

Houston County Commissioners Meeting
February 15, 2022
Warner Robins, Georgia

The Houston County Board of Commissioners met in regular session at 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday February 15, 2022, at the Houston County Annex in Warner Robins, Georgia, with Chairman Stalnaker presiding and Commissioners Byrd, Perdue, Robinson, and Walker present. Also present were County Attorney Tom Hall, Director of Administration Barry Holland, Director of Operations Robbie Dunbar, Sheriff Talton, Director of Personnel Ken Carter, Chief Building Inspector Tim Andrews, Fire/HEMA Chief Chris Stoner, Acting District Attorney William Kendall, Director of Purchasing Mark Baker, Community Planner Jake Cox, Houston County Health Department Nurse Manager Chris Sikes, former Chairman Ned Sanders, former Commissioner Tom McMichael, former Commissioner Larry Thomson, Walton and Becky Wood, Larry Walker, Perry-Houston County Airport Manager Jim Marquardt, Jessica Perdue, Houston County Development Authority member Scott Cox, Foster Rhodes, and Charles Ayer.

Commissioner Perdue led the audience in the Invocation and then the Pledge of Allegiance.

Motion by Mr. Walker, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously by all to approve the minutes from the February 1, 2022 meeting.

Chairman Stalnaker asked for a motion to add as Item 13 concerning the selection of a CM-at risk for the Houston County Health Department Addition and Modifications project.

Motion by Mr. Perdue, second by Mr. Byrd and carried unanimously by all to add as Item 13 the selection of a CM-at risk for the Houston County Health Department Addition and Modifications project.

Mr. Walker presented a request from the District Attorney's office to eliminate the vacant full-time Digital Evidence Technician position and create a full-time investigator position to be filled by the part-time Investigator.

Motion by Mr. Walker, second by Mr. Perdue and carried unanimously by all to approve the elimination of the vacant full-time Digital Evidence Technician position in the District Attorney's office, the creation of a full-time Grade 18 Investigator position, and to approve the current part-time Investigator to fill the newly created full-time position at a Grade 18-F commensurate with his experience.

Chairman Stalnaker recognized Acting District Attorney William Kendall and thanked him for the cooperation he has shown between the DA's office and the Board of Commissioners.

Mr. Walker presented a right of way easement with Flint Energies that will accommodate the new State Court Expansion project.

Motion by Mr. Walker, second by Mr. Byrd and carried unanimously by all to approve Chairman Stalnaker signing the underground right of way easement (Work Order #202508) with Flint Electric Membership Corporation as depicted on Exhibit "A" and as more particularly described on Exhibit "B" (property more commonly known as 201 Perry Parkway, Perry, GA 31069, Tax Parcel OP414A0 115000) for the transmission and distribution of electric power to the new State Court Expansion project.

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Mr. Perdue presented an annexation request from the City of Perry for property located at the southwest corner of Gurr Road and Kings Chapel Road.

Chairman Stalnaker opened the floor for comments, as there were none the meeting continued.

Motion by Mr. Perdue, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously by all to concur with a City of Perry annexation request for Tax Parcel 000830 062000 for 27.25-acres located at the southwest corner of Gurr Road and Kings Chapel Road.

Mr. Perdue presented an Indication of Lighting Support with the Georgia DOT on the SR11-US41 & Lakeview Road roundabout.

Motion by Mr. Perdue, second by Mr. Byrd and carried unanimously by all to approve the execution of the Indication of Lighting Support document with the Georgia DOT on the SR11-US41 & Lakeview Road roundabout whereby the County agrees to pay for the entire cost to energize the lighting system installed and to provide for the operation/maintenance.

Chairman Stalnaker commented that this was an unusual situation since Houston County, the City of Warner Robins, Peach County, and the State of Georgia all are involved in the area of this roundabout. The additional lighting will enhance the intersection and safety of the motorists in the area.

Mr. Perdue presented a request for approval of bids on the equipment to build the network infrastructure for the State Court Expansion.

Motion by Mr. Perdue, second by Mr. Walker and carried unanimously by all to approve the award of the wireless access points, licensing, UPS, power distribution units, and associated patch cables and adapters from CDW-G of Vernon Hills, IL in the amount of \$25,274.74; and the award of the phones, switches, licenses, and 1-year maintenance in the amount of \$65,594.79 and the network switches, modules, cables, and installation/support services in the amount of \$132,068.34 both from CNP Technologies of Charlotte, NC.

