

Houston County Commissioners Meeting March 5, 2024 Perry, Georgia

The Houston County Board of Commissioners met in a regular session at 9:00 am on Tuesday, March 5, 2024, at the Houston County Courthouse in Perry, Georgia, with Chairman Perdue presiding and Commissioners Byrd, Gottwals, Robinson, and Talton present. County Attorney Tom Hall, Director of Administration Robbie Dunbar, and Director of Operations Brian Jones were also present.

Commissioner Robinson gave the Invocation.

Commissioner Gottwals led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

MSgt. Danielle Larios, Assistant to the Command Chief Master Sergeant, Air Force Reserve Command; Program Manager, Development & Training Flight, spoke of her military career which began when she joined the Air Force Reserves in 2008. Her father, a retired Army Green Beret, encouraged her enlistment. She spoke about the various positions she has held in her career. She also spoke about the bases where she has been assigned. Recently, she transferred from her last assignment in San Antonio, Texas to serve as the assistant to the Command Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force Reserve Command.

Each Commissioner expressed their appreciation to MSgt. Larios for her service, patriotism and kind words about the Base and the Houston County community, and additional comments were made thanking her father for his service in Vietnam.

Motion by Mr. Talton, second by Ms. Robinson, and carried unanimously by all to approve the minutes from the February 20, 2024 meeting.

Chief Building Inspector Tim Andrews presented Special Exceptions #2738, #2742, #2744 through #2747 and #2749.

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

Applicant #2727 was present, there was no opposition.

Applicant #2742 was not present, there was no opposition.

Applicant #2744 was present, there was no opposition.

Applicant #2745 was present, there was no opposition.

Applicant #2746 was present, there was no opposition.

Applicant #2747 was present, there was no opposition.

Applicant #2749 was present, there was no opposition.

There being no comments, Chairman Perdue closed the Public Hearing and reopened the meeting.

Motion by Mr. Gottwals, second by Ms. Robinson, and carried unanimously by all to approve the following Special Exception Applications to include any and all stipulations as noted on the Zoning & Appeals recommendation and Section 95 Requirements staff report:

Applicant #2738	Justin & Christin Key	Landscaping Business
Applicant #2744	Gwendolyn Stovall	Virtual Assistant & Real Estate Transaction Coordinator
Applicant #2745	Jennifer Bell	Glamping & Party Rental Supply
Applicant#2746	Samantha Lineberger	Sales of Products & Commodities Raised on Premises
Applicant #2747	Jonathan & Jessica Adams	Dog Grooming Business
Applicant#2749	Walter & Rhonda Zellner	Education Consulting & Tutoring

And also, to disapprove the following Special Exception Applications:

Applicant #2742 Miranda Stewart Special Events Facility

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 businesses. These restrictive covenants are not superseded by any action the Board of Commissioners takes. The actions taken by the Board will not change any provision within the covenant that prohibits any commercial or business activity.

Chairman Perdue stated that he had heard from Applicant #2742, Ms. Stewart, with additional information regarding access in and out of her property, which was distributed to the Commissioners and staff. He also stated that the additional information and changes does not change the engineering opinions, and he also noted that the Zoning and Appeals Board reluctantly had to recommend a denial of application.

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

County Attorney Tom Hall conducted the second reading of a proposed amendment to the Houston County Code of Ordinances. The proposed amendment to Section 62-56 will add Old Hawkinsville Road to the list of roads where through truck traffic is prohibited. The first reading was held at the February 20, 2024, 5:00 pm Board of Commissioners meeting.

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

There being no comments Chairman Perdue closed the Public Hearing and reopened the meeting.

Motion by Mr. Gottwals, second by Mr. Byrd, to approve the amendment to Section 62-56 of the Houston County Code of Ordinances to add Old Hawkinsville Road to the list of roads where through truck traffic is prohibited. Upon voting, Mr. Gottwals, Mr. Byrd and Ms. Robinson voted yes, Mr. Talton abstained. Motion approved.

County Attorney Tom Hall gave a first reading to repeal Section 14-1 of Chapter 14, Article I of the Ordinances titled Board of Adjustment and Appeals to update the current definition of this Board. A second reading and public hearing on this change to County Ordinances will be held at the March 19th, 2024 Commission meeting.

County Attorney Tom Hall gave a first reading on a proposed change to Section 2-274(f) of the County Ordinances regarding Capital Budget Policies. The change would be to have six months of general fund reserve on hand instead of the current three-month amount. A second reading and public hearing on this change to County Ordinances will be held at the March 19th, 2024 Commission meeting.

Chairman Perdue advised this came up at the last audit and that this would change the County's policy to fall in line with our practice.

Mr. Byrd presented a request for a letter of support for the Ocmulgee Mounds National Park and Preserve legislation.

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Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Mr. Talton, and carried unanimously by all to approve a letter of support for the Ocmulgee Mounds National Park and Preserve legislation.

Chairman Perdue advised the legislation creating this national park would be great for the region and our sister county.

Mr. Byrd presented a request for renewal of a hauling contract with Mid Georgia Trucking to haul leachate for the landfill.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Mr. Gottwals, and carried unanimously by all to approve the one-year renewal of a hauling contract with Mid Georgia Trucking, of Lithonia, Georgia. All terms of the current contract will be extended for the renewal period of one year.

Mr. Byrd commented on the good work negotiating the same terms and agreements for this contract renewal.

Mr. Talton presented a request for the approval of a bid on one New 2024 Ford F450 with a Reading Service Body to be used by the Water Department.

Motion by Mr. Talton, second by Mr. Byrd, and carried unanimously by all to approve the bid on one New 2024 Ford F450 with a Reading Service Body to be used by the Water Department from Phil Brannen Ford of Perry, GA in the amount of \$78,700. This purchase will be funded by Water Department Capital Funds.

