

Houston County Commissioners Meeting
September 17, 2024
Warner Robins, Georgia

The Houston County Board of Commissioners met in regular session at 5:00 pm on Tuesday, September 17, 2024, at the Houston County Annex in Warner Robins, 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 led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Rev. Andrew Howe of Mount Calvary Lutheran Church gave the Invocation and thanked the Commissioners for asking him to attend. He spoke about the Lutheran Church's origins and mentioned that next year, they will celebrate 45 years in Houston County. He spoke about the work his congregation is doing in the county: an after-school program to help children with homework, partnering with other food banks, and family support programs. He concluded by mentioning that while he is a transplant, both his children were born here in Houston County.

Each commissioner expressed appreciation to Rev. Howe for his service in the community and for coming to the meeting to give the invocation.

Motion by Mr. Talton, second by Mr. Byrd, and carried unanimously by all to approve the minutes from the special called session held on August 20, 2024, and the minutes from the September 3, 2024 meeting.

Ms. Robinson presented a request for approval of a quote to replace an inoperable backup generator at the Woodard Road Water Treatment Plant.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Gottwals, and carried unanimously by all to approve the quote of \$133,708 from ESSE Generac Industrial of Birmingham, Alabama, for one backup generator for the Woodard Road Water Treatment Plant. Estimated delivery is 38 to 40 weeks. Water Capital funds will fund this purchase.

Ms. Robinson presented a request from Purchasing to declare items surplus and schedule a public auction of said items. The public has been notified via newspaper advertisements (in the Houston Home Journal and the Macon Telegraph-Houston edition), county website postings, and prominent locations at the Purchasing Office, the Courthouse, the Government Building, and the Annex Building.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Byrd, and carried unanimously by all to approve declaring items as surplus and scheduling a Public Auction to sell the items. The auction will be held on Thursday, October 3, 2024, at 10:00 a.m. at the Houston County Warehouse, with a rain date of Thursday, October 10, 2024, at 10:00 a.m.

Chairman Perdue spoke about the list of vehicles being declared surplus and the County's fleet of vehicles. He said that the Purchasing Department would review the fleet to see if any vehicles were not seeing enough use. This could lead to a reduction in fleet size. He stated he would update the Board when Purchasing completed the review.

Ms. Robinson presented a request from Public Works to approve the GMP proposal for the Houston County Superior Court Modifications project.

Houston County Commissioners Meeting Continued from Page 423

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Talton, and carried unanimously by all to approve the Guaranteed Maximum Price proposal for \$512,251 for the Houston County Superior Court Modifications Project submitted by Parrish Construction Group, Inc., of Perry, Georgia, and authorize Chairman Perdue to sign the necessary GMP contract documents. This project will be paid for using reserve funds.

Chairman Perdue stated that he expected this project to grow through change orders. He clarified that the Superior Court needs renovations, and while contractors are on-site, they will undertake limited projects to address flooring, paint, and other maintenance tasks.

Mr. Gottwals presented a request from the Engineering Department for approval of a bid on the Intersection Improvements for South Houston Lake Road at Smithville Church Road project.

Motion by Mr. Gottwals, second by Mr. Byrd, and carried unanimously by all to approve the award of the bid on the Intersection Improvements for South Houston Lake Road at Smithville Church Road project for \$1,992,497.35 to the low bidder, C. W. Matthews Contracting Company of Bolingbroke, Georgia. The 2018 SPLOST will fund this project.

Chairman Perdue explained that the idea for this project started from an annexation request and the concerns of Commissioner Gottwals and citizens about traffic safety at this intersection and through traffic in surrounding neighborhoods. He also stated that it had been requested that any commercial business being built at the intersection use the shared access for traffic safety and to limit curb cuts on Houston Lake Road in that area. This issue has been addressed with the City of Warner Robins, who support the concept.

Mr. Gottwals presented the Engineering Department's request for the approval of a bid on the Davidson Road Paving project.

Motion by Mr. Gottwals, second by Ms. Robinson, and carried unanimously by all to approve the award of the bid on the Davidson Road Paving Project to Reeves Construction Company of Macon, Georgia, and to authorize the Accounting Department to make any necessary budget adjustments. This project, for \$1,093,245.31, will be funded by ARPA.

Chairman Perdue expressed appreciation for this project moving forward. He noted that the issues with Davidson Road and the right of way regarding the paving have been on the Board's radar for nearly 25 years.

