

Houston County Commissioners Meeting
March 2, 2021
Perry, Georgia

The Houston County Board of Commissioners met in regular session at 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday March 2, 2021, at the Houston County Courthouse in Perry, Georgia, with Chairman Stalnaker presiding and Commissioners Byrd, Perdue, Robinson, and Walker present. Also present were County Attorney Tom Hall, Director of Administration Barry Holland, Director of Operations Robbie Dunbar, Director of Purchasing Mark Baker, Director of Personnel Ken Carter, Chief Building Inspector Tim Andrews, Fire/HEMA Chief Chris Stoner, and Walton Wood.

Chairman Stalnaker gave the Invocation.

Brig. Gen. Matthew Burger, Air Force Reserve Command led the audience in the pledge of allegiance and detailed his 31-year military career. After graduating from the Air Force Academy in 1990 he completed undergraduate helicopter training at Fort Rucker Army Airfield in Alabama. He served as a helicopter instructor pilot and chief of safety with a combat rescue squadron. After nearly ten years in the regular Air Force, he received a reserve appointment and eventually transitioned from flying helicopters to aerial refueling planes. He has held numerous staff and command positions throughout his career and has been stationed in Fort Rucker, AL; Grand Forks AFB, ND; Nellis AFB, NV; Keflavik Naval Air Station, Iceland; Patrick AFB, FL; Joint Base Andrews, MD; Travis AFB, CA; Office of the Air Force Reserve, Washington D.C.; March Air Reserve Base, CA; and now for the second time at Robins AFB. Gen. Burger commented that he really appreciates our community for the way it has embraced his family and remarked that he continues to serve because of the great airmen that he serves alongside.

Chairman Stalnaker explained that the scheduled presentation from the Perdue Foundation to the Fire Department would be postponed until the next meeting due to a conflict in schedules.

Motion by Mr. Perdue, second by Mr. Byrd and carried unanimously by all to approve the minutes from the meeting of February 16, 2021.

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.

Chief Building Inspector Tim Andrews presented Re-Zoning Application 2449.

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

Civil Engineer Steven Rowland, Rowland Engineering, 318 Corporate Parkway, Macon appeared on behalf of applicant Lee Wingate.

Chairman Stalnaker asked if the subdivision plan had been submitted.

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Mr. Rowland stated that it had not, but their understanding was that the R-1 designation would require a ¾-acre lot minimum and that the subdivision would be designed based on the County's recommendations and rules regarding the R-1 zoning.

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

Motion by Mr. Perdue, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously by all to approve Re-Zoning Application #2449 submitted by Lee Wingate dba WinDL, LLC.

Chairman Stalnaker asked Mr. Rowland to confer with Mr. Andrews and Mr. Dunbar as the plan develops.

Chief Building Inspector Tim Andrews presented Special Exception Applications #2446 thru #2448 and #2450 thru #2454.

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

Mr. Perdue asked Mr. Andrews if it was standard to allow two trailers for use as was the case for application #2452.

Mr. Andrews replied that normally one commercial vehicle and trailer is allowed and that this was an exception.

Special Exception Application #2446 was not present, there was no opposition.
Special Exception Application #2447 was not present, there was no opposition.
Special Exception Application #2448 was not present, there was no opposition.
Special Exception Application #2450 was not present, there was no opposition.
Special Exception Application #2451 applicant Matthew Martin was present, there was no opposition.
Special Exception Application #2452 was not present, there was no opposition.
Special Exception Application #2453 was not present, there was no opposition.
Special Exception Application #2454 was not present, there was no opposition.

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

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

Applicant #2246	Todd & Samantha Gilbert	Organizing Business
Applicant #2447	Daniel & Heather Clem	Grading & Excavating
Applicant #2448	Fred Graham	Attorney
Applicant #2450	Joshua & Michelle Raffield	Crafts & Embroidery (Internet)
Applicant #2451	Matthew Martin	Mobile Food Truck
Applicant #2452	Veronica Aquino	Landscaping
Applicant #2453	Kerry Nelson	Hair Salon
Applicant #2454	Shadrach & Christa O'Neal	Trucking Business

Mr. Andrews gave the applicants approved for a home occupation instruction on the next step of the process which is obtaining their occupational business license from the Commissioner's office.

