

**Houston County Commissioners Meeting
May 6, 2025
Perry, Georgia**

The Houston County Board of Commissioners met in regular session at 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday, May 6, 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 Operations Brian Jones, and Director of Administration Robbie Dunbar were also present.

Commissioner Byrd gave the invocation.

Commissioner Gottwals led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Col. William DeWalt, Commander of the 413th Flight Test Group, spoke about his military career. He stated that after graduating from the Air Force Academy, he immediately went into pilot training, where he became an AC-130 pilot. Col. DeWalt came to Robins four years ago as Squadron Commander of the 413th and expressed his appreciation for the tremendous public support that he and everyone serving at Robins feel.

The Commissioners expressed their appreciation to Col. DeWalt for attending, speaking about his military career, and for his work and service at Robins Air Force Base.

Chairman Perdue and the Commissioners recognized Captain Paula Blevins and Captain Tim Blevins for their work with the Salvation Army, presenting them with a proclamation that recognized the week of May 12-17, 2025, as National Salvation Army Week in Houston County.

Captains Paula and Tim Blevins provided a brief history of the Salvation Army's background and discussed the ministry's focus and efforts. They concluded by inviting the Board to a volunteer appreciation luncheon scheduled for Monday, May 12, 2025.

Motion by Mr. Talton, second by Ms. Robinson, and carried unanimously by all to approve the minutes from the April 22, 2025, meeting.

Chairman Perdue stated that he needed to rearrange some items on the agenda and asked Ms. Robinson to present the request on the Mental Health Matters of Middle Georgia Memorandum of Understanding.

Ms. Robinson presented a request for approval of a Memorandum of Understanding for the education and assistance of the community, including first responders, regarding the awareness about opioid addiction, available opioid treatment resources, and developing opioid harm education strategies through Mental Health Matters of Middle GA.

Chairman Perdue invited Superior Court Judge Katie Lumsden to make remarks regarding this agenda item.

Judge Lumsden commented that Houston County established a mental health court over 10 years ago, which has had a profoundly positive impact. She noted that May is Mental Health Awareness Month and that approximately 1 in 5 Americans suffer from a mental health condition, with 1 in 20 experiencing a mental health crisis. She concluded her remarks by emphasizing the importance of mental wellness.

Chairman Perdue commented that one of the most impactful experiences he has had during his time as Chairman was attending the mental health court graduation.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Byrd, and carried unanimously by all to approve the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with Mental Health Matters of Middle Georgia, of Warner Robins, Georgia, in the amount of \$96,000. The opioid settlement fund will fund this.

Chief Building Inspector Tim Andrews presented Special Exception Applications #2844 through #2848.

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 opened a Public Hearing on the Applications.

- Applicant #2844 was present; there were no comments.
- Applicant #2845 was not present; there were no comments.
- Applicant #2846 was present; there were no comments.
- Applicant #2847 was not present; there were no comments.
- Applicant #2848 was present; there were no 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:

#2844	Cherrise Pierce	Massage Therapy
#2846	Ron Bartholomew	Gas Appliance Service Technician
#2848	Jacob Batten	Pressure Washing

and to table the following Special Exception Applications:

#2845	Victor Primas	Home Care and Assistance
#2847	Lindsey Hayes	Nurse Staffing Agency

Mr. Andrews informed the approved applicants that the next step in obtaining their business license was to apply at the Commissioner’s Office.

County Attorney Tom Hall gave a first reading of a proposed ordinance amendment regarding short-term rentals in Houston County. A second reading and public hearing on this matter will take place on May 20, 2025, during the 5:00 pm Board of Commissioners meeting at the County Annex located at 200 Carl Vinson Parkway in Warner Robins.

