

**Houston County Commissioners Meeting
May 20, 2025
Warner Robins, Georgia**

The Houston County Board of Commissioners met in regular session at 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, May 20, 2025, at the Houston County Annex in Warner Robins, 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 Robinson led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Daryl McElwain, Multi-Area Director of the Flint River FCA, gave the invocation. He then spoke about his role in the FCA, their mission statement, and vision. He concluded by speaking on the three Es: Engage, Equip, and then Empower those with whom they come in contact.

The Commissioners expressed their appreciation to Mr. McElwain for attending, giving the invocation, and for his work with the FCA, highlighting the positive impact it is having on the community.

Motion by Mr. Gottwals, second by Ms. Robinson, and carried unanimously by all to approve the minutes from the May 6, 2025, meeting.

Ms. Robinson presented a second reading of a proposed amendment to the Houston County Code of Ordinances, followed by a public hearing. The proposed amendment will add a new article to Chapter 19, titled Article III – Short-Term Rentals, to the Code of Ordinances. The new article will regulate the use of, establish standards for, and ensure proper taxation of privately owned residential property used as vacation homes and rented to transient occupants within the unincorporated area of Houston County.

The first reading of this proposed amendment to the Houston County Code of Ordinances was held at the May 6, 2025, Houston County Board of Commissioners meeting.

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

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 addition of Article III titled Short-Term Rentals, to Chapter 19 of the Houston County Code of Ordinances.

Ms. Robinson presented a second reading of a proposed amendment to the Houston County Code of Ordinances, followed by a public hearing. The proposed amendment will add a new article to Chapter 58, titled Article V – Lodging Tax, to the Code of Ordinances. The new article will permit Houston County to levy and collect an excise tax to provide additional funding for the promotion of tourism, conventions, and trade shows in the county.

The first reading of this proposed amendment to the Houston County Code of Ordinances was held at the May 6, 2025, Houston County Board of Commissioners meeting.

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

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. Talton, and carried unanimously by all to approve the addition of Article V titled Lodging Tax to Chapter 58 of the Houston County Code of Ordinances.

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Chairman Perdue recognized Dan Rhoades from the Museum of Aviation and stated that a portion of the lodging tax dollars collected will support the Museum. He remarked that the Museum of Aviation not only attracts visitors to Houston County but is also vital for education and economic development in the area.

Ms. Robinson presented a request for certification of the Roll Back Millage under the requirements of the new Floating Homestead Tax Exemption. Given the ongoing uncertainty surrounding the net digest and the fiscal impact of the floating homestead exemption, the Board will certify the estimated rollback rate at 8.501 mills, which matches the County's current millage rate. This approach maintains compliance while allowing flexibility as digest figures continue to evolve.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Gottwals, and carried unanimously by all to approve certifying the estimated rollback millage rate at 8.501 mills for tax year 2025.

Chairman Perdue explained the reasoning for maintaining the current millage rate and commented on House Bill 581 and House Bill 92, passed in the Georgia General Assembly, which affect the homestead exemption process in the state. He stated that keeping the current millage rate maintains compliance with state law and provides flexibility for the County as the tax digest is still being calculated.

Mr. Talton presented a request for annexation to the City of Perry.

Chairman Perdue opened the floor for Public Comments.

As there were no comments the meeting continued.

Motion by Mr. Talton, second by Mr. Byrd, and carried unanimously by all to concur with the annexation of a portion of 130 Mack Thompson Road known as Tax Parcel 000300 040000 with a zoning change of County C-1 to City of Perry C-1 with the following stipulations:

- All current County utilities will stay with the County.

Mr. Talton presented a request for approval of a contract for services for the Accountability Court to give location services and notifications for drug screens, Court dates, and sobriety dates.

Motion by Mr. Talton, second by Ms. Robinson, and carried unanimously by all to approve the signing of a contract for services with Reconnect Inc. of Portland, ME. This 12-month contract will begin on July 1, 2025, and will cost \$500 per month to be paid by the DATE Fund.

Mr. Talton commented that a small portion of all traffic fines go to support the efforts of the Accountability Court through the DATE Fund.

Mr. Talton presented a request for approval of a service agreement to replace the obsolete telephony infrastructure at the E-911 Center.

Motion by Mr. Talton, second by Mr. Gottwals, and carried unanimously by all to approve signing a Commercial Services Agreement with Cox Communications Georgia, LLC, Cox Georgia Telcom, LLC, of Macon, Georgia. This 36-month agreement will cost \$896.81 per month and will require a one-time installation fee of \$345.

Chairman Perdue commented that this will be a cost savings for the 911 center and provide improved capability as well.

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Mr. Gottwals presented a request for an addendum to the FY25 Independent Contractor Agreement Between the Board of Commissioners of Houston County and Carl Veline.

Motion by Mr. Gottwals, second by Mr. Talton, and carried unanimously by all to approve signing an addendum, for \$7,500 for June 2025 for contract attorney services with Matthew Pollard.

Mr. Byrd expressed his appreciation to attorney Carl Veline for his many years of service in the Public Defender's Office.

Mr. Gottwals presented a request for the reclassification of the Records Retention and Inventory Warehouse Manager position.

Motion by Mr. Gottwals, second by Ms. Robinson, and carried unanimously by all to approve the reclassification of the Records Retention and Inventory Warehouse Manager position (Grade 16) to Records Retention and Surplus Manager (Grade 14), effective May 26, 2025, and to eliminate the Warehouse Associate position.

