

Houston County Commissioners Meeting
January 16, 2024
Warner Robins, Georgia

The Houston County Board of Commissioners met in a regular session at 5:00 pm on Tuesday, January 16, 2024, at the Houston County Annex in Warner Robins, GA, with Chairman Perdue presiding and Commissioners Byrd, Gottwals, Robinson, and Talton present. County Attorney Tom Hall and Director of Administration Robbie Dunbar were also present.

Ms. Robinson led those in attendance in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Gary Morton, Executive Pastor of Second Baptist Church in Warner Robins, gave the Invocation. He spoke of his appreciation of the Chairman and Board for their work and sacrifice on behalf of the citizens of Houston County.

Chairman Perdue, Mr. Talton, and Director of Administration Robbie Dunbar all spoke of the impact Pastor Morton had on their lives and the lives of their families. They thanked him for his leadership, wisdom, and example that he set.

Chairman Perdue mentioned the upcoming retirement of Pastor Morton and thanked him for his leadership and the direction he gave Second Baptist Church during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Brandi McGonagill, Houston County Extension Coordinator, and her staff: Morgan Grizzle, Sam Price, and La Keshia Levi, gave a presentation. They gave an update on the work and services of the County Agent's Office. Each presented information and updates regarding the programs provided by the Extension Office. Concluding their presentation, Ms. McGonagill explained that all the services were free, unless there was a charge connected to being part of a team, or to purchase supplies.

Each of the Commissioners expressed their appreciation for their dedication and work. They commented on the wide range of services offered, at no cost, and their focus on teaching the youth of Houston County the importance of agriculture.

Motion by Mr. Talton, second by Ms. Robinson, and carried unanimously by all to approve the minutes from the January 2, 2024 meeting.

Mr. Talton presented a request for approval of a bid for the purchase of a used trash compactor for use at the Landfill.

Motion by Mr. Talton, second by Mr. Byrd, and carried unanimously by all to approve the purchase of a used 2014 826H Caterpillar trash compactor from Yancey Brothers Company for \$472,000. The compactor will be purchased with the proceeds from the ACCG insurance claim for the loss due to the accidental fire.

Chairman Perdue commented that there had been another equipment fire at the Landfill the previous day. He then mentioned the need for better firefighting capabilities and equipment at the landfill to take care of incidents such as this should they occur in the future.

Mr. Talton noted that most of the heavy equipment at the Landfill has high work hours. He stated that this was a testimony of the care the equipment receives from the employees.

Mr. Talton presented an Intergovernmental Agreement with the City of Perry. This agreement is for the relocation of their force main sewer as part of the Talton Road Widening Project.

The City of Perry will oversee all aspects of the project relating to the force main sewer relocation and will be billed separately by the contractor for all costs associated with its relocation.

Motion by Mr. Talton, second by Mr. Gottwals, and carried unanimously by all to approve the signing of an Intergovernmental Agreement with the City of Perry for the relocation of their force main sewer.

Chairman Perdue mentioned this was a 2018 SPLOST project and that traditionally, local governments are responsible to move utilities on projects such as this.

Mr. Talton presented a bid for the installation of a pressure-reducing valve and vault for the Stratford Hills subdivision.

Motion by Mr. Talton, second by Ms. Robinson, and carried unanimously by all to approve awarding Pyles Plumbing & Utility Contractors, Inc. the contract to install a pressure reducing valve and vault for the Stratford Hills subdivision at a cost of \$76,650. This project will be paid for by the Water Department.

Mr. Byrd mentioned the cost savings to County taxpayers due to the bid process on this project.

Chairman Perdue mentioned that competition among quality companies was good and that this project would help reduce the number of water main breaks in that subdivision.

Mr. Gottwals presented a request to add a Building Engineer Technician position to the Houston County Position Control Listing.

Motion by Mr. Gottwals, second by Mr. Byrd, and carried unanimously by all to approve the addition of one Building Engineer Technician to the Houston County Position Control Listing at a Grade 21, effective January 17, 2024. Also, to approve the Accounting Department to make any necessary budget adjustments.

Mr. Byrd said that it was good to adjust staffing to meet the needs of the County, and that realizing cost savings by elimination of unfilled positions was great too.

Chairman Perdue mentioned that the buildings being built and remodeled now have more technology and that it would be good to have someone on staff who can assist with the technical changes.

Mr. Gottwals presented a request from Probate Court to add an additional Deputy Clerk to the Houston County Position Control Listing.

Motion by Mr. Gottwals, second by Ms. Robinson, and carried unanimously by all to approve the addition of one Deputy Clerk to the Houston County Position Control Listing at Grade 14 effective January 22, 2024. Also, to approve the Accounting Department to make any necessary budget adjustments.

Mr. Gottwals presented a request from Juvenile Court to add an additional Chief Deputy Clerk to the Houston County Position Control Listing.

