

MINUTES OF THE HOUSTON COUNTY COMMISSION  
REGULAR SESSION  
April 12, 2021

PRESENT: Chairman Mark S. Culver, Commissioner Doug Siquefield, Commissioner Ricky Herring, Commissioner Brandon Shoupe, County Engineer Barkley Kirkland, Chief Administrative Officer Peter Covert and County Attorney Pres Register.

Chairman Culver welcomed everyone to the April 12, 2021, Houston County Commission Regular Session and called the 10:00 a.m. meeting to order. He declared a quorum as a majority of the commissioners were in attendance. He welcomed everyone and stated that this is the largest crowd they have had in a year and half due to COVID restrictions. Chairman Culver added that today starts the new procedures and policies in the building and masking is not mandatory in the building but it is encouraged.

ABSENT: Commissioner Curtis Harvey

The invocation was given by Pastor Clark Cornelius and Commissioner Doug Siquefield led in the pledge of allegiance.

Chairman Culver stated that one of the things that has been missed over the last year and a half were the members of the clergy in our community coming and beginning the meetings in the proper way. He thanked Pastor Cornelius for coming.

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved on a motion by Commissioner Herring and seconded by Commissioner Siquefield. The motion passed unanimously.

#### ANNOUNCEMENTS AND COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN AND COMMISSIONERS

Chairman Culver began by thanking everyone for abiding by the changing rules as we move forward and get back to some normalcy but he does encourage everyone to continue to mask when possible, social distance when possible and bear with us as we move in a slow but steady pace.

Commissioner Siquefield read a letter that had been received from the Cottonwood FFA students thanking the Commission for supporting the Houston County Steer Show recently. He appreciates the young people being involved in agriculture and all the different entities of agriculture. He thanked them for their care and concern for making these things possible.

#### AWARDS AND PRESENTATIONS

1. Proclamation – “Child Abuse Prevention Month” – Lindsey Wagoner, Community Advocate, Child Advocacy Center

Commissioner Herring made a motion to approve the proclamation and Commissioner Sinquefield seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Chairman Culver read the proclamation and CAO Peter Covert presented it to Ms. Wagoner. He thanked them for just not being here today and recognizing “Child Abuse Prevention Month” but for the daily effort the Center does in such a critical area of the community. Ms. Wagoner introduced Megan Marchman, who is the new Education Advocate at the Child Advocacy Center. She thanked the commission and mentioned that the Blue Ribbon Campaign slogan for this year is “Every Child Safe. Every Community Aware.”. Ms. Wagoner wanted everyone to know that it is not just them doing their job at the center, but everyone in the community’s job to be on the lookout and to report child abuse. Chairman Culver thanked them again for being here today.

2. Proclamation – “HIPPI Day” – Nancy Brown, HIPPI Coordinator, Alfred Saliba Center

Commissioner Shoupe made a motion to approve the proclamation. Commissioner Sinquefield seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

Chairman Culver read the proclamation and CAO Peter Covert presented it to Ms. Brown. Chairman Culver thanked them for making the commission aware of this program and for the work that the Child Services Center does for the community. Ms. Brown thanked the commission for the opportunity to be here today. She added that early education is very important and it’s very refreshing to know that the community leaders share the same vision as they do.

3. Proclamation – “Crime Victims’ Rights Week” – Shelly Linderman, Director, Wiregrass Angel House

Commissioner Shoupe made a motion to approve the proclamation and Commissioner Herring seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Herring read the proclamation and CAO Peter Covert presented it to Ms. Linderman. Chairman Culver thanked Ms. Linderman and the Wiregrass Angel House for their services that they provide during unfortunate times and the commission appreciates it. Ms. Linderman stated that most of the staff came today as this is very important to them. Crime Victims’ Rights is important not only to the victims that they serve, but to victims across all violent crimes. She added that Krystee Stacey is their court advocate, Tony Luker is the Dog Program Manager and Katie Lewis is the Outreach Coordinator. Ms. Linderman stated that on behalf of the entire staff, they thank the commission for what they do in the community as that is what it is all about. She mentioned that they will have Family Fun Day on Sunday, April 18<sup>th</sup> at the Angel House and everything is free for the children and on Thursday, April 22<sup>nd</sup>, their major fundraiser is the golf tournament at Dothan National and she encourage everyone to participate

