

**Houston County Commissioners Meeting
May 19, 2026
Perry, Georgia**

The Houston County Board of Commissioners met in Regular Session at 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, May 19, 2026, at the Houston County Annex in Warner Robins, 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 Robinson led those in attendance in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Pastor Anthony Hayes, of St. James CME Church in Perry, gave the invocation and spoke about his church and the outreach it provides in the community. He spoke about the history of his church, established in the early 1900s, and about Feed My Sheep, the program serving elderly homebound members of the community. He closed by quoting the church's motto, "A place to connect, grow, and serve."

Each of the Commissioners thanked Pastor Hayes for his work in the community, his focus, his friendship, and his invocation.

Chairman Perdue stated that an Executive Session was needed and requested that Item #15 be added to the agenda.

Motion by Mr. Talton, second by Mr. Byrd, and carried unanimously by all to add Item #15, for Attorney-Client Consultation as provided in O.C.G.A. § 50-14-2(1).

Motion by Mr. Gottwals, second by Ms. Robinson, and carried unanimously by all to approve the minutes from the May 5, 2026, meeting.

Tom Hall, County Attorney, gave the first reading of a proposed amendment to the Houston County Code of Ordinances regarding restrictions and limitations on vape shops. A second reading and public hearing will be held at the Commissioners' meeting on June 2, 2026, at the Houston County Courthouse in Perry at 9:00 a.m. Following the public hearing, the Commissioners will vote on the proposed amendment.

Tom Hall, County Attorney, gave the first reading of a proposed amendment to Chapter 6, Alcoholic Beverages, of the Houston County Code of Ordinances. The proposed changes include updating the state code reference in the definitions section to O.C.G.A. § 3-1-1 et seq.; replacing references to the position of County Clerk with Director of Administration; requiring new retail package liquor stores to be located at least five miles from an existing retail package liquor store, with the distance certified by a Georgia Registered Land Surveyor at the applicant's expense; increasing the annual retail liquor license fee from \$4,000 to \$5,000; and increasing the annual wholesale beer license fee from \$100 to \$500 for wholesale dealers whose principal place of business is in Houston County. A second reading and public hearing will be held on June 2, 2026, during the Commissioners' meeting at the Courthouse in Perry at 9:00 a.m. Following the public hearing, the Commissioners will vote on the proposed amendment to the Code of Ordinances.

Chairman Perdue thanked Mr. Hall and discussed the existing moratorium on vape shops and liquor stores, as well as the changes under consideration to impose additional restrictions on these types of businesses in the County.

Chairman Perdue presented an annexation request from the City of Perry. He then opened the floor for Public Comments, stating that all comments should be brief and directed at the Board.

Casey Graham, engineer for the developer, gave additional information on the development and spoke in favor of the annexation.

With no other comments, the meeting continued.

Houston County Commissioners Meeting Continued from Page 655

Motion by Mr. Gottwals, second by Mr. Byrd, and carried unanimously by all to concur with the City of Perry's request to annex 35.59 acres on Kings Chapel Road, known as Tax Parcel 000820 016000, with a zoning change from County RAG to Perry R3 subject to the following stipulations:

- The parcel's connection to Kings Chapel Road is not suitable for subdivision access, and additional access to Kings Chapel will not be approved without appropriate changes.
- The County's water system cannot currently support additional customers on this parcel, and water service will be from the City of Perry.

