

MINUTES OF THE HOUSTON COUNTY COMMISSION
JANUARY 24, 2011

PRESENT: Chairman Mark S. Culver, Commissioner Curtis Harvey, Commissioner Doug Siquefield, Commissioner Jackie Battles, Gary Sherrer, County Attorney, Barkley Kirkland, Acting County Engineer, William J. Dempsey, Chief Administrative Officer

ABSENT: Commissioner Phil Forrester, Mark Pool, County Engineer

Chairman Mark Culver called the 10:00 A.M. meeting to order, declared a quorum was present, and welcomed everyone. Rev. Brad Hardy, Interim Pastor, Bluff Springs Baptist Church, gave the invocation. Commissioner Battles led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

Announcements and Public Comments from Chairman and Commissioners

Chairman Culver reported that February is Heart Health Awareness Month, and there will be a lot of events around the county with that theme. He encouraged everyone to wear red on February 1st, and asked all county employees to wear red every Thursday during February.

Awards and Presentations

1. Presentation of the VFW Houston County Law Enforcement Officer of the year Award – C.J. Watson, VFW 3037 Post Commander, and Ed Pritchard, Quartermaster

Chairman Culver asked VFW 3037 Post Commander C. J. Watson and Ed Pritchard, Quartermaster, to come forward for a presentation of the VFW Houston County Law Enforcement Officer of the Year Award. Mr. Pritchard stated this year they had two awards to present to the Alabama State Troopers. At that time, he called Trooper Jeremy Burkett forward and presented him with the 2009-2010 Trooper of the Year award. He pointed out Trooper Burkett was serving in Iraq last year and was unable to accept the award. Mr. Pritchard also called Trooper Tracy McCord forward and presented him with the 2011 award. He pointed out Trooper McCord is a veteran of Bosnia.

The Houston County Deputy of the Year Award was presented to Phillip Small. He was honored because while off duty he noticed activity that led to a money counterfeiting bust.

Commander Watson thanked the honorees for protecting our community.

2. Safety Review – Kelly Crowell, Houston County Safety Director

Mrs. Crowell reported it was always good to come and give a presentation when there is good news to share. She then gave a safety review. Mrs. Crowell reported it had been about a year since she made her last presentation. She then updated the commission on where the county is on its safety efforts. Mrs. Crowell reported she went back and compared the first quarters from the previous years and it showed a significant drop in 2010. She pointed out the county is down to 3 medical cases for the first fiscal quarter. Mrs. Crowell reported one of the reasons for the big drop is because they have changed the way injuries are approached. She stated the county's ultimate goal is to prevent accidents and injuries to the county's work family but if they happen, they are changing the way they are dealt with. Mrs. Crowell reported a lot of training has been done with the first line supervisors and key employees. She pointed out first aid kits have been added in the vehicles and in the departments, and a common sense approach can be used in band aid type injuries and they can be taken care of by the employees. Ms. Crowell reported in November, 2010, the county went an entire month without sending someone to the doctor with an injury, and that has not happened since 2004. She stated overall, she felt the county has a heightened sense of awareness about safety with the supervisors, the employees and their efforts and what they are trying to do. It was pointed out the direct costs for workers compensation are down almost \$60,000.00 and in turn it saves the county money.

Chairman Culver thanked Mrs. Crowell for her efforts as well as those of the supervisors and employees.

Regular Agenda

1. Request from Dothan Industrial Development Board to approve assisting in construction of holding pond at Pepi Foods – Matt Parker, President, Dothan Area Chamber of Commerce.

Chairman Culver reported this is a finishing up of a project the commission approved several months ago. He pointed out the county did some site work out at Pepi Foods and at that time, there was some discussion whether or not a holding pond was going to be necessary. The chairman reported it had been determined there is a need for a holding pond. He stated they had some discussion so that the county would not have to do a lot of hauling and a lot of work. The chairman reported they are going to allow the county to dispose of the work on site, and that will make it easier and shorter project. He stated this is a collaborative effort with the City of Dothan, and they are going to do all of the pipe work, drainage work, and design work. Mr. Matt Parker thanked the county for their support for economic development. He stated as the chairman had eluded, the project was previously approved by the county, and due to a design change, they felt it appropriate to come back to the county and request to finish the job. He stated he appreciated the county's assistance on the project. Chairman Culver reported the request was from the Industrial Development Board, who has control of the property where the work will be done. Commissioner Harvey made a motion to approve the request from the Industrial Development Board to approve assisting in construction of a holding pond at Pepi Foods. Commissioner Sinquefield seconded the motion. Chairman Culver reported Mr. Barkley Kirkland had talked with the design engineer about the project. Mr. Kirkland reported they want the county to have the work done by March 1st, but he stated it was all weather related. The chairman pointed out according to Mark Pool, the crews are working on the shooting range for the Sheriff and they want to complete that project before they pull off. The chairman called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously.