Senior Animal Control Officer Alan Smith presented an application for waiver of animal limitations filed by Mr. Kentavius Morgan of 302 Wellington Way. Mr. Morgan is requesting a waiver to Section 10-19 of the Unified Animal Control Ordinance to be allowed to keep six adult dogs and one puppy. This matter came to our attention after a neighbor filed a complaint with the Georgia Department of Agriculture Companion Animal/Equine Division alleging that Mr. Morgan was illegally breeding and selling dogs from his home. Mr. Morgan has indicated that he wants to pursue his Pet Dealer license through the State so that he could continue his breeding operation. Although his operation was found to be in good operating order and the dogs all appeared to be well-cared for, Mr. Morgan is in violation of Section 10-19 and does not have a special exception or business license for the breeding operation.

Mr. Perdue asked Officer Smith if an approved breeding operation would add more dogs to the current count of six adult dogs and one puppy. Officer Smith assumed that this would be the case.

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

The applicant, Mr. Kentavius Morgan of 302 Wellington Way, stated that he takes very good care of all his dogs, cleans the kennels several times per day, has a privacy fence around his back yard, and the runs are heated and cooled by fans. He presented the Board with a series of photographs of his kennels and yard. The dogs do bark if someone is passing by the fence or if they hear another animal but there is no excessive barking.

Mr. Walker asked the applicant if the dogs were engaged in any type of fighting. Mr. Morgan stated that they were not.

Mr. Perdue remarked that it is obvious that Mr. Morgan's dogs are well-cared for but there is a separate issue as to the number of dogs at the residence before the Board today.

Mr. Byrd concurred with Mr. Perdue's remarks.

Gerald Botkin, 311 Wellington Way, spoke in opposition and stated that their neighborhood covenants limit the number of dogs to two and presented a copy to Mr. Perdue.

Ms. Robinson asked Mr. Botkin if his residence was close enough to Mr. Morgan's to hear the dogs barking.

Mr. Botkin replied that he does hear them occasionally.

Mr. Walker asked Mr. Botkin how close his residence was to Mr. Morgan's house.

Mr. Botkin replied three or four houses down the street. He then stated that their neighborhood is a nice friendly neighborhood and that he hoped if could remain that way.

Wayne Walker, 215 Wellington Way, stated that he lived diagonally across from Mr. Morgan and that he has resided there for 28 years. He stated that Mr. Morgan's dogs do occasionally get out of the fenced yard and that they do bark quite a bit. He also said that they are a large breed of bull dogs. Mr. Morgan also cleans the kennels sometimes late at night with a pressure washer. He was concerned about the additional traffic in the neighborhood generated by buyers coming to the house.

Chairman Stalnaker commended Mr. Morgan for how well he takes care of both his kennels and his animals, but the issue is the number of animals in this R-1 zoning where houses are close in proximity. If he was on a larger tract of land, it could possibly be a completely different situation.

Mr. Perdue asked Officer Smith if Mr. Morgan had already been pursuing his pet dealer license before the complaint was lodged or if that was something he was doing since the complaint.

Officer Smith replied that Mr. Morgan became aware of the need to obtain his pet dealer license after the complaint was filed.

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Mr. Byrd explained to Mr. Morgan that the problem is not so much what he was doing but rather where he was doing it. The Board has a duty of care to act in compliance with the County's Code of Ordinances.

Chairman Stalnaker then closed the public hearing and reopened the regular meeting.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Byrd and carried unanimously by all to disapprove an application for waiver to animal limitations submitted by Kentavius Morgan of 302 Wellington Way in Warner Robins.

Chairman Stalnaker asked Officer Smith to follow-up with Mr. Morgan to advise him on the next step.

Ms. Robinson presented a request for approval to disperse funds from the Georgia Public Safety Officials and First Responders Supplement Grant.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Walker and carried unanimously by all to authorize the disbursement of \$1,000 per eligible full-time employee and \$300 per eligible volunteer firefighter from the Public Safety Officials and First Responders State Supplement Grant funds received from the State of Georgia passed through from federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. Volunteer firefighters will receive their \$300 one-time supplement by check, and full-time employees will receive their \$1,000 (less the applicable Federal and State taxes as required by law) through the County's payroll system for the pay period ending February 20, 2022. Once State funds are received in the County's account, they will be distributed by one check to Houston Medical Center for disbursement to EMS employees.

Chairman Stalnaker remarked that the Board is glad to be able to distribute this money and are very appreciative of Governor Kemp making it available for all first responders in the state. He reiterated that the supplement is subject to federal and state withholding for tax purposes.

