

Houston County Commissioners Meeting
December 15, 2020
Warner Robins, Georgia

The Houston County Board of Commissioners met in regular session at 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday December 15, 2020, at the Houston County Annex in Warner Robins, Georgia, with Chairman Stalnaker presiding and Commissioners Walker, Thomson, McMichael, and Robinson 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, Fire/HEMA Chief Chris Stoner, Assistant Fire Chief David Newman, HCFD personnel Derek Pollard, Joe LeMaster, Michael Keeney, George Mateyko, Andrew Nadekow, Kevin Prater, Rick Saunders, Chief Building Inspector Tim Andrews, Commissioner-elect Dan Perdue, Commissioner-elect Mark Byrd, District Attorney George Hartwig, Jessica Hartwig, Airport Authority member Danny Wilson, and Maurice Braswell.

Chairman Stalnaker commented that Houston County has lost a giant of a man today with Mr. Wayne Lowe's passing. He extended his condolences to Mr. Lowe's family and to all the employees who worked for him. He then led the audience in the Invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Stalnaker asked for a motion to add an agenda item concerning the lowering of Houston Lake for maintenance purposes as item number twelve.

Motion by Mr. McMichael, second by Mr. Thomson and carried unanimously by all to add the lowering of Houston Lake for maintenance purposes as Item #12 to the agenda.

Chairman Stalnaker then read a proclamation recognizing Houston County Fire Department Capt. Troy "Steve" Pollard for his 25-plus years of service to the department. Capt. Pollard began his career as a volunteer in 1991 and has served many roles and advanced in rank from Firefighter to Lieutenant and finally to Captain of the department's Support Division. He has worked tirelessly and selflessly to ensure the safety and security of lives and property in Houston County and is retiring from service.

Chief Stoner commended Capt. Pollard for his exemplary service and remarked that he will be sorely missed. He presented Capt. Pollard with his helmet, a plaque commemorating his service and his 25-year service pin.

Capt. Pollard introduced his wife Denise and his son who also serves in the department and was promoted to Lieutenant today.

Motion by Mr. McMichael, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously by all to approve the minutes from the meeting of December 1, 2020.

Motion by Mr. Walker, second by Mr. Thomson to approve the appointment of Gail Robinson as Vice Chair of the Board of Commissioners for the year 2021. After vote Mr. Walker, Mr. Thomson and Mr. McMichael voted yes motion approved.

The Chairman and other Board members thanked Mr. Walker for his service as Vice-Chairman during the 2020 year.

Mr. Walker presented salaries for Commissioners-elect Mark Byrd and Dan Perdue to be set per local legislation and a longevity increase for Commissioner Robinson.

Motion by Mr. Walker, second by Mr. McMichael and carried unanimously by all to approve the adjustment of Commissioner Robinson's salary to reflect the longevity increase effective January 1, 2021; and to set Commissioner Mark Byrd and Commissioner Dan Perdue at the beginning salary of \$12,000 annually as outlined in a memorandum from Personnel Director Ken Carter dated December 4, 2020.

Mr. Walker presented a request to fill the vacant Assistant District Attorney position.

Motion by Mr. Walker, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously by all to approve the hiring of Meghan Bowden for the vacant Assistant District Attorney position in the District Attorney's office at a Grade 27-C effective December 16, 2020.

Motion by Mr. Thomson, second by Mr. Walker and carried unanimously by all to approve the following reappointments:

Airport Authority:	Danny Wilson	1/01/2021 thru 12/31/2022
Board of Tax Assessors:	Bill Fowler	1/01/2021 thru 12/31/2023
	David Grossnickle	1/01/2021 thru 12/31/2023
Development Authority	Scott Cox	1/01/2021 thru 12/31/2026

Mr. Thomson remarked that each individual being re-appointed has done a great job on their respective Authority or Board.

Chairman Stalnaker commented that these are all indeed dedicated individuals giving of their own time to fulfill these obligations.

