

Houston County Commissioners Meeting
July 18, 2023
Warner Robins, Georgia

The Houston County Board of Commissioners met in regular session at 5:00 pm on Tuesday July 18, 2023, at the Houston County Annex in Warner Robins, GA, with Chairman Perdue presiding and Commissioners Byrd, Talton, Gottwals, and Robinson present. Also present were County Attorney Tom Hall, Director of Administration Robbie Dunbar, Director of Operations Brian Jones, Director of Personnel Ken Carter, Director of Purchasing Vanessa Zimmerman, Chief Financial Officer Danyelle George, Director of Animal Control Alan Smith, Community Planner Jake Cox, Utility Director Terry Dietsch, Sheriff Talton, Chief Rape, and several senior members of the Sheriff's Department.

Commissioner Robinson led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Perdue gave the Invocation.

Chief Deputy Billy Rape was recognized for 50 years of service in the Houston County Sheriff's Department.

Chairman Perdue and each of the Commissioners, County Attorney Tom Hall, and Director of Administration Robbie Dunbar each thanked Chief Rape for his service to the citizens of Houston County, his leadership, his management ability, not only of personnel, but also the budget. Chief Rape was also recognized for his professionalism, friendship, and devotion to duty.

Sheriff Talton thanked Chief Rape for his support, help, and friendship over many years.

Senior Sheriff Department staff spoke about how well regarded the Houston County Sheriff's Office is viewed all over the State of Georgia and beyond due to the leadership and example set by Chief Rape and Sheriff Talton.

Motion by Mr. Talton, second by Mr. Byrd and carried unanimously by all to approve the minutes from the July 5, 2023 meeting.

Mr. Byrd presented a request from the City of Warner Robins for annexation of property located at 108 and 0 Crestview Drive.

Chairman Perdue opened the floor for Public Comments.

As there were no comments, the meeting continued.

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 at 108 Crestview Dr. and 0 Crestview Dr., containing 3.22 acres and also known as Tax Parcels # 00122A 053000 (0.54 acres) # 00122A 047000 (1.07 acres) and # 00122A 046000 (1.61 acres) with the stipulations that any County utilities remain with the County. The property is currently zoned County R-4 and proposed zoning is City R-4.

Chairman Perdue commented that he has a concern regarding the condition of the roads used to access this property and will express his concerns to the City of Warner Robins officials in anticipation of increased traffic on these roads.

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

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously by all to approve the addition of the property, located at Georgia Highway 127 and Roberts Road, to the Water Use Agreement between the Houston County Board of Commissioners and the City of Warner Robins with the stipulations that the developer posts a bond covering 125% of construction cost for work performed on the Houston Water System, adherence of the rate structure approved by the Houston County Board of Commissioners on November 19, 2019, and the issuance of a utility permit to the City of Warner Robins based on all conditions being met according to "Houston County Utility Accommodations."

Mr. Byrd expressed his appreciation to staff and the County's consultant Carter and Sloope for their thorough analysis on requests of this nature.

Chairman Perdue also added that a recently replaced master meter in the Woodlands Subdivision has begun to give more accurate measurements which have reflected in increased revenues for the County. He further expressed his appreciation to staff replacing these master meters when a determination is made that readings they are giving could be inaccurate.

Mr. Byrd presented a request from the UGA Extension office to fill the upcoming vacant Administrative Assistant position.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Mr. Talton and carried unanimously by all to approve the signing of an agreement with the UGA Extension Office allowing them to fill the upcoming vacancy in the Administrative Assistant position.

Chairman Perdue skipped Item #4 and proceeded with Items #5 and #6.

Mr. Gottwals presented a request from Public Works for internal water remediation at the 911 Center.

Motion by Mr. Gottwals, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously by all to approve the award of the Internal Water Remediation Project at the 911 Center to ICB Construction Group of Macon, Georgia in the amount of \$193,646.00.

