

MINUTES OF THE HOUSTON COUNTY COMMISSION

AUGUST 27, 2012

PRESENT: Chairman Mark S. Culver, Commissioner Curtis Harvey, Commissioner Doug Siquefield, Commissioner Jackie Battles, Commissioner Melinda S. McClendon, Gary Sherrer, County Attorney, Mark Pool, County Engineer, and William 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. Dr. Hayes McKay, Pastor, Covenant United Methodist Church, gave the invocation. Commissioner McClendon led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

Announcements and Public Comments from Chairman and Commissioners

Chairman Culver reported the ACCA Annual meeting was held last week and it was really a great conference. He stated he felt everyone that attended the meeting benefited, and he hoped they would apply a lot of the good information they learned in the community.

Chairman Culver asked Chris Etheredge, former E-911 Coordinator, and Dothan Fire Department's Battalion Chief, to come forward. He reported Mr. Etheredge served as the E-911 Coordinator for the past couple of years under his existing pay with no additional pay. Chairman Culver reported at the meeting he was recognized and they thanked him for his effort. Mr. Culver reported the commission wanted to thank him for his work and the groundwork he laid. He stated the commission felt very confident in Mr. Collins, the new E-911 Coordinator. The chairman pointed out one of the things they worked very hard on while Mr. Etheredge was the E-911 Coordinator was the establishment of the E-911 Board statewide along with the revamping of fees and rates. He stated legislation was passed to insure that the entire State of Alabama would have E-911 coverage. Chairman Culver reported there was extreme concern, particularly out in the rural counties, that if things did not change they did not have the base to continue to fund their operation. The chairman stated if a person was on the interstate and driving through a county in the rural areas of the state and had an accident, the person could not get a response because they did not have an E-911 System. Chairman Culver reported that problem was fixed by legislation. He stated Representative Paul Lee was in attendance, and he thanked him for working with them on that matter. The chairman reported last week at the ACCA conference all of the E-911 officials were recognized that were involved in the process and helped to make it come to fruition. At that time, the chairman presented him with a plaque on behalf of the ACCA commemorating the passage of Act 2012-293. He thanked Mr. Etheredge for being an integral part of the process. Mr. Etheredge received a round of applause.

Chairman Culver stated Mr. Clark Matthews was very busy with the storm and was not able to attend. He asked Mr. Etheredge to give an update on the storm.

Mr. Etheredge reported Dothan-Houston County has a great E-911 System. He stated it had nothing to do with him but with the dispatchers that answer the E-911 calls every day and every night. Mr. Etheredge stated they are very proud of the legislation that was passed to make sure it stays a good system for many years to come.

Mr. Etheredge then reported Dothan-Houston County is very blessed as far as Isaac is concerned. He stated 48 hours ago, they were expecting a significant impact on our area. Mr. Etheredge pointed out the latest information shows severe thunderstorms passing through the area Tuesday and Wednesday morning. He stated the latest update from Tallahassee indicated if it stays on the current path, the worst scenario would be 5-8 inches of rain localized through the area and 25-35 mph winds possibly gusting up to 45 mph. Mr. Etheredge reported that would equate to about a severe thunderstorm in the area. He pointed out they anticipate tornado watches being issued on Tuesday mid-day and possibly that evening. Mr. Etheredge reminded everyone Houston County is located on the east side of the storm which is the most significant side, and the winds extend 200 miles from the eye of the storm.

He stated everyone needs to remember that the cone is where the eye is moving; not the damage path. Mr. Etheredge reported all of the first responders are well prepared. He stated the chairman and several commissioners have been down at EMA over the weekend for the updates and he stated the commission has a phenomenal staff from EMA, Road and Bridge, and the Sheriff's Department. He stated they have a play book, and they can respond at any minute to move things with Community Corrections providing assistance along with the city forces, and volunteers throughout the county. Mr. Etheredge reminded everyone to stay tuned to the media outlets in order to know what is going on. Chairman Culver thanked Mr. Etheredge for the update.

Chairman Culver asked Mrs. Brittany Clayton, Engineer, Road and Bridge Department, to come forward. The chairman reported the ACCA is very involved and committed to training those that represent the citizens in county government. He stated he did not just mean county commissioners. He pointed out commissioners have a mandatory 50 hour training course that has to be accomplished within two years, Commissioners Battles and Siquefield have completed them. The chairman reported Commissioner Harvey, the senior commissioner, has completed the 50 hour course and also the graduate program. He pointed out Commissioner McClendon will begin her 50 hour course in December. Chairman Culver reported this program gives the newly elected commissioners training on what they can do including the ethics laws, accounting, roads and bridges, etc. He stated it has been expanded to engineers, administrators, revenue officials, emergency management operators, and everyone that is part of the county umbrella. He stated they had over 700 people to attend the conference including engineers, accountants, revenue officials, E-911 operators, Sheriffs, EMA Directors, and other officials. Chairman Culver reported as part of the County Government Education Institute, an announcement was made that Mrs. Clayton, has completed the mandated educational requirements for a certificate in County Engineering Administration. He stated Mrs. Clayton was unable to attend the conference, and at that time he presented a plaque to her on behalf of the ACCA, and from the Houston County Commission. He thanked Mrs. Clayton. Mrs. Clayton reported they learn a lot in these classes, and one thing she learned is Houston County is a good county, and the county has great commissioners. She received a round of applause.

Awards and Presentations

1. Presentation – Choctawhatchee, Pea, & Yellow Rivers Watershed Management Authority – Mrs. Barbara Gibson, Director

Chairman Culver asked Mrs. Barbara Gibson, Director, Choctawhatchee, Pea & Yellow Rivers Watershed Management Authority, for a presentation relative to a project the county is involved in. Chairman Culver recognized Mr. Joe Carothers, longtime community servant, and who also serves on the Choc, Pea, & Yellow Rivers Watershed Management Authority's Board.

