

Houston County Commissioners Meeting
June 7, 2022
Perry, Georgia

The Houston County Board of Commissioners met in regular session at 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday June 7, 2022, at the Houston County Courthouse in Perry, Georgia, with Chairman Stalnaker presiding and Commissioners Byrd, Robinson, and Walker present. Also present were County Attorney Tom Hall, Director of Administration Barry Holland, Director of Operations Robbie Dunbar, Chief Building Inspector Tim Andrews, Director of Personnel Ken Carter, Fire/HEMA Chief Chris Stoner, Acting District Attorney William Kendall, Dan Perdue, Tal Talton, Flint Energies VP of Cooperative Communications Marian McLemore, Walton & Becky Wood, Billy Jerles, Jeanne Moyer, Habitat for Humanity Development Director Jim Taylor, Jacqueline Rozier, and Josh Bloodworth.

Commissioner Walker led the audience in the Invocation.

Captain Thomas Lenell, USAF led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance and then detailed his 5-year military career. Having grown up in Washington state, he graduated from Central Washington University and commissioned through the ROTC in 2017. After training at Keesler AFB, Mississippi he was stationed at Cannon AFB, New Mexico for three years during which he deployed once to Iraq and once to Qatar. He has been at Robins AFB for 10 months and serves as the Flight Commander of Mission Systems for the 51st Combat Communications Squadron. He remarked that the community is very supportive of the military mission here in middle Georgia.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously by all to approve the minutes from the May 17, 2022 meeting.

County Attorney Tom Hall made a blanket statement for the benefit of all applicants for Special Exceptions for home occupations that even if the Board of Commissioners approves an application, neighborhood covenants may still impose certain restrictions upon or against home occupation businesses. These restrictive covenants are superior to any action taken by the Board of Commissioners. The actions taken by the Board will not change any provision within the covenant that prohibits any commercial or business activity.

Chief Building Inspector Tim Andrews presented Special Exception Applications #2611, #2613 thru #2615, #2617, and #2618.

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

Special Exception #2611, applicant was not present and was recommended for tabling. Special Exception #2613, applicant was present and had nothing further to add. There was no opposition.

Special Exception #2614 applicant was present and had nothing further to add. There was no opposition.

Special Exception #2615, applicant was not present. There were no objections.

Special Exception #2617 applicant was present and had nothing further to add. There was no opposition.

Special Exception #2616 applicant was present and had nothing further to add. There was no opposition.

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

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Walker and carried unanimously by all to approve the following applications to include any and all stipulations as noted on the Zoning & Appeals recommendation and Section 95 Requirements staff report:

Application #2613	James Faulkner	Electrical Contractor
Application #2614	Christy Moyer	Comm/Residential Cleaning
Application #2615	Craig Johnson & Sarita Everett	General Cleaning
Application #2617	Corey Hamlin	Lawn Care
Application #2618	Salvatore & Tracie Falzone	Hair Salon

and; to table Application #2611 submitted by Sherri and James Nance and send back to Zoning & Appeals for reconsideration.

Mr. Andrews advised all applicants on the next step in the process which would be obtaining their business licenses through the Commissioner's office.

Chief Building Inspector Tim Andrews presented Re-Zoning Application #2612.

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

There was no opposition.

Billy Jerles, representing Josh Bloodworth and Unique Property Holdings, LLC, passed out a concept drawing of the plan for the property upon annexation. Mr. Bloodworth has acquired the house next to his existing property and is slated to be heard for rezoning at the next Planning & Zoning Board meeting. His plans are to repurpose that house as his corporate office.

Chairman Stalnaker 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 Re-Zoning Application #2612 submitted by William R. Jerles, Jr.

Ms. Robinson presented a request from the Accountability Court for approval of a grant for continuing the operation of the Mental Health Accountability Court.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Walker and carried unanimously by all to approve the acceptance of the Mental Health Accountability Court grant (#J23-8-072) in the amount of \$224,588 from the State of Georgia - Criminal Justice Coordinating Council for the purposes of continuing the Mental Health Accountability Court. Of that \$224,588, Houston County's required match is \$26,951. Chairman Stalnaker is authorized to sign all grant documents.