Chairman Perdue presented an annexation request from the City of Warner Robins. Prior to opening the floor for public comments, Chairman Perdue explained the County's legal authority regarding concurrence or non-concurrence with annexation requests. He stated that the Board had previously voted to non-concur with this annexation request when it was accompanied by a commercial rezoning; however, the current request does not include any change in zoning or density. He added that, under State law, the Board may only non-concur when specific statutory grounds are present, and that he did not believe such grounds existed in this case. Chairman Perdue described this as a gap in Georgia law, acknowledged by state legislators, under which a property owner denied a rezoning at the county level may annex into a city at existing zoning, wait out the two-year freeze, and then pursue the same rezoning from the city. He encouraged citizens to contact their state senator and representative to ask that this gap be closed in the next legislative session. He further advised that the Board had three options regarding the request: to non-concur, in which case the Georgia Department of Community Affairs would likely not convene an arbitration panel due to the absence of statutory grounds, though such a vote would serve as a show of solidarity with the surrounding community and a clear statement of the Commission's position on the use of the land; to concur and comply with State law, in keeping with each member's oath to uphold the laws of the State; or to take no action, in which case the 45-day window would close and the annexation would proceed to the City of Warner Robins for final approval, carrying neither the Board's endorsement nor DCA review. Chairman Perdue concluded by stating that the Commission's view on the long-term suitability of the property had not changed, and that each Commissioner would vote his or her conscience after giving the matter serious consideration.

Mr. Keith Newton spoke in favor of the annexation.

Mr. Terry Mock, Ms. Monica Wilson, and Ms. Heather Talton spoke in opposition to the annexation.

With no further comments, Chairman Perdue called for a motion on the item. There being no motion, no action was taken, and the meeting continued.

Mr. Gottwals presented a request to enter a sales contract to purchase property that will expand the footprint of the Echeconnee Creek Park in north Houston County.

Motion by Mr. Gottwals, second by Mr. Talton, and carried unanimously by all to approve entering into a sales contract with Ms. Kenia Hernandez, in the amount of \$300,000, to purchase the property at 10115 Hawkinsville Road, also known as:

All that tract or parcel of land situate, lying and being in Land Lot 205 of the Fifth Land District of Houston County, Georgia, and being more particularly described and shown on a plat prepared by Tamplin & Sherrill, Inc. and recorded in Plat Book 16, Page 4, Clerk's Office, Houston Superior Court, said lot having a frontage of 125.8 feet on the westerly line of Georgia Highway 247 and extending back therefrom in a westerly direction a distance of 363.0 feet along its northerly line adjacent to property of John C. Phillips and having a measurement of 168.3 feet along its rear line adjacent to the right of way of the Georgia Southern and Florida Railroad Company.

This purchase will be funded by the 2018 SPLOST.

Houston County Commissioners Meeting Continued from Page 656

Mr. Byrd stated that he was glad to see continued progress on this park.

Chairman Perdue expressed his appreciation to the property owner for agreeing to sell the property.

Ms. Robinson presented a request to accept the Services, Training, Officers, and Prosecutors (STOP) Violence Against Women Formula Grant.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Byrd, and carried unanimously by all to accept STOP Violence Against Women Formula Grant AW-VAWA-25-060-062. This grant is in the amount of \$64,842 with matching funds of \$21,614 for a total of \$86,456, and has an award period of July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2027.

Ms. Robinson presented a request to declare items surplus to be sold on GovDeals.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Gottwals, and carried unanimously by all to approve declaring the following items surplus and selling them on GovDeals:

- 2015 Ford F-350 Cab & Chassis
- 2017 Kubota M6-131 Tractor
- 2017 Microplex F40 green bar printer

Ms. Robinson presented a request to fill the vacant Secretary position in the District Attorney's Office.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Talton, and carried unanimously by all to approve hiring Aleisa Turner to fill the vacant Secretary position in the District Attorney's Office at a Grade 8 Step C effective May 20, 2026. Personnel has reviewed her qualifications and confirms that she meets the criteria for Step C.

Mr. Talton presented a request for approval of a change order on the Bonaire Elevated Tank project.

Motion by Mr. Talton, second by Ms. Robinson, and carried unanimously by all to approve change order #1 for the Bonaire Elevated Tank project in the amount of \$171,100. This change order for a lighting package will increase the contract price from \$6,470,000 to \$6,641,100 and extend the contract time by 42 days. This project, including the change order, is funded through ARPA.

Mr. Talton presented a request for approval of a bid for the County vehicle fleet services.

Motion by Mr. Talton, second by Mr. Gottwals, and carried unanimously by all to approve the bid from Jeff Smith Ford, of Byron, Georgia, with the lowest overall cost in all categories, to provide fleet vehicle services for a period of one year, with an option for a second year.

