

Houston County Commissioners Meeting
May 3, 2022
Perry, Georgia

The Houston County Board of Commissioners met in regular session at 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday May 3, 2022, at the Houston County Courthouse in Perry, Georgia, with Chairman Stalnaker presiding and Commissioners Byrd, Robinson, and Walker present. Also present were County Attorney Tom Hall, Director of Administration Barry Holland, Community Planner Jake Cox, Chief Building Inspector Tim Andrews, Director of Personnel Ken Carter, MIS Systems Administrator Eric Mitchell, Director of Operations Robbie Dunbar, Fire/HEMA Chief Chris Stoner, Acting District Attorney William Kendall, Assistant Public Defender Sara Meyers, Library System Director J. Sara Paulk, City of Perry Mayor Randall Walker, City of Perry Community Planner Holly Wharton, MGRC Government Services Specialist Dean Nelson, Dan Perdue, Steve Williams, Shane Gottwals, Tal Talton, Jacqueline Rozier.

Commissioner Robinson led the audience in the Invocation.

TSgt J. Keith Lancaster, U.S. Army Air Corp led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance and then detailed his 2-1/2-year military career. He joined in March of 1943 and was at six different bases in the span of one year. He trained as a pilot in Officer Training but was found to have flat feet during his physical and was told he had to switch to enlisted to fly. He was trained as a Bombardier and Top Gunner in the B-24 Liberator and flew in missions over Germany and Yugoslavia. On one mission his plane was disabled, and the pilot had to set it down in a potato field in Hungary where they were picked up by the Russians and eventually turned back over to the Allies. Another mission he and his aircraft mates had to bail out of a stricken plane over Northern Italy. After returning to the U.S., he was assigned to a base in Arkansas where he worked to reassemble B-24 crews for eventual service in the South Pacific, but the Japanese government surrendered, and the war effort was over. TSgt Lancaster is a Purple Heart recipient and a very proud patriot.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Mr. Walker and carried unanimously by all to approve the minutes from the April 19, 2022 meeting.

Ms. Robinson presented Special Exception Application #2593.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Byrd to approve Application #2593 to include any and all stipulations as noted on the Zoning & Appeals recommendation and Section 95 Requirements staff report.

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

Special Exception #2593, applicant was not present there was no opposition.

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

Upon voting, Ms. Robinson, Mr. Byrd, and Mr. Walker voted yes. Motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Robinson presented Special Exception Application #2594.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Walker to deny Special Exception Application #2594.

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

Special Exception #2594, applicant was not present as application is recommended for denial.

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

Upon voting, Ms. Robinson, Mr. Walker, and Mr. Byrd voted for denial. Motion carried unanimously.

Chief Building Inspector Tim Andrews presented Special Exception Applications #2606 thru #2610.

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

Special Exception #2606, applicant was present, there was no opposition.

Special Exception #2607, applicant was present, there was no opposition.

Special Exception #2608, applicant was present, there was no opposition.

Special Exception #2609, applicant was present, there was no opposition.

Special Exception #2610, applicant was present, there was no opposition.

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

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Byrd and carried unanimously by all to approve the presented applications to include any and all stipulations as noted on the Zoning & Appeals recommendation and Section 95 Requirements staff report.

Mr. Andrews advised all applicants on the next step in the process which would be obtaining their business licenses through the Commissioner's office.

County Attorney Tom Hall made a blanket statement for the benefit of all applicants for Special Exceptions for home occupations that even if the Board of Commissioners approves an application, neighborhood covenants may still impose certain restrictions upon or against home occupation businesses. These restrictive covenants are superior to 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.

Ms. Robinson presented a request for approval of the emergency purchase ratification of a server with storage array and storage expansion for use in the Sheriff's Department.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Walker and carried unanimously by all to approve the purchase of one PowerEdge R650XS server with storage array and storage expansion enclosures for use in the Sheriff's Department from Dell Technologies in the total amount of \$91,102.51.

Ms. Robinson presented a request for the purchase of a Chevy Tahoe for use in the District Attorney's Office.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Byrd and carried unanimously by all to approve the purchase of one new 2022 Chevrolet Tahoe PPV for use in the District Attorney's office from Brannen Motor Company of Perry in the amount of \$38,000. This vehicle purchase will be reimbursed 100% from DA Forfeiture Funds.