#### 4. Recognition – “Tele-Communicator’s Week”

Major Bill Rafferty and Captain James Ivey came forward to make comments on this recognition. Major Rafferty reported that Tele-Communicator’s Week is the second week of April each year. In 1981, Patricia Anderson of the Contra Costa County Sheriff’s Office in California initiated this weeks’ celebration for communication employees. He stated that the Houston County Sheriff’s Department has 15 slots and at this time all the slots are full, which is the first time in years. Major Rafferty thanked the Houston County Commission for allowing the pay adjustment that has made a big difference in the quality of communication employees as well as bringing in qualified persons. He stated that the employees deal with a lot of stress on a daily basis as they handle over 30,000 calls per year. He added that the communication employees are the “ears” of all calls. They are the “ears” to the law enforcement officers for safety; they are the “ears” to the public because what they hear makes a difference to all in the community. Major Rafferty reported that the communication employees hear the mother when their child is not breathing, or a loved one in distress, a burglary in progress, domestic violence calls, and shots being fired along with all the other calls. They are the safety for the deputies, officers and first responders as they get the needed information, listen and get the facts whether they are simple facts or dangerous facts. These employees are responsible for 17 volunteer fire departments, 7 municipality law enforcement agencies, and 6 rescue squads for this area, ALEA Troopers and the Fish and Game. They cover a lot of territory and agencies. Major Rafferty stated that no one understands what these dispatchers go through and as of today two-thirds of the dispatchers are certified and three of the five left are very close to being certified. He added that due to the stress and the facts that these communicators deal with on a daily basis, we have Dr. Tim Faulk on call 24/7. He is not only available for the dispatchers, but for all law enforcements and he meets with them on a quarterly basis. Major Rafferty reported that since Sheriff Valenza has been in office, they show their appreciation to the communication operators by hosting a luncheon for them and also a cook-out at their facility to thank them. The communication center is for all law enforcement and first responders and it is the heart of safety, life saving, the help to all communities. He thanked the communication employees and they are proud of the job well done.

Chairman Culver thanked Major Rafferty for bringing awareness to Telecommunicators Week and on behalf of the Commission, they extend their appreciation for the job they do.

#### REGULAR AGENDA

1. Request for 050 Retail Beer (Off Premises Only) License and 070 Retail Table Wine (Off Premises Only) License – Dolgencorp, LLC, d/b/a Dollar General Store #22162, located at 140 S. State hwy. 123, Newton, AL 36352

Commissioner Shoupe made a motion to approve the request for the licenses and Commissioner Sinquefield seconded. Chairman Culver asked if anyone was present in objection to this license being issued. With no one present, the motion carried unanimously

2. Request to award bid for printing and mailing of monthly renewal notices to lowest bidder meeting specs – Patrick Davenport, Judge of Probate

Commissioner Sinquefield made a motion to approve the request to award the bid and Commissioner Herring seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

3. Request to approve repairs at Waste Water Treatment Plant and accompanying budget amendment – Peter B. Covert, Chief Administrative Officer

Commissioner Shoupe made a motion to approve the request for repairs at the Waste Water Treatment Plant and accompanying budget amendment and Commissioner Herring seconded. Chairman Culver stated that this is ongoing work that has to be done for maintenance of the plant that has not been updated since it was built twenty years ago or more. When called for the question and vote, the motion carried unanimously.

4. Request to approve budget amendment for construction equipment cost – Road & Bridge

Commissioner Sinquefield made a motion to approve the budget amendment and Commissioner Shoupe seconded. Chairman Culver stated that this is an opportunity that has been presented to get exceptional value for our current used equipment and move forward with new equipment. He added that the old equipment will be bought back from the provider at an extremely high buy-back price, higher than can be obtained at an auction, and then the county will turn around and purchase/lease new equipment so the net cost will be lower. When called for the question and vote, the motion carried unanimously.

5. Request to sell on GovDeals; miscellaneous office equipment from Probate, Accounting and Revenue Departments

Commissioner Sinquefield made a motion to approve the request to sell items on GovDeals and Commissioner Herring seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

#### STAFF REPORTS

Chief Administrative Officer – No Report

County Engineer – Closed roads: Omussee, Cecil Varnum, Gilmore and intersection of Taylor and Campbellton.

County Attorney – No Report

Meeting adjourned.