

Houston County Commissioners Meeting
September 1, 2026
Perry, Georgia

The Houston County Board of Commissioners met in Regular Session at 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday, September 1, 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, Director of Operations Brian Jones, and County Attorney Tom Hall were also present.

Commissioner Gottwals gave the invocation.

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

Mr. Joseph “Joe” Steadley, Director for the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) Distribution, spoke about his work at Robins Air Force Base (RAFB). A native of Florida, he spent 30 years in the U.S. Navy serving in submarines from 1979 to 2009 before coming to work at RAFB. He spoke of the work, operations, and purpose of the Defense Logistics Agency at RAFB, stating that the DLA focuses on the storage and distribution of equipment and supplies within the Department of War. He stated that over a million orders were processed at the DLA facility on RAFB last year. He explained that he oversees the work of over 400 personnel. In closing, he stated that he was the gateway to federal employment for those seeking a job and career on Robins Air Force Base.

Chairman Perdue and each Commissioner thanked Mr. Steadley for his service in the U.S. Navy, his work at Robins Air Force Base helping and serving those on the front lines, and his information about workforce development and how those interested can reach out to him for an introductory position on the base.

Chairman Perdue presented a proclamation recognizing September as Suicide Prevention Month. He recognized Chrystal Wasden with Mental Health Matters, who spoke about suicide prevention, gave statistics and numbers about suicide, and spoke about being conscious of the warning signs and not being afraid to speak up and make sure others are doing okay. She concluded her comments by speaking about the crisis and suicide prevention line, which can be reached by dialing 988.

Chairman Perdue thanked Ms. Wasden for her work and then recognized others present for the proclamation, including Judge Lumsden, Sheriff Moulton, Coroner Williams, and personnel from accountability court, NAMI, and Middle Flint Behavioral Health Systems who were present in support of the proclamation reading

Chairman Perdue asked Sheriff Matt Moulton to step forward and recognize Cpl. Amanda Shell. Sheriff Moulton spoke about the events of Wednesday, August 12, 2026, surrounding the shooting at Warner Robins High School, and highlighted the efforts, guidance, and direction Cpl. Shell provided and demonstrated throughout the crisis to responding public safety personnel on scene and to those working at the 911 Center.

Chief Stoner also expressed his appreciation to Cpl. Shell for her work that day and stated that having her on the radio giving directions during calls he was working while a firefighter was very reassuring.

Cpl. Shell expressed her thanks to Sheriff Moulton and Chief Stoner for their kind words and focused the praise on the efforts that day from those in the 911 Center working with her.

Chairman Perdue and each Commissioner thanked her for her service, for recognizing her team for their efforts, for handling such intense pressure so well, and for again being recognized publicly for going above and beyond.

Motion by Mr. Talton, second by Mr. Byrd, and carried unanimously by all to approve the minutes from the August 18, 2026, meeting.

Chief Building Inspector Tim Andrews presented Special Exception applications.

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

Applicant #2947 was present; there was no opposition.
Applicant #2949 was present; there was no opposition.
Applicant #2954 was present; there was no opposition.
Applicant #2955 was not present; there was no opposition.
Applicant #2956 was present; there was no opposition.
Applicant #2957 was present; there was no opposition.
Applicant #2958 was not present; there was no opposition.
Applicant #2959 was present; there was no opposition.
Applicant #2962 was present.

Ms. Amanda Holmes asked about the disposal of the hazardous chemicals. Mr. McLean responded that he would follow the Georgia Department of Agriculture guidelines, as specified in the licensure and training for pesticide applicators.

Applicant #2963 was present; there was no opposition.
Applicant #2965 was present; there was no opposition.

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

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. Gottwals, second by Ms. Robinson, 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:

#2947	Greg Blackmon	Fraternity & Sorority Apparel
#2949	Shawn Wilkenson	Lawn Care
#2954	Pedro & Diana Banuelas	Concrete Construction
#2956	Jason & Pamela Marfell	Telehealth Therapy
#2957	Destinee Hicks	Mobile Coffee Trailer
#2959	Nancy Hall	Interior Design & Custom Décor
#2962	John McLean	Pest Control
#2963	Jonathan Starnes	Handyman
#2965	Chris Reeves	Rental Property

also, to table the following applications:

#2955	Wanda Scott	Crafts & Writing
#2958	Blake Horne	Dumpster Rental

Mr. Andrews informed the approved business license applicants that the next step in obtaining their business license was to apply at the Commissioner’s Office.

Chief Building Inspector Tim Andrews presented Rezoning Applications numbers 2960 and 2961 for consideration by the Board. He also noted that Applications numbers 2950 and 2951 had been withdrawn by the applicant several days prior to the meeting.

