

MINUTES OF THE HOUSTON COUNTY COMMISSION
NOVEMBER 10, 2010

PRESENT: Chairman Mark S. Culver, Commissioner Curtis Harvey, Commissioner Doug Siquefield, Commissioner Jackie Battles, Commissioner Phillip L. Forrester, Mark Pool, County Engineer, and William J. Dempsey, Chief Administrative Officer

ABSENT: Gary Sherrer, County Attorney

Chairman Mark S. Culver, called the 10:00 A.M. meeting to order, declared a quorum was present, and welcomed everyone. Captain Bill Criss of the Salvation Army gave the invocation. Commissioner Harvey led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Commissioner Harvey made a motion to approve the minutes of the last meeting. Commissioner Siquefield seconded the motion; and it carried unanimously.

Announcements and Public Comments from Chairman and Commissioners

Chairman Culver reported due to the State law, the Commission could not meet within seven days of an election, and because of that law, the newly elected commission took office earlier that morning. He pointed out because the commission is not allowed to meet during those seven days, there was no Administrative meeting. The chairman reported normally, there is an Administrative meeting at which time they discuss all of the items to be placed on the agenda and they also allow time for public comments. Chairman Culver reported in the cases when an Administrative meeting is cancelled or in the case of this meeting, they open the meeting regulations to allow some more discussion, also discussion before motions, and at the end, ask for comments by the public. He stated he wanted everyone to be aware of the changes in the procedures for the meeting.

The chairman welcomed Commissioners Siquefield and Battles, and stated they were glad to have them and looked forward to working with them for at least the next four years in moving the county forward. He congratulated all of the candidates, both winning and losing, on the election season. The chairman thanked everyone who put their name out before the public to run for office.

The chairman commended the National Peanut Festival staff and volunteers for a successful event in spite of some cold and wet weather.

Chairman Culver reminded everyone November 11th was Veterans Day and he reported Federal, State and County offices would be closed in order for everyone to take the opportunity to honor our veterans throughout the Wiregrass. He reported there would be a ceremony at 11:00 A.M. at the VFW in Dothan, and he encouraged everyone to attend if possible.

Awards and Presentations

1. Proclamation – “Farm City Week” – Commissioner Doug Siquefield, Chairman

Chairman Culver asked Commissioner Doug Siquefield to come forward. Commissioner Forrester made a motion to approve the Proclamation declaring November 19-25, 2010, as “Farm City Week” in Houston County. Commissioner Harvey seconded; and the motion carried unanimously. Chairman Culver then read the Proclamation and presented it to Commissioner Siquefield. Chairman Culver thanked Mr. Siquefield for his service as Chairman of the Farm City Week Committee and also as a farmer.

Commissioner Siquefield thanked the Chairman for the Proclamation. He thanked the members of the Farm City Week Committee for their work and efforts to make the Farm City Week possible. He reported Farm City Week is an opportunity for farmers ready to share their stories with their urban neighbors and to build trust and confidence in the food supply. Mr. Siquefield reported the average farmer today produces enough to feed 155 people with good, quality food. He stated Farm City Week began in 1955, when the President of Kiwanis International and a conservationist were traveling on a train trip to Washington, D.C., and they began discussing how important it was to bring the urban and rural families together in America. He stated Farm City Week was begun to achieve unity among

American workers on and off the farm with their ongoing theme “Partners in Progress.” Commissioner Slnquefield thanked Mayor Schmitz and the City of Dothan for hosting the event this year on November 16th at the Civic Center. He thanked the sponsors, the Dothan Area Chamber of Commerce, and the media for their participation in this year’s event. Mr. Slnquefield thanked Mrs. Gloria Jeffcoat for her work on the Ag in the Classroom project. Commissioner Slnquefield thanked the Commission and stated he looked forward to the Farm City Week Banquet on November 16th at the Dothan Civic Center. Commissioner Slnquefield received a round of applause. Chairman Culver thanked Mrs. Janice Shepard and Ms. Linda McGhee for their assistance.

