

Houston County Commissioners Meeting August 20, 2024 Warner Robins, Georgia

The Houston County Board of Commissioners met in a regular session at 5:00 pm on Tuesday, August 20, 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 Byrd led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Rabbi Elizabeth Bahar, of Temple Beth Israel, gave the Invocation and spoke about the Temple's history in Macon. She spoke about how the temple started in a room above a candy store in Macon in 1859 by 11 immigrants from Germany and France. She explained that Temple Beth Israel is the oldest synagogue in Georgia, outside of Savannah. The current location of Temple Beth Israel was built in 1902, and the fellowship participated in the civil rights movement in the 1960's. Rabbi Bahar concluded her comments by speaking on an antisemitic event that occurred in June of 2023 and the outpouring of unity in Middle Georgia for the synagogue.

Each board member expressed their appreciation for Rabbi Bahar's uplifting invocation, sharing the history of Temple Beth Israel and her message of optimism, and unity.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Mr. Talton, and carried unanimously by all to approve the minutes of the August 6, 2024 meeting.

Mr. Byrd presented a request for approval of a quote for furniture to be used in the new training room suite at the Houston County Annex.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Mr. Gottwals, and carried unanimously by all to approve the quote of \$33,115 from Phillips Furniture Outlet, Inc., of Warner Robins, Georgia. This quote includes furniture for the new annex training room, two new conference rooms, and a new break area. This purchase will be funded by reserve funds.

Mr. Byrd presented a request for a step increase in salary for Mr. Michael Ray at the Landfill. Mr. Ray obtained his Landfill Operator Certification, even though it is not a requirement of his current position.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Ms. Robinson, and carried unanimously by all to approve increasing Heavy Equipment Operator Michael Ray one step within his current pay grade to a Grade 13 Step G effective September 2, 2024. Also, for accounting to make any necessary budget adjustments.

Mr. Byrd expressed his appreciation to Mr. Ray for taking the initiative to obtain this certification.

Chairman Perdue commented that he has County employees seeking certifications, education and training that will improve their capability as an employee. Also, to reward this self-improvement, which benefits the County, with raises or promotions where possible.

Ms. Robinson presented a request from the City of Warner Robins to annex a portion of the property located at 417 Nelson Drive.

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Chairman Perdue opened the floor for Public Comments.

As there were no comments the meeting continued.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Byrd, and carried unanimously by all to concur with the annexation to the City of Warner Robins of 1.35 acres of the property located at 417 Nelson Drive, also known as tax parcel 00074E 170000. The current zoning of the property is County R-1, and the proposed zoning is City of Warner Robins C-2.

Ms. Robinson presented a request from the City of Warner Robins to annex 7 properties located near and on South Houston Lake Road.

Chairman Perdue opened the floor for Public Comments.

As there were no comments the meeting continued.

Chairman Perdue explained that a stipulation of concurrence with this annexation will be that this section of Houston Lake Road remain with the County until the County has completed the scheduled resurfacing of this road. Following the completion, Chairman Perdue stated that the City of Warner Robins take maintenance obligations of this section of Houston Lake Road as both sides of Houston Lake Road will in the City of Warner Robins.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Gottwals, and carried unanimously by all to concur with the annexations to the City of Warner Robins of the following properties:

Tax Parcel 00077D 062000 on Wrasling Way, containing 2.33 acres

Tax Parcel 00077D 019000 at 1276 South Houston Lake Road, containing 1.07 acres

Tax parcel 00077D 021000 at 1272 South Houston Lake Road, containing .51 acres

Tax parcel 000770 081000 located on Moran Street, containing .91 acres

Tax parcel 00077D 017000 at 1280 South Houston Lake Road, containing 1.01 acres

Tax parcel 00077D 018000 at 1278 South Houston Lake Road, containing 2.01 acres

Tax parcel 00077D 020000 at 1274 South Houston Lake Road, containing 1.03 acres

with the stipulation that a master meter be installed on the Houston County Water System to be individually metered by the City of Warner Robins and that the City of Warner Robins assume responsibility for maintenance, access control, improvements, and traffic operations on Houston Lake Road and its right-of-way from Cohen Walker Road to Sandy Run Creek at the completion of the County's current resurfacing project. These properties are currently zoned County C-2, and the proposed zoning is City of Warner Robins C-2.

Mr. Talton presented a request to authorize sending EPD a letter confirming that the proposed Construction and Demolition Expansion at the Houston County Landfill is consistent with the County's Solid Waste Management Plan.

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

Utility Director Terry Dietsch addressed the proposed expansion, indicating that the 44-acre expansion would extend the operational lifespan of the landfill by an additional 50 years. He stated both staff and consultants have expressed confidence that this expansion aligns with the County's Solid Waste Management Plan in terms of its location and site suitability.

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Chairman Perdue then stated that the County is not in the process of acquiring new property for the proposed expansion; instead, it is looking to enlarge the existing, smaller footprint of the C & D Landfill within the property already owned by the Board, a plan that has been in development for some time. He noted that the entire process is expected to take around five years due to the extensive permitting process required by the EPD. Additionally, Chairman Perdue praised Jeff Smith, the Solid Waste Superintendent, for achieving a perfect score during a recent EPD inspection of the C & D Landfill.

With no further comments, Chairman Perdue closed the Public Hearing and reopened the regular portion of the meeting.

Motion by Mr. Talton, second by Mr. Byrd, and carried unanimously by all to approve Chairman Perdue signing and sending the consistency determination letter to EPD regarding the proposed expansion of the construction and demolition landfill.

Mr. Talton presented a request for approval of a bid for a new Ford F-150 (or like model) with spray-in bedliner and trailer package for the Public Buildings Department.