Mr. Gottwals presented the Board of Elections' request to hire poll workers for the November 5, 2024, General Election.

Motion by Mr. Gottwals, second by Mr. Talton, and carried unanimously by all to approve hiring the following poll workers for the November 5, 2024, General Election, as well as the training and supplies, and for the Accounting Department to make all necessary budget adjustments:

| | | AMOUNT | TOTAL |
|-----|-------------------------------|----------|-------------|
| 17 | Managers (Precinct) | \$175.00 | \$2975.00 |
| 34 | Assistant Managers (Precinct) | \$125.00 | \$4250.00 |
| 103 | Clerks | \$115.00 | \$11,845.00 |
| 154 | Training | \$25.00 | \$3850.00 |
| 10 | Training (Backup Workers) | \$25.00 | \$250.00 |
| 5 | Janitors | \$15.50 | \$77.50 |
| 1 | Janitor | \$25.00 | \$25.00 |

Houston County Commissioners Meeting Continued from Page 424

| | | | |
|-------|---|----------|-------------|
| 334 | BMD (Ballot Marking Device) | \$2.00 | \$668.00 |
| 3 | Election Supply Load Out Help | \$75.00 | \$225.00 |
| 3 | Election Night Equipment Return Help | \$75.00 | \$225.00 |
| 3 | Election Night Check-In Clerks | \$75.00 | \$225.00 |
| 17 | Supply pick-up/return supplies (Managers) | \$10.00 | \$170.00 |
| 17 | Cell Phones | \$10.00 | \$170.00 |
| 2 | Ballot Scan Clerks | \$100.00 | \$200.00 |
| TOTAL | | | \$25,155.50 |

Chairman Perdue mentioned that they were in training as the meeting took place. He also stated that he had been by the Board of Elections earlier in the day to speak with Perry Youth Leadership about registering to vote.

Mr. Talton presented a request for approval of an Intergovernmental Agreement with the City of Perry that sets the conditions under which the County will provide emergency fuel assistance to the City of Perry in the case of a manmade or natural cause or enemy attack that disrupts the commercial fuel supply.

Motion by Mr. Talton, second by Ms. Robinson, and carried unanimously by all to approve the renewal of the Intergovernmental Agreement for the emergency use of the county fuel supply by the City of Perry. This renewal will expire on October 20, 2026.

Mr. Talton presented a request from the City of Perry to annex 42.89 acres on S. HWY 341.

Chairman Perdue opened the floor for public comments about the annexation. There being no comments, the meeting continued.

Motion by Mr. Talton, second by Mr. Byrd, and carried unanimously by all to concur with the annexation to the City of Perry, the 42.89 acres located on S. HWY 341, also known as Tax Parcel 000830 043000. The property is currently zoned County R-AG; the proposed zoning is City R-3.

Mr. Byrd commented that although the Perry Planning Commission voted on this action, the Perry Council has not yet acted on it.

Chairman Perdue stated that the change in zoning from County R-AG to City R-3 is a big step. Still, it is transitory to progress from commercial to R-1 as the property is adjacent to current commercial property, R-1 housing, and likely future commercial property.

Mr. Talton presented a request from the City of Perry to annex 22.5 acres located on Main Street. The Board previously concurred with this request at the August 15, 2023, meeting, with a zone change of County R-AG to City R-3. However, the city denied the application at its October 3, 2023, meeting.

Chairman Perdue opened the floor for Public Comment.

Mr. Sharples of Perry, Georgia, spoke of his concerns about traffic, pedestrian sidewalks, and safety.

With no further comments, the meeting continued.

Houston County Commissioners Meeting Continued from Page 425

Motion by Mr. Talton, second by Mr. Byrd, and carried unanimously by all to concur with the annexation to the City of Perry, the 22.5 acres located on Main Street, also known as Tax Parcel 000570 008000. The property is currently zoned County R-AG and the proposed zoning is City R-1.

Chairman Perdue told Mr. Sharples that he appreciated his comments and fully respects the neighborhood's concerns. He said the County would be willing and able to help the City of Perry and GDOT address those concerns through SPLOST projects. He stated that it would be difficult legally to deny an R1 zoning and that a legal challenge to a non-concurrence would likely be successful.

Mr. Byrd presented a request from the City of Warner Robins to annex the property at 1279 S. Houston Lake Road, containing 1.1 acres.

