

**Houston County Commissioners Meeting  
October 1, 2024  
Perry, Georgia**

The Houston County Board of Commissioners met in regular session at 9:00 am on Tuesday, October 1, 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 Byrd gave the Invocation.

Commissioner Talton led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Perdue announced that there would be a Houston County Comprehensive Plan meeting immediately after the Board meeting, inviting those interested to stay for that meeting.

Motion by Mr. Talton, second by Ms. Robinson, and carried unanimously by all to approve the minutes from the September 17, 2024, meeting.

Chairman Perdue recognized Judge Sammons, acknowledging her need to leave for a court proceeding and her interest in an item on the agenda. He asked Mr. Gottwals to proceed with presenting item number eight to allow Judge Sammons to make her scheduled proceeding.

Mr. Gottwals presented a request from the Magistrate Court to fill the vacant Deputy Clerk position.

Motion by Mr. Gottwals, second by Mr. Byrd, and carried unanimously by all to approve hiring Adrienne Kirkman to fill the vacant Deputy Clerk position in the Magistrate Court at grade 14 step C, effective October 2, 2024. Staff has reviewed her qualifications, and she meets the C-step requirements.

Judge Sammons expressed her appreciation to the Board for filling this position at the Magistrate Court.

Chairman Perdue expressed his appreciation for the Magistrate Court and their work.

Chief Building Inspector Tim Andrews presented Special Exception Applications numbers 2798 through 2805.

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

Applicant #2798 was present with nothing further to add; there was no opposition.  
Applicant #2799 was present with nothing further to add; there was no opposition.  
Applicant #2800 was present with nothing further to add; there was no opposition.  
Applicant #2801 was present with nothing further to add; there was no opposition.  
Applicant #2802 was present with nothing further to add; there was no opposition.  
Applicant #2803 was present with nothing further to add; there was no opposition.  
Applicant #2804 was present with nothing further to add; there was no opposition.  
Applicant #2805 was present with nothing further to add; there was no opposition.

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

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Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Ms. Robinson, 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:

#2798	Johnnie Robinson	Automotive Detailing Business
#2799	Alejandro Cabrera	Landscaping & Brush Clearing
#2800	Loni McGehee	Educational Services
#2801	Jay Barecky	Construction Business
#2802	Marco Antonio Rios & Sara Diaz	Framing Business
#2803	James Wicker	Pool Construction Business
#2804	Michael Anderson	Locksmith Business
#2805	Johnny & Cindy Ross	Hand Sewn Gifts & Home Accessories

Mr. Andrews instructed the approved applicants that the next step in getting their business license was to go to the Commissioner's Office and apply for it.

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.

Chairman Perdue recognized guest speakers Col. Sherry Graham and CMSgt. Lloyd Morales.

Col. Graham spoke about her military career and work as Vice Wing Commander of Robins Air Force Base. She explained that she was new to Robins Air Force Base and the Houston County Community arriving only 90 days ago. She spoke of her 22 years of service, three daughters, and three combat tours overseas. In closing, she thanked the Board for the invitation to speak, the strong community support she has felt so far, and the ability to engage with those she has previously served with during her military career who have chosen to retire here in Houston County.

CMSgt. Morales, who accompanied Col. Graham, is the Command Chief of the 78th Air Base Wing at Robins. He spoke about his career, saying that he comes from the field of logistics and that it was good to be working in his field again. He stated that he is originally from New York and has served multiple combat tours overseas. He closed by thanking the Board of Commissioners and the Houston County community for their strong support of the military personnel stationed at Robins Air Force Base.

The Commissioners expressed their appreciation for Col. Graham's and CMSgt. Morales' service and for their attendance at the meeting.

Chairman Perdue commented that in speaking to Col. Reese, the 78th ABW Commander, he was challenged and excited by the fresh perspective that Col. Graham and CMSgt. Morales have brought to the 78th ABW and Robins Air Force Base. He finished by saying that the Board of Commissioners was here to assist them in any way possible.

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Mr. Byrd presented an Intergovernmental Agreement between the 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 signing of an Intergovernmental Agreement with the City of Warner Robins facilitating the care and maintenance of Houston Lake Road from Sandy Run Creek to Cohen Walker Drive upon the completion of the County's resurfacing project.

Chairman Perdue commented that this was the agreement mentioned two meetings ago, which addresses the maintenance of Houston Lake Road in the specified section due to the City of Warner Robins annexing several properties along both sides of the road.

Mr. Byrd presented a Memorandum of Understanding between the Board of Commissioners and the City of Warner Robins, allowing the County to connect to the City's fiber network to upgrade the Emergency Services Records Management Server connection.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Mr. Talton, and carried unanimously by all to approve the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with The City of Warner Robins, allowing the County to connect to the City's fiber network. Per the agreement, each party will bear the costs for maintaining and operating their respective infrastructure.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Byrd, and carried unanimously by all to approve the appointment of Ms. Elizabeth Jones to the Warner Robins Area Transportation Study (WRATS) Citizens Advisory Committee to fill the unexpired term of Mr. Van Herrington. Ms. Jones will begin a new four-year term at the March 6, 2025, meeting of the WRATS Citizens Committee.

Chairman Perdue explained that Ms. Jones will be a voting member at the November meeting to fill Mr. Van Herrington's unexpired term and begin a new four-year term in March.