Mr. Walker presented a request to hire Lorenzo Quichocho for the soon to be vacated Building Inspector position.

Motion by Mr. Walker, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously by all to approve hiring Lorenzo Quichocho for the Building Inspector position in the Building Inspection Department at a Grade 17-F effective March 2, 2021.

Mr. Walker presented a request for an extended leave of absence.

Motion by Mr. Walker, second by Mr. Byrd and carried unanimously by all to approve an unpaid leave of absence for Water Department Clerk Gamble Greathouse until June 24, 2021. Ms. Greathouse will be responsible for her insurance cost under COBRA while on leave.

Chairman Stalnaker asked Mr. Carter if both Brian Jones and Robbie Dunbar were aware of this request.

Mr. Carter replied that he knew that Mr. Jones was aware of the request.

Mr. Holland confirmed that Mr. Dunbar was made aware of the request as well.

County Attorney Tom Hall conducted a first reading of Amendment to Code of Ordinances Chapter 2, Article III, Division 2 – Hospital Authority.

A second reading and public hearing will be held at the March 16, 2021 Houston County Board of Commissioners meeting at 5:00 p.m. in the Commissioners Board Room at the County Annex at 200 Carl Vinson Parkway, Warner Robins, Georgia.

Ms. Robinson presented a request for approval of a mutual aid agreement with the City of Perry.

Motion by Ms. Robinson second by Mr. Perdue and carried unanimously by all to approve Chairman Stalnaker signing a two-year Mutual Aid Agreement for fire, law enforcement and emergency management support between Houston County and the City of Perry. Effective dates are March 6, 2021 through March 5, 2023.

Ms. Robinson presented a request for approval of a bid for the Chiller Replacement project at the Detention Center.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Byrd and carried unanimously by all to approve the award of the Chiller Replacement project at the Detention Center to JM Clayton of Thomaston, GA in the amount of \$3,065,000; and the award of the construction management services to ICB Construction Group of Macon in the base amount of \$55,204 plus a rate of \$4,020 per week if the project extended beyond the initial two month estimated timeline. SPLOST 2012 will fund this project.

Chairman Stalnaker asked Mr. Dunbar how they planned to hold the contractor to the two-month timeframe.

Mr. Dunbar explained that the six-week lead time for the chiller equipment is driving the timeline but the clock on the construction manager does not begin until closer to the delivery time of that equipment.

Mr. Byrd presented a request for approval of bid on the Annex Building Rear Entry Modifications project.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Mr. Walker and carried unanimously by all to approve the award of the Annex Building Rear Entry Modifications project to ICB Construction Group of Macon in the amount of \$51,592 to be paid for with SPLOST 2018 funds; and the award of the Annex Building Access Control project to ICB Construction Group of Macon in the amount of \$94,523 to be paid for with HOST funds.

Chairman Stalnaker asked Mr. Dunbar to hold the contractor to 30 days on the replacement of the steps at the rear of the building. He commented that this is a long overdue improvement.

Mr. Byrd presented a request for approval of a bid on the Spot Overlay project.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously by all to approve the award of the Spot Overlay project to Womack Paving of Gray, GA in the amount of \$107,390.70. Funds for this project will come from the 2012 SPLOST resurfacing allocation.

Mr. Byrd presented a request for approval of a bid on a Striping project.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Mr. Perdue and carried unanimously by all to approve the award of the Striping of various roads project to McRae Contracting in the amount of \$39,975. Funds for this project will come from the 2012 SPLOST resurfacing allocation.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Mr. Perdue and carried unanimously by all to approve the payment of the bills totaling \$3,606,640.47 to include the correction to the bills moving the Perry-Houston County Airport payment of \$442,000 from the General Fund to the SPLOST 2018 fund.

