

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

Ms. Robinson presented a request for abandonment of Easement for properties located at 107 & 109 Fifth Fairway, Warner Robins, Georgia.

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Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Walker and carried unanimously by all to approve the Resolution Abandoning County Interest in Access Easement approving the applications submitted by Stephanie A. Bleshoy and Carl R. Jones for the abandonment of any and all interest Houston County may have in an undeveloped 30' Access Easement that is situated between their respective properties located at 107 and 109 Fifth Fairway, Warner Robins, GA 31088. The approval and signing of said Resolution will further authorize Chairman Stalnaker to sign quit claim deeds conveying any and all interest Houston County may have in one half of the Access Easement to each property owner. The easement rights to be conveyed are as follows:

To Sephanie A. Bleshoy:

All that tract or parcel of land, situate lying and being in Land Lot 82 of the Eleventh Land District of Houston County, Georgia, being known and designated as "30' ACCESS ESMT" between lots 7 and 9, according to a plat of survey being of record in Plat Book 61, Page 116, in the Clerk's Office, Houston Superior Court. Said plat and the recorded copy thereof are incorporated herein by reference for all purposes. The portion of the property more particularly described as any and all interest that Houston County may have in the 15' westerly half of the 30' Access Easement adjacent to the easterly lot line of lot 7.

This conveyance is subject to any easements for utilities owned by others and rights of other parties presently existing within the above described property.

To Carl R. Jones:

All that tract or parcel of land, situate lying and being in Land Lot 82 of the Eleventh Land District of Houston County, Georgia, being known and designated as "30' ACCESS ESMT" between lots 7 and 9, according to a plat of survey being of record in Plat Book 61, Page 116, in the Clerk's Office, Houston Superior Court. Said plat and the recorded copy thereof are incorporated herein by reference for all purposes. The portion of the property more particularly described as any and all interest that Houston County may have in the 15' easterly half of the 30' Access Easement adjacent to the westerly lot line of lot 9.

This conveyance is subject to any easements for utilities owned by others and rights of other parties presently existing within the above described property.

Ms. Robinson presented a request to enter into a contract for services for lawn maintenance at the Houston County Judicial Complex.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Byrd and carried unanimously by all to approve the acceptance of a contract for services from Dixie Lawn & Landscaping, Inc. of Cochran, GA to maintain the grounds at the Houston County Judicial Complex at a rate of \$2,750 per month or \$33,000 annually. The rate will be adjusted once the construction of the new State Court addition is completed to \$3,050 per month or \$36,600 annually.

Ms. Robinson presented a request to release a maintenance bond and acceptance of roadways for maintenance purposes and to renew a cul-de-sac bond on Oakley Court of Stratford Hills Subdivision, Phase 2.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Walker and carried unanimously by all to approve the release of the maintenance bond (SunTrust Letter of Credit #70003936 expiring April 10, 2022) for Stratford Hills Subdivision, Phase 2 and to accept Oakley Court for 0.16 mile at 25 mph and Thurston Street for 0.06 mile at 25 mph for maintenance purposes; and to renew the cul-de-sac bond (SunTrust Letter of Credit #70003935 expiring April 10, 2022) at Oakley Court of Stratford Hills Subdivision, Phase 2 for one year.

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Ms. Robinson presented a request for approval of a bid on one new mini excavator for use in the Roads Department.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Byrd and carried unanimously by all to approve the award of one new Kubota KX080-4S2SW3 Mini Excavator for use in the Roads Department from Mason Tractor & Equipment Co. in the amount of \$108,940.45. SPLOST 2012 will fund this equipment purchase.

Ms. Robinson presented a request for approval of a Juvenile Court Contract Attorney Agreement.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Walker and carried unanimously by all to approve Chairman Stalnaker signing an Independent Contractor Agreement with Corlice Atkins at \$45,000 per year to provide for the defense of indigent persons appearing in the Houston County Juvenile Court. The agreement is effective April 5, 2022 and remains in effect until June 30, 2022. This agreement may be renewed from year to year subject to an annual review of performance conducted by the County in conjunction with the Juvenile Court.

