

Houston County Commissioners Meeting
August 18, 2026
Warner Robins, Georgia

The Houston County Board of Commissioners met in Regular Session at 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, August 18, 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, Director of Operations Brian Jones, and County Attorney Tom Hall were also present.

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

Reverend Don Feezor, Pastor at First Baptist Church Centerville, gave the invocation. He then spoke about the history of his church and its impact on the community. He stated that he has been the church's pastor for nine and a half years, and First Baptist Church Centerville is celebrating its 125th anniversary this fall. He commented on the church's focus on serving the community, including the completion of more than 4,500 oil changes through the Single Moms' Oil Change outreach. He also mentioned the church's food ministry to students through the Pack-A-Sack ministry, which provides students with food on weekends. He concluded by mentioning the church is sharing parking spaces with the City of Centerville for Center Park.

Chairman Perdue and each Commissioner expressed appreciation to Reverend Feezor for his kind words and his church's service to the community and congratulated him on the church's milestone anniversary coming later in the year.

The Board recognized several members of the Houston County Fire Department for their service and dedication in assisting with the wildfires in Brantley County earlier this year.

Fire Chief Christopher Stoner, who served on the Incident Management Team during the Brantley County deployment, explained that these firefighters all volunteered for this service, helped protect more than 350 homes from the effects of wildfire, and helped keep the water lines clear, ensuring continuous water flow for fire suppression.

Chairman Perdue and each Commissioner expressed thanks to these firefighters for their service, willingness to assist another jurisdiction, and efforts to save property and lives.

Chairman Perdue asked Sheriff Moulton to introduce School Resource Officer Deputy Cody Nelson and speak about the lifesaving efforts he made during a recent incident at a local high school.

Sheriff Moulton stated that Deputy Nelson's quick reaction saved the life of a student when he rendered aid following a school shooting. Sheriff Moulton recognized Deputy Nelson's parents, Earl and Wendy Nelson, and his wife, Hailey, who accompanied him. Sheriff Moulton concluded his remarks by advising that the owner of Lake Joy Tree Removal heard about Deputy Nelson's actions and gathered funds to purchase gift cards, which were presented to Deputy Nelson.

Chairman Perdue and each Commissioner expressed thanks to Deputy Nelson for his heroic actions in saving the student's life, his service to the community, the trust and respect he has earned from the students he serves, and his willingness to go above and beyond.

Motion by Mr. Talton, second by Ms. Robinson, and carried unanimously by all to approve the minutes from the August 4, 2026, meeting.

Mr. Byrd presented a request for approval of updates to the County's Capital Improvement Plan for FY2027 through FY2031.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Mr. Gottwals, and carried unanimously by all to approve the Five-Year Capital Improvement Plan for FY2027 through FY2031. Board action at this time is not an appropriation of funds. Individual projects will still require approval through the annual budget process, project approvals, grant awards, or separate Board actions as applicable.

Mr. Byrd thanked all County staff who worked on the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) document and said it was the most robust and accurate document of its kind he had ever seen. He concluded by saying that the document would be online soon for everyone to review.

Chairman Perdue thanked all the staff who worked on this project for their work and involvement. He stated that this document covers \$300 million in anticipated County capital expenditures over the next five years as part of an effort toward planning and transparency. He broke this figure down by saying most of the funding for these capital improvements would come from SPLOST (\$140 million) and enterprise funds (\$112 million). He thanked Public Works staff for their work in planning for the landfill expansion and for the water system expansion to provide drinking water and fire suppression to the rapidly growing parts of Houston County.

Chairman Perdue read the Resolution, Houston County Tax Levy for the Year 2026, into the record:

WHEREAS, the Tax Commissioner has filed the Houston County Digest for the year 2026; and

WHEREAS, the aggregate net value of property on the 2026 Digest is \$7,366,354,399 which includes public utilities; and

WHEREAS, by local legislation there was enacted a "tax cap" limiting the Houston County Commissioners ability to levy a county tax (Georgia Laws 1982, Page 1601, which was continued in effect by Georgia Laws 1986, Page 4209); and

WHEREAS, sub-paragraph (D) of paragraph (3) of the "tax cap" provides that "the mill rate limitation shall not apply to taxes levied for the express purpose of paying the cost of expenditures which are not funded by state or federal funds,"; and