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Ms. Robinson presented a request from the Superior Court Accountability Court to renew contracts with Surveillance Officer Christopher Gray and with Infinite Health Wellness LLC to provide various services covered under the current grant program.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Byrd and carried unanimously by all to approve Chairman Stalnaker signing a contract for services with Christopher Gray to provide surveillance services for the Houston County Accountability Court; and, to sign with Infinite Health Wellness LLC to provide therapeutic individual and group counseling services, healthcare education, and clinical evaluations for participants of the Houston County Accountability Court. Both contract terms will be effective July 1, 2022 and terminate June 30, 2023.

Ms. Robinson presented a request for approval of an updated agreement for the continued use, operation, and maintenance of the animal control facility owned by the City of Warner Robins.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Walker and carried unanimously by all to approve Chairman Stalnaker signing the Intergovernmental Agreement for Joint Use of Animal Control Facilities with the City of Warner Robins effective July 1, 2022.

Chairman Stalnaker remarked that this has been a long process and thanked Mayor Patrick and city staff for their efforts negotiating this contract with the County. He also thanked the County staff who were involved remarking that there are some very positive things in the agreement.

Mr. Byrd also expressed his appreciation for city staff and leadership as well as county staff and leadership which demonstrates the cooperation yet again between our governments. Mr. Walker and Ms. Robinson both agreed with the comments.

Chairman Stalnaker also thanked former commissioner Perdue for his involvement in the meetings leading up to this agreement.

Ms. Robinson presented a request from the City of Perry for annexation of property located at 2032 Sam Nunn Blvd.

Ms. Robinson made a motion to concur with the request.

Chairman Stalnaker opened the floor for any public comments, there were none.

Second by Mr. Walker and carried unanimously by all to concur with a City of Perry annexation request for the property described as:

Tax Parcel 000310 12A000 consisting of 4.046 acres located at 2032 Sam Nunn Blvd.

Mr. Walker presented a request from Acting District Attorney Kendall to fill the vacant receptionist/secretary position at the DA's office.

Motion by Mr. Walker, second by Mr. Byrd and carried unanimously by all to approve hiring Tangelia Rouse for the vacant receptionist/secretary position in the District Attorney's office at a Grade 8-C effective June 8, 2022.

Mr. Walker presented a request from Solicitor-General Smith to fill the vacant Legal Secretary position in her office.

Motion by Mr. Walker, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously by all to approve hiring Jennifer Noler for the vacant Legal Secretary position in the Solicitor-General's office at a Grade 13-B effective June 8, 2022.

Mr. Walker presented a request from Roads Superintendent McLendon to fill the vacant Equipment Operator position in the Roads & Bridges Department.

Motion by Mr. Walker, second by Mr. Byrd and carried unanimously by all to approve hiring Kevin Youngblood for the vacant Equipment Operator position in the Roads & Bridges Department at a Grade 10-E effective June 8, 2022.

Mr. Walker presented a request from Roads Superintendent McLendon to fill the vacant Mechanic position in the Roads & Bridges Department.

Motion by Mr. Walker, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously by all to approve hiring William Wood for the vacant Mechanic position in the Roads & Bridges Department at a Grade 13-C effective June 8, 2022.

Mr. Walker presented a request to enter into an agreement with the Georgia Board of Regents of The University of Georgia on behalf of the Cooperative Extension Service for salary, retirement, SS/Med cost for six County Extension employees.

Motion by Mr. Walker, second by Mr. Byrd and carried unanimously by all to approve entering into an agreement with the Georgia Board of Regents of The University of Georgia on behalf of the Cooperative Extension Service for salary, retirement, SS/Med cost for six County Extension employees for the period of July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023.

