

Houston County Commissioners Meeting
August 19, 2025
Warner Robins, Georgia

The Houston County Board of Commissioners met in a Special Called meeting at 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday, August 19, 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.

Director of Administration Robbie Dunbar gave the invocation.

County Attorney Tom Hall led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Perdue presented information on the proposed millage rate. He spoke on how property taxes are assessed, state requirements on assessed values, exemptions, House Bill 581 and the changes it put in effect, the budget, County efficiency, and how tax dollars are utilized to keep the County functioning. He concluded his presentation by stating that the new proposed millage rate is 8.45, down from 8.501, and the new Fire Millage for unincorporated Houston County will be 1.677, up from 1.177.

Mr. Byrd thanked Chairman Perdue for his well-explained presentation. He stated he found the charts on services and County efficiency to be very informative and that the presentation showed the challenges faced by the County to maintain the standard of public safety services and keep the millage rate down.

Ms. Robinson stated that it was an excellent presentation and helped explain the millage rate, the funds for the new deputies, and the fire personnel. She concluded by saying that Houston County is very efficient and that the citizens get excellent services for low tax dollars.

Mr. Gottwals stated that he was very glad Chairman Perdue had made the presentation. The news headlines had presented the new millage rate in a confusing way, and it was good to have the presentation to clear up any misunderstandings.

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

Ms. Susan Strickland presented each member of the board with a typed list of questions, which she then proceeded to read aloud.

Chairman Perdue answered Ms. Strickland, referring to the presentation for explanations.

Ms. Carrie Sharples asked about House Bill 581 and what effect it had on the Millage Rate.

Chairman Perdue answered Ms. Sharples, referring to his presentation for explanations.

Mr. Jim Brown asked about the 6 new deputies, and why having one person at each fire station twenty-four hours a day was necessary.

Chairman Perdue answered Mr. Brown, stating that the new deputies would be in multiple departments in the Sheriff's Office. He also stated that having one person at the fire station would cut down on response times.

Mr. Robert Sharples shared his views on County efficiency and suggested that utilizing firefighters during their downtime for specific tasks could help reduce labor costs.

Mr. Alan Gardner asked about Hospital EMS, SRO, and recreation funding.

Chairman Perdue explained that the budget line for EMS funding was the maximum we planned to spend, but it might come in under that amount. He expressed hope that EMS would become self-sufficient. He also clarified that all fees for School Resource Officers are reimbursed by the School Board. He concluded by noting that the recreation funds varied due to the new Aquatic Center.

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Mr. Jerry Davis spoke on the possibility of a new one cent sales tax to reduce the Millage Rate.

Chairman Perdue said that the floating homestead exemption opened up the possibility of a Local Option Sales Tax and that we may be seeing something on that in the spring and that all monies raised from the tax would go to lower the Millage Rate.

Ms. Strickland asked if the EMS funds were part of the Fire Department and paid by the Fire Millage Rate.

Chairman Perdue explained that they were two separate items, that the Fire Millage was used only for Fire Services in the unincorporated portion of the County.

Mr. Michael Pelletier asked why the Fire Millage was only charged to the unincorporated part of the County.

Chairman Perdue explained that the County's fire services were utilized in the unincorporated part of the County, that the cities had their own fire services.

Mr. Davis asked if the presentation was available online.

Chairman Perdue answered that he would make sure it was available online.

Mr. Robert Schaffer inquired about exemptions and tax relief for seniors on a fixed income.

Chairman Perdue responded that House Bill 581 aims to address this issue, explaining that a floating homestead exemption would provide tax relief.

Fire/ HEMA Chief Chris Stoner thanked the Board for what they did, saying he was honored and blessed to work for Houston County. He spoke on the Reserve account and what it means for Houston County. He said should we be hit by a disaster, these funds would get the County up and running without the need to wait for Federal funds. He concluded by saying that as an example we just received reimbursement from the Federal government last year for funds spent to repair damage from Hurricane Irma over seven years ago.

Mr. Sharples praised the First Responders present at the meeting.

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

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