

**Houston County Commissioners Meeting**  
**January 21, 2025**  
**Warner Robins, Georgia**

The Houston County Board of Commissioners, due to inclement weather, met in regular session at 12:00 p.m., instead of 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, January 21, 2025, at the Houston County Annex in Warner Robins, Georgia. Chairman Perdue presided, and Commissioners Byrd, Gottwals, and Robinson were present. County Attorney Tom Hall, Director of Administration Robbie Dunbar, and Director of Operations Brian Jones were also present. Commissioner Talton was not in attendance.

Commissioner Robinson led those in attendance in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Perdue gave the invocation.

Chairman Perdue explained that the scheduled Employee Service Recognition Presentation was postponed due to the inclement winter weather.

Jim Marquardt, Perry-Houston County Airport Manager, gave an update on the airport. He stated that a \$956,000 south apron project was underway that would create eight spaces for airplanes to park. Additional projects he spoke about included: the construction of new T-Hangars for 14 additional aircraft, Alpha taxi way repairs, and additional corporate hangars being built. He reported that trees on two sides of the airport are encroaching on takeoff and landings and will be cut down or trimmed and that the Airport's 10-year ALP plan (Airport Layout Plan) will need to be updated sooner than scheduled with the FAA due to the growth of the Airport. He concluded his remarks by saying that based on the number of takeoffs and landings at the airport the FAA has upgraded the Airport to that of a regional airport.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Gottwals, to approve the minutes from the January 7, 2024, meeting. Upon voting, Ms. Robinson, Mr. Gottwals, and Chairman Perdue voted yes. Motion carried.

Director of Administration Robbie Dunbar read the first reading of the alcohol license application for Monica Kennebrew. The second reading, and Public Hearing will take place during the February 4th, 2025 Commissioners' meeting, at which time action will be taken by the Board.

Mr. Byrd presented a request for approval of the emergency procurement of six new HVAC units for the Magistrate Court.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Mr. Gottwals, to approve award of the bid of 6 new HVAC Units from Wilson Bryant Air Conditioning of Macon, Georgia for the price of \$57,975.00. This purchase will be paid out of the 2018 SPLOST. Upon voting, Mr. Byrd, Mr. Gottwals, and Ms. Robinson voted yes. Motion carried.

Chairman Perdue explained that, in addition to the units needing repair, it was crucial to purchase new units now before a transition to a new coolant standard takes place. This would ensure that these new units use the same coolant type as other systems in the county.

Ms. Robinson presented a request for approval of a bid on one new in-stock Dodge Durango to be used as an admin SUV at the Detention Center.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Byrd, to approve award of the bid on one new in stock 2023 Dodge Durango from Woody Folsom Chrysler Dodge Jeep Ram, Inc of Baxley, Georgia in the amount of \$43,000. This purchase will be funded by 2018 SPLOST. Upon voting, Ms. Robinson, Mr. Byrd, and Mr. Gottwals voted yes. Motion carried.

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Chairman Perdue stated that the County prefers to buy from local dealers, but in this case, the need for an immediate replacement required going with a dealer out of the area who had a vehicle readily available that met the required specifications. He also expressed his appreciation to the Purchasing Department staff for locating a vehicle that would meet the needs and requirements of the Detention Center.

Ms. Robinson presented a request for the reclassification of the current investigator position and the addition of two new administrative positions in the Fire Department.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Gottwals, to approve reclassification of the Investigator Position, #2060 (Grade 19) to Deputy Chief – Prevention (Grade 23) and adding a Deputy Chief – Training, position #2070 (Grade 23) and Captain – Prevention position #2071 (Grade 19), to be effective February 3, 2025. Also, for accounting to make all necessary budget adjustments. Upon voting, Ms. Robinson, Mr. Gottwals, and Mr. Byrd voted yes. Motion carried.

Chairman Perdue explained that he, Fire Chief Chris Stoner, Director of Administration Robbie Dunbar, and Personnel Director Ken Carter all discussed this plan and found that revenue in the Fire Fund was available to support these changes.

Ms. Robinson presented a request for approval of a pay matrix for the Fire Department to encourage advanced training and certification for Houston County Fire Fighters.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Byrd, to approve a pay matrix for the Houston County Fire Department that would award a step increase once a year for each certification or advanced training completed to improve retention and encourage advanced training of Houston County Fire Fighters effective February 3, 2025. Also, for accounting to make any necessary budget adjustments. Upon voting, Ms. Robinson, Mr. Byrd, and Mr. Gottwals voted yes. Motion carried.

Chairman Perdue invited Fire Chief Chris Stoner to comment about this change.

Chief Stoner thanked Chairman Perdue and the Board and explained that this is the culmination of a lot of work and input toward the idea of how to recognize and reward those firefighters who increased their abilities and knowledge through additional education and certifications. Chief Stoner stated that this will help greatly with the recruitment and retention of firefighters and will also increase the service level of the Houston County Fire Department for County residents.