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

Director of Purchasing Mark Baker provided an update on the status of the Government Building construction project stating that good progress was being made by the contractor even with the recent delays caused by heavy rainfall. The first of September is still an obtainable goal for the completion of this project that also remains under budget.

Chairman Stalnaker commented that he has been very impressed with both the contractor and architect on this job. He commented that the other construction project, the State Court addition to the courthouse, is not moving as fast but we are expecting new cost estimates by this Friday. He thanked Mr. Baker, Mr. Dunbar and Mr. Holland for their combined efforts pushing hard to bring this project back into budget.

Mr. Baker added that the contractor and architect on the State Court project are making a lot of changes and are redesigning a good portion of the building. Prices on materials have gone out of sight during this process complicating matters.

Director of Operations Robbie Dunbar provided an update on the status of the Bear Branch Road Water Treatment Plant construction project stating that it is on schedule despite of the recent rainfall. A major piece of equipment that had to be custom-made has been manufactured already and is stored off-site until needed. Project completion is expected during the month of May. He also updated the Board on various other on-going projects including Lake Joy Road Phase 5 widening from Langston Road to SR 127 with Robinson Paving actively clearing the right of way; SR127 widening project from the Perry Parkway to Kings Chapel Road has right of way acquisition in process; the Elberta Road widening project from North Houston Road to Northside Drive has right of way acquisition in process; the county-wide SPLOST 2018 Pleasant Hill Road widening project from Watson Blvd. to Moody Road is in the early stages of design in conjunction with the City of Warner Robins; and the paving of Scott Road, which is a dirt road, is in the right of way acquisition process.

Mr. Walker asked how many miles of dirt roads the County has left.

Mr. Dunbar stated approximately 50 miles of dirt road remain unpaved. The County tries to pave at least one dirt road per year if possible.

Chief Building Inspector Tim Andrews gave the Board a brief background on his new building inspector Lorenzo Quichocho. Mr. Quichocho is a native of Guam, a veteran of the U.S. Army and is a licensed and certified HVAC contractor who has lived in Houston County for around sixteen years. His wife is currently active duty in the military. Mr. Quichocho was hired last week at the A-step and is currently being trained in the field by another inspector.

Mr. Byrd congratulated Mr. Andrews on finding a quality replacement for the position and asked him to let the Board know what plans are for Mr. Exley's retirement.

Mr. Andrews also commented that from the perspective of the home building profession material shortages are attributable to various reasons such as the forest fires out west reducing lumber production and lower interest rates which has triggered a lot of activity. Windows and doors are experiencing up to twelve weeks back orders as well as appliances. He explained that the Building Inspection Department has made accommodations to assist builders maintaining their schedule on production. They have modified the inspection process to help them.

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

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

Mr. Perdue reminded everyone to early vote if possible, in support of the E-SPLOST referendum. He also commented that he has recently had the opportunity to confer with both Mr. Andrews and Mr. Dunbar on different customer service issues and both have responded to those issues in a very timely fashion.

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Mr. Byrd remarked that the mutual aid agreement approved today between the County and the City of Perry is yet another example of cooperation between local governments and that we need to continue to support our front-line health care workers during the COVID pandemic. He also agreed with Mr. Perdue that we need to support the E-SPLOST referendum.

Chairman Stalnaker agreed with both Mr. Perdue and Mr. Byrd about the importance of the city-wide election and the county-wide E-SPLOST referendum. First week early voting totals were approximately 545 in the city election and 860 for the E-SPLOST. He encouraged everyone to get out and vote. He commented that everything is going well with the Board of Elections administering the City elections this time. Some electors have commented that they are very appreciative that they can early vote for both elections in the same location. He then announced that the next Board meeting would be held on March 16th at 5:00 p.m. at the County Annex building on Carl Vinson Parkway.

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

Barry Holland
Director of Administration

Chairman

Commissioner

Commissioner

Commissioner

Commissioner