

**Houston County Commissioners Meeting
September 6, 2022
Perry, Georgia**

The Houston County Board of Commissioners met in Regular Session at 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday September 6, 2022, at the Houston County Courthouse in Perry, Georgia, with Chairman Stalnaker presiding and Commissioners Byrd, Robinson, Talton, and Walker present. Also present were County Attorney Tom Hall, Director of Administration Robbie Dunbar, Director of Operations Brian Jones, Director of Personnel Ken Carter, Director of Purchasing Mark Baker, Chief Building Inspector Tim Andrews, Fire/EMA Chief Chris Stoner, Landfill Superintendent Terry Dietsch, Public Buildings Supervisor Michael Phillips, Community Planner Jacob Cox, Houston County Library Director Sara Paulk, Dan Perdue, Walt and Becky Wood, and Jacqueline Rozier.

Commissioner Walker led the audience in the Invocation.

Major Angeletha Long, U.S. Army – JSTARS Commander led the Pledge of Allegiance and then spoke of her military career. Major Long is originally from Jamaica and immigrated to Florida. She joined the Army in 1999 and was a paralegal in the Army before going to Officer Candidate School where she was commissioned as an officer in the US Army. She has worked in military intelligence since becoming an officer. She has lived in 8 states, had two overseas moves and has had 15 PCS moves. Major Long is currently the commander of the 138th Military Intelligence Company. Major Long then gave a breakdown of the financial impact that Robins Air Force Base has on the local and state economy by the numbers along with the number of employees employed at Robins Air Force Base. Major Long said she will be retiring from the Army in September of 2023 and that she, her husband who is a retired Master Sergeant, and their two boys will remain in Houston County due to the hospitality and support for the military that they have felt since moving here.

Motion by Mr. Walker, second by Mr. Byrd and carried unanimously by all to approve the minutes from the August 16th meeting.

Chief Building Inspector Tim Andrews presented Rezoning Applications #2633 and #2635.

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

Rezoning Application #2633 there was no opposition.

Rezoning Application #2635 there was no opposition.

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

Motion by Mr. Talton, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously by all to approve the following applications to include any and all stipulations as noted in the Zoning & Appeals recommendation:

Rezoning Application #2633 – Bryant Engineering Rezone from R-AG to R-1

Rezoning Application #2635 – Bryant Engineering Rezone from R-AG to R-1

Mr. Andrews presented Special Exception Applications #2626, #2631, #2632, and #2634.

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

Special Exception Application #2626 there was no opposition.
 Special Exception Application #2631 there was no opposition.
 Special Exception Application #2632 there was no opposition.
 Special Exception Application #2634 there was no opposition.

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

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

Chairman Stalnaker addressed Mr. English and expressed his understanding of the need to keep a close eye on a family member when it comes time to do so.

Chairman Stalnaker then thanked Mr. Bledsoe for continuing the crop dusting of the land and farming. He stated that the Bledsoe family were anchors in Houston County.

Mr. Talton presented a request from the Board of Elections to hire poll workers for the November 8, 2022, General Election.

Motion by Mr. Talton, second by Mr. Walker and carried unanimously by all to approve the hiring of the following poll workers for the upcoming November 8, 2022, General Election:

		AMOUNT	TOTAL
16	Managers (Precinct)	\$175.00	\$ 2,800.00
32	Assistant Managers (Precinct)	125.00	4,000.00
116	Clerks	115.00	13,340.00
6	Janitors	15.50	93.00
4	Janitors	25.00	100.00
313	BMD (Ballot Marking Device)	2.00	626.00
3	Election Supply Load Out Help	75.00	225.00
3	Election Night Equipment Return Help	75.00	225.00
3	Election Night Check-In Clerks	75.00	225.00
16	Supply Pick up / Return Supplies	10.00	160.00
16	Cell Phones	10.00	160.00
4	Ballot Scan Clerks	100.00	400.00
2	Election Day Techs	250.00	500.00
	GRAND TOTAL		\$22,854.00

Mr. Byrd presented a Resolution Supporting Houston County's Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program Application to create the new Echeconnee Creek Park.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Mr. Talton and carried unanimously by all to approve a Resolution Supporting Houston County's Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program Application to create the new Echeconnee Creek Park.

