

## MINUTES OF THE HOUSTON COUNTY COMMISSION

APRIL 26, 2011

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

ABSENT: None

Chairman Mark S. Culver called the 10:00 A.M. meeting to order, declared a quorum was present and welcomed everyone. Rev. Jim Tate, Pastor, Memphis Baptist Church, gave the invocation. Commissioner Siquefield led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Commissioner Battles 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

The chairman asked if any of the commissioners had any announcements about events happening in their districts? Commissioner Siquefield reported the DownHome Festival and Parade would be held May 7<sup>th</sup> in Cottonwood, and Gordon would also be having a parade that same day.

### Awards and Presentations

1. Proclamation – “Small Business Week” – Dr. Steve Turkoski, Program Manager, Dothan Area Chamber of Commerce

Chairman Culver asked Dr. Steve Turkoski, Program Manager, Dothan Area Chamber of Commerce, Mr. Matt Parker, President, Dothan Area Chamber of Commerce, and Ms. Caroline Shippey, Director of Membership, to come forward. Commissioner Forrester made a motion to approve the Proclamation declaring the week of May 2<sup>nd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> as “Small Business Week.” Commissioner Harvey seconded; and the motion carried unanimously. The chairman then read the Proclamation and presented it to Dr. Turkoski.

Chairman Culver thanked the Chamber of Commerce for allowing the commission to recognize small business owners. He reported as a former small business owner, he knew what small businesses go through, and he felt it important that they receive continued support because they are the backbone of this country.

Dr. Turkoski thanked the commission for the Proclamation. He stated there are approximately 10,000 businesses in Houston County and the majority are small businesses with less than one percent being large businesses. Dr. Turkoski reported Governor Bentley has stated he plans to create a cabinet level position to work with small businesses since they have such a significant impact on our state. He also reported they would be announcing the “Small Business Person of the Year” during Small Business Week, and they looked forward to that.

Chairman Culver thanked Commissioner Harvey for chairing the Administrative meeting on Thursday and establishing a new record of brevity in the Administrative meeting that will probably last for years to come.

#### Regular Agenda

1. Appointments to the Houston County Industrial Development Authority.

Chairman Culver reported there were three appointments, and two would be filled as follows: Robert S. Hewes and Harrison Morris. He stated Mr. Hewes is an at-large appointment and Mr. Morris is out of District 3. Commissioner Battles made a motion to approve the appointment of Robert S. Hewes and Harrison Morris to the Houston County Industrial Development Authority. Commissioner Sinquefield seconded the motion. The chairman reported the other appointment would come from District #1 at a later time. Chairman Culver called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Matt Parker commended the commission for creating the Houston County Industrial Development Authority. He stated it has been on the forefront to create a lot of opportunities in the marketplace, and has supported a lot of the small towns with their economic development. Mr. Parker stated without the Houston County Development Authority they would have missed out on approximately \$45 million of tax exempt financing during the stimulus package to create a lot of commercial projects in our market area. He thanked the commission for creating the entity and stated it had been great for our area.

Chairman Culver reported this organization's mission can be used anywhere in Houston County; particularly in the smaller towns that do not have an industrial development authority. He stated this authority is an asset to Mr. Parker and what he does in the economic development arena.

2. Request to award bid for two (2) 2011 Chevrolet Tahoes for the Sheriff's Department.

Commissioner Harvey made a motion to award the bid for two (2) 2011 Chevrolet Tahoes for the Sheriff's Department to the low bidder meeting specs, Solomon Motor Company, in the amount of \$26,801.50 each. Commissioner Sinquefield seconded the motion.

