

**Houston County Commissioners Meeting
September 3, 2024
Perry, Georgia**

The Houston County Board of Commissioners met in regular session at 9:00 am on Tuesday, September 3, 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 Gottwals gave the invocation and then led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Colonel Craig Giles, Commander of the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) Aviation Division, spoke about his work at Robins Air Force Base. He mentioned that so much depot and repair work on airplanes took place at the base that the DLA located a site at Robins to handle the need for parts. He commented that this was the second time he had been stationed at Robins AFB, with the first being ten years ago with the J-STARS. He further stated that upon leaving the Air Force, he and his wife will retire to the area, having recently built their retirement home. He concluded his remarks by saying that out of the 14 duty stations he had been assigned to, the Houston County community was the most welcoming community for active-duty military personnel, in his opinion, and he greatly appreciated the community support for the military.

Each of the commissioners expressed their appreciation to Col. Giles for his service, sharing information about his career and military service and the critical work he does in support of the United States military.

Motion by Mr. Talton, second by Mr. Byrd, and carried unanimously by all to approve the minutes from the regular session held on August 20, 2024.

Chief Building Inspector Tim Andrews presented Special Exception Applications #2793 through #2796.

Chairman Perdue asked if applicant #2795 was the applicant who had previously been denied.

Mr. Andrews responded that the applicant had secured a commercial building for material delivery and employees to gather, so the objections have been resolved.

Chairman Perdue opened a Public Hearing.

Applicant #2793 was present with nothing further to add; there was no opposition.

Applicant #2794 was present with nothing further to add; there was no opposition.

Applicant #2795 was not present; there was no opposition.

Applicant #2796 was present and stated that all his business would be done away from his residence; there was no opposition.

Without further comments, Chairman Perdue closed the Public Hearing and reopened the regular portion of the meeting.

Motion by Mr. Talton, second by Mr. Gottwals, 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:

#2793	Larry & Anita Foreman	Executive Transport Services
#2794	Darius Gibson	Medical Transportation
#2795	Austin Clements & Baylee Irby	Fencing and Patio Business
#2796	John & Emily Gugino	Mobile Mechanic Business

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County Attorney Tom Hall made a blanket statement for the benefit of all applicants for Special Exceptions for home occupations: 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.

Mr. Andrews instructed those applicants whose applications were approved on the next step in getting their business license: go to the Commissioner's Office and apply for the license.

Mr. Andrews presented Special Exception #2797.

Chairman Perdue opened a Public Hearing.

Mr. Matt Beasley, of Silicon Ranch Corporation, spoke in favor of the development.

Mr. Ben Carr, a University of Georgia graduate student studying black bears in Middle Georgia, spoke in opposition to the development.

Mr. Raye Jones spoke in opposition to the development.

Mr. Ed Varner spoke in opposition to the development.

Mr. Bobby Tuggle spoke in opposition to the development.

Ms. Amanda Holmes spoke in opposition to the development.

Ms. Kathryn Fussell spoke in opposition to the development.

Ms. Margaret Jones spoke in opposition to the development.

Mr. Fletcher Sams spoke in opposition to the development.

Mr. John Colson spoke in opposition to the development.

Mr. Alex Morrow spoke in opposition to the development.

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

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Gottwals, and carried unanimously by all to disapprove the following Special Exception Applications:

#2797	Silicon Ranch Corporation	Solar Energy System
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Chairman Perdue closed the meeting for a five-minute comfort break.

Chairman Perdue called the meeting back to order.

Mr. Talton presented a request from the Engineering Department to enter into a supplemental service agreement with Saunders Engineering Consultants, Inc., for additional engineering services on the Wilson Road and Elberta Road Phase 3 Project.

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Motion by Mr. Talton, second by Mr. Byrd, and carried unanimously by all to approve the signing of a supplemental service agreement with Saunders Engineering Consultants, Inc., of Centerville, Georgia, in the amount of \$10,000.

Mr. Byrd commented that he appreciates the opportunity to perform value engineering on this project to save money.

Mr. Gottwals presented a request to acknowledge consent of an agreement between the City of Centerville and Houston County Sheriff Cullen Talton.

Motion by Mr. Gottwals, second by Ms. Robinson, and carried unanimously by all to approve the acknowledgment of consent of an agreement between the City of Centerville and Houston County Sheriff Cullen Talton for blood draws performed by CorrectHealth Houston, LLC.

Mr. Gottwals presented a request for approval of a Memorandum of Agreement between the Houston County Board of Commissioners and the Development Authority of Houston County. Per this understanding, the County will supply an employee to be an on-site maintenance person for the Development Authority. The Development Authority will reimburse the county for salary and benefits monthly.

Motion by Mr. Gottwals, second by Mr. Talton, and carried unanimously by all to approve the signing of a Memorandum of Agreement with the Development Authority of Houston County for the utilization of a Houston County employee.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Ms. Robinson, and carried unanimously by all to approve the following FY24 year-end budget adjustments:

FUND		DEPARTMENT	ADJUSTMENT
100	INCREASE	1300	\$283,423.00
100	INCREASE	1400	\$209,310.00
100	INCREASE	1512	\$278,645.00
100	INCREASE	1530	\$168,530.00
100	INCREASE	1555	\$1,157,150.00
100	INCREASE	1565	\$367,050.00
100	INCREASE	1595	\$1,250.00
100	INCREASE	2200	\$213,900.00
100	INCREASE	2300	\$43,250.00
100	INCREASE	2310	\$40,950.00
100	INCREASE	2320	\$16,450.00
100	INCREASE	2800	\$33,525.00
100	INCREASE	3320	\$185,550.00
100	INCREASE	3910	\$5,100.00
100	INCREASE	3920	\$65,750.00
100	INCREASE	3921	\$15,100.00
100	INCREASE	4100	\$90,800.00
100	INCREASE	5110	\$419,100.00
100	INCREASE	5115	\$65,000.00
100	INCREASE	5452	\$6,800.00
100	INCREASE	6100	\$6,750.00
100	INCREASE	7130	\$8,650.00
100	INCREASE	7200	\$84,668.00
100	INCREASE	7400	\$1,400.00
100	INCREASE	7520	\$1,998,900.00
100	INCREASE	9000	\$242,000.00
		TOTAL INCREASE	\$6,009,001.00

