

Houston County Commissioners Meeting
May 21, 2024
Warner Robins, Georgia

The Houston County Board of Commissioners met in a regular session at 5:00 pm on Tuesday, May 21, 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.

County Administrator Robbie Dunbar gave the Invocation.

President of United Way of Central Georgia, Mr. George McCanless, Brandi Rozier and Amanda Morris from the United Way of Central Georgia, presented a ceremonial check to the Board of Commissioners in recognition of the results of Houston County's United Way campaign. With over \$46,000 raised by County employees in 2023, Mr. McCanless said that this was another way in which Houston County leads the way in Central Georgia. He then gave remarks of thanks and appreciation to Jake Cox, United Way Board Member, and campaign coordinator for the County, and to the Board of Commissioners for the great job and results of the campaign.

Ms. Robinson presented a request for approval of Change Order #3 on the State Court & Sheriff's Office Remodel.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Gottwals, and carried unanimously by all to approve the signing of Change Order #3 on the State Court & Sheriff's Office Remodel in the amount of \$125,121.21 bringing the total contract amount to \$6,422,577.10. This change order will be funded by 2018 SPLOST.

Chairman Perdue commented on the change in the scope of the project and mentioned that this change was made so the contractor would not have to come back out a second time and to make the remodeling project seamless.

Ms. Robinson presented a professional services agreement with SP Design Group for the architectural and engineering services for the Superior Court modifications project.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Byrd, and carried unanimously by all to approve the signing of an agreement with SP Design Group Architects & Engineers, Inc. of Macon, Georgia for the architectural and engineering services for the Superior Court modifications project in the amount of 6% of the cost of work and \$3,000 for a 3-D walk through. This agreement will be paid for by the Public Buildings Professional Services budget.

Chairman Perdue commented that this construction project in the Superior Court is for the addition of another Superior Court judge in Houston County which was approved recently by the Georgia General Assembly.

Ms. Robinson presented a request for approval of the award of the Construction Manager at Risk for the Superior Court modifications project.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Talton, and carried unanimously by all to approve the award of the Construction Manager at Risk for the Superior Court modifications project at the Houston County Courthouse to Parrish Construction Group of Perry, Georgia.

Houston County Commissioners Meeting Continued from Page 373

Chairman Perdue thanked Mr. Talton, Ms. Zimmerman, Mr. Phillips, Public Works, and Purchasing for their help in the selection process.

Mr. Talton presented a request for approval of three court reporter contracts.

Motion by Mr. Talton, second by Mr. Gottwals and carried unanimously by all to approve the signing of employment contracts with Ms. Joy Malone with an annual salary of \$69,500, Ms. Connie Montgomery with an annual salary of \$69,500, and Ms. Wendy Nelson with an annual salary of \$69,500. The contract terms for these will be July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025.

Mr. Talton presented a request to distribute \$2,000,000 of the General Fund Reserve Balance to the Development Authority of Houston County.

Motion by Mr. Talton, second by Mr. Byrd, and carried unanimously by all to approve the distribution of \$2,000,000 from the General Fund Reserve Balance to the Development Authority of Houston County.

Chairman Perdue mentioned the property this money would go towards paying off was the office park property at Booth Road and Hwy. 247. This property houses the Project Synergy offices and has helped Robins AFB with additional office space and software capabilities outside of the Base.

Mr. Byrd mentioned that this was a prime example of workforce development, support of Robins Air Force Base and existing industry.

Mr. Talton presented a request to distribute \$327,031 to Houston Healthcare for reimbursement of funds spent on two new ambulances.

Motion by Mr. Talton, second by Ms. Robinson, and carried unanimously by all to approve the distribution of \$327,031 from 2018 SPLOST fund to Houston Healthcare for reimbursement of funds spent on two new ambulances.

Chairman Perdue explained that these funds in support of Houston Healthcare were programmed into the 2018 SPLOST for this purpose.

Mr. Gottwals presented a request is to fill the vacant Equipment Operator position in Roads & Bridges.

Motion by Mr. Gottwals, second by Mr. Talton, and carried unanimously by all to approve the hiring of Mr. Corey Selmon to fill the vacant Equipment Operator position in Roads & Bridges at Grade 10 Step C. Staff have reviewed his qualifications, and he has the experience to merit the step and grade. The effective date will be May 22, 2024.