County Attorney Tom Hall gave a first reading of a proposed ordinance amendment regarding a lodging tax ordinance in Houston County. Mr. Hall advised that this would be a 5% tax with 1.5% going to support the Museum of Aviation, 1.5% going to the Georgia Ag Expo Authority/Georgia National Fairgrounds, and the remaining 2% going into the County’s general fund to support administrative, tourism, and marketing efforts. A second reading and public hearing on this ordinance change will take place on May 20, 2025, during the 5:00 pm Board of Commissioners meeting at the County Annex located at 200 Carl Vinson Parkway in Warner Robins.

Chairman Perdue commented that these efforts are being taken to help regulate short-term rentals in the County and to support the identified community organizations. He further stated that regulating rentals will also ensure that adequate parking is present, safety equipment is available on premises, and a suitable trash service is provided. In addition, a point of contact for the property, either an owner or property manager, will also be secured in case complaints are raised about the property.

Mr. Talton presented a request for approval of a Resolution to levy and collect a lodging tax.

Motion by Mr. Talton, second by Mr. Byrd, and carried unanimously by all to approve the signing of a Resolution to levy and collect a lodging tax pursuant to O.C.G.A. 48-13-51(a)(3) in the unincorporated area of Houston County, Georgia.

Mr. Talton presented a request for approval of a proposal for professional services related to the Houston County Records Storage Study.

Motion by Mr. Talton, second by Ms. Robinson, and carried unanimously by all to approve the proposal from SP Design Group of Macon, Georgia, in the amount of \$5,662, for professional services in the study of utilization of the existing Records Storage Facility and the adjacent Receiving Warehouse for record storage and retention.

Chairman Perdue explained that an architect will help determine the best use of these two structures: the current warehouse, which the County is standing down, to possibly be used for record retention, and the current records retention facility, which was previously the County’s correctional institute.

Mr. Byrd presented a request for approval of an updated agreement for the management of the county water system.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Mr. Gottwals, and carried unanimously by all to approve the signing of an Infrastructure Intergovernmental Agreement between Houston County, the City of Centerville, the City of Perry, and the City of Warner Robins.

Chairman Perdue stated this agreement would address master meter requests between the County and the three cities, requiring a minimum 6-inch water meter to be considered a wholesale customer when connecting to the County’s water system.

Director of Operations Brian Jones stated that this agreement would also require additional approval for each extension of the Houston County water system.

Mr. Byrd presented a request for approval of the application and road list for the 2025 Local Road Assistance (LRA) grant.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Mr. Talton, and carried unanimously by all to approve the application of the following list of roads for the 2025 LRA grant:

ROAD NAME	BEGINNING	ENDING	LENGTH (MILES)	DESCRIPTION OF WORK
Old Perry Rd	SR 96	Woodard Rd.	1.94	Base Repair/Resurface
Patton Drive	Heritage Dr	Dead End	0.41	Resurface
Waterfront Way	Fairground Rd	Dead End	0.53	Resurface
River West Rd	Thompson Mill Rd	River West Rd	0.91	Base Repair/Resurface
Loblolly Dr	Old Hickory Dr	Old Hickory Dr	0.49	Resurface

Langston Rd	US 41	West of Lake Joy	1.37	Resurface
4 th St (Lashley Sub.)	County Rd	3 rd Ave	0.31	Base Repair/Resurface
		Total Miles	5.96	

Chairman Perdue stated that this was the second year in a row that the Georgia General Assembly has distributed local road assistance funding to local governments for transportation improvements, and that lots of resurfacing has taken place in the County using State GDOT funds.

Mr. Gottwals presented a request for approval of the application and road list for the 2025 LMIG Safety Action Program (SAP).

Motion by Mr. Gottwals, second by Ms. Robinson, and carried unanimously by all to approve the application of the following list of roads for the 2025 LMIG Safety Action Program. The matching funds by the County will come from the 2018 SPLOST.