WHEREAS, the Houston County Commissioners desire to levy a tax of 6.944 mills to fund FY2027 general fund expenses and a tax of 1.475 mills to fund mandated expenses for a total of 8.419 mills countywide; and

WHEREAS, a fire tax of 1.677 mills in the unincorporated areas of Houston County is required to fund FY2027 fire expenses as previously budgeted; and

WHEREAS, this countywide levy and fire tax levy meet the requirements of the local "tax cap" legislation and the requirements of State O.C.G.A. 48-5-32.1 regarding adoption of "rollback" rates or conducting required advertisements, notices and public hearings for rates in excess of the "rollback" rate.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDERED that a tax of 8.419 mills be levied upon all the taxable property of Houston County on the Digest, including public utilities, and on all taxable property not on the Digest for the several County purposes for which the law authorizes and directs county authorities to levy taxes as specified below:

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

To provide for legislative and executive branches of government, the judicial branch, the operation of courts, elections and financial administration.

PUBLIC SAFETY

To provide for law enforcement and other protection.

PUBLIC WORKS

To provide for public roads, bridges and engineering.

HEALTH AND WELFARE

To provide for physical and mental health and other health services and welfare.

LIBRARIES

To provide for library facilities.

CONSERVATION OF NATURAL RESOURCES

To provide for the County Extension Service and to provide for the Georgia Forestry Commission.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL

To provide for the Middle Georgia Regional Commission, Development Authority of Houston County, Middle Georgia Clean Air Coalition, and the Perry-Houston County Airport Authority.

MISCELLANEOUS

To provide for social security, workers' compensation, retirement benefits and county insurance.

UNINCORPORATED SERVICES

Insurance premium tax in the amount of \$4,811,942.70 is being used for Animal Control Services, Storm Drainage Improvements, Traffic Engineering, Mosquito Abatement, Fire Department Personnel and Equipment, Recreation Services, 21st Century Partnership, Planning and Zoning and Building Inspection Services within the unincorporated area in lieu of adjusting the unincorporated millage.

MANDATED EXPENSES

To provide for those expenditures mandated by court order or state or federal law and which are not funded by state or federal funds.

BE IT FURTHER ORDERED that there be levied a fire tax of 1.677 mills on all property in unincorporated Houston County, including public utilities, and on all taxable property not on the digest. This fire tax levy is to provide for fire protection in unincorporated Houston County.

BE IT FURTHER ORDERED that there be levied a school tax of 11.677 mills on all property in Houston County as it appears on the 2026 Tax Digest of Houston County, including public utilities, and on all taxable property not on the digest. This countywide tax levy is to maintain the public schools of Houston County, in accordance with Georgia School Laws for the 2026-2027 school year.

ADOPTED this the 18th day of August 2026.

Chairman Perdue then read the Resolution Adopting Houston County Mandate Levy for the Year 2026 into the record:

WHEREAS, the Tax Commissioner has filed the Houston County Digest for the year 2026; and

WHEREAS, the aggregate net value of property on the 2026 Digest is \$7,366,354,399 which includes public utilities.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDERED that there be levied a tax of 1.475 mills on all taxable property including public utilities of Houston County to cover all State, Federal and Court mandated costs with a combined amount of \$10,868,162.

SO ADOPTED this the 18 day of August, 2026

The State, Federal, and Court Mandates and amounts associated with each mandate for the Resolution Adopting Houston County Mandated Levy for the Year 2026.