Mr. McMichael thanked Mr. Danny Wilson, Airport Authority member, who was in attendance.

Mr. Thomson presented a request for the disbursement of the allotted clothing allowance for eligible individuals in the Sheriff's Department.

Motion by Mr. Thomson, second by Mr. Walker and carried unanimously by all to approve the disbursement of a \$450.00 clothing allowance to those twenty-seven Sheriff's Department personnel identified in a letter form Chief Deputy Rape dated December 2, 2020. Total disbursement is \$12,150.

County Attorney Tom Hall conducted a second reading of an amendment to the Houston County Code of Ordinances concerning timber operations. The first reading was held at the December 1, 2020 Board of Commissioners meeting.

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

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

Motion by Mr. Thomson, second by Mr. McMichael and carried unanimously by all to approve amendments to the Houston County Code of Ordinances Article X-Timber Operations; Sec.30-192-Permit and Sec. 30-193-Violations; penalties in response to newly passed Georgia legislation that amend O.C.G.A.§ 126-24. The amendments shall read as follows:

Sec. 30-192. – Permit.

(c)(6) The applicant shall be responsible for all damages and shall present a letter of credit or a cashier's check for \$5,000.00 to protect the county against damage caused by applicant. All damage exceeding \$5,000.00 shall be the responsibility of the applicant. In the event of any damage caused by the applicant then the letter of credit or cashier's check shall be subject to the provisions contained in O.C.G.A. § 12-6-24 (b)(4)(A)(B)(C) and (D).

Sec.30-193. – Violations; penalties.

Any timber operator who shall willfully fail to comply with this article shall be guilty of a misdemeanor; amenable to the process of the Magistrate Court of Houston County, Georgia and, upon convictions, shall be punished by fine not to exceed \$1,500.00. Each day the violations continues shall constitute a separate offense.

County Attorney Tom Hall conducted a first reading of Amendment to Code of Ordinances Section 2-36(b) (Board Meeting Time Change). A second reading and public hearing will be held at the January 5, 2021 Board of Commissioners meeting at 9:00 a.m. in the Boardroom at the Houston County courthouse after which action may be taken.

Mr. McMichael presented a request for approval of a bid for the Lake Joy Road Phase 5 widening project.

Motion by Mr. McMichael, second by Mr. Thomson and carried unanimously by all to approve the award of the Lake Joy Road Phase 5 widening project to Robinson Paving Company of Columbus, GA in the amount of \$5,522,017. This is a 2012 SPLOST funded project.

Mr. Dunbar commented that the project timeline was approximately 20-months to completion.

Mr. McMichael presented a request for approval of three change orders to the Phase II Leachate Tank Repair project at the Landfill.

Motion by Mr. McMichael, second by Mr. Thomson and carried unanimously by all to approve Change Order #1 for \$4,300, Change Order #2 for \$3,000 and Change Order #3 for \$3,500 with Southeastern Tank, Inc. of Lebanon, TN on the Phase II Leachate Tank Repair at the Landfill. Contract time will increase by six days.

Ms. Robinson presented a request for approval of a License Agreement with Georgia Southern and Florida Railway Company.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Thomson and carried unanimously by all to approve Chairman Stalnaker signing a License Agreement with Georgia Southern and Florida Railway Company on the Bear Branch Water Supply and Treatment Facility project allowing for the bore under the railroad tracks necessary for installation of a new 16" water main connecting the treatment plant with Frito Lay, Middle Georgia Cogen and other Bonaire/Kathleen customers. A total payment per the agreement of \$22,200 will be made to the railroad. This project is funded by Water Capital Funds.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. McMichael and carried unanimously by all to approve the payment of the bills totaling \$1,499,434.01.

Mr. Thomson presented a request for the County to temporarily lower the water level of Houston Lake.

Chairman Stalnaker explained that this request comes from Mr. Byrd on behalf of Houston Lake, Inc. at the request of multiple property owners and per a long-standing memorandum of agreement which allows for the lowering of the lake level for maintenance purposes.