Motion by Mr. Walker, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously by all to approve the reappointment of the following:

Central Georgia Joint Development Authority:

Tommy Stalnaker	7/07/22 thru 7/06/26
Neal Talton	7/07/22 thru 7/06/26
Dan Perdue	7/07/22 thru 7/06/26

DFCS Board:

Thomas Philpot	7/01/22 thru 6/30/27
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Mr. Byrd expressed his appreciation for each board member for their willingness to serve.

Mr. Byrd presented a request from the City of Warner Robins for annexation of property located at Dry Creek Court, south of the Buckhead Forest subdivision.

Chairman Stalnaker opened the floor for any public comments.

Thomas Amely, 117 Musket Fire Lane, Warner Robins stated that his home is adjacent to the property in question. He commented that when he purchased his property several years ago, he was told that this property would eventually be developed as County R-1 not as City R-2 which allows for a much smaller lot size which will mean an increase in traffic, prolonged construction of more homes, and separate city services to this area. He was also concerned that in the future several additional properties adjacent to the property in question that are currently landlocked would then be developed and connected to this neighborhood which would mean even more traffic through Settler's Landing. The end result would be that Settler's Landing would become a shortcut from Feagin Mill Road to Russell Parkway.

Chairman Stalnaker explained that although the law will change on July 1st, the current law gives the County a 30-day timeframe within which it must respond to a city's annexation request with either a concur or non-concur. During that time, the city has not yet heard the application.

Mr. Byrd commented that he has had a conversation with the applicant, and he has indicated that there is no intent to connect the road system from Settler's Landing to Buckhead Forest because of the topography.

Chairman Stalnaker agreed that the separate services and impact on the existing infrastructure issues are concerning. If the County concurs, he encouraged Mr. Amely to attend the city's Planning and Zoning meetings.

Mr. Byrd remarked that the new legislation taking effect on July 1st will increase the timeline giving the county an opportunity to learn more before taking action. The property is contiguous to existing city limits and offers a compatible land use, so he intends to make the motion to concur with concern.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Mr. Walker and carried unanimously by all to concur with a City of Warner Robins annexation request for the property described as:

Tax Parcel 000760 025000 consisting of 8.86 acres (shown as PT Parcel 9 on a plat of survey by Story, Clarke & Associates dated August 22, 2019, and recorded at Houston Superior Court, Plat Book 81, Page 47) located at Dry Creek Court, south of the Buckhead Forest subdivision.

Mr. Byrd presented a request from the City of Warner Robins to annex property located at 2108 and 2110 Elberta Road.

Chairman Stalnaker opened the floor for any public comments, there were none.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously by all to concur with a City of Warner Robins annexation request for the properties described as:

Tax Parcel 00073B 029000 and 00073B 028000 together consisting of 1.99 acres (shown on a plat of survey by Waddle Surveying Co., Inc. dated February 13, 1967, and recorded at Houston Superior Court, Plat Book 11, Page 75) located at 2108 and 2110 Elberta Road.

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Mr. Byrd commented that this is a unique project, and that the owner has completed a significant number of renovations to this area.

Mr. Byrd presented a request from the City of Warner Robins for annexation of property located at the southwest corner of Feagin Mill Road and Houston Lake Road.

Chairman Stalnaker opened the floor for any public comments, there were none.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Mr. Walker and carried unanimously by all to concur with a City of Warner Robins annexation request for the properties described as:

Tax Parcel 000770 010000 and 000770 072000 together consisting of 1.394 acres (shown on a plat of survey by Jones Surveying Company dated November 21, 1994 and recorded at Houston Superior Court, Plat Book 45, Page 163) located at the southwest corner of Feagin Mill Road and Houston Lake Road. This property will remain a single county water customer.

Mr. Byrd presented a request for approval of a bid to harvest and sell timber at the Landfill.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Mr. Walker and carried unanimously by all to approve the award of the timber harvest and sale bid at the Landfill on 43.6 acres to Gay Wood Company, Inc. of Eastman, GA in the amount of \$228,136 and to authorize Chairman Stalnaker to sign the timber sale contract.

Mr. Byrd presented request for approval of Construction Manager Selection on the Bonaire Fire Station #2 project.