Chairman Perdue closed the regular portion of the meeting and opened a Public Hearing explaining that he would hear from three speakers in favor of the rezoning and three speakers against the rezoning.

Mr. Jim Elliott and Mr. Charles Talton spoke in favor of the rezoning.

Mr. Tony Bass, Mr. Nicholas Hering, and Mr. Bernie Marino spoke against the rezoning.

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

Chairman Perdue stated he had read all the information received both in favor of and against the rezoning. He stated the property would not be able to support a liquor store due to the updated distance requirements in the ordinance updated on June 2, 2026. He also stated that the current regulation would not allow a vape shop at this location. He explained that Commissioner Talton would be recusing himself from voting to avoid any conflict of interest.

Commissioner Talton asked County Attorney Tom Hall if there would be any conflict of interest for him voting.

Mr. Hall replied that Mr. Talton would not have a direct benefit from the land sale and thus would not have a conflict of interest.

Mr. Talton thanked Mr. Hall for the clarification, but informed Chairman Perdue that he would not vote to avoid any appearance of a conflict of interest.

Mr. Gottwals commented that he and the other Commissioners had read the emails and comments and had kept an open mind about the rezoning. He commented about the personal purchase of property to preserve its rural character. He next commented about previous approval of development at the other intersections of Hwy. 96. He concluded by saying that he was also balancing the rights of property owners as well.

Motion by Mr. Gottwals, second by Mr. Byrd, to approve Rezoning Applications #2960 and #2961 as recommended by the Houston County Planning Commission. The intention of this motion is to create a Commercial Node only, not a chain of commercial development along this intersection of Hwy. 96. Upon voting Mr. Gottwals, Mr. Byrd, and Ms. Robinson voted yes. Mr. Talton abstained. Motion carried.

Chairman Perdue paused the meeting for a brief break.

Mr. Gottwals presented a request from John Kyle White for the approval of de-annexation from the City of Warner Robins of his property located at 101 Joy Drive, Warner Robins, Georgia, pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 36-36-22.

Motion by Mr. Gottwals, second by Ms. Robinson, and carried unanimously by all to approve the de-annexation of the property located at 101 Joy Drive, Warner Robins, Georgia and authorize the signing of the appropriate resolution to be sent to the City of Warner Robins.

Mr. Talton presented a request for abandonment of right-of-way of property at 114 and 115 Julia Dr.

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. Talton, second by Mr. Byrd, and carried unanimously by all to the Board of Commissioners approving Mr. Kerr's request and signing the Resolution of Right-of-Way Abandonment by the Board of Commissioners of Houston County. The conveyance of the property will be subject to any easements for drainage or utilities currently existing within the right-of-way and the relocation of two water meters at the expense of the property owner.

Mr. Byrd thanked the County staff for their thorough review of this type of request.

Chairman Perdue explained that an aerial view shows two structures on this property: the main house and an accessory building.

Mr. Talton presented a request for approval of an update to the Automatic Aid Agreement with Georgia State Prison – Dooly Fire Department. Under the agreement, the Georgia State Prison – Dooly Fire Department will provide automatic response to all structure fires occurring in areas of Houston County south of U.S. Highway 341. Upon execution of the agreement, both agencies will be dispatched simultaneously, eliminating the need for a separate verbal request for assistance for each incident. This agreement has no monetary terms.

Motion by Mr. Talton, second by Mr. Gottwals, and carried unanimously by all to approve the update to the Automatic Aid Agreement with Georgia State Prison – Dooly Fire Department.

Mr. Talton thanked Fire Chief Chris Stoner for establishing relationships with neighboring fire services stating that even though we are fully staffed, having those connections for mutual aid and additional help is good.

Mr. Talton presented a request from the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) for the donation of County-owned right-of-way at 10115 Hawkinsville Road (Hwy 247).

Motion by Mr. Talton, second by Ms. Robinson, and carried unanimously by all to approve the donation, to the Georgia Department of Transportation, of 1,865.65 square feet of County-owned right-of-way, and 834.14 square feet of temporary construction easement for a driveway, at 10115 Hawkinsville Road.

Chairman Perdue stated that this was the County's second donation of property for this GDOT project on the bridge over Echeconnee Creek. This request follows the County's purchase of this parcel.

Mr. Byrd presented a request to approve accepting the Juvenile Justice Incentive Grant funding for evidence-based treatment programs designed to keep troubled juveniles in their home communities.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Mr. Gottwals, and carried unanimously by all to approve accepting Juvenile Justice Incentive Grant AW-JJIG-27-037-016, in the amount of \$300,000 for the award period of July 1, 2026, through June 30, 2027. No matching funds are required for this grant.

Chairman Perdue thanked the Juvenile Court for their work in Houston County.