2. Proclamation – “The Salvation Army” – Captain Bill Criss

Chairman Culver asked Captain Bill Criss, The Salvation Army, to come forward. Commissioner Harvey made a motion to approve the Proclamation recognizing “The Salvation Army.” Commissioner Slnquefield seconded; and the motion carried unanimously. Chairman Culver reported Captain Criss was new to the area and he welcomed Captain Criss to Houston County on behalf of the Commission. The chairman read the Proclamation and presented it to Captain Criss.

Captain Criss thanked Chairman Culver and the Commission. He reported he and his wife appreciated the welcome they have received since arriving in Houston County. Captain Criss stated they have not only been accepted; but warmly embraced by the community. The captain reported they are privileged to be leading the Salvation Army as they complete their 99th year in the community, and as they begin the 98th Kettle Campaign. He pointed out the funds that are raised this time of year serve a lot of purposes. 1. The 4,000 boys and girls and senior citizens that will receive food, clothing, toys and gifts over the next two months. 2. The many thousands throughout the year they assist with utilities, rent, food, clothing, and furniture. He stated without the support and hard work of the people of the community, none of this would be possible. Captain Criss thanked the commission for their support to help change lives and bring hope to many.

Capatin Criss stated he understood the Mayor plans to put up quite a competition this year with the Bell Ringing. Chairman Culver stated the county usually challenges the city because they tend to cheat. He stated the county took them two years and the mayor took back the trophy last year. Chairman Culver reported the annual competition would be November 29th, from 10:00 A.M. until 5:00 P.M. at the Southside WalMart. Chairman Culver reported it will be the 5 commissioners and either the Probate Judge, Revenue Commissioner or the Sheriff to ring for the county. He stated every year, the City brings firemen and policemen in addition to their commissioners. He urged everyone to come out and visit on November 29th as they ring the bell for donations for the Salvation Army. The chairman thanked Captain Criss and Rev. Morris Bates, Kettle Campaign Director, for being a part of such a worthy cause. Captain Criss then introduced Rev. Bates, and thanked him for all he does for the Kettle Drive.

3. Presentation – Ms. Marty LeBlanc, Sponsor, Houston County High School’s BEST Robotic Team

Chairman Culver asked Ms. Marty LeBlanc, Coach, Houston County High School’s BEST Robotic Team, to come forward. He recognized Mr. Tim Pitchford, Houston County School Superintendent. The chairman reported the BEST Robotic Team brings out the talent that our young people have, and this year Houston County High School has done well in the competition at this point and in two weeks will be going off to compete in a larger competition. Chairman Culver reported they still need funds to get the students to the competition, and he asked anyone who might feel the need or have organizations that would assist to please contact Ms. LeBlanc or Mr. Pitchford by the end of the day.

At that time, he turned the meeting over to Ms. LeBlanc. She reported their team name is Pride Technology, which stands for Proudly Recognizing Intelligence, Determination, and Excellence through BEST Robotics. She reported BEST—Boosting Engineering, Science, and Technology. Ms. LeBlanc reported it is a lot of fun but it is 100% academic. She reported they are proud to say out of the county schools, on overall, Houston County placed second for the best award and also placed second in the actual Robotics competition, and Wicksburg placed third. She introduced Devon Meisner and Justin Haynes who demonstrated the Robot. Ms. LaBlanc reported they would be taking the Robot to competition in Auburn on November 18th-20th. She stated 24 people would be going for Thursday and Friday nights, and the main competition would be 9:00 A.M. on Saturday at the Beard-Eaves Coliseum.

Ms. LeBlanc encouraged people to come and attend. Chairman Culver thanked Ms. LeBlanc for all of her efforts and hard work on this project. The chairman asked Mr. Pitchford for any comments? He stated this BEST Robotics competition is an excellent program and it answers the fundamental questions everyone had in school of why students take science, take math, and how are they going to use it? Chairman Culver reported Matt Parker, President, Dothan Area Chamber of Commerce, was present and he stated he had been involved in the competition. The chairman stated the competitions are like athletic events with bands, cheering, and he encouraged everyone that could to support Houston County High School. He thanked Ms. LeBlanc and her students for taking the time to attend the meeting.