Sheriff Hughes reported the reason they were buying Tahoes was because they have 8 Tahoes in service and they have had zero problems from those vehicles. He pointed out this was the last year that Ford was building the Crown Victoria police car and they were not able to find any Crown Vics in the Southeast. Sheriff Hughes reported Chevrolet is building a Caprice vehicle with a police package and Ford is coming out with a new police package vehicle, but none will be available until sometime after August. Sheriff Hughes stated that the public sometimes questions why the Tahoes are bought. He reported the Tahoes get one (1) mile per gallon better in the city than the Crown Vic and the same on the highway with the Tahoes getting 15 miles per gallon in town and 21 miles per gallon on the highway and the Crown Vic getting 14 miles per gallon in town and 21 miles per gallon on the highway. The Sheriff reported there are a lot of Dodge Charges in police service and they had done a lot of homework on them contacting the State Troopers because they have a lot of them in their fleet, and the

maintenance costs are cost prohibitive. He also pointed out they are a small car and it is hard to get a lot of equipment in them. The sheriff reported a deputy puts approximately 200 miles per shift on the vehicle. He stated they have dual vehicles in place so that the maintenance costs do not overrun. Chairman Culver reported when the Sheriff's Department brought the situation with the Crown Vic's to the commission's attention, they discussed the alternatives. He reported they have people selling all varieties of cars and he stated he did not want to throw off on anyone. The chairman reported the Tahoes are very reliable and there is a little bit of expense but long term versus the other alternative, he felt the county would come out better. The Sheriff pointed out that the Tahoes also have a better manufacturer's warranty. Sheriff Hughes reported the new Ford will be similar to the Taurus and they would be testing them and the Chevrolet Caprice to see if they would work for them. The Sheriff reported if the Tahoes are not being driven at an accelerated speed, then they will drop back to four cylinders, and a lot of gas is saved. A question concerning the county going to dual pumps was asked? It was pointed out at this time, the county has no plans to do that. The chairman reported that was a program that they would need to research. Chairman Culver called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously. (Please see attached Bid Summary Sheets in Minute Book)

#### Staff Reports:

Chief Administrative Officer – there was no report

#### County Engineer

Mr. Pool reported the state was making good progress on the Ardilla Intersection, and it should be complete by the first of July. He stated County Road #81 was complete except for the shoulder work. Mr. Pool pointed out the industrial access project at Ashford was going well. He reported the problem they have is cleaning up limbs as they are just getting started on those that had been blown down. Mr. Pool reported it would be at least two weeks. Commissioner Battles asked if citizens who have limbs should they call it in? Mr. Pool stated that was not necessary because they would get them.

#### County Attorney – there was no report

Chairman Culver asked everyone to recall back in the fall, the county was fortunate to work with Vantage Sourcing in bringing significant jobs to Taylor and Houston County and part of the process was that the county agreed to allow the Farm Center to be used as a training facility because of the huge numbers they had. The chairman pointed out by doing that, the county was basically taking the building out of circulation. He reported to offset that the Alabama Department of Agriculture's former Director, Ron Sparks, committed \$10,000 from his department to help offset the loss of revenue at the Farm Center. Chairman Culver reported the county has not received the money and he stated he had contacted and talked with everyone in the current Agricultural Department and the word he has received is that the county is not going to get the money. The chairman reported he knew the state had financial problems but the county had issues also. He pointed out \$10,000 to the state is a drop in the bucket compared to the significant revenue loss it is to the Farm Center. Chairman Culver reported when the state makes commitments related to economic development projects, it is important that the commitment be honored. He advised the commission that he was going to ask Attorney Sherrer to take

any and all actions to recover the money owed to the county. He reported when the State of Alabama makes a commitment on an economic development project they need to honor their commitment. The chairman reported he had been working on this for a while, and he had been waiting to bring this up because the state has said they are working on it. He asked the commission if they were okay with this? There were no objections.

Mr. Pool reported there were a tremendous number of real estate signs on the right-of-way, and some of the people are attaching them to the county's traffic control signs. He stated this needed to stop. Chairman Culver suggested something be sent to the Dothan Realtors Association and let them send out information that there is not supposed to be any advertising on public signs. Chairman Culver reported he would get Mr. Pool the correct information.

Adjourn.

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