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FUND		DEPARTMENT	ADJUSTMENT
100	DECREASE	1110	\$180,000.00
100	DECREASE	1517	\$58,475.00
100	DECREASE	1535	\$172,325.00
100	DECREASE	1540	\$19,750.00
100	DECREASE	1545	\$186,975.00
100	DECREASE	1550	\$144,950.00
100	DECREASE	1551	\$5,800.00
100	DECREASE	1561	\$12,000.00
100	DECREASE	1599	\$962,272.00
100	DECREASE	2150	\$43,200.00
100	DECREASE	2155	\$233,054.00
100	DECREASE	2180	\$20,150.00
100	DECREASE	2210	\$19,500.00
100	DECREASE	2220	\$97,250.00
100	DECREASE	2400	\$461,475.00
100	DECREASE	2450	\$1,500.00
100	DECREASE	2600	\$298,350.00
100	DECREASE	2620	\$68,075.00
100	DECREASE	3300	\$373,200.00
100	DECREASE	3310	\$163,800.00
100	DECREASE	3325	\$92,400.00
100	DECREASE	3326	\$1,237,850.00
100	DECREASE	3600	\$78,000.00
100	DECREASE	3700	\$7,350.00
100	DECREASE	4200	\$535,800.00
100	DECREASE	4205	\$410,000.00
100	DECREASE	4250	\$98,500.00
100	DECREASE	4270	\$20,000.00
100	DECREASE	7525	\$7,000.00
		TOTAL DECREASE	\$6,009,001.00

FUND		DEPARTMENT	ADJUSTMENT
540	INCREASE	REVENUE	\$194,176.00
540	INCREASE	4530	\$194,176.00

FUND		DEPARTMENT	ADJUSTMENT
505	INCREASE	REVENUE	\$125,995.00
505	INCREASE	4400	\$125,995.00

Chairman Perdue thanked the entire accounting staff for preparing this year-end budget adjustment and their work compiling this information for the upcoming audit.

Mr. Byrd presented a request for approval of the signing of the Contractor Agreement with Ryland Environmental, Inc.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Mr. Talton, and carried unanimously by all to approve the signing of a Contractor Agreement with Ryland Environmental, Inc. of Dublin, Georgia, for the collection of solid waste and recyclable materials. The agreement will begin on July 1, 2025, and continue for a five-year period with two optional service years.

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Ms. Robinson presented a request for approval of a memorandum of understanding with the City of Warner Robins.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Byrd, and carried unanimously by all to approve the signing of a memorandum of understanding with the City of Warner Robins for the 2024 SPLOST Project to construct a new animal control shelter.

Ms. Robinson presented a request from Public Works for approval of a bid on one round bale processor (hay blower) for use at the Landfill.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Gottwals, and carried unanimously by all to approve the bid on one round bale processor (hay blower) from Lasseter Tractor Company of Unadilla, Georgia in the amount of \$49,350. This purchase will be paid for from Solid Waste Capital Funds.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Talton, and carried unanimously by all to approve the payment of the bills totaling \$4,712,788.65.

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

Margaret "Meg" Mehserle spoke about her views on election integrity and an article that ran in a local newspaper.

With no further comments, Chairman Perdue closed Public Comments.

Chairman Perdue then opened Commissioner Comments.

Mr. Talton thanked everyone for attending. He spoke about all the work behind the scenes that happens in order to bring these meetings together. He thanked County staff for their work in preparing the documents for the meeting.

Mr. Gottwals echoed Mr. Talton and then quoted Winnie the Pooh saying, "*How lucky I am to have something that makes saying goodbye so hard.*" He spoke about the County and stewardship. He spoke about Silicon Ranch and stated that he was on the phone for about three hours learning more about the project, and what it would mean for the County. He concluded that there are some special things that we need to keep intact about our County, including the land, wildlife and, most importantly, the people in Houston County.

Mr. Byrd commented on the difficulty of this meeting, addressing complex issues such as land use, property rights, and zoning. He thanked the Board of Zoning & Appeals for their hard work. He also thanked the citizens in favor of and against the development for their respectful and fact-based dialog. He commended the board on balancing property owner rights, public opinion, and environmental concerns, saying it is difficult and complex. He then commented on the naming of the dining hall at the hospital after Ed Dyson, the former Chairman of the Hospital Authority. He concluded by repeating a speaker's comment that repeating an untrue statement does not make it true; it makes it propaganda.

Ms. Robinson commented that balance of what is best overall for the County and the people of the County must be the focus when making decisions like were made by the Board today. She further stated that she felt it was not appropriate to move forward, with the information available, regarding the Silicon Ranch project and the company. She concluded by thanking everyone for their comments and demeanor.

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Chairman Perdue thanked everyone for attending and commented that his daughter Rabun was in attendance as part of her Perry Youth Leadership class requirement. He stated that the requirement was to participate in a County Commission or City Council meeting, and she had chosen the Commissioner's meeting.

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

Robbie Dunbar
Director of Administration

Chairman

Commissioner

Commissioner

Commissioner

Commissioner