The chairman stated since there was no administrative meeting, the commission was operating under the alternative rules and more discussion would be allowed than normal.

2. Request for capitalization of in-house developed software with a threshold of \$25,000.00.

Mr. Dempsey reported they had been advised by the State Examiners that in accordance with GASBY 51 General Accounting Standards, the county should be going forward and capitalize in-house software. He stated the county is allowed to set its own threshold which after talking with the examiners and Mr. Paul Clark internally, he was recommending \$25,000, which means the county has very few items of software capitalized. Mr. Dempsey reported this did not change the capital threshold on the other items which it typically \$5,000. He pointed out this only applies to software. Mr. Dempsey reported this is somewhat of a formality to the State to say this is the county's position on it. Chairman Culver reported this is basically putting a value on software that the county has developed in-house. He stated if the county had gone out and bought \$100,000 worth of software it would be capitalized, but this is saying there is value to the software that has been developed in-house. Commissioner Harvey made a motion to approve the request for capitalization on in-house developed software with a threshold of \$25,000.00. Commissioner Battles seconded the motion. Chairman Culver called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously. (Please see attached in Minute Book)

3. Request to enter into a service agreement with IMS Enterprises, Inc. for the processing of credit card transactions effective February 1, 2011.

Commissioner Harvey asked that Mr. Dempsey explain the request. Mr. Dempsey reported by local law approximately ten years ago, the county placed a \$2.00 transaction fee on all credit card transactions in the Probate Office including primarily tags. He reported the credit card company has advised the county that it is not in compliance with their guidelines although there has been a law in place for over ten years. Mr. Dempsey reported about two years ago, the Revenue Commissioner's office entered into an agreement with a company that would process the credit card payments for the county. He pointed out if someone has a \$100 tax bill with the Revenue Commissioner, then all fees associated with credit card payments would be paid by the taxpayer. Mr. Dempsey reported they have located a company, IMS

Enterprises, Inc., that processes credit cards for more than 20 other counties in the state. He reported they propose February 1st, the Probate Office would switch to IMS Enterprises, Inc. Mr. Dempsey stated Mr. Paul Clark has been in contact with IMS Enterprises, Inc., and the Probate Judge and her Chief Clerk are in agreement with this. He stated all of the ground work is set to begin February 1st. He stated there will be a change in the structure of the payments. Mr. Dempsey reported in the past, there was a flat \$2.00 fee, and now there is another fee schedule based on credit card use only. He pointed out the county gets none of that additional fee. He pointed out If the county's bill is \$100.00 then that is the amount the county will get, and if the fee to use the credit card is \$3.00 then all of the \$3.00 will go to the credit card company and IMS Enterprises, Inc. He reported without a credit card there will be no change; a customer can pay cash or a check. Chairman Culver asked if the change would allow the customers to continue to use true credit cards both at the desk and over the internet for purchase of internet purchases in Probate? Mr. Dempsey stated that was correct. Chairman Culver stated there was a different program in Revenue. Mr. Dempsey reported in Revenue a customer can't come to the office and swipe the card but the customer can pay through the internet or there is a 1-800 number. He pointed out in talking with the Revenue Commissioner, the program has worked very well. Commissioner Harvey asked why the customer cannot swipe the card? Mr. Dempsey stated the company they use does not offer that service. Commissioner Harvey made a motion to approve the request to enter into a service agreement with IMS Enterprises, Inc. for the processing of credit card transactions effective February 1, 2011. Commissioner Siquefield seconded the motion. Chairman Culver reported the company that is leaving wanted to leave January 1st. He stated he hated they brought it up after the county has been doing this for ten years, and he appreciated them giving the county the extra month so there would not be a gap. Chairman Culver called for the question; and it carried unanimously. (Please see in Minute Book)