Chairman Stalnaker gave a brief review of the reason why this grant was being applied for, the location of the County property along SR247 and the Echeconnee Creek and a listing of the proposed outdoor activities that are planned for this park. Chairman Stalnaker asked Mr. Perdue if he had anything to add as Mr. Perdue and Mr. Cox were working on the grant.

Mr. Perdue advised that Chairman Stalnaker covered the project description and scope fully.

Commissioner Walker said this would be another opportunity for residents to enjoy the outdoors.

Mr. Byrd presented a request from the Sheriff's Office to update the Radar List for Houston County.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously by all to approve the following changes to the Houston County Radar List:

- Eagle Springs Elementary School located on US 41 has been upgraded to allow an Automated Traffic Enforcement Safety Device (ATESD).
- Houston County High School located on SR 96 has been upgraded to allow an ATESD.
- Bonaire Primary School located on Thompson Mill Road has been added to the Radar List (30 MPH).
- Moss Oaks Road from SR 127 (Marshallville HWY) to the Perry City Limits has been added to the Radar List (45 MPH).
- Terrell Road from Elko Road (north) to Elko Road (south) was changed from 45 MPH to 35 MPH. (Posted speed is 35 MPH).

Chairman Stalnaker advised that the next move will be for GDOT to approve these updates. He asked Brian Jones if he knew whether GDOT had seen these proposed changes.

Brian advised that he had not.

Chairman Stalnaker asked Mr. Dunbar who replied that he did not know either but that he would find out and let Chairman Stalnaker know.

Mr. Byrd presented a request from Public Works for approval of a bid on the Bear Branch Remote Well Addition.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Mr. Talton and carried unanimously by all to approve the award of a bid on the Bear Branch Remote Well Addition to Greene's Water Wells, Inc., in the amount of \$2,318,669.30. This is a Water Department Capital Project. Funds will be paid by the from ARPA Fiscal Recovery Funds.

Chairman Stalnaker advised that this should just about conclude this project with minor details remaining at most on this project.

Mr. Byrd presented a request from the City of Warner Robins to include a commercial development located at 725 Highway 96 in the current water use agreement.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously by all to approve a request from the City of Warner Robins to include a commercial development located at 725 Highway 96 in the current water use agreement between the City of Warner Robins and Houston County. Approval is contingent upon meeting the requirements of the Houston County Utility Accommodations, and upon the developers posting a bond covering 125% of construction cost for work performed on the Houston County Water System.

Ms. Robinson presented a request for approval of a change order on the upgrade to the HVAC system at the Detention Center.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Talton and carried unanimously by all to approve Chairman Stalnaker signing a fourth change order on the HVAC upgrade project at the Detention Center lowering the contract price by \$6,000 making the contract total price \$3,201,408. There will be no change in the contract time.

Ms. Robinson presented a request for an approval of a bid on the Annex and State Court Renovation.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Walker and carried unanimously by all to approve signing a contract to name ICB Construction Group, of Macon, Georgia, as the Construction Manager at Risk for the Annex and State Court Renovation Contract with a fee of 2.5% of the Guaranteed Maximum Price. This will be paid for from 2018 SPLOST funds.

Commissioner Byrd thanked the County staff for their review of these six bidders and remarked that once again the bid process benefitted the taxpayers of Houston County.

Chairman Stalnaker thanked all the committee members who served on the selection committee.

Ms. Robinson presented a request from the Engineering Department for approval of a bid on the Parking Lot Expansion for the Houston County Courthouse.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Talton and carried unanimously by all to approve the award of a bid on the Parking Lot Expansion for the Houston County Courthouse to low bidder International Waste Services, LLC., of Atlanta Georgia, in the amount of \$324,104.10. The completion date for this project is December 30, 2022. The funding for this project is ARPA fiscal recovery funds.