Road Name	Beginning	Ending	Length (Miles)	Description of Work
Elko Rd	Dooly Co Line	Perry City Limit	10.18	Striping & RPM'S
Sandy Run Rd	WR City Limit	SR 247	1.46	Striping & RPM'S
Dunbar Rd	East of Gen. Lee	Elberta Rd	2.70	Striping & RPM'S
Bear Branch Rd	SR 127	SR 247	3.41	Striping & RPM'S
Arena Rd	SR 127	US 341	4.39	Striping & RPM'S
Hatcher Rd	Tharpe Rd	Leverett Rd	2.01	Striping & RPM'S
Story Rd	Dunbar Rd	Elberta Rd	1.39	Striping & RPM'S
White Rd	US 41	Peach Co. Line	1.14	Striping & RPM'S
Hunt Rd	Lake Joy Rd	Houston Lake Rd	1.89	Striping & RPM'S
Kersey Rd	US 41	Felton Rd	5.53	Striping & RPM'S
Felton Rd	Us 41	Dead End	2.91	Striping & RPM'S
		Total Miles	37.01	

Chairman Perdue commented that these safety features will include new striping and reflectors, known as raised pavement markers.

Mr. Gottwals presented a request for approval of a training proposal from Tyler Technologies for the Building Inspection Department.

Motion by Mr. Gottwals, second by Mr. Byrd, and carried unanimously by all to approve the quote from Tyler Technologies, in the amount of \$10,200, for system administrator training.

Chairman Perdue commented that this software and training for Ms. Kidd will allow for more in-house problem solving and expansion of online permitting for inspections and building permits for builders in the County.

Ms. Robinson presented a request for approval of a bid on one new 2025 Chevrolet Silverado 1500 for use in the Fire Department.

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Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Talton and carried unanimously by all to approve the bid from Hardy Automotive Group of Dallas, Georgia, in the amount of \$59,991 for one new 2025 Chevrolet Silverado 1500 4wd Crew Cab RST. This purchase will be funded by the 2018 SPLOST.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Gottwals, and carried unanimously by all to approve the payment of the bills totaling \$4,148,126.24.

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

Community Planner Jacob Cox spoke about the positive help he received from Water Department employee Alton Hilton in resolving a recent citizen issue.

Mr. Robert Sharples spoke about Hill Road and his request to have the County pave the dirt portion to relieve the dust issue.

With no further comments, Chairman Perdue closed the Public Comment portion of the meeting and asked for Commissioner Comments.

Mr. Gottwals thanked everyone for attending the meeting and commented on the powerful message delivered by the Salvation Army Captains, emphasizing their message of 'Others'.

Ms. Robinson thanked everyone for attending and said it was a privilege to serve the citizens of Houston County.

Mr. Byrd commented on the cooperation exhibited during the meeting with the IGA between the local governments and the partnership with the State DOT on the LRA grant. He spoke about the message brought by the Salvation Army Captains on the service to others. He concluded his comments by mentioning that it was National Teacher's Day and National Nurse's Day.

Mr. Talton spoke on the proposed lodging tax, stating that it was well thought out and the proceeds would be used to attract people to Houston County. He then mentioned the passing of retired County Employee, Ed Carroll, and the integral part he played in the creation of Houston County's Animal Control. He concluded by saying that it was Nurses Week and that everyone has been positively impacted by a nurse at some point in their life.

Chairman Perdue stated that the Georgia Department of Transportation was revisiting its roundabout project at the I-75/ HWY 26 interchange. He mentioned the funds allocated to this project by GDOT may be better utilized in an area with more traffic. Chairman Perdue then congratulated Director of Operations Brian Jones on the birth of his first grandchild. He spoke about two upcoming town hall meetings taking place May 22nd in Perry at the Courthouse, and May 27th in Warner Robins at the Annex, both at 6:00 pm. He stated these meetings were to inform the public about the growth in the Houston County Fire Department, the improvement in the department's ISO rating, and to gather citizen input on funding mechanisms for continued growth and increased service in the Fire Department.

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

Robbie Dunbar
Director of Administration

Chairman

Commissioner

Commissioner

Commissioner

Commissioner