Code Section / Authority	Description	Amount
O.C.G.A. § 15-10-1 et seq.	Establishes County Magistrate Courts; County funds operating costs in excess of estimated court revenue.	\$930,797
O.C.G.A. §§ 48-5-137, 48-5-183	Mandated increases in the Tax Commissioner's minimum salary.	\$18,991
O.C.G.A. § 15-16-20	Mandated increases in the Sheriff's minimum salary.	\$37,622
O.C.G.A. §§ 15-6-88, 15-6-89	Mandated increases in the Superior Court Clerk's minimum salary.	\$38,402
Jury Composition Reform Act of 2011	Compilation and distribution of the statewide master jury list by the Council of Superior Court Clerks of Georgia.	\$4,116
H.B. 1073, 148th Gen. Assemb., Reg. Sess. (Ga. 2006)	Additional Superior Court judge, plus Supreme Court rule changes applicable to Superior Courts; costs in the Superior Court and Clerk's Office.	\$95,161
Georgia Indigent Defense Act of 2003; Georgia Supreme Court Order (March 4, 1999)	Indigent defense caseload guidelines; County funds Public Defender's Office expenditures in excess of State grant funds.	\$2,548,383
Georgia Acts 1445, 1232, 403, 1327, 974, and 1306; Ga. L. 1984, p. 143; Public Law 98-435; O.C.G.A. Title 21, Chapter 2; O.C.G.A. § 21-2-234(a)	State and federal election requirements for the Board of Elections, including 'No Act Notice' mailouts to electors.	\$81,571
Houston County Juvenile Court Orders; Houston County Superior Court Order	Additional Juvenile Court staff and an increase in the Juvenile Judge's minimum salary above State grant funds.	\$182,751
Georgia Juvenile Justice Reform Act	Rewrite of Georgia's Juvenile Code; funds a full-time position in Juvenile Court–Enhancement.	\$81,223
	Excess revenues over expenditures for mandated levies.	\$14,612
O.C.G.A. § 15-9-63	Mandated increases in the Probate Judge's minimum salary.	\$34,862

O.C.G.A. § 15-9-68	Local custodian for vital records and/or special abstracting agent in Probate Court; the lesser of fees collected or \$7,500 in any calendar year.	\$7,500
Local Government Uniform Chart of Accounts and Reporting Act (H.B. 491); GASB 34	Maintenance of software required to conform to the State's accounting system.	\$302,163
Federal court-ordered pay plan	Maintenance of software required to comply with the judges' ruling.	\$91,081
Ga. L. 1990, p. 3510	Established the office of full-time Chairman of the Board of Commissioners and the position of secretary, and changed travel pay for part-time Commissioners.	\$357,515
O.C.G.A. §§ 36-5-27 – 36-5-28	Training supplements and COLA increases for all part-time Commissioners.	\$6,458
O.C.G.A. § 36-5-24	Authorizes County Commissioners to set their compensation; increase in part-time Commissioners' pay.	\$62,772
O.C.G.A. § 15-18-60	Establishes the office of full-time Solicitor.	\$209,644
H.B. 337, 154th Gen. Assemb., Reg. Sess. (2017); O.C.G.A. § 45-18-5; Georgia Department of Revenue regulations; S.B. 177, Taxpayer's Bill of Rights (Ga. 1999)	Two Tax Assessor III positions under H.B. 337 and Department of Revenue regulations, plus two additional Tax Assessor III positions under the Taxpayer's Bill of Rights, to meet property tax administration requirements (four positions total).	\$381,916
Houston County Superior Court Order	Security personnel and equipment for the courthouse.	\$695,415
O.C.G.A. § 15-16-10	Requires the Sheriff to develop a written comprehensive security plan; funds security personnel in Magistrate Court.	\$158,844
O.C.G.A. § 45-16-11	Mandated increase in the Coroner's salary.	\$17,251
O.C.G.A. § 12-6-93	Increases the forestland assessment for wildfire protection from 4¢ to 10¢ per acre of privately held forestland.	\$6,115
Houston County Superior Court Orders	Court-ordered expenditures.	\$8,755
Affordable Care Act, employer shared responsibility provision	Form 1095-C health coverage statements furnished to each employee; forms and postage.	\$4,437
H.B. 451	PTSD insurance for all first responders.	\$52,635
S.B. 177, Property Taxpayer's Bill of Rights (Ga. 1999)	Tax Commissioner must mail new property owners a brochure explaining the County's property tax laws and procedures; printing and postage.	\$660
O.C.G.A. § 48-5-306, Comprehensive Tax Reform Bill	Annual assessment notices mailed by the Tax Assessors Office to all property owners.	\$58,197
O.C.G.A. § 21-2-385	Advance voting.	\$175,000
O.C.G.A. §§ 21-2-99 – 21-2-101	Training for full-time elections employees.	\$7,000
O.C.G.A. §§ 21-2-300, 21-2-379.3	Maintenance and testing of voting machines.	\$8,100