Mr. Byrd commended the four very reputable general contractors who offered quality proposals for this project stating that we are fortunate in Houston County to have that much interest in our construction projects.

Mr. Byrd made a motion to approve and Ms. Robinson seconded the motion.

Mr. Byrd expressed appreciation to county staff and selection committee members for a very thorough and diligent job working through the selection process.

Motion carried unanimously by all to approve the selection of Parrish Construction Group of Perry as the construction manager (at risk) for the Fire Station #2 (Bonaire), EMS and Sheriff's Precinct project at an estimated total management cost of \$316,114.52 (based on a \$3,000,000 construction budget) which includes the preconstruction fee, construction management fee, general conditions, performance bond and liability insurance. Parrish Construction Group will prepare the Guaranteed Maximum Price (GMP), once drawings are complete and submit to the County for acceptance. If the County and Parrish Construction Group fail to successfully negotiate the GMP, the County reserves the right to discontinue the contract and subsequently initiate contract negotiations with the next highest ranked firm.

Mr. Byrd presented a request for approval of a change order on the State Court Expansion project.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Mr. Walker and carried unanimously by all to approve Change Order #6 on the State Court Expansion project with ICB Construction Group increasing the current contract amount from \$19,635,283.71 by \$443,415 for a total amended contract amount of \$20,078,698.71 with no change in contract time.

Mr. Byrd presented a request for approval on a change order on the LMIG project for asphalt resurfacing of Firetower Road.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously by all to approve Change Order #2 on the 2022 LMIG project with Reames and Sons Construction Company, Inc. increasing the current contract amount from \$1,917,103.73 by \$108,102.98 for a total amended contract amount of \$2,025,206.71 with no change in contract time. SPLOST 2012 will fund this increase.

County Attorney Tom Hall presented an update on the blighted property at 204 Gail Drive presenting up-to-date pictures of the residence. He explained that this property was apparently used in some type of live fire exercise conducted by the Georgia Fire Academy along with the Georgia Office of Insurance and Safety with the owner's permission. There was apparently not an agreement in place to mitigate the mobile home after the exercise was conducted. It has become an eyesore. Chief Stoner has been in contact with the owner and advised him that at the very least he needs to secure the property since the windows and doors are busted out. As of today, the owner has not taken any action. Contact will be made with both state agencies to see why they did not require mitigation of the property and the owner of the property by certified mail informing him of the timeline that he faces to abate the issue.

Chairman Stalnaker commented that this came to our attention through a citizen complaint. He further stated that the County needs to be aggressive with these types of situations. If the individual does not comply within a reasonable amount of time, then court action will be necessary.

Mr. Byrd agreed that code enforcement and blight abatement is one area that the County needs to advance their efforts against. He commented that although this type of live fire training is essential for fire professionals, we need to find a way to make sure that this type of situation does not continue to occur.

Mr. Hall stated that what we can do is remain in contact with the state agencies to let them know that the local government should not be placed in these situations.

Chairman Stalnaker also commented on another citizen complaint involving properties on Orchard Road that need attention.

Tim Andrews commented that Corporal Little has been in contact with the owner of this property and that it has recently been sold to a new owner, but the property has not been closed on yet.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Byrd and carried unanimously by all to approve the payment of the bills totaling \$6,961,039.80.

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

Jacqueline Rozier, recent candidate for Post 4 Commissioner, thanked the voters who supported her campaign for office. She commented that although disappointed she was not elected, she plans to continue to be involved and ask questions about issues in the future hoping to be a part of the process improving governance of Houston County.

Mr. Byrd thanked Ms. Rozier for offering herself for public service.

Ms. Robinson and Mr. Walker agreed.

Chairman Stalnaker thanked Ms. Rozier for the professionalism she displayed during her campaign and for her willingness to spend time with him learning about processes.

Reddy Cobbs, 209 Wellston Drive, Warner Robins shared her concern about the lack of sidewalks on Nelson Drive from Watson Blvd. to Corder Road.