Chairman Perdue commented that the employees of the 911 Center are looking forward to the water and moisture issues in their building being fixed.

Mr. Gottwals presented a request from Public Works for a bathroom and kitchen remodel at the 911 Center.

Motion by Mr. Gottwals, second by Mr. Talton and carried unanimously by all to approve the award of the bathroom and kitchen remodel at the 911 Center to ICB Construction Group of Macon, Georgia in the amount of \$167,511.00.

Chairman Perdue stated that the kitchen area needed to be remodeled with an expansion due to the increase in 911 personnel. He also stated that a shower would be installed for employee use when situations arise where staff needed to be on post at the 911 Center for an extended period due to an emergency.

Chairman Perdue then returned to Item #4 from the agenda.

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Mr. Gottwals presented a request for a revision to the ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) Fiscal Recovery Fund.

Motion by Mr. Gottwals second by Mr. Byrd and carried unanimously by all to approve the revision to the Revenue Loss Projects of the ARPA Fiscal Recovery Fund FY2023 Budget as follows:

1	Health Department Addition	\$6,000,000.00
2	Airport T-Hangars	\$1,000,000.00
3	Public Safety (LPR) Cameras	\$1,000,000.00
4	State Court Addition (FFE)	\$350,000.00
5	State Court Parking Lot Addition	\$350,000.00
6	911 Water Damage Remediation & Remodel	\$400,000.00

Mr. Talton expressed his appreciation to staff for placing these ARPA funds in the places needed to benefit the citizens of Houston County.

Chairman Perdue also pointed out that this is not an increase in the County's ARPA budget but a moving of funds already in the ARPA budget to reflect what was spent on projects with the additional funds being now available to be spent on other projects.

Mr. Talton presented a request from the Fire Department for approval of the purchase of furniture, fixtures, and equipment for the new Bonaire Public Safety Complex.

Motion by Mr. Talton, second by Mr. Gottwals and carried unanimously by all to approve the purchase of furniture, fixtures, and equipment for the new Bonaire Public Safety Complex in the amount of \$98,526.20.

Chairman Perdue asked Chief Stoner if the EMS credit was from Houston Healthcare to furnish their portion of the facility.

Chief Stoner replied that he was correct.

Mr. Talton presented a request from the Tax Assessors Office to renew a contract with Traylor Business Services.

Motion by Mr. Talton, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously by all to approve the signing of the contract for the Fiscal years 2023-2024 with Traylor Business Services.

Mr. Talton presented a request to write off bad debt for the following departments:

Water System	\$20,746.48
Solid Waste Collection (Sanitation)	\$18,393.62
Solid Waste Disposal (Landfill)	\$0.00

Motion by Mr. Talton, second by Mr. Byrd and carried unanimously by all to approve the FY23 Water Fund debt write-off of \$20,746.48 (\$20,536.48 for the water system and \$210.00 for stormwater management); the Waste Collection (Sanitation) debt write-off of \$18,393.62 (\$13,989.57 for Routes 10-80 and \$4,404.05 for route 90). Solid Waste Disposal (Landfill) has no debt to write-off.

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Chairman Perdue advised this is a step needed to take at this time in order to be prepared for the upcoming audit and also advised that staff would still be working to collect this bad debt.

Mr. Talton commented that some of this bad debt had even been collected since these numbers were published.

Ms. Robinson presented a request for approval of a bid on five Ford Explorers for use in the SRO Department of the Sheriff's Office.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Talton and carried unanimously by all to approve the award of the bid for five (5) in-stock Ford Explorers from Phil Brannen Ford of Perry for use in the SRO Department. Four units will be charged to line item 100-3320-54.2200 and reimbursed by the Board of Education, and one unit will be charged to line item 100-3321-54.2200 and reimbursed by the Westfield School in Perry, Georgia at a total cost of \$218,000.

