

Houston County Commissioners Meeting
May 5, 2026
Perry, Georgia

The Houston County Board of Commissioners met in Regular Session at 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday, May 5, 2026, at the Houston County Courthouse in Perry, Georgia. Chairman Perdue presided, and Commissioners Byrd, Gottwals, Robinson, and Talton were present. Director of Administration Robbie Dunbar, County Attorney Tom Hall, and Director of Operations Brian Jones were also present.

Commissioner Talton delivered the invocation.

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

The Board of Commissioners presented Captain Paula and Captain Tim Blevins a proclamation recognizing May 11-17, 2026, as National Salvation Army Week. Captain Paula and Captain Tim spoke about the purpose, reason, and mission of the Salvation Army.

Chairman Perdue thanked them both and the Salvation Army as a whole for their work in the community.

The Board of Commissioners presented a proclamation to Public Works staff who were present in recognition of Public Works Appreciation Week, May 17-23, 2026. Chairman Perdue thanked them for their work, service, and the action they take daily, and for the work they do when called out due to weather and mechanical disruptions.

Chief Financial Officer Danyelle George presented the Board with a quarterly financial report. She spoke on the General Fund, 911 Fund, Fire Fund, Water Fund, and Solid Waste Fund.

Houston County Library Director Judith Malone presented information about the Houston County Library System's Vacation Reading Program. She gave the event registration date of May 20th and the ending date of July 11th. She spoke on last year's participation numbers of over 2,700 students at the three libraries in Houston County. She concluded her comments by thanking the Commissioners and the event sponsors for making this opportunity for the students possible.

Chairman Perdue advised that information about the Vacation Reading Program is available at the back and thanked the event sponsors, including Friends of the Library, Frito-Lay, and Gottwals Books.

Motion by Mr. Talton, second by Mr. Gottwals, and carried unanimously by all to approve the minutes from the April 21, 2026, meeting.

Chief Building Inspector Tim Andrews presented Special Exception Applications #2927 through #2933.

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

Applicant #2927 was present; there was no opposition.
Applicant #2928 was present; there was no opposition.
Applicant #2929 was present; there was no opposition.
Applicant #2930 was not present; there was no opposition.
Applicant #2931 was present; there was no opposition.
Applicant #2932 was present; there was no opposition.
Applicant #2933 was present; there was no opposition.

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

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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 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.

Motion by Mr. Talton, second by Mr. Byrd, 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:

#2927	Jaime Gonzalez	Window and Exterior Cleaning
#2928	Marva Drake	Furniture Flipping Business
#2929	Jimmy Davis	Lawn Care Business
#2931	Robert Sconyers	Hot Sauce & Seasoning Business
#2932	Maria Gaiss	Laser Engraving & Personalization Business
#2933	William Sandefur	Lawn Care Business

and to table the following Special Exception Application:

#2930	Alex Guyse	Industrial Maintenance
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Mr. Andrews gave instructions to the approved applicants about their next step in obtaining their license, which is to complete a business license application in the Commissioner's Office at the County Annex.

Motion by Mr. Talton, second by Ms. Robinson, and carried unanimously by all to table the amendments to the Comprehensive Land Development Regulation for Houston County.

Mr. Byrd presented a request to join the Mid-Georgia Gateway Joint Development Authority and to enter into an Intergovernmental Agreement with Macon-Bibb County and Peach County.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Mr. Gottwals, and carried unanimously by all to approve Houston County becoming a member of the Mid-Georgia Gateway Joint Development Authority for the purpose of marketing the mega-site in Peach County and pursuing an industrial tenant for the property. Also, Houston County would participate in the Authority's Revenue Sharing Agreement. Houston County's financial contributions will be paid from general fund reserves. The finance department is authorized to make necessary budget adjustments.

Chairman Perdue thanked Angie Gheesling and Andrea Gray for their assistance with this project. He explained that the project is intended for a large industrial manufacturer and noted that, by taking this action, Houston County will have a voice in determining what is ultimately located on the property, contribute to necessary infrastructure improvements, and benefit from future development revenues.

Mr. Byrd thanked Macon-Bibb and Peach Counties for their partnership on this project and expressed his appreciation as well to Angie Gheesling and Chairman Perdue for their involvement.

Mr. Byrd presented a request for approval of a quote for a well pump for the Hwy 96 local well, to replace the existing unit, which is operating at reduced pumping volume.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Mr. Talton, and carried unanimously by all to approve the quote from Greene's Water Wells, of Gray, Georgia, for a Flowserve 14EMM 4 Stage Vertical Turbine pump, in the amount of \$29,250. Funding will come from the Water Department General Supplies, and the pump has a two-to-three-week lead time.

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Mr. Byrd presented a request for approval to enter into a utility agreement for the relocation of water facilities for the Georgia Department of Transportation Project to Widen SR 96 E. of Old Hawkinsville Road to W. of SR 87.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Ms. Robinson, and carried unanimously by all to approve entering a utility agreement with the Georgia Department of Transportation in the amount of \$206,040 to be paid in two equal installments of \$103,020, one in June of 2026 and one in June of 2027. These payments will be made from water system capital funds.

This amount represents 50% of the total cost associated with relocating Houston County's water facilities required for the Georgia Department of Transportation project to widen SR 96, extending from east of Old Hawkinsville Road to west of SR 87.