Chairman Perdue thanked all the firefighters who were present at the meeting and stated that this move goes along with his goal of department heads finding ways to reward employees who make themselves more valuable to Houston County.

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

Motion by Mr. Gottwals, second by Ms. Robinson, to approve hiring Mr. Darrien Lester for the vacant equipment operator position in the Roads and Bridges Department at Grade 10-B step based on his experience, effective January 21, 2025. Upon voting, Mr. Gottwals, Ms. Robinson, and Mr. Byrd voted yes. Motion carried.

Mr. Gottwals presented a request to reclassify one Secretary position (009) from Grade 8 to a Secretary II position (1007) Grade 11 in the District Attorney's Office.

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Motion by Mr. Gottwals, second by Mr. Byrd, to approve reclassification of a position in the District Attorney's Office from Secretary at a Grade 8 to Secretary II at a Grade 11, effective February 3, 2025. Also, for accounting to make any necessary budget adjustments. Upon voting, Mr. Gottwals, Mr. Byrd, and Ms. Robinson voted yes. Motion carried.

Chairman Perdue thanked DA Edwards for finding a way to make this reclassification in a budget-neutral manner.

Mr. Gottwals presented a request for a 3% salary adjustment.

Motion by Mr. Gottwals, second by Ms. Robinson, to approve a 3% salary adjustment for all merit system employees, full-time employees of all constitutional officers who are eligible for merit adjustments, full-time county elected and appointed officials, and salary adjustments on those eligible full-time employees receiving county supplements. Also, for accounting to make any necessary adjustments.

Director of Administration Robbie Dunbar commented that Mr. Gottwals' motion needed to be amended to reflect the effective date of this salary adjustment request, which would be February 3rd, 2025.

Chairman Perdue asked Mr. Gottwals to amend his motion to reflect an effective date of February 3rd, 2025, for this salary adjustment to take place.

Motion by Mr. Gottwals, second by Ms. Robinson, to approve a 3% salary adjustment for all merit system employees, full-time employees of all constitutional officers who are eligible for merit adjustments, full-time county elected and appointed officials, and salary adjustments on those eligible full-time employees receiving county supplements to be effective February 3, 2025. Also, for accounting to make any necessary adjustments. Upon voting, Mr. Gottwals, Ms. Robinson, and Mr. Byrd voted yes. Motion carried.

Mr. Byrd expressed his appreciation to all the County employees for the work they do each day.

Chairman Perdue echoed Mr. Byrd's comments and advised that the sound financial condition of Houston County made this salary adjustment for County employees possible.

Mr. Byrd presented a request for approval of Intergovernmental Agreements with the City of Centerville, The City of Perry, The City of Warner Robins, and the Houston County Board of Elections, for the conduct of city elections.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Mr. Gottwals, to approve signing Intergovernmental Agreements with Houston County Board of Elections, The City of Warner Robins, The City of Perry, and The City of Centerville for the conduct of city elections for the 2025 election year.

Mr. Byrd commented that these agreements are a prime example of cooperation among the local governments in Houston County.

Chairman Perdue advised that this move provides clarity to citizens by having the same voting locations utilized for both city and county elections.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Ms. Robinson, to approve the payment of the bills totaling \$2,627,787.36. Upon voting, Mr. Byrd, Ms. Robinson, and Mr. Gottwals voted yes. Motion carried.

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The Chairman closed the regular portion of the meeting and opened the floor for Public Comments.

As there were no Public Comments, the Chairman opened the floor Commissioner's Comments.

Mr. Byrd expressed his appreciation for the work of all Houston County employees and recognized all the Houston County firefighters present in the meeting for what they do each day. He also thanked them for the work and help they will provide in the coming days with the incoming winter storm. He concluded his comments by requesting that everyone keep Commissioner Talton in their thoughts and prayers due to his accident.

Chairman Perdue commented on the fact that yesterday was day in which Martin Luther King, Jr. was recognized. He asked everyone to keep the fire fighters and all public safety officials in their prayers for the next 48 hours with the incoming winter storm. He next spoke about the 4 P's of winter weather, to check on people, your pets, your pipes and your plants during extremely cold weather.

Ms. Robinson thanked everyone for attending, the firefighters for being present, and Chief Stoner for the excellent work he is doing. She then commented on the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday and the presidential inauguration that both occurred yesterday and said it was an honor to serve the residents of Houston County.

Mr. Gottwals commented about the inspiring presidential inauguration that took place yesterday and that the patriotism that was on display in Washington, D.C., yesterday was the same level of patriotism felt and expressed each day in Houston County.

Motion by Mr. Gottwals, second by Mr. Byrd, to approve adjourning the meeting. Upon voting, Mr. Gottwals, Mr. Byrd, and Ms. Robinson voted yes. Motion carried.

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Robbie Dunbar  
Director of Administration

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Chairman

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Commissioner

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Commissioner

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Commissioner  
Commissioner Talton was not in  
Attendance so does not sign

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Commissioner