Regular Agenda

1. Request to set schedule for Meetings and approve Meeting Procedures.

Chairman Culver reported each time a new Commission is sworn in, they are required by law to set their meeting schedule for their term of office, and to approve Meeting Procedures. He stated the schedule is set out in the law that establishes the County Commission which states they will meet the second and fourth Monday of every month. He stated a motion will be needed to that effect. The chairman reported the Meeting Procedures were adopted the last time the Open Meetings Law was passed. He stated it talks about the decorum, what the commission is required to do to abide by the Open Meetings Law, and it has worked well since its passage. Commissioner Harvey made a motion to approve the request to set the schedule to meet the second and fourth Mondays of every month, and to approve the Meeting Rules of Procedures. Commissioner Battles seconded the motion.

2. Request from Probate Judge to approve HAVA Grant Funds for improving polling facilities – Mrs. Susan Johnson, Chief Clerk, Probate.

The chairman stated Mrs. Johnson was representing Probate Judge Cooley, and he asked her to come forward. He reported the project was to create better voter access and better handicap access for the Madrid Senior Center voting location. Chairman Culver reported the cost is \$60,000 based on the estimate supplied by Mr. Pool. He pointed out it involved paving and putting in handicapped parking and really improving the access to the voting place. Commissioner Harvey made a motion to approve the Probate Judge's request to approve HAVA Grant Funds for improving the polling facilities at Madrid. Commissioner Siquefield seconded the motion. Mrs. Johnson reported this was a much needed project at Madrid and the money is available and she felt all that was needed was to have the work done. Mr. Pool reported there would be no county money spent on the project. He stated the equipment and labor cost on this project would enhance his budget. Chairman Culver called for the question; and it carried unanimously. (Please see attached in Minute Book)

3. Request to approve Law Enforcement Grant in the amount of \$30,000.00 – Mr. Clark Matthews, EMA.

Commissioner Harvey made a motion to approve the request for a Law Enforcement Grant in the amount of \$30,000.00. Commissioner Forrester seconded the motion. Mr. Clark Matthews reported this is a pass through for the sustainment teams for regional law enforcement. He stated the grant is 100% pass through and it serves a 10 county area. Mr. Matthews reported Homeland Security furnishes the money to keep up equipment and buy new equipment to replace the worn out equipment. Chairman Culver reported periodically, they would try to have more detailed discussions on items in order to bring Commissioners Battles and Siquefield up to speed. The chairman reported Houston County is the repository for the region for Homeland Security with all the equipment and funds coming through the EMA office. The county then redistributes them to the various counties where a need might be. He stated a lot of the grants are pass through but the commission has to approve them because they go through the county's budget. Mr. Pool asked if any of the grant money could be used for equipment maintenance? Mr. Matthews stated yes. The chairman called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously.

4. Request to approve Fire Department Grant in the amount of \$37,545.16 – Clark Matthews, EMA.

Commissioner Harvey made a motion to approve the request for the Fire Department Grant in the amount of \$37,545.16. Commissioner Battles seconded the motion. Mr. Matthews reported this is a 100% pass through to the Dothan Fire Department for heavy rescue aid and hazmat aid which is located in the City of Dothan. He stated Homeland Security bought most of the equipment and this money will be used to maintain that equipment.

Mr. Matthews reported the Law Enforcement Grant is split between the City of Dothan and Houston County Sheriff's Department to buy the equipment.

Chairman Culver called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously.