Chairman Perdue thanked Director of Operations Brian Jones and the Houston County Water Department staff for securing assistance from the Georgia Department of Transportation in helping move the water lines for this relocation.

Mr. Gottwals presented a request for approval to renew the payment agreement with the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia on behalf of the University of Georgia Cooperative Extension Service.

Motion by Mr. Gottwals, second by Ms. Robinson, and carried unanimously by all to approve the signing of the renewal of the payment agreement with the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia on behalf of the University of Georgia Cooperative Extension Service for the FY 2027.

Chairman Perdue expressed his appreciation to the staff of the Houston County Extension Office for the work they do in the community, not only for farmers and gardeners, but also for children, youth, and families.

Mr. Gottwals presented a request for a step increase for Jessica Mitchell, who has attained her Local Government Finance Officer Level I Certification. Although not required for her current position, this certification enhances the County's financial expertise.

Motion by Mr. Gottwals, second by Mr. Byrd, and carried unanimously by all to approve a one-step increase for Jessica Mitchell effective May 11, 2026.

Chairman Perdue thanked Ms. Mitchell for taking the initiative to find, take, and pass this training.

Mr. Gottwals presented a request to fill a vacant Firefighter position in the Fire Department.

Motion by Mr. Gottwals, second by Ms. Robinson, and carried unanimously by all to approve the hiring of Dustin Talley to fill the vacant Firefighter position in the Fire Department at a Grade 16, Step C, effective May 11, 2026. The Personnel Department has reviewed his qualifications, and he meets the criteria for the higher step.

Chairman Perdue expressed his appreciation to Mr. Talley for his work with the fire department and for joining the department full-time.

Ms. Robinson presented a request to approve the selection of the Workers' Compensation Third-Party Administrator (TPA).

Motion by Ms. Robinson to approve the selection of Georgia Administrative Services, Inc. as the County's Workers' Compensation Third Party Administrator, and for the signing of the necessary paperwork to proceed with the transition and implementation.

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Chairman Perdue asked that Commissioner Robinson amend her motion to allow for Director of Personnel Ken Carter to be authorized to sign the agreement with Georgia Administrative Services, Inc.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Gottwals, and carried unanimously by all to approve the selection of Georgia Administrative Services, Inc. as the County's Workers' Compensation Third Party Administrator, and for Director of Personnel Ken Carter to sign the necessary paperwork to proceed with the transition and implementation.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Talton, and carried unanimously by all to approve the payment of the bills totaling \$7,234,064.81.

Chairman Perdue stated that these bills include the first payment to the Georgia Department of Transportation for improvements to Hwy 41 from State Route 247 Connector to Lakeview Road using SPLOST funds. He then expressed his appreciation for the partnership and cooperation that the Georgia DOT has exhibited.

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

Shirlin Johnson-Granville spoke about the Read Foundation, stating it is in its 25th year at First Baptist Church in Warner Robins. She spoke about the Summer Reading Academy, which will take place June 1st through 3rd for grades 6-8, from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Dan Rhoades, President and CEO of the Museum of Aviation, invited the Commissioners to the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the GEAR Lab. He expressed his appreciation to the Peyton Anderson Foundation, Flint Foundation, and Sigma Defense for their support of this new initiative at the Museum of Aviation.

Chairman Perdue thanked Mr. Rhoades for the work he and his staff perform at the Museum of Aviation each day and expressed excitement about the opening of the GEAR Lab.

There being no further comments, Chairman Perdue closed Public Comments and opened the floor for Commissioner Comments.

Mr. Byrd thanked everyone for attending and commented on the significant items addressed at the meeting and the intergovernmental cooperation required to implement them. He closed by expressing his appreciation to the Houston County Firefighters who assisted with the recent South Georgia wildfire.

Mr. Talton thanked Fire Chief Chris Stoner for sending personnel to assist with the South Georgia wildfire and expressed his appreciation to all Public Works staff. He commented about the mega-site and the work that went into putting this agreement and initiative together and the positive impact that will be realized once this property is fully developed. He closed by expressing his appreciation for the organizations and activities presented at the meeting, such as the Salvation Army and the summer educational events hosted by the Houston County Library and Read Foundation.

Ms. Robinson thanked those who attended the meeting. She commented on the progress for the future of Houston County that was voted on or spoken about at the meeting. She closed by commenting about the children's and youth activities planned for this summer that were highlighted during the meeting.

Mr. Gottwals gave a quote from Jimmy Carter, which reads, "Each of us must rededicate ourselves to serving the common good. We are a community." He expressed that it was a privilege to serve with the other members of the Board and to serve others.

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Chairman Perdue spoke about the upcoming water rate increase set to begin July 1st. He stated that the County's water rates are among the most affordable in the region and in comparison to similar markets. He pointed out that, prior to last year's adjustments, 2006 was the last time water rates had been increased, and that in fiscal years 2024 and 2025 the water department operated at a loss. He explained that the County is in the midst of a three-year phased adjustment, and the adjustment in July will not be as large as in 2025. He thanked the Board for its recent decision to adjust connection fees to ensure that new growth carries the burden of capital expansion while existing ratepayers pay for operations. He thanked Chief Stoner for sending members of his Fire Department to help fight the South Georgia wildfires recently and noted that Chief Stoner also went down to assist with emergency management. He concluded his comments by wishing Director of Administration Robbie Dunbar a belated happy birthday.

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