Chairman Stalnaker said this project would increase parking at the Perry Courthouse by two additional bands, both on the north and south side of the Perry Courthouse, for visitor and employee parking. This is being done due to the State Court of Houston County being relocated to the Perry Courthouse and the need for additional parking.

Mr. Walker presented a request to enter into a contract to install litter control fencing around Phase 6, Stage 1B of the most recent landfill cell construction.

Motion by Mr. Walker, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously by all to approve entering into a contract with National Fence Company, of Kathleen, Georgia, in the amount of \$18,900 to install a litter control fence around Phase 6, Stage 1B of the most recent landfill cell construction. This fence installation is required to keep the Houston County Landfill in compliance with GA DNR/EPD Rule 391-3-4 and the approved D&O plan for the facility.

Motion by Mr. Walker, second by Mr. Byrd to approve the following Board Appointments:

Region 5 EMS Council;

Christopher Stoner (To fill the unexpired term of Mike Mathis)	September 7, 2022 thru June 30, 2024
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Kirk Crumpton (To fill a vacancy)	September 7, 2022 thru June 30, 2025
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And the reappointment to:

Middle Flint Behavioral HealthCare;

Gail Robinson	September 15, 2022 thru September 14, 2025
Brian Blanton	September 15, 2022 thru September 14, 2025
Sean Whilden	September 15, 2022 thru September 14, 2025

Commissioner Robinson asked if the three reappointments were requested by Middle Flint Behavior Health.

Chairman Stalnaker advised he had spoken to them about the appointments.

Commissioner Robinson gave a review of the mental health crisis in Georgia and the steps being taken at the local and state level to address this issue.

Chairman Stalnaker remarked about the need to improve mental health in Georgia and for those who need emergency mental health care assistance. He also stated that the closest mental health facilities to Houston County are in the Columbus and LaGrange Georgia areas. That when law enforcement deals with a mental health situation, they must travel outside of the County so that the person in custody can receive assistance. Chairman Stalnaker has checked into whether Houston County could build its own mental health facility for just Houston County residents. He was informed by the State that Houston County residents encountering a mental health crisis would not be guaranteed a spot in the Houston County facility because the State would be picking

up the costs. If Houston County went ahead with this idea, then Houston County would bear the full costs of the running of this facility. Chairman Stalnaker said mental health is a problem locally, around the state and nation. Commissioner Walker said it was heartbreaking for families who have a loved one dealing with this issue.

Upon voting motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Walker presented a request from the City of Centerville for annexation of Houston County Tax Parcels: 000720 014000, 000720 012000, 00072C 80A000 and 000720 013000 totaling 161.42 acres.

Chairman Stalnaker advised that the counties, under state law, can only take two positions on annexation requests – to concur or non-concur. Chairman Stalnaker then advised that while we would not have a public hearing, he would allow residents to speak in favor or against this annexation request.

Chairman Stalnaker opened the floor to those in favor of the annexation. There were no comments.

Chairman Stalnaker then opened the floor to those in opposition.

The first to speak was Mr. Brian Meeks of 106 Frog Holler. He advised that the current area is zoned R-1 and that Centerville is proposing R-2 which will make for smaller lot sizes and smaller homes and create higher density. This could impact the safety of those traveling Dunbar Road with this increased traffic. The infrastructure and roads in that area may not accommodate larger numbers of people. He also said the limited site distance with the curves in that area could be a potential hazard as well. He also wondered if the Fire Department could support fire protection for all of these new proposed houses.

Chairman Stalnaker asked for input from the Commissioners.

Commissioner Walker said he doesn't have a conflict of interest but does have a concern with those curves and the increase in traffic.

Commissioner Byrd thanked Mr. Meeks for his comment and did agree with him on the line-of-sight issue. He also advised that in future development and approval processes, sight distance will be addressed to ensure safety.