Ms. Robinson presented a request to fill the Public Defender's position that will become vacant upon Claudia Meier's retirement.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Walker and carried unanimously by all to approve the hiring of Sara Meyers to fill the soon to be vacant Public Defender position at a Grade 36-G effective May 16, 2022.

Chairman Stalnaker recognized and congratulated Ms. Meyers.

Ms. Meyers stated that she is a 2004 graduate of Mercer University and a lifelong public defender having spent time working in the Toombs Circuit outside of Augusta and then coming to Houston County in 2016. She remarked that she is excited for the opportunity and thanked the Chairman and the Board for their confidence in her.

Chairman Stalnaker stated that the review panel, comprising all three superior court judges, himself, and Commissioner Robinson, had multiple qualified candidates with Ms. Meyers being the selected individual. Each of the Commissioners congratulated Ms. Meyers on her appointment.

Mr. Walker presented a request to fill the vacant ADA position in the District Attorney's office.

Motion by Mr. Walker, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously by all to approve hiring Ryan English to fill the vacant Assistant District Attorney position at a Grade 27-E effective May 4, 2022.

Chairman Stalnaker recognized Acting District Attorney Kendall and expressed appreciation for the relationship between the DA's office, the courts, law enforcement, and the Board of Commissioners. Each Commissioner likewise thanked Mr. Kendall.

Mr. Kendall congratulated Ms. Meyers on her appointment as Public Defender and remarked that he looks forward to working together. He thanked the selection committee for their diligence. He complimented Mr. English stating that he will represent the County well and knows how to prosecute cases.

Mr. Walker presented an amendment to the Personnel Manual to update the policy concerning the use of accrued annual and sick leave due to an Administrative Guidance issued by the U.S Department of Labor.

Motion by Mr. Walker, second by Mr. Byrd and carried unanimously by all to approve an amendment to the Houston County Personnel Manual (Article VIII-Time Off, Section 11-C) as outlined in a memorandum from Personnel Director Ken Carter dated April 20, 2022.

Mr. Walker presented a request to enter into a professional services agreement for storm water repairs at three different locations.

Motion by Mr. Walker, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously by all to approve the Engineering Department entering into a professional service agreement with Enviro Trenchless, LLC of Warner Robins for centrifugally cast concrete pipe rehabilitation repair services at 398 Henson Road, 428 Arena Road and 103 Blue Ridge Lane for a total cost of \$24,700.

Mr. Walker presented a request for a temporary allowance under the Houston County Stormwater Design Manual due to a supply chain disruption.

Motion by Mr. Walker, second by Mr. Byrd and carried unanimously by all to approve a temporary allowance under the Houston County Stormwater Design Manual (Section 3.1.1) for the use and installation of polypropylene pipe as a replacement for reinforced concrete pipe under roadways. Houston County Engineering staff will reevaluate after six months to determine a continuance of this temporary allowance.

Chairman Stalnaker asked Mr. Dunbar to circle back somewhere close to the fifth month to reevaluate the availability of the pipe and to make a recommendation to the Board then whether to extend or discontinue the approved allowance.

Mr. Byrd presented a request for approval of a change order on the existing LMIG project in regards to Gilbert Road and Firetower Road.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously by all to approve Change Order #1 with Reames and Sons Construction Company, Inc. on the 2022 Houston County Local Maintenance and Improvement Grant (LMIG) project amending the original contract price of \$1,232,864.47 by \$684,239.26 for a new contract total of \$1,917,103.73. There is no increase in contract time. This additional work will be funded by SPLOST funds.

Mr. Byrd presented a request for approval of a price increase on a purchase of a dump truck approved at the March 1, 2022 Board of Commissioners meeting.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Mr. Walker and carried unanimously by all to approve an additional pricing surcharge of \$3,800 to be added to the approved unit cost of \$89,720 for a total amended cost of \$93,520 to the 2023 Freightliner M 2106 with 10-foot Godwin Body for use in the Roads Department from Middle Georgia Freightliner of Macon. SPLOST 2012 funds will cover the additional cost.