5. Request to approve SNS Grant in the amount of \$11,000.00 – Clark Matthews EMA.

Commissioner Harvey made a motion to approve SNS Grant in the amount of \$11,000.00. Commissioner Sinquefield seconded the motion. Mr. Matthews reported this is a Strategic National Stockpile Grant. He reported Houston County is an RDS site and he stated last year, when there was a flu epidemic, EMA's responsibility through volunteers, Dothan Fire and Police and all of them together took the equipment and broke it down for the ten county area, shipped it out to the ten county area, and maintained the inventory. He pointed out they still have some stuff leftover from last year, but it also includes ventilators, medical equipment for the Medical Center if Flowers gets overwhelmed. He stated they also have equipment that they distribute to other hospitals that might be in need of it. Mr. Matthews reported the \$11,000.00 is not a pass through; it will actually be for the Houston County Health Department and EMA. He stated the Health Department has a project they need done for communications. Mr. Matthews reported EMA needs some hand trucks that will be used all year long. The chairman called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously.

6. Request to award bid to Chaney Branch Construction for addition to existing metal building at Road and Bridge Department in the amount of \$12,880.00.

Chairman Culver reported this is a budgeted item. He reported it will help house the paint striping, road striping material, and equipment. The chairman reported this amount is under budget. Mr. Pool stated it is one-half of what was budgeted and Dale County and Coffee County will each pay one-third. Mr. Pool stated he should have caught that it is not really a bid but to award a contract. He pointed out the bid law is \$15,000.00, on an item. He reported this falls under the Public Works Law which is labor and materials. Commissioner Harvey made a motion to award a contract to Chaney Branch Construction for an addition to the existing metal building at Road and Bridge Department in the amount of \$12,880.00. Commissioner Sinquefield seconded the motion.

Chairman Culver stated he wanted to be sure the new commissioners have all the information. He reported the striper was purchased by three different counties, Houston, Coffee, and Dale. The chairman reported they share in the equipment purchasing, operational costs, and they each use it when they need to. Chairman Culver reported it is a feather in the cap with the three counties in their willingness to work together to save money. Mr. Pool reported they have saved over \$500,000.00 with this equipment. He stated it has been a good program. Chairman called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously. (Please see in Minute Book)

7. Request to approve Konecranes to install overhead traveling crane in County Shop for a total cost of \$49,500.00.

Chairman Culver reported this is a budgeted item. Commissioner Harvey made a motion to approve Konecranes to install overhead traveling crane in County Shop for a total cost of \$49,500.00. Commissioner Battles seconded the motion. Chairman Culver reported this crane came with the building and it has been in need of repair, and this will make it a useable and safe piece of equipment. Mr. Pool reported this comes under Public Works Law also. Chairman Culver called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously. (Please see in Minute Book)

Staff Reports:

Chief Administrative Officer – there was no report

County Engineer – Mr. Pool reported the county is still working on several projects. He stated they would be paving Guy Branch Road on November 10th and 11th. Her reported Miller Street is under construction, and they are planning and hoping to have asphalt on it in six weeks. The FEMA flood repair projects are finishing up. He pointed out they have four cross-drains left before they begin working on off-right-of-way repairs. Mr. Pool stated the Ardilla Intersection has about one week's worth of work left until the County's part is completed. He pointed out they are currently waiting on the State. Chairman Culver stated he wanted to be sure everyone understands that the county is waiting on the State at this point. Mr. Pool reported when they get that part where the county can tie in on Beverlye, then the county will be through with its part. Chairman Culver stated although the project has taken a long time, it would be very beneficial to that area, and he hoped everyone would appreciate it. Mr. Pool reported they hope to have the resurfacing project completed soon on Fortner Street. He stated they are about to begin an industrial access project in Ashford that will take approximately four months to complete. Mr. Pool reported they should start cutting grass on the side of the road in December. He stated they normally start in October but they have been behind because of all the other projects. Mr. Pool reported County Road #81 will require about four weeks worth of work on the county's part and the contractor will do the rest. He stated they were waiting on the city on Rowland Road and Cherry Road. He stated it would take three to five months to complete if they were to put in this year's budget. Mr. Pool reported they have 309 outstanding work orders.

County Attorney – Chairman Culver reported Mr. Sherrer was present for the Swearing In Ceremony but had to be in Court because this is not the commission's normal meeting time.

Adjourn.

Commissioner Harvey made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Sinquefield seconded; and the motion carried unanimously.