Chairman Perdue acknowledged those in attendance from Five Star Ford and stated that this contract was not an exclusive one. He explained that County departments could take their vehicles to other dealerships for maintenance as long as the prices in the contract were matched.

Mr. Talton presented a request for approval to enter an agreement with Saunders Engineering Consultants, Inc. for construction plans.

Motion by Mr. Talton, second by Ms. Robinson, to approve an agreement with Saunders Engineering Consultants, Inc., of Centerville, Georgia, in the amount of \$11,000, for construction plans for a right-turn lane on Bear Branch Road at SR 127. This work will be funded by the 2018 SPLOST, with a 5-month timeline for plan completion. Upon voting, Mr. Talton, Ms. Robinson, and Mr. Gottwals voted yes; Mr. Byrd abstained. Motion carried.

Mr. Talton was excused from the meeting for personal reasons.

Houston County Commissioners Meeting Continued from Page 657

Mr. Byrd presented a request for approval to purchase a flow meter for the Quail Run Water Treatment Plant to replace the current flow meter, which has failed.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Mr. Gottwals, to approve the purchase of one new 12-inch Badger Mag Meter flow meter, from J.K. Duren Company of Roswell, Georgia, in the amount of \$8,512.50. Funding for this purchase will be from the Water Department General Supplies. Upon voting, Mr. Byrd, Mr. Gottwals, and Ms. Robinson voted yes. Motion carried.

Mr. Byrd presented a request for approval of the final adjusting change order on the Water System Improvements to Serve Cemex project.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Ms. Robinson, to approve change order #2 with John R. Walker, Inc., of Macon, Georgia, to reduce the final contract price by \$132,529.80, bringing the final total to \$1,944,227.09. Upon voting, Mr. Byrd, Ms. Robinson, and Mr. Gottwals voted yes. Motion carried.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Mr. Gottwals, to approve the payment of the bills totaling \$2,706,309.24. Upon voting, Mr. Byrd, Mr. Gottwals, and Ms. Robinson voted yes. Motion carried.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Byrd, to approve entering Executive Session for Attorney-Client Consultation as provided in O.C.G.A. § 50-14-2(1). Upon voting, Ms. Robinson, Mr. Byrd, and Mr. Gottwals voted yes. Motion carried.

The Board left chambers for Executive Session.

Upon returning to chambers, Ms. Robinson made a motion, seconded by Mr. Byrd, to exit Executive Session and reconvene the Commissioners' meeting. Upon voting, Ms. Robinson, Mr. Byrd, and Mr. Gottwals voted yes. Motion carried.

Mr. Byrd presented the matter discussed in the Executive Session, reading the following into the record:

In the matter of Lange vs. Houston County, et al., the parties have reached an agreement. The plaintiff has 10 days from today to revoke the agreement by law. The Board of Commissioners agrees to the terms of the agreement. The parties have agreed to the release of a joint statement at the close of the revocation period and to that being the only public communication regarding the agreement. I move that we authorize the Chairman to sign the agreement at the close of the 10-day revocation period and agree to the terms of the agreement.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Mr. Gottwals, to authorize Chairman Perdue to sign the agreement at the close of the 10-day revocation period. Upon voting, Mr. Byrd, Mr. Gottwals, and Ms. Robinson voted yes. Motion carried.

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

Mr. John Schwendler expressed his appreciation to the Board for assistance with transportation issues that he previously brought to their attention.

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

Mr. Gottwals expressed his congratulations to all Houston County graduates, and thanked Pastor Hayes for his invocation.

Ms. Robinson thanked everyone for attending and remarked on how productive the meeting was given the many items discussed and approved. She stated that it was hard to make everyone happy, but the Board had to follow the law and move forward.

Houston County Commissioners Meeting Continued from Page 658

Mr. Byrd expressed his congratulations to the graduates and their parents and his thanks to all the schools' faculty and staff for their work each day. He reminded everyone that the polls were still open for those who had not voted yet. He concluded his remarks by expressing his condolences to the family of Mike Long, former County Attorney.