Ms. Robinson presented a request from Chief Stoner to apply for a Georgia Firefighter Standards and Training Council (GFSTC) Fireworks Grant to replace old or obsolete hose and nozzles on three of the County's older trucks.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Perdue and carried unanimously by all to approve Chairman Stalnaker and Chief Stoner signing all applicable grant application documents to apply for the GFSTC 2022 Fireworks Tax Grant for \$19,540. Houston County will be required to match 10% of this amount or \$1,954.

Chief Stoner confirmed that these grant funds are derived from the excise tax on the sale of fireworks.

Mr. Byrd presented a request for approval of a bid on Mobile Data Terminals (MDTs), vehicle mounts, docking stations, Visio licensing, and iPads for the County.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously by all to approve the award of Mobile Data Terminals (MDTs), vehicle mounts, docking stations, Visio licensing, and iPads to CDW-G of Vernon Hills, IL in the amount of \$1,595,247.15; the installation of MDTs and iPads to Macon Communications of Macon in the amount of \$11,000; the MCT and Freedom application licensing to Central Square of Lake Mary,

FL in the amount of \$91,121; the iPad Pro to Apple in the amount of \$6,495; and the virtual private network licensing to Radio IP Software, Inc. of Quebec, Canada in the amount of \$11,730. SPLOST 2018 will fund the purchase of this equipment.

Mr. Byrd presented a resolution adopting the Joint Comprehensive Plan Update.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Mr. Perdue and carried unanimously by all to approve Chairman Stalnaker signing the resolution adopting the Joint Comprehensive Plan Update for Houston County and the Cities of Centerville, Perry, and Warner Robins as approved by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs.

Mr. Byrd remarked that the Middle Georgia Regional Commission was very active in the development and completion of this plan update and that their assistance is greatly appreciated. He also expressed appreciation for the cooperation received from all three cities.

Mr. Byrd presented a request for approval to complete the acquisition of the property at 134 Bear Branch Road for use as a remote production well site for the new Bear Branch Road Water Treatment Facility.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Mr. Perdue and carried unanimously by all to approve the remaining \$153,000 plus any applicable closing fees to complete the property acquisition transaction on Tax Parcel 001060 012000 containing 6.078 acres and referenced as Parcel 'B-W' on a survey completed by Lee R. Jones, G.R.L.S. #2680 dated January 20, 2022 for the Houston County Commissioners. Chairman Stalnaker is authorized to sign any and all documents relative to closing the sale.

Mr. Perdue asked Mr. Dunbar how many million gallons per day the remote well site would produce.

Mr. Dunbar responded that it will be up to two million gallons per day.

Mr. Perdue also asked how much will be invested in the total project when the remote well is completed.

Mr. Dunbar replied that the remote well along with the construction of the new Bear Branch Road Water Treatment Plant will come to approximately \$8,000,000.

Motion by Mr. Walker, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously by all to approve the payment of the bills totaling \$2,881,555.31.

Mr. Byrd presented a request for approval of the selection of a Construction Manager (at risk) for the additions and modifications to the Houston County Health Department project. He thanked the members of the selection committee and supporting County staff as well as the staff of SP Design for their service on this project.

Motion by Mr. Perdue, second by Mr. Byrd and carried unanimously by all to approve the selection of ICB Construction Group of Macon as the construction manager (at risk) for the Additions and Modifications to the Houston County Health Department project at an estimated total management cost of \$292,507 (based on a \$4,000,000 construction budget) which includes the preconstruction fee, construction management fee, general conditions, performance bond and liability insurance. ICB

Construction Group will prepare the Guaranteed Maximum Price (GMP) once drawings are complete and submit to the County for acceptance. If the County and ICB Construction Group fail to successfully negotiate the GMP, the County reserves the right to discontinue the contract and subsequently initiate contract negotiations with the next highest ranked firm. Construction must be underway no later than July 1, 2022 and completed by February 28, 2023.

Chairman Stalnaker recognized Houston County Health Department Nurse Manager Chris Sikes remarking that she and her staff have done an exceptional job especially over the last two years during the pandemic. This project will provide much needed square footage for the Health Department staff to deliver services to the community. He congratulated Ms. Sikes who recently was awarded the Sherrill Stafford Government Service Award from the Robins Regional Chamber of Commerce. The annual award recognizes exceptional service in the performance of duty.

Ms. Sikes thanked the Chairman and the Board for their continued support of the Houston County Health Department as it is their desire and mission to serve the County's citizens in the best way possible.