Chairman Perdue commented that this action was taken due to a recent retirement within the Purchasing Department and the closing of the County's purchasing warehouse. He stated that this action would combine the job duties of the existing Purchasing warehouse employee and the retired record retention employee, and that this employee would be over County records and surplus. He concluded by thanking Public Works and Sheriff's Department officials and Purchasing Director Vanessa Zimmerman for their efforts to remove the remaining inventory in the warehouse.

Mr. Gottwals presented a request for the reclassification of the Custodian and Senior Custodian positions.

Motion by Mr. Gottwals, second by Mr. Byrd, and carried unanimously by all to approve the reclassification of the Custodian and Senior Custodian positions to Grade 6, and to make the Senior Custodian title a legacy position, converting the position to a Custodian, effective May 26, 2025. Also, to allow Accounting to make any necessary budget adjustments.

Chairman Perdue spoke about contract custodians in comparison to county-employed custodians. He commented that this reclassification was necessary to ensure that the County's compensation was comparable to that of the current private sector. He concluded by saying that this would help keep custodians with the county long term and fully staffed.

Mr. Byrd presented a request from the City of Warner Robins for an addition to the Water Purchase Agreement.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Mr. Talton, and carried unanimously by all to approve the addition of the Morgan Ranch Subdivision Phase 2 located at 227 Wilson Road, and a second connection at Lafayette Drive to existing 8-inch water main, to the Water Purchase Agreement between the Houston County Board of Commissioners and the City of Warner Robins, with the following stipulations:

- The developer posts a bond covering 125% of the construction cost for work performed on the Houston Water System.
- Adherence to the rate structure approved by the Houston County Board of Commissioners on February 18, 2025.
- The issuance of a utility permit to the City of Warner Robins based on all conditions being met according to "Houston County Utility Accommodations".

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Mr. Byrd presented a request for approval of a proposal for a mass notification system.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Mr. Gottwals, and carried unanimously by all to approve acceptance of a proposal from Rave Mobile Safety, a Motorola Solutions Company, of Framingham, Massachusetts. First-year cost for this service will be \$32,980.00. Second and third-year costs will be \$24,080.00 annually.

Chairman Perdue commented that this move will reduce costs for the County by approximately \$10,000 per year. Additionally, this change will offer better coverage with a more modern platform. He concluded by stating that this system will replace the old CodeRed emergency and weather notification system in the County.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Ms. Robinson, and carried unanimously by all to approve the payment of the bills totaling \$3,432,307.85.

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

Fire/HEMA Chief Chris Stoner thanked the Board for the approval of the new mass notification system. He then spoke about two upcoming Town Hall Meetings that will take place on Thursday, May 22nd at 6:00 pm at the Perry Courthouse and Tuesday, May 27th at 6:00 pm at the County Annex in Warner Robins, to discuss recent improvements and get feedback on future changes in the Fire Department.

Ms. Jacqueline Rozier spoke on her views concerning the at-large versus district representation of the Houston County Board of Commissioners.

Rev. Dr. Rutha Jackson spoke on her views concerning the at-large versus district representation of the Houston County Board of Commissioners.

Mr. Clarence Long spoke on his views concerning the at-large versus district representation of the Houston County Board of Commissioners.

Ms. Xzandria Armstong, Political Action Chair for the Houston County NAACP, spoke about a candidate forum for Centerville mayoral candidates and candidates for the Public Service Commission that will take place Wednesday, May 21st, at 5:00 p.m. at Centerville City Hall.

Mr. Thomas Reynolds spoke on his views concerning the at-large versus district representation of the Houston County Board of Commissioners. He then spoke about his views on the payment of school taxes by seniors.

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

Mr. Gottwals commented about the season of graduation, and quoted Dr. Suess saying, *"Oh the places you will go"*.

Ms. Robinson thanked everyone for attending and thanked those who made comments. She concluded by giving congratulations to the graduates in Houston County.

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Mr. Talton thanked those who gave public comments for their professionalism in presenting their points. He concluded by thanking the County staff for their help with the agenda each meeting and for the Board maintaining a focus of fiscal responsibility and savings.

Mr. Byrd commented on the work accomplished with the agenda items and thanked the County employees for the efficient way they provide services to County residents. He commented on the cooperation among the County and cities, the graduates from Houston County high schools and the County’s Houston County U leadership program. He spoke about the retiring of Houston County Superintendent Mark Scott and his many years of service to the public school system. He concluded by thanking the Public Work staff for the quick response in clearing County roads after recent weekend storms.

Chairman Perdue commented that this week was National Public Works Week and thanked those employees for all that they do regarding the County’s roads, trash collection and disposal, and water system. He stated that the recent density report from the landfill showed a 14% improvement in landfill density over last year’s measurement, which he said was crucial in maximizing the amount of garbage that can be placed in the landfill’s active cells. He recognized Public Works employees Jefferey Smith, Terry Dietsch, and all the landfill staff for this accomplishment. He continued by echoing Chief Stoner’s comments about the Town Hall meetings set for this Thursday evening and next Tuesday evening. He concluded by commenting on the upcoming Memorial Day, saying that the day should be a time for reflecting on the sacrifices made by those in the military who protect the rights and freedoms we enjoy as Americans.

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