Chairman Stalnaker expressed his appreciation of Judge Wilburn and her efforts at the Juvenile Court. Each of the Board members concurred with his remarks.

Ms. Robinson presented a request from the Accountability Court to engage the services of Lee Chambers of Community Psychotherapy and Addiction Counseling, LLC.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Byrd and carried unanimously by all to approve Chairman Stalnaker signing a contract for services with Lee Chambers of Community Psychotherapy and Addiction Counseling, LLC for the provision of therapeutic individual and family counseling services in the Accountability Court effective immediately and expiring June 30, 2022. The Accountability Court grant will fund these services.

Mr. Byrd presented a request from the City of Warner Robins for annexation of property located at the intersection of N. Davis Drive Extension and Hwy 247.

Chairman Stalnaker opened the floor for public comments. There were no comments.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously by all to concur with a City of Warner Robins annexation request for properties located at the northwest corner of Hwy. 247 and N. Davis Drive Extension (Tax Parcel 00095F 063000 for 2.77 acres and Tax Parcel 00118B 108000 for 0.35 acre) together totaling 3.12 acres.

Chairman Stalnaker remarked that last night the General Assembly passed the annexation reform bill which he felt would greatly enhance the annexation process throughout the State of Georgia. He commented that he and the other commissioners as well as former commissioner Perdue were involved, and he thanked the delegation for their support on this bill. This was the first reform of the annexation process that had both the support of the Georgia Municipal Association and the Association of County Commissioners. He also thanked Mayor Walker for working on the issues on the city side and helping to obtain support for the bill.

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Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Mr. Walker and carried unanimously by all to approve the appointment of Mr. Bill Phelps to the Houston County Board of Tax Assessors filling the unexpired term of Mr. David Grossnickle effective immediately and expiring on 12/31/23.

Mr. Byrd presented a request from the Central Georgia Soccer Association to amend the existing ground lease for property on Snellgrove Drive.

Mr. Byrd stated that Houston County staff has identified several details needing additional clarification before action can be taken on this lease amendment and therefore is offering a motion to table the item until further review.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously by all to table the First Amendment to Ground Lease between the Board of Commissioners and the Central Georgia Soccer Association (CGSA).

Chairman Stalnaker remarked that the Board has no problem with the existing ground lease but there are, as Mr. Byrd stated, certain aspects of the amendment that we have some things to discuss internally before approval.

Mr. Byrd presented a request from Public Works to enter into an agreement to clear cut 43.6 acres at the Landfill to make room for future expansion of the next cell.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously by all to approve entering into an agreement with American Forest Management (AFM) for the timber harvest and sale on 43.6 acres and the thinning and sale of an additional 31 acres at the Houston County Landfill.

Chairman Stalnaker recognized Landfill Superintendent Terry Dietsch who commented that the sale of timber should be completed within six months.

Mr. Byrd presented a request from the Water Department staff to enter into a professional services agreement to provide test well installation and evaluation for the Houston Lake Water Treatment Plant Remote Well.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Mr. Walker and carried unanimously by all to approve entering into a professional services agreement with Carter & Sloope Consulting Engineers of Canton, GA in the amount of \$113,880 for the provision of a test well installation and evaluation on the Houston Lake Water Treatment Plant Remote Well project. This project will be funded with Water Department Capital Funds.

Chairman Stalnaker thanked the City of Centerville for allowing the County to utilize a piece of their property at the training grounds for this purpose.

Mr. Byrd presented a request to enter into three separate professional services agreements with American Tank Maintenance.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously by all to approve entering into professional services agreements with American Tank Maintenance of Warthen, GA for the Woodard Road Water Plant Aerator Removal project for \$7,150 (Water Dept. Repairs & Maintenance funded); the Elko Water Treatment Plant Elevated Storage Tank Decommissioning and Demolition project for \$23,850 (2012 SPLOST funded); and the Piney Grove Water Plant Concrete Tank Crack Sealing and Re-Painting project for \$56,550 (Water Dept Repairs & Maintenance funded).