Motion by Mr. Gottwals, second by Mr. Byrd, and carried unanimously by all to approve the following Board appointments:

Library Board:

Jessica Perdue	07/01/2024 – 06/30/28
Jean Jones	07/01/2024 – 06/30/28
George Nunn	07/01/2024 – 06/30/28

Houston County Commissioners Meeting Continued from Page 374

Middle Flint Behavioral Healthcare Community Service Board:
 Stacy Bright 05/21/2024 – 09/14/2025
 (Unexpired Term of Sean Whilden)

Department of Family and Children Services Board:
 Mikki Quinones 07/01/2024 – 06/30/29

Region V EMS Board:
 Christopher Stoner 07/01/2024 – 06/30/27

Mental Health Developmental Disabilities & Addictive Diseases Advisory Council, Region 6
 Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities Advisory Committee:
 Stacey Bright 07/01/2024 – 12/31/2026

Mr. Gottwals presented a request for an additional day off on July 5, 2024 in conjunction with the regularly observed July 4th holiday.

Motion by Mr. Gottwals, second by Ms. Robinson, and carried unanimously by all to approve Friday, July 5, 2024 as a paid day off for Houston County employees. Shift workers scheduled to work those days will be given an additional day off at a later date with their department head's approval.

Chairman Perdue stated that when a holiday falls on a Thursday, consideration was given to having the next day considered a day off as well. He also explained that this was not done every year.

Mr. Byrd presented a request for approval of the increase in the County's total share on the HMGP 4579-0009 Grant caused by a clerical error on the initial award notification.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Mr. Talton, and carried unanimously by all to approve the \$16,392 increase in the County's total share of the HMGP 4579-0009 grant bringing the total to \$133,399. The County's portion will be funded by Water Capital Funds.

Chairman Perdue thanked Chief Stoner for his efforts in securing this grant and apologized for the mix up in the grant award and error made that was outside of his and the County's control.

Mr. Byrd commented on the good value this grant provides the County when comparing the value of the grant, \$409,800, and what the County's portion to pay is.

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

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Mr. Gottwals, and carried unanimously by all to approve the addition of property located at 122 Hunt Road, to serve O'Brien Farms Subdivision Phase 2, to the Water Purchase Agreement between the Houston County Board of Commissioners and The City of Warner Robins with the following 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.
- The issuance of a utility permit to the City of Warner Robins based on all conditions being met according to "Houston County Utility Accommodations".

Houston County Commissioners Meeting Continued from Page 375

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Mr. Gottwals, and carried unanimously by all to approve the payment of the bills totaling \$2,620,746.09.

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

Meg Mehserle spoke about her views on election integrity issues and her feelings about being let go as a poll worker from the Houston County Board of Elections.

Daryl Allen spoke of multiple issues that concerned him quoting the Declaration of Independence, Plato, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, C.S. Lewis, and others.

Mr. Gottwals spoke in response to Mr. Allen and commented that Mr. Allen had been given his cell phone number and asked to call him about his concerns with the County over a month ago. He also said that the conversation had yet to be initiated by Mr. Allen. He then spoke of C.S. Lewis saying that he was a fan and that he had named one of his children after him. Mr. Gottwals spoke of the negative things that were said about the commissioners, saying that there are some comments being made that can be ignored and should be ignored but that bringing a person's faith into it was not an appropriate thing to do.

Jackie Rozier spoke about elections; she offered her support to the Board of Commissioners on taking the recent appeals court decision to the Supreme Court and spoke about the additional day off given to County employees for July 5th.

James Ermachetck spoke about a recent experience he had at the Department of Labor offices in Houston County.

Sydney (no last name given) spoke about various issues of concern to her and in support of the comments made by Daryl Allen.

As there were no further comments Chairman Perdue closed Public Comments.

Chairman Perdue opened Commissioner's Comments.

Ms. Robinson commented on the interesting meeting, for the words of advice from those who gave public comments and for those who came to the meeting.

Mr. Byrd stated that he was thankful to serve on the Board and that the Board had such an open public comment period. He expressed appreciation to all of those in the community who live a life of service such as teachers, nurses, law enforcement officers and others who we recognized recently and throughout the year through the various appreciation weeks. He mentioned the upcoming Memorial Day that will be celebrated and encouraged everyone to remember those who serve in our military and those who made the ultimate sacrifice for our nation.

Chairman Perdue mentioned that he was glad to have County Attorney Tom Hall back after his successful surgery. He asked everyone to remember in their prayers County employee Terry Dietsch who suffered a recent health emergency. In closing he spoke about the comment that the Commissioners don't pay attention to public comments by saying that they are either reading material passed out by the speaker or taking notes on the comments being made.

Houston County Commissioners Meeting Continued from Page 376

Mr. Talton made no comments.

Mr. Gottwals replied to a comment made during Public Comments saying that his feelings weren't hurt, but that he is frustrated with the negativity and lack of civility during Public Comments. He also stated that he hoped that one-on-one conversations could be held, and common ground found.

Before adjournment, Mrs. Mehserle interrupted the meeting and requested to be allowed to continue her comments about elections in Houston County and investigations of the County's Board of Elections Office.

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

Robbie Dunbar
Director of Administration

Chairman

Commissioner

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