Chairman Perdue explained that Houston County deputies working as School Resource Officers (SRO) providing security at Houston County schools has been in existence for quite some time and that all expenses for these deputies were reimbursed by the Houston County Board of Education. He then explained that the Westfield school desired a similar arrangement so an SRO will be located there at Westfield with all expenses for this Officer being reimbursed by Westfield to the County.

Ms. Robinson presented a request for approval of a contract renewal between the Houston County Accountability Court and IHOPE Inc.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Gottwals and carried unanimously by all to approve the signing of a Contract for Services renewals between Houston County and IHOPE Inc. for a term of July 10, 2023 through June 30, 2024.

Chairman Perdue spoke highly of the good work done by the Accountability Court in giving people the help they need, but also holding people accountable when they are not willing to take or accept that help. He further commented that this is largely a grantfunded program.

Motion by Ms. Robinson second by Mr. Talton and carried unanimously by all to approve the payment of the bills totaling \$3,388,219.19.

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

Gwendolyn McLeod, owner of The Peach Pit, and a licensed clinical social worker specializing in equine therapy advised of the work she does to help those needing mental health services through her program. She said she wished to introduce herself to the Commissioners and explain how she helps families and individuals through this program in Peach and Crawford Counties and hopes to do the same in Houston County.

Chairman Perdue advised he would be happy to introduce her to Juvenile Court Judge Wilburn.

Dr. David Ellerbrock gave the board print outs titled "*Security Analysis of Georgia's Image Cast X Ballot Marking Devices*" and spoke about the need to move away from electronic voting machines and move to paper ballots in Georgia.

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Chairman Perdue thanked him for his comments.

Ms. Meg Mehserle spoke about the need to move away from electronic voting machines and move to paper ballots in Georgia and other election issues.

Chairman Perdue thanked Ms. Mehserle for her comments.

Ms. Amanda Prettyman spoke about the need to move away from electronic voting machines and move to paper ballots in Georgia.

Chairman Perdue thanked Ms. Prettyman for her comments.

Ms. Holly Kesler spoke about the need to move away from electronic voting machines and move to paper ballots in Georgia.

Chairman Perdue thanked Ms. Kesler for her comments.

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

Mr. Gottwals commented on the very productive meeting and recognized the combined 415 years of service of the County employees who had been recognized earlier in the day for their years of service to the County. He then thanked everyone for their service and their time.

Ms. Robinson thanked everyone for attending the meeting and expressed her appreciation to the dedicated County employees and for those who provided their comments and their information. She mentioned that the citizens and employees are what make Houston County such a great place. She finished by thanking everyone for coming and for the information they shared.

Mr. Talton said he was proud to serve along with the employees of Houston County. He expressed his appreciation to the dedicated employees who serve the citizens of Houston County and commented that the County employees who were recognized earlier for their years of service serve as a report card to the Commissioners in terms of employee retention. He also expressed his appreciation for Ms. McLeod's attendance and her speaking about her equine therapy program and concluded his comments by expressing his support for Board of Elections Supervisor Deborah Presswood and her staff for the excellent, secure and professional way that they conduct the elections in Houston County.

Mr. Byrd expressed his thankfulness to be a citizen of Houston County and commented that several things make him feel this way and several reasons to celebrate living in Houston County. He also spoke about the benefit of the open public comments time that the Board provides as exhibited by the comments and information shared this evening.

Chairman Perdue gave an update on the solid waste collection issues and the poor service County residents have been receiving. He said that County elected officials and staff are actively working on the problem and working to hold Waste Management accountable and ensure that the issues are fixed. Next, he recognized Captain Mikki Quinones as being named the Georgia Dispatcher of the month by the Georgia Association of Public Safety Communications Officials. He concluded by welcoming Colonel Reese to Robins Air Force Base as the new 78th Air Base Wing Commander and thanked Colonel Lindsay Droz for the excellent job she did during her command at Robins.

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

Robbie Dunbar
Director of Administration

Chairman

Commissioner

Commissioner

Commissioner

Commissioner