Each board member thanked Ms. Sikes and her staff for their efforts and dedication.

Chairman Stalnaker recognized Community Planer Jake Cox who introduced Victoria Garay-Moreno and Timothy Howell, Warner Robins High School seniors, who are participating in the Professional Interest Exploration (PIE) program learning about County government. Timothy will be attending Troy University in Alabama and work towards a degree in music production. Victoria will be attending the University of Georgia and plans to study Sociology and then pursue a pre-law track.

Chairman Stalnaker announced that he will not seek reelection for Chairman of the Houston County Board of Commissioners at the end of his current term which ends on December 31, 2022. He commented that it has been his honor and privilege to work for the Citizens of Houston County and is very grateful for them electing him to three terms or twelve years. With those twelve years added to his thirty-eight years as an employee he will have a total of fifty years in service to Houston County at the end of this year. During his career he has been honored to work for and with thirty County commissioners, numerous local, state, and federal elected officials, and County employees and all have been exceptional. He is proud to have been a part of the unprecedented growth in the County, numerous infrastructure projects and other improvements, and leaving the County's financial situation very stable and without debt. He commented that there is a lot of work to be done before the end of 2022 so together as a team we can continue to make dreams become a reality. He has stood on the shoulders of others in the course of his career and acknowledged Sheriff Cullen Talton who was on the Board of Commissioners when he was initially hired by the County in 1972; former Chairman Ned Sanders who encouraged him to run for Chairman twelve years ago; two former County Commissioners in attendance as well Mr. Tom McMichael and Mr. Larry Thomson who he worked for as an employee and then with them after becoming Chairman of the Board. Other friends including every County employee, all of which should be commended for what they do; lifelong friend Mr. Larry Walker who showed him the ropes in politics; Mr. Foster Rhodes, and Mr. Charles Ayers.

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Mr. Walker then announced that he would not seek re-election either after the completion of his term December 31, 2022. He will have thirty-six years on the County Commission, and it has been an honor and a privilege to serve the citizens of Houston County and to work with the finest employees. He remarked that Houston County is a special place for him and his family and he hoped that he has served it well.

Chairman Stalnaker commended Mr. Walker as well as his father and brother for what they have done for this community over the years.

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

Jim Marquardt, Perry-Houston County Airport Manager, remarked that the airport is having a banner year. He commented that the airport has achieved eight straight months selling over 10,000 gallons of fuel which is by far a record. They are busier than ever with larger aircraft coming in and more individuals also who then go into town and spend their money in the local economy. They hope to have the newly constructed terminal building open in mid-March. He thanked the Board for the support they have provided on the terminal building project as well as the corporate hangar. Chairman Stalnaker commented that he was extremely proud of the airport's accomplishments due to the investments made over the years. He also commented that we need to find funding for the construction of additional T-hangars. Mr. Marquardt stated that he does still have a waiting list that is greater than sixteen at any given time.

Chairman Stalnaker thanked Mr. Marquardt for his leadership at the airport and also Mr. Ned Sanders for his contributions representing the County on the Airport Authority.

Tim Andrews, Chief Building Inspector and Planning & Zoning Administrator, thanked Chairman Stalnaker and Commissioner Walker for their leadership and support of his department.

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

Chairman Stalnaker closed the regular portion of the meeting and opened Commissioners Comments.

Ms. Robinson remarked that it was a big night and a great meeting in which a lot was accomplished. She remarked that Chairman Stalnaker and Commissioner Walker have been great leaders and are special people who will be missed terribly.

Mr. Perdue commended Commissioner Walker and Chairman Stalnaker for their faithful service to Houston County for so many years.

Mr. Byrd thanked Commissioner Walker and Chairman Stalnaker for their service to the citizens of Houston County.

Chairman Stalnaker called on Mr. Larry Walker and commented that he, along with Sheriff Talton, is a true statesman who has helped him immensely throughout his career.

Mr. Walker commented that the Chairman's service was unprecedented and that the people of Houston County love him very much.

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Chairman Stalnaker reminded everyone that the next regularly scheduled Board meeting will be on Tuesday, March 1st at 9:00 a.m. in Perry at the courthouse. He concluded saying that Houston County has the very best citizens in the State of Georgia.

Motion to adjourn by Mr. Walker, second by Ms. Robison and carried unanimously by all. Meeting adjourned.

Barry Holland
Director of Administration

Chairman

Commissioner

Commissioner

Commissioner

Commissioner