4. Request from EMA to approve '09 Homeland Security Grant.

Chairman Culver asked Mr. Clark Matthews to come forward and explain. Mr. Matthews reported the Department of Homeland Security has a pool of money and after they support the regional teams and the counties they take the last pool of money and split it up throughout the state. He stated communications is probably the biggest thing that is a failure during a disaster, and the money that is left over in 2009 is being distributed back out to the counties to try to fix the shortfalls. He pointed out in this particular case they are requiring them to do something they have never been asked to do and that is to return the communications truck which was not designed correctly and is dangerous to drive. Mr. Matthews reported this truck was designed by Homeland Security and it is nothing to do with the county. He stated Homeland Security recognizes the problem with the truck and part of the grant would be to replace the truck to be purchased off the state bid list with their specifications. He reported the truck would be titled to the county. Mr. Matthews reported he has requested to get the existing truck back because other counties have and he felt it would be a good vehicle for Road and Bridge. Mr. Matthews stated this is a 100% grant and it would also include some software and other small things. He stated he furnished the information paper because of the vehicle and he would have to come back to the commission for approval. Chairman Culver asked Mr. Matthews if the grant was for \$54,409? Mr. Matthews stated yes. He asked Mr. Matthews if that was enough to buy the truck and take care of the other things mentioned? Mr. Matthews stated yes.

Chairman Culver reported basically the if the county is getting an '09 grant with money left over to upgrade the truck on the communications vehicle? Mr. Matthews stated yes and communications statewide. He stated the county would probably get some other money in the near future along the same line. Commissioner Harvey made a motion to approve the request from EMA for an '09 Homeland Security Grant in the amount of \$54,409.00. Commissioner Siquefield seconded the motion. The chairman called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously. (Please see attached in Minute Book)

5. Request to award bid for removing and replacing 100% outside air unit and installing two fan coil units at the Courthouse, and the appropriate budget amendment.

He reported the bid came in about \$26,000 more than what was budgeted. He stated this is a specialized unit and sometimes they cost more. The chairman reported three bids were taken and the

low bidder meeting specs is Comfort Systems in the amount of \$104,600.00. Commissioner Harvey requested to see the list of bidders and the prices. Commissioner Harvey made a motion to award the bid for removing and replacing the 100% outside air unit and installing two fan coil units at the Courthouse, to the low bidder meeting specs, Comfort Systems in the amount of \$104,600.00 and the appropriate budget amendment. Commissioner Battles seconded the motion. Chairman Culver called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously. (Please see attached in Minute Book)

6. Request to extend contract with Contech Construction Products, Inc. for bituminous coated roadway drainage pipe for an additional six months.

Commissioner Harvey made a motion to approve the request to extend the contract with Contech Construction Products, Inc. for bituminous coated roadway drainage pipe for an additional six months. Commissioner Sinquefield seconded the motion. Chairman Culver called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously. (Please see attached in Minute Book)

Staff Reports:

Chief Administrative Officer

Mr. Dempsey reported a different approach is being taken for revenue tracking than has been done in years past. He stated he would be reviewing this each month against the total projected budget. He stated sales tax through December was up about 3.4%. He reported the Revenue Commissioner's income is about where it was projected to be. Gasoline Sales tax is up a little, and some of the major Probate is down a little. He stated it is too early to tell how this will pan out for the year. He pointed out this is the state of income through the first quarter. Chairman Culver stated it was going to take people buying and selling houses and buying new cars as opposed to used cars to get Probate's Revenues back up.

County Engineer – Mr. Barkley Kirkland had no report.

County Attorney – there was no report.

Chairman Culver asked if there were any questions for the staff members?

Commissioner Battles asked Mr. Kirkland to tell the public why the county is cutting grass along the roadway this time of year? Mr. Kirkland reported they cut grass this time each year and they make one cutting in the winter because they handle it through the summer with chemical sprayers. He stated now they are going through and knocking down any tall grass and weeds and get it level, and next month they will begin spraying.

Chairman Culver called on Judge Cooley who stated they have a small glitch with the February tag assessment. She reported the state has not been able to come up with a definitive amount for them to make ad valorem tax on for vehicles and they cannot print renewal cards if they do not receive the information by today. She reported they will be sending out post cards to those with the last name beginning with a "B" so they know they will have to either catch the community worker in their community or they will have to come into the office. She stated they do not know which cars are wrong, and rather than send out wrong amounts, if the information does not come today, then the people with their last name beginning with a "B" will receive post cards stating they will have to make an appearance. Judge Cooley stated she wanted to catch the media and let the commission know also because she felt there would be a lot of confusion and complaints. Judge Cooley stated those people would either receive a post card or their renewal notice.

Chairman Culver asked for any comments from the audience?

Mr. Jerry Dillard, resident of District #3, stated he was going to try to get Commissioner Battles to go out and look at the roads. He stated the right-of-ways are washing away. He stated he called the Alabama Department of Transportation and other counties and asked if they cut grass in January? He stated they thought it was a waste of time.

Chairman Culver recognized his wife, Tami, who he stated was taking good care of him while he was under the weather.

Adjourn.

Commissioner Sinquefield made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Battles seconded; and it carried unanimously.