Motion by Mr. Talton, second by Ms. Robinson, and carried unanimously by all to approve the purchase of one (1) new in-stock 2023 Ford F-150 V8 Super Crew 4x4 truck with a spray-in bed liner and trailer package from Brannen Motor Company of Unadilla, GA for \$45,000. This purchase will be funded by the 2018 SPLOST.

Mr. Gottwals presented a request to fill the vacant Heavy Equipment Operator position at the Landfill.

Motion by Mr. Gottwals, second by Mr. Talton, and carried unanimously by all to approve the hiring of DeAndrae Blassingame at a grade 13 Step C for the Heavy Equipment Operator position at the Landfill effective August 21, 2024. Also, for accounting to make any necessary budget adjustments. Personnel has reviewed the qualifications, and Mr. Blassingame does meet the requirements for the C Step.

Chairman Perdue stated that when an employee is hired at a step above the A step, based on experience or education, approval by the Commissioners is needed.

Motion by Mr. Gottwals, second by Ms. Robinson, and carried unanimously by all to approve the payment of the bills totaling \$4,653,222.23.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Gottwals, and carried unanimously by all to approve entering into executive session pertaining to O.C.G.A. § 50-14-2(1); Attorney-Client.

Chairman Perdue gavelled the Commissioners into an Executive Session.

Chairman Perdue gavelled the Commissioners meeting back into session from the executive session.

County Attorney Tom Hall explained that the Executive Session had to do with an animal cruelty case where the affected animals have to be boarded at the Warner Robins Animal Shelter at the expense of the County. He advised that this action was to file a petition with the courts to have the owner cover the costs of this boarding of the animals.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Byrd, and carried unanimously by all to file a petition with the courts to have the owner of an animal cruelty case cover the expenses encountered by the County for boarding of the animals.

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

Ms. Meg Mehserle spoke about election integrity issues and her time as a poll worker.

Mr. Daryl Allen spoke about many issues, including taxes, County purchases and donations, the Houston County School District and others.

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

Chairman Perdue opened Commissioner's Comments.

Mr. Gottwals spoke about the many positive and various actions the Board took to include the purchase of furniture for the new training room, the C&D landfill expansion and annexation of property into the City of Warner Robins. He closed by commenting on the effort it takes to run the County and thanked all the County employees who had a hand in developing and completing the agenda for each Commission meeting.

Ms. Robinson thanked everyone for attending.

Mr. Talton thanked all the County employees for their work getting the agenda ready and recognized Fire Chief Chris Stoner for taking an active part in fighting a recent fire with full gear on and being inside the structure that was on fire.

Mr. Byrd expressed his appreciation for the service of the County employees. He also commented on a recent ACCG training event where he heard the challenges that other counties in Georgia were facing which made him all the more appreciative to serve in a County that does not have the problems, he heard of that other Georgia counties do.

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

Robbie Dunbar
Director of Administration

Chairman

Commissioner

Commissioner

Commissioner

Commissioner

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EXECUTIVE SESSION AFFIDAVIT

STATE OF GEORGIA
COUNTY OF HOUSTON

AFFIDAVIT OF PRESIDING OFFICER

Dan Perdue, Chairman of the Houston County Board of Commissioners, being duly sworn, states under oath that the following is true and accurate to the best of his knowledge and belief:

1. The Houston County Board of Commissioners met in a duly advertised meeting on August 20, 2024.

2. During such meeting, the Board voted to go into executive session.

3. The executive session was called to order at 5:30 p.m.

4.

The subject matter of the closed portion of the meeting was devoted to the following matter(s) within the exceptions provided in the open meeting law:

X Consultation with the county attorney or other legal counsel to discuss pending or potential litigation, settlement, claims, administrative proceedings, or other judicial actions brought or to be brought by or against the county or any officers or employee or in which the county or any officer or employee may be directly involved as provided in O.C.G.A. § 50-14-2(1);

Discussion of tax matters made confidential by state law as provided by O.C.G.A. § 50-14-2(2) and (insert the citation to the legal authority making the tax matter confidential) _____;

Discussion or voting on:

_____ Authorizing a settlement as provided in O.C.G.A. § 50-14-3(b)(1)(A);

_____ Authorizing negotiations to purchase, dispose of, or lease property as

provided in O.C.G.A. § 50-14-3(b)(1)(B);

_____ Authorizing an appraisal as provided in O.C.G.A. § 50-14-3(b)(1)(C);

_____ Entering a contract for the purchase, disposal of, or lease of property as provided in O.C.G.A. § 50-14-3(b)(1)(D);

_____ Entering into an option to purchase, dispose of, or lease property as provided in O.C.G.A. § 50-14-3(b)(1)(E);

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_____ Discussion or deliberation on the appointment, employment, compensation, hiring, disciplinary action or dismissal, or periodic evaluation or rating of a county officer or employee as provided in O.C.G.A. § 50-14-3(b)(2);

_____ Interviewing candidates for executive positions as provided in O.C.G.A. § 50-14-3(b)(2);

_____ Other (describe the exemption to the open meetings law): _____ as provided in (insert the citation to the legal authority exempting the topic) _____.

5. _____ During the course of the closed session devoted to exempt topics, an incidental remark regarding a non-exempt topic or an attempt to discuss a non-exempt topic was made.

_____ The attempt was immediately ruled out of order and attempts to discuss same ceased immediately.

_____ The attempt was immediately ruled out of order. However, the comments did not cease, so the closed/executive session was immediately adjourned without discussion or action being taken regarding any non-exempt topic.

6. Minutes were taken of this meeting and will be filed and held for in camera inspection only.

This _____ day of August 2024.

Dan Perdue, Chairman
Houston County Board of Commissioners

Sworn to and subscribed
before me this _____ day of
August 2024.

Notary Public

My commission expires: _____