

Houston County Commissioners Meeting
July 5, 2023
Perry, Georgia

The Houston County Board of Commissioners met in regular session at 9:00 am on Tuesday July 5, 2023, at the Houston County Courthouse in Perry, GA, with Chairman Perdue presiding and Commissioners Byrd, Talton, and Gottwals, present. Also present were County Attorney Tom Hall, Director of Administration Robbie Dunbar, Director of Operations Brian Jones, Director of Personnel Ken Carter, Chief Building Inspector Tim Andrews, Solicitor General Amy Smith, Director of Purchasing Vanessa Zimmerman, Utility Director Terry Dietsch, Amanda Clark and Senior Accountant Will Davis. Commissioner Robinson was unable to attend the meeting.

Commissioner Gottwals gave the Invocation and then led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Lt. Col. Joshua T. Gulbranson, Commander 728th Battle Management Control Squadron, spoke about how Houston County and Robins Air Force Base are stronger together. He spoke of his military career, saying that growing up in a military family he knew he wanted to follow in his father's footsteps and join the Air Force. He talked about the importance of the 728th Battle Control Management Squadron and the new mission sets that are coming to Robins AFB. Lt. Col. Gulbranson talked about his history with the Air Force, including previous a previous mission at Robins AFB working on the J-STARS platform. He finished by saying he is happy to be back in middle Georgia, and that in many ways he and his family feel like this is home for them.

Mr. Byrd welcomed Lt. Gulbranson back to middle Georgia and said he was glad he was back. He also thanked him for his service and said we are all proud to be a host community.

Mr. Talton thanked Lt. Gulbranson for his sacrifice and stated we were lucky to have men and women like him serving this country.

Mr. Gottwals thanked Lt. Gulbranson and said that what stood out to him while listening to him speak of his military career was that he was going to manage battles globally from here at Robins Air Force Base, and that it almost seemed unbelievable.

Chairman Perdue said that listening to Lt. Lt. Gulbranson brought to mind something he heard a four-star general say at the National Security Briefing he had attended, "*the public will know what technology is being retired but not what is incoming*". He stated that he is looking forward to it and is excited to see what is coming.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Mr. Gottwals to approve the minutes from the June 20, 2023 meeting. Upon voting, Mr. Byrd, Mr. Gottwals and Chairman Perdue voted yes. Motion approved.

Motion by Mr. Talton, second by Mr. Gottwals to approve the minutes from the June 29, 2023 meeting. Upon voting, Mr. Talton, Mr. Gottwals and Chairman Perdue voted yes. Motion approved.

Chief Building Inspector Tim Andrews presented Special Exceptions #2689, #2692, #2696, #2697, and #2699 through #2706.

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.

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Applicant #2689 was present, there was no opposition.
 Applicant #2692 was present, there was no opposition.
 Applicant #2696 was present, there was no opposition.
 Applicant #2697 was present, there was no opposition.
 Applicant #2699 was present, there was no opposition.
 Applicant #2700 was not present, there was no opposition.
 Applicant #2701 was present, there was no opposition.
 Applicant #2702 was present, there was no opposition.
 Applicant #2703 was present, there was no opposition.
 Applicant #2704 was present, there was no opposition.
 Applicant #2705 was present, there was no opposition.
 Applicant #2706 was present, there was no opposition.

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

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

#2689 John Donnelly
 #2692 Tiffany White
 #2696 Gregory Ford
 #2697 Jennifer H. McCarthy
 #2699 James & Danielle McDaniel
 #2700 Cory Hortman
 #2701 Antwan & Myra Scott
 #2702 Ryan Scott
 #2703 John & Kelly Slade
 #2704 John & Kelly Slade
 #2705 Bill & Lakisha McMichael
 #2706 Ryan & Bridget Strub

Upon voting, Mr. Gottwals, Mr. Talton and Mr. Byrd voted yes. Motion approved.

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

Mr. Gottwals presented a request to fill the vacant Senior Purchasing Clerk position in the Purchasing Department.

Motion by Mr. Gottwals, second by Mr. Byrd to approve the hiring of Ms. Jessica Mitchell to fill the vacant Senior Purchasing Clerk Position at a Grade 16 Step C effective July 6, 2023. Upon voting, Mr. Gottwals, Mr. Byrd and Mr. Talton voted yes. Motion approved.

Mr. Gottwals presented a request for approval of a bid on furniture for the State Court & Houston County Sheriff's Office Renovation project.

Motion by Mr. Gottwals, second by Mr. Talton to approve a bid on furniture for the State Court & Houston County Sheriff's Office Renovation project from Phillips Furniture of Warner Robins in the amount of \$151,340. The furniture will be charged to the 2018 SPLOST Fund. Upon voting, Mr. Gottwals, Mr. Talton and Mr. Byrd voted yes. Motion approved.

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Chairman Perdue asked Mr. Dunbar if the funds were coming from the 2018 Discretionary SPLOST funds. Mr. Dunbar confirmed that they were.

Mr. Talton presented a request for approval of a bid on equipment for Fire Station #2.

Motion by Mr. Talton second by Mr. Byrd to approve the bid on equipment for Fire Station #2 from Municipal Equipment Company of Orlando Florida at a total cost of \$49,377 with a lead time of 8 – 10 weeks. This purchase will be funded from Insurance Premium Funds. Upon voting, Mr. Talton, Mr. Byrd and Mr. Gottwals voted yes. Motion approved.