O.C.G.A. § 21-2-389	Absentee voting.	\$141,241
O.C.G.A. § 21-2-498	Risk-limiting audit obligations.	\$1,070
O.C.G.A. § 21-2-215	Voter record and signature card maintenance, less State reimbursement.	\$1,100
O.C.G.A. § 21-2-379.6	Ballot secure paper.	\$16,000
O.C.G.A. § 42-1-12	Sex Offender Registry maintenance.	\$141,327
O.C.G.A. § 42-4-4	Jail inmate care.	\$2,500,000
O.C.G.A. § 37-3-101; H.B. 1013, the 2022 Georgia Mental Health Parity Act	Emergency mental health transport.	\$30,000
O.C.G.A. §§ 35-3-30 – 35-3-40	GCIC/CJIS compliance audits and policy maintenance.	\$640
O.C.G.A. § 35-8-20	Minimum training requirements for law enforcement officers.	\$280,000
H.B. 146; O.C.G.A. § 25-3-23	Firefighter cancer insurance.	\$5,511
H.B. 1105 (2024); O.C.G.A. § 42-4-16	Criminal Alien Tracking & Reporting Act; Inmate immigration status verification and reporting.	\$11,500
O.C.G.A. §§ 15-11-50, 15-11-63(a)&(b)	Creates a Juvenile Court in each Georgia county; authorizes the appointment of clerks and other personnel and the Judge's setting of salary, tenure, and other conditions of employment, with salaries paid from county funds.	\$887,428
O.C.G.A. § 15-6-2(21); H.B. 992, 157th Gen. Assemb., Reg. Sess. (Ga. 2024)	Provides a fourth judge of the Superior Courts of the Houston Judicial Circuit, with compensation, salary, and expense allowance paid by the State and the circuit's counties; an additional court reporter; and county-provided facilities, office space, supplies, equipment, and personnel.	\$102,500
O.C.G.A. § 40-2-22	Registration and licensing of motor vehicles, which must be issued by the Tax Commissioner.	\$69,895

Following his reading of the millage rate resolution, Chairman Perdue thanked the Accounting Department, constitutional officers, and county department heads for helping develop the millage rate to cover the mandated millage and commented that the county is below the tax cap by 2.42 mills. He concluded his comments by stating that this is the lowest millage rate ever.

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

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

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Ms. Robinson, and carried unanimously by all to approve Chairman Perdue signing resolutions setting the Houston County tax levy for 2026 at 20.096 mills in the incorporated areas and 21.773 mills in the unincorporated areas, as hereby specified:

Incorporated
8.419 mills General County Purposes
11.677 mills Educational Purposes
20.096 mills Total

Unincorporated
8.419 mills General County Purposes
11.677 mills Educational Purposes
1.677 mills Fire Levy
21.773 mills Total

Mr. Talton presented a request for approval of a proposal for civil design, planning, and permitting work related to the development of the Echeconnee Creek Park.

Motion by Mr. Talton, second by Mr. Gottwals, and carried unanimously by all to approve the signing of a proposal with Traverse Land Services, LLC, of Warner Robins, Georgia, with preliminary costs of \$67,750 and administration fees assessed at \$175 per hour, not to exceed \$6,000. This does not include the No-Rise Certification. This project has a six-month timeline and will be paid from Recreation Professional Services.

Chairman Perdue commented that he was happy to see work continue on the Echeconnee Creek Park project.

Motion by Mr. Talton, second by Mr. Byrd, and carried unanimously by all to approve changing the date of the Houston County Board of Commissioners' second meeting in September from September 15, 2026, to September 22, 2026.

Chairman Perdue stated that he would be traveling during the regularly scheduled second meeting and thanked the Commission for their willingness to change the date.

Ms. Robinson presented a request for approval of a bid for nine vehicles for the Sheriff's Office.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Talton, and carried unanimously by all to approve the bid from Wade Ford of Smyrna, Georgia, the state-contracted vendor, for nine 2026 Ford Interceptors with the 3.0L EcoBoost engine for a purchase price of \$50,000 per vehicle, or a total cost of \$450,000. These vehicles will be funded as follows: eight will be charged to the 2018 SPLOST, and one will be charged to the General Fund and reimbursed by the Board of Education for use as an SRO vehicle.