Ms. Robinson presented a request for approval of a bid on ten new in-stock 2025 Ford Police Interceptors.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Gottwals, and carried unanimously by all to approve the bid from Phil Brannen Ford of Perry, Georgia, on ten new in-stock 2025 Ford Police Interceptors to be used in the Patrol and Traffic Divisions of the Sheriff's Department for \$49,200 per truck. The 2018 SPLOST will fund this purchase of \$492,000.

Chairman Perdue thanked Purchasing Director Vanessa Zimmerman for locating these vehicles for the Sheriff's Department.

Ms. Robinson presented an Independent Contractor Agreement with Attorney Lauren Deal to replace Mr. Genghis Shakhan for work with the Juvenile Court.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Byrd, and carried unanimously by all to approve signing an independent contractor agreement with Attorney Lauren Deal to start on October 11, 2024, and end June 30, 2025, for \$25,215.14. This 9-month term is to be paid as follows: \$1,881.78 for October, \$2,916.66 for November through and including May, and \$2,916.74 for June.

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Mr. Gottwals presented a request to fill the Senior Water Clerk position in the Perry office of the Water Department.

Motion by Mr. Gottwals, second by Mr. Talton, and carried unanimously by all to approve hiring Tierney Nicole Hannula to fill the Senior Clerk position in the Water Department at grade 12 step B effective October 2, 2024. Staff have reviewed her qualifications, and she meets the B Step requirements.

Chairman Perdue stated that Ms. Hannula had previously worked at Public Works in the Water Department and that having her back was good.

Mr. Gottwals presented a request for approval to enter into an agreement with the Georgia Environmental Protection Division for a scrap tire amnesty event.

Motion by Mr. Gottwals, second by Ms. Robinson, and carried unanimously by all to approve signing a Local Government Scrap Tire Abatement Reimbursement Program Agreement with the Georgia Environmental Protection Division for a tire amnesty event on April 25 and 26, 2025. The County will receive reimbursement of up to \$48,256 from the EPD for the event.

Chairman Perdue thanked Utility Director Terry Dietsch and Landfill Superintendent Jeff Smith for their help with this event.

Mr. Talton presented an option to purchase a portion of the property at 2510 Hwy 127, Perry, Georgia, from the Hospital Authority of Houston County.

Chairman Perdue asked County Attorney Tom Hall whether any Commissioners needed to recuse themselves from voting as three serve on the Hospital Authority.

County Attorney Tom Hall advised the Commissioners that they could realize no personal gain with this item; therefore, recusal was unnecessary.

Motion by Mr. Talton, second by Mr. Byrd, and carried unanimously by all to approve the signing of an option to purchase a portion of the land located at 2510 HWY 127, Perry, Georgia, also known as Tax Parcel OP0490 017000.

Chairman Perdue explained that this item was only an option to purchase and that a test well would need to be constructed, along with other testing, before the Board could vote on proceeding with a purchase.

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

Zoning Appeals Board

Arthur Clarke                      06/06/24 through 06/05/2028

Planning & Zoning Board

Dr. Holcomb                      09/07/24 through 09/06/2028  
 Ty Diamond                      09/07/24 through 09/06/2028  
 Zach Ivestor                      09/07/24 through 09/06/2028

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Commissioner Talton expressed his appreciation for these individuals and their willingness to serve.

Motion by Mr. Talton, second by Ms. Robinson, and carried unanimously by all to approve the payment of the bills totaling \$5,211,485.46.

Chairman Perdue opened the floor for Public Comments.

Ms. Margaret Mehserle spoke about her concerns regarding election integrity and her desire for all elections to be run on hand-marked paper ballots.

Mr. Michael Hatcher spoke about the Warner Robins Blight Task Force and inquired about the Houston County Land Bank Authority. He closed by recognizing Mr. Drew Bell, who accompanied him.

Chairman Perdue recognized Director of Operations Brian Jones as the chairman of the Land Bank Authority and suggested they connect after the meeting.

Mr. Tim Andrews thanked the Chairman and Board for approving the appointments to the Zoning and Appeals Board and Planning & Zoning Board during the meeting and complimented the Zoning Board members for their work and commitment.

Without further comments, the Chairman closed Public Comments and opened Commissioner Comments.

Mr. Byrd expressed his thanks that Houston County was spared from the damage brought to other communities in Georgia by Hurricane Helene. He then congratulated the Houston County School District for the ribbon cutting of the new Matt Arthur Primary School and Feagin Middle School, along with its principal, Mark Sams, for being awarded the National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence, one of only ten schools in Georgia. He concluded by commenting on the several approved agenda items that had to do with cooperation and how that was the secret ingredient to the success of this community.

Mr. Talton thanked everyone for attending. He then thanked Mr. Hatcher and Mr. Bell for their presence and efforts to enhance the community. Additionally, he addressed Hurricane Helene, thanking staff for their readiness and willingness to take on the task and mentioning how grateful he was to live in a community that comes together to assist those in need.

Ms. Robinson thanked everyone for attending, and for the support of the community. She expressed her gratitude that Houston County made it through Hurricane Helene with minor damage compared to other locations in Georgia.

Mr. Gottwals spoke about the grief that many people are facing due to the damage caused by Hurricane Helene. He expressed his thanks for the change in the hurricane's trajectory and said that we should all feel blessed.

Chairman Perdue apologized to the Commissioners and those in attendance for losing his decorum during Public Comments. He concluded by saying he was thankful that everyone in the room, including himself, would answer to only one person one day.

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

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Robbie Dunbar  
Director of Administration

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Chairman

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Commissioner

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