Chairman Stalnaker also mentioned that the widening of Dunbar Road has also been on the County's to do list and that he hopes that a future SPLOST will see this road widened and the curves as part of this potential project be flattened out some for driver safety. Chairman Stalnaker then stated he was happy to see growth starting to come back to the north side of Houston County.

Darrell Allen of 105 Stonewall Drive spoke next and said that the sign posted about this being on the Commission's Agenda was only posted last Thursday right before a holiday weekend and not in a very noticeable or conspicuous place and that notice of this annexation was not on the County website. Mr. Allen questioned why the County was more concerned with a developer than with nearby County residents, who have lived in the area for years, and their concerns. He also wondered if the local schools would be able to handle the influx of new students.

Chairman Stalnaker advised that the County has only two options, to concur or non-concur; not to approve or disapprove the annexation.

Commissioner Byrd commented that growth creates additional demands and that a local landowner in Houston County initiated this annexation action and development of their property. He also said that if the law states that contiguous property can be annexed and rezoned, then he is basing his decision on the law.

Commissioner Walker agreed with Commissioner Byrd's statements.

Motion by Mr. Walker, second by Mr. Byrd and carried unanimously by all to concur with the City of Centerville's request for annexation of Houston County Tax Parcels: 000720 014000, 000720 012000, 00072C 80A000 and 000720 013000 totaling 161.42 acres, with the provision that an engineering study be conducted due to limited sight distances. If the City of Centerville is unable to provide sufficient water, a city/county water purchase agreement will be required.

Motion by Mr. Talton, second by Mr. Walker and carried unanimously by all to approve the payment of the bills totaling \$6,038,265.03.

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

Sara Paulk, Houston County Library Director, gave an update to the Commissioners and thanked them for their support. Ms. Paulk advised that the numbers of users of the library are increasing coming out of Covid.

Chairman Stalnaker thanked her for the job the libraries do and stated it is one of the best library systems in the state.

Commissioner Walker said the library system is a needed quality of life issue for County residents.

Commissioner Robinson said our library system is great system.

Commissioner Talton thanked her and remarked that the numbers were very interesting.

Commissioners Byrd said that libraries provide the avenue and foundation for lifelong learning and thanked Ms. Paulk for her and her staff's work

Brian Jones advised that on item #5, regarding the changes to road speeds and radar, GA DOT was aware of the changes and the items approved today will be sent over to for their review and approval.

There being no further comments Chairman Stalnaker closed Public Comments and opened Commissioner's Comments.

Commissioner Byrd said that coming off of Labor Day that we should celebrate the workforce in Houston County and the County employees for their great job and services they provide. He also mentioned that Georgia Southern is celebrating their 40 years of football and have had five players from Houston County play on the GA Southern football team. Brett Moore, Vance Pike, Laron Scott from Warner Robins, Kiwaukee Thomas from Perry, and Jessie Jenkins from Bonaire.

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Commissioner Talton thanked everyone for coming and for the employees' hard work.

Commissioner Robinson thanked everyone for being in attendance and mentioned that our system is a system of law and rules, not always perfect, but in those instances we hope that changes can be made. Commissioner Robinson also mentioned she was happy to represent the people of Houston County.

Chairman Stalnaker asked Ms. Robinson to give a brief synopsis of her recent trip to Africa where she visited the countries of Kenya and Tanzania. She said the people were very friendly, but life for them was tough living in a third world environment without running water, electricity being spotty, even in the large cities. She said she very much appreciates all that we have here having come back from her trip. She also visited several national parks and saw all kinds of wildlife.

Commissioner Walker thanked everyone for coming and mentioned what an outstanding county that Houston County is especially when he talks to commissioners from other counties in Georgia.

Chairman Stalnaker thanked everyone for coming and wished everyone a good week.

Motion to adjourn by Mr. Walker, second by Ms. Robinson, meeting adjourned.

Robbie Dunbar
Director of Administration

Chairman

Commissioner

Commissioner

Commissioner

Commissioner