Ms. Robinson presented a request to enter into an independent contractor agreement to fill the court reporter vacancy in the Superior Court.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Gottwals, and carried unanimously by all to approve entering into an independent contractor agreement with Ms. Kristian Daugherty for court reporting services in Judge Lumsden's court, with an annual salary of \$69,500, payable in monthly installments of \$5,791.66, with the twelfth month at \$5,791.74. This agreement will have a term of September 1, 2026, through June 30, 2027.

Mr. Gottwals presented a request for approval of a one-step increase for Ryan Hale, who has attained the Security X Certification.

Motion by Mr. Gottwals, second by Mr. Byrd, and carried unanimously by all to approve the one-step increase for Ryan Hale, bringing his pay grade from a Grade 27 Step G to a Grade 27 Step H effective August 31, 2026.

Chairman Perdue thanked the Board for supporting the rewarding of County employees who seek out and secure additional training or education related to their jobs, which will make them better employees and increase their ability to serve County citizens.

Mr. Gottwals presented a request for approval of a one-step increase for Larry Whitfield, who has attained his Landfill Operator Certification.

Motion by Mr. Gottwals, second by Ms. Robinson, and carried unanimously by all to approve the one-step increase for Larry Whitfield, bringing his pay grade from a Grade 13 Step B to a Grade 13 Step C effective August 31, 2026.

Motion by Mr. Gottwals, second by Mr. Byrd, and carried unanimously by all to approve the payment of the bills totaling \$3,703,474.26.

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Director of Personnel Ken Carter presented a Personnel Appeal to the Board regarding Humphrey Smith and his termination based on a Group 3 offense.

Mr. Smith addressed the Board and read his appeal.

Chairman Perdue asked Director of Operations Brian Jones to make comments.

Mr. Jones gave background information and details regarding the incident, investigation, and findings, along with the disciplinary action that had been taken to date.

Mr. Smith provided additional information he wished the Board to know.

Chairman Perdue stated that the Board would send him a letter with its decision within the time allowed.

Chairman Perdue opened the floor for Public Comments.

Mr. Ron Coleman spoke about an overgrown lot on Dunbar Road, adjacent to his property, and requested the County's assistance in having the property cleared due to the number of snakes he had encountered.

Mr. George Enami and Col. Alan Yee spoke about a problem they were having obtaining a building permit.

With no further comments, Chairman Perdue opened the floor for Commissioners' comments.

Mr. Gottwals commented on the many items that had been discussed and the work accomplished during the meeting and stated he was thankful to be able to recognize those members of public safety for their work, efforts, and service.

Mr. Talton thanked everyone for attending and expressed his appreciation to Sheriff Moulton and Chief Stoner for their leadership. He stated that those who serve under them are true heroes who represent Houston County well everywhere they go. He concluded his comments by thanking all those who were involved in developing the CIP document.

Mr. Byrd commented that this was a very special meeting recognizing members of the public safety community for their service, work, and sacrifice. He thanked Deputy Nelson for his lifesaving action and recognized the hard work of County employees in developing the CIP document. He closed by noting the County's low millage rate and commitment to providing key services at the lowest cost possible.

Ms. Robinson commented on the firefighters who were recognized for their service in providing assistance to the residents of Brantley County during the wildfire in South Georgia earlier this year. She also expressed her appreciation for the quick work and lifesaving action performed by Deputy Nelson. She concluded her comments by giving a quote from Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. about education: *"Intelligence plus character—that is the goal of true education."*

Chairman Perdue commented on the large amount of work accomplished during the meeting and mentioned the Capital Improvement Plan, thanking those who helped put it together. He noted that the County's millage rate is very low and expressed his thanks to all County employees who helped make that happen. He then thanked the firefighters who were in attendance and recognized for their service during the wildfires in South Georgia, as well as Deputy Nelson for successfully saving the life of a student at a local high school. He also addressed the recently announced closure of Anchor Glass and thanked the staff of the Houston County Development Authority for their efforts to establish a career fair in September to provide job placement assistance to employees at Anchor Glass affected by the closure.

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