

Houston County Commissioners Meeting
February 4, 2025
Perry, Georgia

The Houston County Board of Commissioners met in regular session at 9:00 a.m., on Tuesday, February 4, 2025, at the Houston County Courthouse in Perry, Georgia. Chairman Perdue presided, and Commissioners Byrd, Gottwals, Robinson and Talton were present. County Attorney Tom Hall, Director of Administration Robbie Dunbar, and Director of Operations Brian Jones were also present.

Chairman Perdue gave the invocation.

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

CMSgt. Ronnie Stevens, from the 116th Operations Group, gave a brief history of his military career. He spoke about the Joint Stars platform and the transition of the 116th to flying the command-and-control aircraft called the Kingpin, remote piloted aircraft, crypto intelligence and cyber operations warfare. He also spoke about the support given by the 116th in support of humanitarian assistance to Georgia residents affected last year by Hurricane Helene, and support of public safety efforts through helicopter and personnel transport and response. In closing, CMSgt. Stevens introduced his wife, Anna, a nurse at Navicent hospital who accompanied him to the meeting and stated they and their three children have lived in Houston County for 24 years.

Each of the commissioners expressed their appreciation for CMSgt. Steven's service, and the critical work he does in support of the United States military.

Chairman Perdue thanked CMSgt Stevens for the help and response by the 116th in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene.

Chairman Perdue introduced Houston County Extension Coordinator & Area Livestock Agent Brandi McGonagill to give an update on the Houston County Extension Office.

Ms. McGonagill gave a presentation and then introduced several staff members: Ag & Natural Resources Agent Morgan Grizzle, County Extension Agent and FACS Coordinator La Keshia Levi, Houston County 4-H Agent Samantha Price and Houston County 4-H Educator Noah Shedd. Each staff member gave an overview of their work during this past year and highlighted many of the school activities, outreach opportunities and community involvement opportunities that each had available or participated in.

Mr. Talton said the education in agriculture for students in Houston County schools was a good influence.

Ms. Robinson commented on the wide scope of work and education that the Extension Office performs.

Chairman Perdue thanked the Extension Office staff for their work and commented on the wide range of work their office handles.

In a final comment, Brandi McGonagill expressed her thanks to the Board for their help in building the outdoor classroom which she says is used weekly.

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Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Ms. Robinson, to approve the minutes from the January 21, 2024, meeting. Upon voting Mr. Byrd, Ms. Robinson, and Mr. Gottwals voted yes. Motion carried. Mr. Talton abstained because he was absent from the meeting on the 21st.

Director of Administration Robbie Dunbar gave the second reading of the alcohol license application for Monica Kinnebrew.

Chairman Perdue opened a Public Hearing on the alcohol license for Monica Kinnebrew at 2802 US Hwy 41 S. in Elko.

As there were no comments, Chairman Perdue closed the Public Hearing and reopened the regular portion of the meeting.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Byrd, and carried unanimously by all to approve the alcohol license for the sale of Beer/Wine for off premise consumption to Monica Kinnebrew for the store located at 2802 US Hwy 41 S. Elko, Georgia.

Building Inspection & Planning/Zoning Assistant Rebecca Kidd presented Special Exception Applications #2817, and #2820 through #2831.

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

Applicant #2817 was not present as the item was tabled.

Applicant #2820 was present, there was no opposition.

Applicant #2821 was present and spoke in favor of his application, there was no opposition.

Applicant #2822 was not present as the item was withdrawn.

Applicant #2823 was present, there was no opposition.

Applicant #2824 was present, there was no opposition.

Applicant #2825 was present and spoke in favor of his application, also speaking in favor were Bob Stewart, Jim Taylor, and Teresa Hathaway. Speaking in opposition were Bill Curtis and Vicki Tucker.

Applicant #2826 was not present as the item was tabled.

Applicant #2827 was present, there was no opposition.

Applicant #2828 was present, there was no opposition.

Applicant #2829 was present, there was no opposition.

Applicant #2830 was present, there was no opposition.

Applicant #2831 was not present as the item was withdrawn.

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

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.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, 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:

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#2820	Stanley Johnson Jr.	Apparel & Vinyl Print Business
#2821	Jeremy Yuill	Kids Entertainment Business
#2823	Jeffrey Lake & Megan Norman	Landscaping Business
#2824	Andrea Brasier	Artwork & Writing Business
#2827	Trenton & Juamona Simmons	Medical Case Management
#2828	Kaleb Turner	Land Clearing & Dirt Work
#2829	Andy & Lynn Moss	Hair Salon Business
#2830	Grayland & Tatiana Allen	Graphic Design Business

and to table the following Special Exception Applications:

#2817	Dylan & Hannah Swafford	Landscaping Business
#2825	James Pierce	Construction Business
#2826	Timothy Winn	Automobile Programming & Accessories Business

Ms. Kidd informed the approved applicants that the next step to obtain their business license was to apply at the Commissioner's Office.

Planning and Zoning Director Tim Andrews explained to those applicants who had their applications returned to be heard by the Zoning and Appeals Board that a new sign would be posted on their property.

Ms. Robinson presented a request for approval of a Memorandum of Understanding to improve the quality of legal representation provided to children and parents before the Houston County Juvenile Court and to secure Title IV-E funds through reimbursement.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Talton, and carried unanimously by all to approve entering a Memorandum of Understanding with the Georgia Office of the Child Advocate to participate in the program and work together to improve the quality of legal representation provided to children and parents before the Court, and secure Title IV-E reimbursement as a funding mechanism.

Chairman Perdue commented on the high turnaround in public defender representation in Juvenile Court and that this grant will endeavor to improve the turnover rate.