Motion by Mr. Thomson, second by Mr. McMichael and carried unanimously by all to approve the lowering of the water level of Houston Lake per the schedule outlined in a memorandum from County Engineer Ronnie Heald dated December 14, 2020.

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

Commissioner-elect Dan Perdue remarked that he and Mr. Byrd recently attended newly elected commissioner training where they were both challenged to leave their new positions better than they found them. He thanked Mr. Thomson and Mr. McMichael for establishing such a high bar to which they will have to live up to in their service. He remarked that the County will never be able to repay them for the service they have provided to its citizens.

Commissioner-elect Mark Byrd concurred with Mr. Perdue remarking that both Mr. Thomson and Mr. McMichael are leaving this County in a very fiscally healthy condition. He thanked both for their service and for their friendship.

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

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

Chairman Stalnaker recognized Mr. Maurice Braswell and remarked that it was good to see him back. He reminded everyone of the ground-breaking ceremonies for the new State Court expansion project which will be held at 1:00 p.m. at the courthouse and the Houston County Government Building project which will be held at 2:30 p.m. on Kings Chapel Road next to the Purchasing Warehouse. He hopes to call a special meeting for 10:30 a.m. on Wednesday, December 30th so the Board can vote on the approval of the Guaranteed Maximum Price (GMP) for each project before the end of the year. He then thanked both Mr. Thomson and Mr. McMichael for their friendship and all that they have done for the County over the years as selfless servants working for the greater good and County employees. He commented that he looks forward to their continued advice in the future. Lastly, he expressed appreciation for both their wives, Chris Thomson and the late Diane McMichael, who have not only supported both men but also contributed in their own way to the County as well.

Ms. Robinson remarked that she echoed Chairman Stalnaker's comments about Mr. McMichael and Mr. Thomson and wished them well in their well-deserved retirements. Both have worked hard and have remained dedicated to the citizens of Houston County and she hoped that they both are looking forward to new adventures and fun in the future.

Mr. Walker remarked that both men have been outstanding public servants not only to the citizens of the County but the community in general. Both will be missed as he considers the Board and County employees as one big extended family. He also thanked Mr. Byrd and Mr. Perdue.

Mr. Thomson thanked the Chairman and other commissioners commenting that his service on the Commission has been a wonderful experience. He commended Chairman Stalnaker for his leadership and service and thanked all citizens for voting for the various SPLOST programs over the years.

Mr. McMichael thanked Mr. Byrd and Mr. Perdue and thanked the citizens for electing him six times to the Board. He also expressed his appreciation for the SPLOST programs and the citizens support. During his service the County had three different Chairmen, Mr. Sherrill Stafford, Mr. Ned Sanders and currently Mr. Tommy Stalnaker. He expressed his appreciation for Chairman Stalnaker for his service to the community at the Public Works before he became the Chairman. He remarked that Mr. Dunbar has done a great job at Public Works since he became Director of Operations and remarked that Sandi Stalnaker has been a very valuable asset to the County through her service as Comptroller. He thanked all the employees of the County and expressed appreciation for the men and women at Robins Air Force Base as well.

Houston County Commissioners Meeting Continued from Page 1889

County Attorney Tom Hall, Director of Administration Barry Holland, Chief Building Inspector Tim Andrews, Director of Operations Robbie Dunbar, and Director of Purchasing Mark Baker each thanked Mr. McMichael and Mr. Thomson for their service and expressed appreciation for their guidance and friendship over the years.

Chairman Stalnaker remarked that he attended the Association of County Commissioners of Georgia (ACCG) Board of Managers meeting last week where they recognized five past presidents of the organization that are retiring this month from service including Mr. McMichael. He wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Motion to a
djourn by Mr. Walker, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously by all, meeting
adjourned.

Barry Holland
Director of Administration

Chairman

Commissioner

Commissioner

Commissioner

Commissioner