Chairman Perdue gave the floor to County Attorney Tom Hall for his comments on the recent passing of his former law partner, Mike Long.

Mr. Hall spoke about his work, friendship, and history with his former law partner and former County Attorney Mike Long. He stated that Mr. Long began working for Houston County in 1978 and ended his career as County Attorney in 2014. Tom spoke about how helpful Mike was to him over the years, both in their practice and as he took over as County Attorney.

Chairman Perdue said that he would be praying for the Long family and that he had consulted with Mike before considering a run for County Commissioner. He concluded his comments by saying that the Commissioners took an oath to uphold the laws of the State and that sometimes pushing back on those laws is necessary and then thanked the Board for their efforts and for the way they each of them listens to citizen comments, input, and feedback.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Mr. Gottwals, to approve adjourning the meeting. Upon voting, Mr. Byrd, Mr. Gottwals, and Ms. Robinson voted yes. Motion carried; meeting adjourned.

Robbie Dunbar
Director of Administration

Chairman

Commissioner

Commissioner

Commissioner

Commissioner

EXECUTIVE SESSION AFFIDAVIT

STATE OF GEORGIA
COUNTY OF HOUSTON

AFFIDAVIT OF PRESIDING OFFICER

Dan Perdue, Chairman of the Houston County Board of Commissioners, being duly sworn, states under oath that the following is true and accurate to the best of his knowledge and belief:

1.

The Houston County Board of Commissioners met in a duly advertised meeting on May 19, 2026.

2.

During such meeting, the Board voted to go into executive session.

3.

The executive session was called to order at 6:15 p.m.

4.

The subject matter of the closed portion of the meeting was devoted to the following matter(s) within the exceptions provided in the open meeting law:

Consultation with the county attorney or other legal counsel to discuss pending or potential litigation, settlement, claims, administrative proceedings, or other judicial actions brought or to be brought by or against the county or any officers or employee or in which the county or any officer or employee may be directly involved as provided in O.C.G.A. § 50-14-2(1);

Discussion of tax matters made confidential by state law as provided by O.C.G.A. § 50-14-2(2) and (insert the citation to the legal authority making the tax matter confidential)

Discussion or voting on:

Authorizing a settlement as provided in O.C.G.A. § 50-14-3(b)(1)(A);

Authorizing negotiations to purchase, dispose of, or lease property as provided in O.C.G.A. § 50-14-3(b)(1)(B);

Authorizing an appraisal as provided in O.C.G.A. § 50-14-3(b)(1)(C);

Entering a contract for the purchase, disposal of, or lease of property as provided in O.C.G.A. § 50-14-3(b)(1)(D);

Houston County Commissioners Meeting Continued from Page 660

_____ Entering into an option to purchase, dispose of, or lease property as provided in O.C.G.A. § 50-14-3(b)(1)(E);

_____ Discussion or deliberation on the appointment, employment, compensation, hiring, disciplinary action or dismissal, or periodic evaluation or rating of a county officer or employee as provided in O.C.G.A. § 50-14-3(b)(2);

_____ Interviewing candidates for executive positions as provided in O.C.G.A. § 50-14-3(b)(2);

_____ Other (describe the exemption to the open meetings law): _____
_____ as provided in (insert the citation to the legal authority exempting the topic) _____.

5.

_____ During the course of the closed session devoted to exempt topics, an incidental remark regarding a non-exempt topic or an attempt to discuss a non-exempt topic was made.

_____ The attempt was immediately ruled out of order and attempts to discuss same ceased immediately.

_____ The attempt was immediately ruled out of order. However, the comments did not cease, so the closed/executive session was immediately adjourned without discussion or action being taken regarding any non-exempt topic.

6.

Minutes were taken of this meeting and will be filed and held for in camera inspection only.

This _____ day of _____ 2026.

Dan Perdue, Chairman
Houston County Board of Commissioners

Sworn to and subscribed
before me this _____ day of
_____ 2026.

Notary Public

My commission expires:

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