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Mr. Byrd presented a request for approval of a bid on the Elberta Road Phase 1 Improvements project.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Mr. Walker and carried unanimously by all to approve the award of the Elberta Road Phase 1 Improvements project to C.W. Matthews Contracting Company of Marietta, GA in the amount of \$8,903,500. Of this total, the City of Centerville and the City of Warner Robins will pay a total of \$1,191,320 directly to C.W. Matthews Contracting Company for the relocation of their city utilities. Houston County is responsible for the balance of \$7,712,180. This project is funded by 2012 SPLOST.

Chairman Stalnaker commented that the City of Warner Robins is most excited about this SPLOST project which Phase 1 will begin at Carl Vinson Parkway and extend to N. Houston Road. Phase 2 of the project in the future will take it from N. Houston Road to Northside Drive. Securing the right of way acquisition for this project has been difficult and time-consuming.

Motion by Mr. Walker, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously by all to approve assigning FY21 Fund Balance as follows:

Pension Contributions	\$ 250,000
Employee Health Insurance Benefits	\$ 750,000
Economic Development	\$1,000,000
Personnel & Pay Chart Adjustments	<u>\$2,900,000</u>
	\$4,900,000

Mr. Walker presented two amendments on the ACCG Defined Benefit Plan and the AETNA Plan for Houston County employees.

Motion by Mr. Walker, second by Mr. Byrd and carried unanimously by all to approve Chairman Stalnaker signing the resolution to amend the ACCG Defined Benefit Plan for Houston County employees as well as Plan Amendment #5 to provide a one-time COLA of 5% for employees who retired from the County with a benefit under the Plan prior to January 1, 2009; and, to authorize payment for the one-time 5% COLA for employees under the Aetna contract GA-3635 in the amount of \$5,330.64.

Mr. Walker presented a request to fill the vacant equipment operator position at the Landfill.

Motion by Mr. Walker, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously by all to approve hiring Andrew Fountain to fill the vacant Equipment Operator position at the Landfill at a Grade 10-D effective April 25, 2022.

Mr. Walker presented a request to upgrade the Laserfiche software and server in the District Attorney's office.

Motion by Mr. Walker, second by Mr. Byrd and carried unanimously by all to approve the award of the Laserfiche software and server upgrade for use in the District Attorney's office to MCCi of Tallahassee, FL in the total amount of \$107,180.40. The total amount will be reimbursed from DA Forfeiture Funds.

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Chairman Stalnaker thanked Acting District Attorney Kendall for his leadership at the DA's office. On behalf of the Board, he congratulated Mr. Kendall, Sheriff Talton and other cooperating agencies for the swift action that was taken to bring those responsible for a recent terrible crime to justice. He also offered his condolences for the loss of DA Investigator Crooms. Each of the Commissioners likewise offered their condolences to the family, friends, and co-workers of Mr. Crooms.

Mr. Walker presented a request from the Engineering Department to extend the performance bond on Section 7 of Southfield Plantation for thirty days.

Motion by Mr. Walker, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously by all to approve extending the performance bond (One South Bank Letter of Credit #410778, expiring April 6, 2022) for thirty days with Thompson Mill Development Company II, LLC on Southfield Plantation, Section 7.

Motion by Mr. Walker, second by Mr. Byrd and carried unanimously by all to approve the payment of the bills totaling \$5,537,352.57.

Chairman Stalnaker presented a recommendation for pay compression relief, recruitment enhancement, and employee retention.