Chairman Perdue advised that the size of equipment that this vehicle will be hauling will be less so the replacement vehicle for the Water Department can be less as well.

Mr. Talton presented a request for approval of a bid on a Big Tex Trailer.

Motion by Mr. Talton, second by Ms. Robinson, and carried unanimously by all to approve the bid on a Big Tex Trailer to accompany the New 2024 Ford F450 with a Reading Service Body, from Trax & Trailers of Perry, GA in the amount of \$19,960. This purchase will be funded by Water Department Capital Funds.

Mr. Talton presented a request for approval of a bid to replace those culverts on Old Vienna Road that were washed out in a recent storm.

Motion by Mr. Talton, second by Mr. Gottwals, and carried unanimously by all to approve the award of the bid on culvert replacement on Old Vienna Road to John R. Walker Inc. of Macon, Georgia, in the amount of \$286,556. This project is funded by 2012 SPLOST.

Mr. Byrd commented about the quick way that public works staff rectified this situation on Old Vienna Road.

Chairman Perdue advised that acquiring the culvert could be a hold up on this project, so when the County found what was needed for the repair, it was purchased. Bids were then requested for the culvert installation to repair Old Vienna Road. Chairman Perdue gave compliments to Director of Operations Brian Jones, Roads and Bridges Superintendent Travis McLendon, and Purchasing Director Vanessa Zimmerman on the quick and efficient way they handled the purchase of this needed culvert to complete this project.

Ms. Robinson presented a proposal for treasury services as recommended by staff and consultant Davenport & Company.

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Mr. Ricardo Cornejo of Davenport & Company spoke to the Commissioners and those present about the process that his company and County staff went through in sending out requests for proposals and how the 6 proposals received were narrowed down to four. He advised of these four proposals, two were chosen as finalists with Synovus Bank winning the recommendation of Davenport & Company.

Mr. Byrd stated that he appreciated the process and the involvement by County staff and Davenport & Co. officials.

Chairman Perdue stated that a big need was for there to be branches in Warner Robins and Perry, and he also expressed thanks to Chief Financial Officer, Danyelle George, Senior Accountant Will Davis, and Director of Administration Robbie Dunbar for their involvement.

Ms. George and Mr. Dunbar both agreed with the recommendation to go with Synovus Bank.

Mr. Gottwals stated that, in his opinion, he thought Morris Bank would have been the better of the two finalists. He finished by saying that he had nothing against Synovus Bank, but that he would have felt better going with Morris Bank.

Ms. Robinson mentioned that both finalists were outstanding and gave very informative presentations and that choosing one over the other was a very difficult decision.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Talton, to approve the acceptance of Synovus Bank's proposal for treasury services as recommended by staff and consultant. Also, for the signing of all documents necessary for this acceptance. Upon voting, Ms. Robinson, Mr. Talton, and Mr. Byrd voted yes, Mr. Gottwals opposed. Motion approved.

Ms. Robinson presented a request for approval of a voting delegate for the Georgia Opioid Settlement Advisory Commission (GOSAC) and Regional Advisory Councils (RACs).

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Byrd, and carried unanimously by all to approve the selection of Director of Administration, Robbie Dunbar, as a voting delegate for the Georgia Opioid Settlement Advisory Commission (GOSAC) and Regional Advisory Councils (RACs).

Chairman Perdue stated that if Mr. Dunbar were unable to attend, that he or County Attorney Tom Hall would be considered alternates.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Gottwals, and carried unanimously by all to approve the payment of the bills totaling \$3,449,982.41.

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

There being no comments, Chairman Perdue closed the Public Comments portion of the meeting.

Chairman Perdue then opened the floor for Commissioner's Comments.

Mr. Talton thanked Mr. Cornejo, of Davenport and Company, along with Chief Financial Officer, Danyelle George, and Director of Administration, Robbie Dunbar, for their work in selecting a new bank for the County. He also commented that from roads to choosing a bank, the Commissioners are meeting the needs of Houston County residents.

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Mr. Byrd commented on the great customer service he not only heard about but observed in the Probate Court. He complimented the staff on their efficiency. He then spoke of Director of Operations, Brian Jones, and those who work with him in Public Works, on the way they communicate with County residents who are having an issue that requires help. He then welcomed Houston Home Journal reporter Mr. Owen Jones to the Commissioners meeting. Concluding his remarks, Mr. Byrd spoke about the 2023 Annual Report which had recently been published which really shows what a great county Houston County is.

Chairman Perdue also commented on the 2023 Annual Report saying the publication tells the story about what a great place Houston County is. He went on to say that the Commissioners inherited a County in great shape which the Board will continue to build on. And that while rooted in the past, will look to the future and innovation where possible. He concluded by saying the Annual Report, put together by the Miner Agency, does a great job of talking about all the new County buildings, financial health and new initiatives the County is utilizing to better serve and be better stewards for County residents.

Mr. Gottwals shared a quote from the *Ann of Green Gables* series by L.M. Montgomery, "Home is the best word in the world." He spoke about a recent experience with an out of state visitor that when describing Houston County to this individual, let him know that as a Houston County resident, there really is no better place than home and here.

Ms. Robinson thanked everyone for attending and thanked MSgt. Larios for her comments and staying for the meeting. She recognized elected officials State Court Solicitor, Amy Smith, District Attorney Will Kendall, and she also recognized State Court Clerk Teresa Hathaway. She concluded her comments by saying that today was her son's 22nd birthday, which also fell on a Tuesday 22 years ago, and that his arrival kept her from attending the Commissioners meeting that day.

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

Robbie Dunbar
Director of Administration

Chairman

Commissioner

Commissioner

Commissioner

Commissioner