Mr. Byrd presented a request from the State Court Clerk's Office for approval of a contract renewal.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Ms. Robinson, and carried unanimously by all to approve the renewal of a contract with Perdue, Brandon, Fielder, Collins & Mott, LLP, of Houston Texas, to serve as the collection agency for all unpaid traffic citations and fees. The contract period will be two years from the contract signing date.

Mr. Byrd presented a request from the Tax Assessors' Office for approval to enter a contract for GIS services.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Mr. Gottwals, and carried unanimously by all to approve entering a contract with GMASS of Norwood, Georgia, for GIS services. The terms of this contract will be January through June of 2025 at a cost of \$15,212.50, with the option for renewal in July. Also, for the Accounting Department to make any necessary budget adjustments.

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Mr. Byrd presented a request to enter a Memorandum of Understanding for educational services on the dangers of opioids.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Mr. Talton, and carried unanimously by all to approve entering a Memorandum of Understanding with Reclaiming Ground Inc., of Warner Robins, Georgia, in the amount of \$78,050 to provide education within the school system on the danger of opioid use. The Opioid Settlement Fund will pay for this project.

Mr. Talton thanked both Coroner James Williams and Sheriff Moulton for being present in support of this action.

Coroner James Williams spoke in full support of this agreement between the County and Willie Raines and his presentation about the dangers of Opioids.

Sheriff Moulton stated that, as a narcotics investigator, he responded to numerous overdose calls and that he fully supported the County in collaborating with Mr. Raines on his Opioid Awareness Assemblies in schools and the community.

Willie Raines expressed his appreciation to the Board for the opportunity to work with the schools and the community on this problem. He spoke about an event recently held at Westfield and upcoming events he will be having in the community.

Chairman Perdue commented on the efforts by Chief Stoner and the District Attorney to introduce Narcan to public safety employees and in County buildings to help reverse overdoses and opioid-related deaths.

Mr. Gottwals presented a request for approval of a bid for one new Chevrolet Tahoe LT to replace a Sheriff's Office vehicle being reassigned.

Motion by Mr. Gottwals, second by Mr. Byrd, and carried unanimously by all to approve the bid on one new Chevrolet Tahoe LT from Hamby Automotive Network, Inc. of Perry, Georgia at the cost of \$65,374.70. This purchase will be funded by 2018 SPLOST.

Mr. Gottwals presented a request to fill the vacant Secretary position at the District Attorney's Office.

Motion by Mr. Gottwals, second by Ms. Robinson, and carried unanimously by all to approve the hiring of Megan Rodriguez to fill the vacant Secretary position at the District Attorney's Office at a Grade 8 Step C effective February 3, 2025.

Motion by Mr. Talton, second by Ms. Robinson, and carried unanimously by all to approve the reappointment of Tara Johnson for a two-year term to start January 31, 2025 and end January 30, 2027, to the Middle Georgia Aging Advisory Council.

Mr. Talton expressed his appreciation to Ms. Johnson for her willingness to serve on the Aging Advisor Board

Motion by Mr. Talton, second by Mr. Gottwals, and carried unanimously by all to approve the payment of the bills totaling \$5,035,951.84.

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

Mr. Jim Taylor spoke about a positive experience he had recently at the Houston County Landfill. An employee assisted him and provided service when he had difficulty with his dump trailer.

Mr. Tim Andrews expressed his appreciation to Fire Chief Chris Stoner and the Houston County Fire Department staff for the recent class on Narcan administration, CPR, and emergency preparedness and procedures offered to County employees.

Chairman Perdue thanked Mr. Andrews for the feedback and said he was the second County staff member to express how beneficial and educational the class was.

Dr. Daryl Vining spoke about the subject of the current at-large representation by the Commissioners and commented about the need and benefits of going to a district-type of representation by the Commissioners like the Board of Education, City of Warner Robins, and the state and federal government.

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

Mr. Talton thanked everyone for their prayers and support following his leg injury, spoke about the positive Commissioners' meeting and recognized and thanked his mom who brought him to the meeting due to his leg injury.

Mr. Byrd commented on the difference in two weeks weather-wise from today's warm temperature to the previous Commissioners' meeting where the time had to be moved up due to the incoming snowstorm. He thanked the County's first responders for their efforts and work during the snowstorm as well. He commented about the recent audit with no findings and expressed his appreciation to the Accounting Department, Chairman Perdue and senior County staff for their work in making this happen.

Mr. Gottwals commented on the large number of small business license applicants and spoke about the benefits small businesses bring to a community. He thanked everyone for attending and concluded his comments by explaining that his and the other Commissioners' service on an at-large basis allows him and the other Board members to serve every Houston County citizen.

Ms. Robinson thanked everyone for attending the meeting and discussed the rules and regulations of the special exception process that allows home-based businesses to be approved while ensuring they operate without causing interruptions or issues for the neighborhood. She concluded her remarks by welcoming Commissioner Talton back after his leg injury.

Chairman Perdue thanked all those in attendance for their respectful comments and praised the Accounting Department staff, Robbie Dunbar, department heads, and constitutional officers for their assistance and cooperation concerning the budget and audit, which returned clear with no findings. He also noted that February is Black History Month and encouraged everyone to participate in local and regional celebrations. He concluded his comments by

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expressing gratitude to the Public Works and Public Safety staff in Houston County, as well as Chief Stoner, for their response during the snowstorm earlier this month. He also remarked on the County's efforts to de-ice bridges on state highways.

Motion by Mr. Talton, second by Ms. Robinson, and carried unanimously by all to approve adjourning the meeting. Meeting adjourned.

Robbie Dunbar
Director of Administration

Chairman

Commissioner

Commissioner

Commissioner

Commissioner