Chairman Stalnaker agreed that Nelson Drive is a cut-thru for traffic and that a 3-way stop installed years ago by the County to help control the speed of the traffic may have helped some, but the road still needs some attention. The shoulders of the road are very narrow or non-existent because it was an old rural road that over time turned into an urbanized street. Some of the road is in the City of Warner Robins and some is in the County. He offered to speak with Mayor Patrick to see if there may be a possibility of at least a sidewalk improvement project in that area. It is much safer to install a sidewalk if the street is curb and guttered, however. A project such as this would be expensive and would likely need to be considered as a future SPLOST project.

Ms. Cobbs also commented that litter has become a problem along the street as well.

Chairman Stalnaker acknowledged that litter control throughout the County has become a bigger issue since the pandemic because the County has not been able to utilize inmate crews for litter control. The County has been using a contractor to pick-up litter on select streets as needed but it is very expensive.

Jim Taylor, newly appointed Habitat for Humanity Development Director, thanked the Board for their past contributions to the development of Wellston Park and commented that there have been several recent events held there and the first open-air concert event is now scheduled for Saturday, September 24th. They will have live music, food trucks, and vendors for all to enjoy. He also commented that he has had several meetings with Mayor Patrick, and she is very committed to finishing the park including the remodeling of the home, paving trails, and building a permanent amphitheater stage.

Chairman Stalnaker remarked that the park has become an asset to the community and the County would be willing to help in any way that it can.

Susan Givler, 2006 Sam Nunn Blvd., Perry asked if it would help Ms. Cobb's effort to secure sidewalks for Nelson Drive if she gathered signatures on a petition for support and to help bring it to the attention of the city as well.

Chairman Stalnaker remarked that it could be done but it really will not elevate it any higher or quicker.

Chief Stoner thanked the Board for their continued support of the Fire Department. They are very excited to moved forward with Parrish Construction on the new Bonaire station. He also thanked the selection committee members for their valuable time and effort choosing Parrish for this project.

There being no further comments Chairman Stalnaker closed the Public Comments portion of the meeting and opened Commissioners Comments.

Mr. Byrd thanked Chief Stoner for the Department's response to the fire in Bonaire along with the assist from the City of Warner Robins and the City of Perry. Also, since the last Commissioner's meeting, the Board of Education celebrated the retirement of over a hundred teachers in our community with a combined 3,000 years of service. He expressed appreciation for those educators for their service to our community and children. Lastly, he expressed his condolences to the family and friends of Daryl Long, principal at ICB Construction Group, who was a great partner on many County construction projects as well as a good friend.

Ms. Robinson echoed Mr. Byrd's comments about Mr. Long and thanked everyone for coming and being involved in community matters.

Mr. Walker remarked that it was an honor to serve the people of Houston County and commended the other Board members and county staff for the work that they do for the citizens.

Chairman Stalnaker recognized commissioner-elect Tal Talton and congratulated him. He stated that the budget process is moving along, and we will have the public hearing on Tuesday, June 14th at 5:00 p.m. at the Annex building in Warner Robins. He then announced the retirement of Mr. Holland on July 29th calling him a very dedicated public servant first as Purchasing Agent and then Director of Administration. He thanked Mr. Holland for his service and congratulated him on his pending retirement. He then announced that Director of Operations Robbie Dunbar will move to the Director of Administration position on August 1st. He congratulated Mr. Dunbar expressing confidence in his abilities to fulfill those duties.

Mr. Byrd expressed his most sincere thank you to Mr. Holland for his service to the county and likewise congratulated Mr. Dunbar on his appointment.

Mr. Walker and Ms. Robinson likewise thanked Mr. Holland and congratulated Mr. Dunbar.

Motion by Mr. Walker, second by Mr. Byrd and carried unanimously by all to enter into Executive Session for Attorney-Client Matters per O.C.G.A. § 50-14-2(1).

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Upon returning from the Executive Session Chairman Stalnaker announced that there will be no action taken.

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

Barry Holland
Director of Administration

Chairman

Commissioner

Commissioner

Commissioner

Commissioner