Mr. Byrd presented a request for approval of a memorandum of understanding, associated with the Juvenile Court's Criminal Justice Coordinating Council Grant AW-JJIG-27-037-016, to provide multi-systemic therapy for youth and families in conjunction with the Juvenile Court.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Ms. Robinson, and carried unanimously by all to approve signing the memorandum of understanding with Juvenile Court and Community Solutions, Inc., of Windsor, Connecticut.

Mr. Byrd presented a request to enter into a services contract to provide clinical and programmatic oversight to the youth who are participants of the Truancy 2 Triumph Program.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Mr. Talton, and carried unanimously by all to approve signing the 2026 CHINS Grant services contract with Juvenile Court, Mental Health Matters of Middle Georgia, Inc., Bridge 2 Hope Assessments and Support Services, Triple C Solutions, LLC, and Results Anger Management, LLC for services in the Juvenile Court.

Ms. Robinson presented a request from Roads and Bridges, for approval of a bid on one new tractor to replace a 2017 Kubota with high work hours and low dependability.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Byrd, and carried unanimously by all to approve the bid from AgPro Macon, of Macon, Georgia, in the amount of \$93,242.82 for the purchase of an in-stock 2026 John Deere 5105M Tractor. This is a 2018 SPLOST-funded purchase.

Chairman Perdue thanked Director of Operations, Brian Jones, and Roads and Bridges Superintendent Travis McLendon for managing their SPLOST budgets so well.

Ms. Robinson presented a request, from the Sheriff's Office, for approval of a bid on a vehicle to replace a 2008 GMC Yukon with high mileage that is in need of repair.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Gottwals, and carried unanimously by all to approve the bid on one 2026 Chevrolet Tahoe 2WD LS from Hamby Chevrolet, of Perry, Georgia, in the amount of \$61,415. This purchase will be funded by the Sheriff's Drug Fund.

Chairman Perdue thanked Sheriff Moulton for reimbursing the County for the cost of this vehicle and noted how well the individual assigned to this vehicle had taken care of his previous vehicle over the past 18 years.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Talton, and carried unanimously by all to approve the payment of the bills totaling \$6,653,218.69.

Chairman Perdue opened the floor for Public Comments.

Ms. Mable Lester spoke about her request to have the County Annex renamed to recognize Col. Rueben James McGhee, who served in the Houston County Sheriff's Office for 40 years.

Chairman Perdue stated that he had her request and would look into it.

Mr. Lenorris Daniels spoke about the Safe Haven Baby Box, where a baby can be placed, no questions asked, if a new mother is facing a crisis and feels she cannot take care of her baby.

Chairman Perdue asked how much each box costs, and Mr. Daniels stated \$22,000, with a \$600 annual maintenance cost. Mr. Daniels also stated that a church in Henry County sponsored the first Safe Haven Baby Box in Georgia and that he would like to see one set up in Houston County.

With no further comments, Chairman Perdue closed Public Comments and asked for Commissioner Comments.

Ms. Robinson commented on the good meeting, stating that the rezoning hearing was fair and balanced. She closed by stating that the Safe Haven Baby Box is a great idea.

Mr. Byrd thanked Joe Steadley for his service and leadership at Robins AFB. He stated he was grateful for the opportunity to recognize Cpl. Shell for her recent leadership and action under pressure. He commented about the Suicide Prevention Month proclamation, and the land use issues, stating that the comments from both parties were civil. He read an email he received praising water department employees for coming on scene after hours and fixing a water leak. He closed by remembering the family of Barbara Waddle following her passing and her involvement on the Board of Elections and her strong Northside High School booster club participation.

Mr. Talton thanked everyone for attending the meeting and said he was glad to be a citizen of Houston County.

Mr. Gottwals commented on the Safe Haven Baby Boxes and said he and his wife would contribute to the cost if plans develop to locate one in Houston County. He commented about the recent passing of poet and novelist Wendell Berry and presented a quote from him, reading, "Be joyful though you have considered all the facts." He closed by saying he knew individuals who had committed suicide and wondered if there was something he could have said that could have changed their actions. He concluded by saying that there is joy and hope, and we should share that with others.

Chairman Perdue stated that he thought of Mr. Gottwals after learning of Mr. Berry’s passing because he knew Commissioner Gottwals was an admirer. He stated that an upcoming Special Called Commissioners meeting would be held on Wednesday, September 9, at 5:30 p.m. at the County Annex to set the millage rate after a slight miscalculation was discovered. He also mentioned that the next regular Commissioners meeting would be moved to Tuesday, September 22, at 5:00 p.m. at the County Annex. He concluded his comments by thanking the Commissioners for their work both before and during the meeting.

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