Chairman Stalnaker explained the necessity of this pricing surcharge relative to the nationwide supply chain issues. This would not be the norm, but the County has no better recourse than to pay the surcharge because cancelling the order will only put delivery further behind.

Mr. Byrd presented a request from the City of Perry to amend the Service Delivery Strategy agreement.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Mr. Walker and carried unanimously by all to approve Chairman Stalnaker signing the resolution and certification page (SDS Form 4) amending the Houston County Service Delivery Strategy (SDS) agreement to modify the sewerage collection and sewerage treatment boundaries for the City of Perry; and to reflect the name change of Jointly Owned Natural Gas to MidState Energy Commission.

Chairman Stalnaker recognized Mayor Randall Walker who stated that this amendment to the SDS came about in conjunction with a rework of Perry's long-term strategic plan for future growth. It is not likely that the city would expand services into this area in the next ten to fifteen years. These expansion efforts would be focused to the East instead.

Chairman Stalnaker expressed his appreciation for the level of cooperation exhibited between the City of Perry and Houston County. There is a lot of activity in the South end of the County including new industry.

Mayor Walker thanked the Chairman and the Board for their cooperation and consideration concerning Perry's planned new wastewater treatment plant in the eastern part of the County.

Each Board member thanked Mayor Walker in turn.

Mr. Byrd presented a request to enter into a professional services agreement for the proposed new Bonaire Fire Station and for the State Court / Annex Building Renovations projects.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously by all to approve Chairman Stalnaker signing professional services agreements with SP Design Group of Macon for design services for the proposed new Fire Station #2 (Bonaire) project at an estimated \$195,000 (6.5% of the total construction costs estimated to be \$3,000,000); and for the proposed renovation project at the Houston County State Court and Annex buildings at an estimated \$260,000 (6.5% of the total construction costs estimated to be \$4,000,000).

Mr. Byrd presented a request for approval of a change order on the State Court Expansion Project.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Mr. Walker and carried unanimously by all to approve Chairman Stalnaker signing Change Order #4 with ICB Construction Group of Macon adding the construction of a new mechanical equipment screen wall to the State Court Expansion project. This change order adds \$187,743.53 to the current contract price of \$19,287,647 bringing the amended contract price to \$19,475,390.53.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously by all to approve the payment of the bills totaling \$3,730,072.77.

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

J. Sara Paulk, Houston County Library System Director, presented the Board with information on their upcoming Summer Vacation Reading Program for children remarking that patronage at all three branches has picked up in numbers post peak COVID activity.

Chairman Stalnaker remarked that the library system was a great service to our community and thanked Ms. Paulk and her staff for their efforts. Each Board member thanked Ms. Paulk for her leadership as well.

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

Mr. Walker thanked everyone for coming and remarked that it was a privilege to have WWII veteran TSgt. Lancaster speak at the Board meeting as he is a true American hero.

Ms. Robinson agreed that it was an honor and a privilege to have TSgt. Lancaster at the meeting.

Chairman Stalnaker commented on the recent event held on April 26th announcing the new Jack Link's manufacturing plant in Perry and thanked all those involved including the Development Authority, the State of Georgia, and Mayor Walker and the City of Perry as partners in the effort. He also mentioned the upcoming "Flip the Switch" event for the new Houston Solar Project on Firetower Road which will be held on Wednesday, May 11th. This event is the culmination of a large amount of effort put forth by many key players in Houston County including Green Power EMC, Solar Ranch and Flint Energies.

Chairman Stalnaker also reminded everyone that early voting began on Monday, May 2nd and will run for three weeks at four different locations in the County. He encouraged everyone to get out and vote. He recognized several candidates for office in attendance and commended each one for their positive campaigns. Lastly he reminded everyone to keep the victims of the recent tornado in our thoughts and prayers as they go about rebuilding their lives.

Mr. Byrd commented that today's agenda encompasses many facets of a progressive government including recognizing a WWII veteran, approving new small business licenses, supporting public safety and law enforcement, a cooperative effort with the City of Perry on an SDS amendment, and various economic development activities.

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

Barry Holland
Director of Administration

Chairman

Commissioner

Commissioner

Commissioner

Commissioner