Chairman Perdue opened the floor for Public Comments.

There being no comments, the meeting continued.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Mr. Gottwals, and carried unanimously by all to concur with the annexation of the property at 1279 S. Houston Lake Road, also known as Tax Parcel 00077D 006000 containing 1.1 acres, stipulating that all County utilities remain with the County. The current Zoning is County C-2; the proposed Zoning is City C-2.

Chairman Perdue mentioned the annexations that occurred at the previous meeting in the surrounding area and the stipulations regarding the maintenance and control of Houston Lake Road. In response, the City of Warner Robins has asked for an IGA, which is currently being worked on by county and city attorneys. An IGA will put the City and County in clear compliance with Georgia law regarding right-of-way ownership when a city has annexed both sides of a road.

Mr. Byrd presented a request from the City of Warner Robins to annex property located at 120 Kennel Drive. This annexation will begin to clear up a large County island created in the past.

Chairman Perdue opened the floor for Public Comments.

David Jones, of Warner Robins, spoke about his concerns: having a multi-story complex near normal residential homes, the flood zone, overcrowded schools, and the extra traffic and noise.

With no further comments the meeting continued.

Mr. Byrd stated that before he offered a motion, he shared many of the concerns that have been discussed today, in particular, traffic on existing county roads that may not be equipped to handle that traffic at present.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Mr. Talton, and carried unanimously by all to concur with the annexation of 120 Kennel Drive, also known as Tax Parcel 000730 032000 containing 22.97 acres. The current Zoning is County R-1, and the proposed Zoning is City R-4, stipulating that no access to the property will be granted from Mauk Cir.

Houston County Commissioners Meeting Continued from Page 426

Mr. Gottwals asked Mr. Hall if the County would have legal ground to non-concur on this annexation.

Mr. Hall replied that it would be difficult to legally justify a non-concurrence, and that the City's review process would address building regulations and buffer requirements. He also mentioned that the city should address environmental concerns regarding the Bay Gall Creek and the floodplain during its review process.

Chairman Perdue spoke to Mr. Jones, saying that the County would share his concerns with the City and that the motion from Commissioner Byrd addressed many of the traffic concerns by ensuring that traffic from this development will not go through the surrounding neighborhood.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Ms. Robinson, and carried unanimously by all to approve the payment of the bills totaling \$2,766,590.96.

Chairman Perdue closed the new business portion of the meeting and opened Commissioner's Comments.

Mr. Talton recognized former Chairman Ned Sanders and his recent passing. He said he had no doubt in his mind this County wouldn't be where it is today without his leadership. He also recognized Ms. Graham with Perry Youth Leadership, saying it is a good program.

Mr. Gottwals mentioned that it was Constitution Day, otherwise known as Citizens Day and that it was also National Voter Registration Day. He stated he had spoken at Kings Chapel Elementary about Constitution Day earlier.

Mr. Byrd extended his thoughts and prayers to the Sanders family on the loss of former Chairman Ned Sanders. He said while he may have been small in stature, his presence was large, from the football field at the Citadel to his time of public service. He also welcomed Camryn Graham and her dad, Chris Graham. He commended Ms. Angie Gheesling with the Houston County Development Authority for her presentation at the Robins Regional Eggs and Issues.

Ms. Robinson said her only comment would be about former Chairman Ned Sanders. She said it was a privilege to serve with him and that he was a terrific chairman and a terrific person. She said he would be missed and wished his family well.

Chairman Perdue asked Mr. Dunbar his thoughts.

Mr. Dunbar said it was a privilege serving with Mr. Sanders, who was a man of integrity and character with a big heart.

Chairman Perdue asked Mr. Hall for his thoughts.

Mr. Hall replied that he, too, had enjoyed the time Mr. Sanders was chairman, saying he was meticulous about details and that it usually makes an attorney happy when there's attention to detail. He mentioned he shared a birthday with Mr. Sanders and that they always wished each other well on that day.

Chairman Perdue commented that as recently as six months ago, Mr. Sanders was still attending and participating in Middle Georgia Clean Air Coalition meetings, which is one of his legacies. Chairman Perdue stated that former Chairman Sanders had always been encouraging and kind to him and that he remained forward-looking and concerned about the future even in the later years of his life.

Houston County Commissioners Meeting Continued from Page 427

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

Robbie Dunbar
Director of Administration

Chairman

Commissioner

Commissioner

Commissioner

Commissioner