Mr. Byrd commented that he had recently visited the site, and the project is advancing rapidly.

Mr. Talton presented a request for approval of a bid on Phase 6, Stages 1C and 2A Cell Construction at the Landfill.

Motion by Mr. Talton, second by Mr. Gottwals to approve the bid on Phase 6, Stages 1C and 2A Cell Construction at the Landfill to CBP Environmental, Inc of Statham, Georgia in an amount not to exceed \$6,210,597.48 which includes an opportunity for a 5% early completion bonus. Funds for this project will be paid from Solid Waste Capital Funds. Upon voting, Mr. Talton, Mr. Gottwals and Mr. Byrd voted yes. Motion approved.

Mr. Talton spoke on the Houston County Code of Ordinances and said that County Attorney Tom Hall would be conducting a second reading of a proposed amendment.

Mr. Hall read the proposed amendment that will add a new article to Chapter 62 – Traffic and Vehicles titled Article III – Truck Traffic and Truck Parking to the Code of Ordinances. The proposed amendment will regulate truck traffic and parking in specific areas of Houston County.

Chairman Perdue opened a Public Hearing.

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

Motion by Mr. Talton, second by Mr. Gottwals to approve the amendment to the Houston County Code of Ordinances to regulate truck traffic and parking in specific areas of Houston County effective September 1, 2023. Upon voting, Mr. Talton, Mr. Gottwals and Mr. Byrd voted yes. Motion approved.

Chairman Perdue commented that this approval would be good news for residents of Bear Branch Road.

Mr. Byrd presented a request from the City of Perry for an amendment to the Water Use Agreement between Houston County and the City of Perry.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Mr. Talton to approve the addition of an eight-inch master meter to be installed to serve the Houston County Board of Education for the new Matt Arthur Primary School at 150 Talton Road to the Water Use Agreement between the Houston County Board of Commissioners and The City of Perry with the stipulations that the contractor posts a bond covering 125% of construction cost for work performed on the Houston Water System,

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adherence of the rate structure approved by the Houston County Board of Commissioners on November 19, 2019, and all conditions being met according to "Houston County Utility Accommodations." Upon voting, Mr. Byrd, Mr. Talton and Mr. Gottwals voted yes. Motion approved.

Mr. Byrd presented a request from the City of Warner Robins for annexation of property located at 100-104 S. Amanda Place.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Mr. Gottwals to concur with the City of Warner Robins annexation request for property located at 100 – 104 S. Amanda Place, containing 3.891 acres and also known as Tax Parcels # 00074E 099000 (3.508 acres) and #00074E 172000 (0.383 acres) with the stipulations that any access should be on and off Houston Lake Road, that a buffer between the commercial and residential area be provided, and that any County utilities remain with the County. The property is currently zoned County R-1 and proposed zoning is City C-2. Upon voting, Mr. Byrd, Mr. Gottwals and Mr. Talton voted yes. Motion approved.

Chairman Perdue commented that the City of Warner Robins was very cooperative with the process of this annexation, and he thanked them for it, and for moving in a positive direction to protect the residents. He mentioned a traffic light that will be installed at the intersection of Smithville Church Road and Houston Lake Road to help with the traffic.

Motion by Mr. Byrd second by Mr. Talton to approve the payment of the bills totaling \$2,539,964.21. Upon voting, Mr. Byrd, Mr. Talton and Mr. Gottwals voted yes. Motion approved.

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

Ms. Sonja Nichols, a patient at Middle Flint Behavioral Health, asked to set up a meeting with Chairman Perdue and Ms. Robinson.

Chairman Perdue commented that he respected the manner in which she approached the board and asked that she see Ms. Wilkins to set up an appointment.

There being no more comments, Chairman Perdue closed Public Comments and opened Commissioner's Comments.

Mr. Gottwals said it was good to be here, that he had listened to a podcast on the drive in about repressive governments and the people they were hurting, and it brought to mind a quote by William Faulkner, "*We must be free not because we claim freedom but because we practice it*". He said that in Houston County we are uniquely reminded about it with the military members coming in to speak and with Houston County being a host community.

Mr. Talton said he was glad to be back, glad to be at the meeting and seeing all the new businesses getting licenses. He mentioned Ms. Zimmerman being at the meeting and glad to see her in her new position and wished her luck.

Mr. Byrd echoed Mr. Gottwals and said that we need to practice freedom, and live freedom. He added that we are lucky to live in a community that does practice freedom. He congratulated Mayor Walker, of Perry, on his election to President of the Georgia Municipal Association. He added that Mayor Walker was a great partner in all things local government, and that he would do an outstanding job in leadership in that organization.

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Chairman Perdue commented that he also reflected on our country's independence. He commented that while listening to fireworks he thought about what it must have been like for the colonists when they realized the Declaration of Independence had been signed. He thought about how blessed we are to live in this Nation and in Houston County. He stated that there is nowhere else he would rather be from and nowhere else he would want to serve in the Public Service. He thanked everyone for being there and for all the work done at the meeting.

Motion by Mr. Gottwals, second by Mr. Talton to adjourn the meeting. Upon voting, Mr. Gottwals, Mr. Talton and Mr. Byrd voted yes. Meeting adjourned.

Robbie Dunbar
Director of Administration

Chairman

Commissioner

Commissioner
Ms. Robinson was not in attendance,
she does not sign.

Commissioner

Commissioner