Motion by Mr. Gottwals, second by Mr. Talton, and carried unanimously by all to approve the addition of one Chief Deputy Clerk to the Houston County Position Control Listing at Grade 16 effective January 22, 2024. Also, to approve the Accounting Department to make any necessary budget adjustments.

Chairman Perdue stated that Judge Wilburn was doing a great job in Juvenile Court and this new position will help with the caseload they have.

Ms. Robinson presented an independent contract attorney agreement for the Juvenile Court.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Gottwals, and carried unanimously by all to approve the signing of an independent contract attorney agreement with April Neal in the amount of \$20,833.38 to be broken down as follows: \$4,166.66 for the months of February, March, April, and May of 2024, and \$4,166.74 for the month of June 2024.

Ms. Robinson presented a mutual aid agreement between the Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency and Houston County / Houston County Emergency Management.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Byrd, and carried unanimously by all to approve the signing of the Statewide Mutual Aid and Assistance Agreement between Houston County/Houston County Emergency Management and the Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency. This agreement, once executed, is valid until March 1, 2028 with the option to renew the agreement for four additional years.

Chairman Perdue thanked Chief Stoner for his leadership and efforts with Mutual Aid and Assistance Agreements. He stated that this agreement will improve assistance between Houston County and the State of Georgia with emergency services needs.

Mr. Byrd presented an intergovernmental agreement for operations of the Tommy Stalnaker Aquatic Center.

Mr. Byrd then asked Chairman Perdue for his comments on the Tommy Stalnaker Aquatic Center.

Chairman Perdue mentioned that construction of the aquatic center was now complete. He further stated that there had been a soft opening and that the County Swim Championship had been held at the aquatic center. He concluded by saying that this agreement laid out the responsibilities of the County and Board of Education regarding the operations of the center.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Ms. Robinson, and carried unanimously by all to approve entering into an Intergovernmental Agreement between Houston County and the Houston County School District for operations, maintenance, repair, management, staffing, and scheduling of the Tommy Stalnaker Aquatic Center.

Mr. Byrd mentioned that the three-page agreement document showed great cooperation among the Board of Commissioners and Board of Education.

Chairman Perdue went on to say that the aquatic center is a great addition to the community. He finished by saying that the ribbon cutting opening the aquatic center to the public would take place on February 12th at 3:30 pm.

Mr. Byrd presented a Memorandum of Understanding between the Houston County Board of Commissioners and the Houston County Sheriff's Office for fingerprinting.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Mr. Talton, and carried unanimously by all to approve Chairman Perdue signing an MOU between the Houston County Board of Commissioners and the Houston County Sheriff's Office for the purpose of fingerprinting applicants for alcohol licenses and solicitors, peddlers and taxicab licenses. The MOU, with a term of January 16, 2024 through December 31, 2028, states the roles and responsibilities of each party.

This agreement may be amended only by written agreement signed by each agency head.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Mr. Gottwals, and carried unanimously by all to approve the payment of the bills totaling \$3,957,481.14.

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

There being no comments Chairman Perdue opened the floor for Commissioner's Comments.

Mr. Gottwals commented that it had been a good night, and a cold night. He stated he had been privileged to be on the Commission a full year and continues to be impressed with how solidly run Houston County is. He concluded by speaking of the measured approach his fellow members on the Board and the county employees use.

Ms. Robinson thanked everyone for attending the meeting and mentioned how productive the meeting had been. She spoke about the new positions approved, equipment purchased, and intergovernmental agreements that were approved. She concluded by stating that she has enjoyed her time serving Houston County on the Board and planned to seek re-election for her Commission seat.

Chairman Perdue mentioned that Ms. Robinson had been recognized for 25 years of service on the Board of Commissioners earlier that day.

Mr. Byrd thanked Ms. Robinson for her work and service on the Board and mentioned that he attended the employee recognition ceremony earlier in the day where 20 employees were recognized and their combined years of service with the County totaled 450 years. Commissioner Byrd also commented on the very productive meeting with MOUs and intergovernmental agreements signed, the briefing by County Agent staff and the cooperation exhibited by local governments in Houston County.

Mr. Talton thanked everyone for coming and thanked Ms. Robinson for her service on the Board. He spoke of his appreciation for the County naming and dedicating the Sheriff's and Tax Commissioner's building after his grandfather. He concluded by expressing how much he enjoyed serving with other Commissioners on the Board.

Chairman Perdue commented on the employee service recognition ceremony that took place just before the Commissioners meeting and the dedication that each of the long-serving employees exhibit. He stated that he was happy that Ms. Robinson was seeking reelection for her seat on the Board. He spoke of the dedication of the Sheriff's Department and Tax Commissioners building. He concluded by saying that the dedication was an appropriate way to honor and recognize the 52 years of service to the citizens of Houston County that Sheriff Cullen Talton will have when he retires from office.

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

Robbie Dunbar
Director of Administration

Chairman

Commissioner

Commissioner

Commissioner

Commissioner