Chairman Stalnaker reminded everyone that at their April 6, 2021 meeting the Board took the initial step toward relieving salary compression. Last year it was stated that when the opportunity presented itself and there were sustainable revenues the County would make further adjustments to relieve compression among the employees that has occurred over the last twelve years. The salary compression has been due to the freeze on employee merit raises since July 1, 2009. After receiving the FY21 audit recently, it did present the opportunity to further relieve salary compression, improve employee recruitment, and retention. The previous action to make fund balance assignments helps to cover these expenses. These funds have been created through the action of various department heads and employees maintaining tight control over their respective budgets. There are still many employee needs to be addressed in the future including continuing compression relief, merits, reclassifications, and new positions. He thanked Mr. Walker, Ms. Robinson, Mr. Byrd, and former commissioner Perdue for their support in improving the pay scale of the County employees. He also thanked all employees, department heads, and elected officials for their contributions toward this goal. Lastly, he thanked Barry Holland, Ken Carter, and Sandi Stalnaker for their many hours of work in this process.

Mr. Walker likewise thanked Barry Holland, Ken Carter, and Sandi Stalnaker for their hard work.

Motion by Mr. Walker, second By Ms. Robinson, and carried unanimously by all to approve the implementation of personnel changes in order to relieve pay compression and to enhance recruitment and employee retention effective the pay period beginning May 2, 2022 including a 7% pay chart adjustment for all full-time employees, full-time employees of all constitutional officers who are eligible for adjustments, full-time county elected and appointed officials, and salary adjustments on supplements for all full-time employees receiving county supplements.

Employees employed full-time before 07/01/2020 with uninterrupted service who are eligible for step adjustments will receive a one step compression adjustment except any employee already at the M-Step and those mandated by the State to receive a pay adjustment effective January 1, 2023 also including the Juvenile Court Judge, State

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Court Judge, and Solicitor General. Regarding all compression adjustments, the department head or elected official must give approval based on the employee's performance. These are one-time pay chart and compression adjustments, and the merit system will continue to be frozen until sustainable financial resources are available.

Chairman Stalnaker commented that Mr. Walker has been the Commissioner assigned to personnel related matters for many years and that he has always been an advocate for the employees. He thanked him for always supporting these types of personnel actions.

Ms. Robinson remarked that it is a great thing to be able to do this for the employees and that she was glad it was possible.

Mr. Byrd remarked that he was extremely thankful to take this action today and agreed that the ability to do this comes from the efficient operation of government which is directly attributable to the employees themselves.

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

Director of Operations Robbie Dunbar thanked the Chairman, the commissioners, and Mr. Perdue for the pay adjustments and Chairman Stalnaker for his leadership and for fulfilling a promise that was made to make pay adjustments when the revenues were sustainable. He also thanked the Board for maintaining the employee's health insurance and pension benefits.

Sheriff Talton commented that the pay adjustment action was a morale booster. He thanked each Board member remarking that the Commissioners have been very good to the County employees through the years.

Chairman Stalnaker recognized former commissioner Dan Perdue commenting that he had discussed this potential action with him prior to him leaving the Board. Mr. Perdue supports this action as well.

There being no further comments Chairman Stalnaker closed Public Comments and reopened the regular portion of the meeting.

Chairman Stalnaker closed the regular portion of the meeting and opened Commissioners Comments.

Mr. Byrd expressed his appreciation for all County employees for the hard work they do and their dedicated service to the citizens of Houston County. He also referenced several items on today's agenda that highlighted the cooperation that exists between each of our local governments.

Ms. Robinson thanked everyone for coming and participating and remarked that the pay adjustments for employees were well deserved.

Mr. Walker thanked the Chairman for his leadership and stated that Houston County has the best employees anywhere.



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Chairman Stalnaker recognized three candidates for the Houston County Commission Shane Gottwals, Steve Williams, and Jacqueline Rozier. He reminded everyone of the next regularly scheduled Board meeting at 5:00 p.m. on April 19th at the Warner Robins Annex building.

Motion to adjourn by Mr. Walker, second by Mr. Byrd and carried unanimously by all. Meeting adjourned.

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Barry Holland  
Director of Administration

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Chairman

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Commissioner

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