Mrs. Gibson thanked the chairman and commission for being able to come and make the presentation. She stated with the storm, the timing was most appropriate for the announcement of the addition of a rain and river gauge for Houston County. Mrs. Gibson stated Chairman Culver had introduced Mr. Joe Carothers who is the chairman of their board. She recognized Mr. Don Hyde, the person who operates and maintains the system for their agency. Mrs. Gibson reported at times when the weather is severe he is on call 24/7. She pointed out they are a state agency in southeast Alabama and their agency operates the only basin-wide flood warning system in the state. Mrs. Gibson reported the rain and river gauge has been installed on the Brannon Stand Road Bridge over the Little Choctawhatchee River and is the 19th installed in Southeast Alabama. She stated the gauge will be used to record rainfall amounts and river levels. Mrs. Gibson pointed out the gauges are monitored electronically, allowing real time data to be sent to emergency management agencies, local and state officials, and the National Weather Service in Tallahassee. She pointed out the gauges are overseen by her agency. Mrs. Gibson also reported the gauges could be used to determine drought conditions as well.

Mrs. Gibson thanked the legislature for providing funding, and she recognized Representative Paul Lee. Representative Lee stated the system is an asset to the areas in which the measurements are taken as well as other locations. He pointed out the information gathered from the gauges allows locations downstream to predict the potential for flood conditions and make the necessary adjustments. Representative Lee thanked Mrs. Gibson and her agency for all of the work they do.

Mrs. Gibson stated they appreciated the efforts of Mark Pool and the Road and Bridge Department and the commission for allowing the crews to do the work for their agency.

2. Presentation – Update on the Houston County Rescue Unit – Dr. Barbara Alford

Chairman Culver invited Dr. Barbara Alford to come to the podium. He reported Dr. Alford is a very committed and distinguished member of the Houston County Rescue Unit. He stated as everyone is aware she also does a lot other important things in the community as well.

Dr. Alford thanked the Commission on behalf of the Houston County Rescue Unit for the opportunity to give an update. She reported there are a lot of rescue units in the area. Dr. Alford stated Houston County Rescue Unit is different in that they do not run lights to fires, they do not save people from having heart attacks, and they are almost never going to be in charge of an emergency scene. She reported the Houston County Rescue Unit has been in existence since the mid 60's, and they are the oldest volunteer unit in the region. Dr. Alford reported they have been a 501(c)3 for most of that time, and they were incorporated as the Ashford-Enon Rescue Squad, and then changed over to the Houston County Rescue Unit. She pointed out they are a 24/7 land and water rescue unit with approximately 35 active members on their roster plus some retired members who are all volunteers. Dr. Alford reported their primary service area is Houston County but they also respond to emergencies and call outs in the surrounding counties in Alabama, Georgia, and Florida, and out to Fort Rucker. Dr. Alford reported their primary mission is to support law enforcement, EMA, and firefighters, etc. She stated if Isaac should hit our area, they would block a road, help a family evacuate, help cut trees, or whatever they are asked to do by the agency in charge. Dr. Alford stated their unit's mission is on land and water as much as it is underwater, but they are known mainly for their dive team. She reported they do help to recover drowning victims in the area, they search for cars that have been driven off into rivers and streams, and help to locate boats that have had the misfortune of sinking, and when feasible they help to get them back on land. Dr. Alford reported advanced certification is required by their members who are divers. She stated they promote water safety. Dr. Alford reported they are very grateful for the commission's support. She stated they do participate in fund raisers and once in a while they get a grant, but they could not survive without the Houston County Commission. She stated their bylaws do not allow them to charge for any of their services, and their divers use most of their own equipment, and members use their personal vehicles to respond. Dr. Alford reported they pay their own memberships to the Alabama Association of Rescue Squads, buy their own t-shirts, etc. Dr. Alford thanked the commission on behalf of their members for enabling them to do what they do well and she committed to them that they will continue training and do what this county needs them to do. Chairman Culver thanked Dr. Alford. He reported as previously stated the Houston County Rescue Unit has been around for a very long time, and the commission really appreciates what they do. The chairman pointed out as with any organization, there are always ups and downs. He stated he felt everyone has put their best foot forward in volunteers whether it is the volunteer firefighters or the rescue squads as they work very closely through EMA. The chairman reported this storm, Isaac, is a good example when everyone comes together when the citizens the county represents are in danger, and the commission appreciates it. Chairman Culver reported the Houston County Rescue Unit, like other volunteer organizations, has been suffering a little bit from volunteerism. He stated it is hard to get volunteers, and he encouraged anyone who might have an interest in rescue units, volunteer firefighters, or transport units to contact their area representatives to find out what is involved. He thanked Dr. Alford.

Regular Agenda

1. Re-appointment to the Dothan-Houston County Airport Authority – Jimbo Loftin.

Chairman Culver reported for many years Mr. Dick Bell served as the county's appointment on the Airport Authority until his untimely death. He stated since Mr. Loftin's appointment, he has done an outstanding job, has an interest in the airport and has really been working hard to help them to succeed. Commissioner Battles made a motion to re-appoint Mr. Jimbo Loftin to the Dothan-Houston County Airport Authority. Commissioner Sinquefield seconded the motion; and it carried unanimously.

2. Request from EMA to approve Emergency Management Performance Grant - Clark Matthews, EMA Director.

Chairman Culver reported as stated earlier, Mr. Matthews could not be in attendance due to working on storm related issues. He stated this is a normal and customary operational grant from FEMA through the state. Commissioner Battles made a motion to approve EMA's request for an Emergency Management Performance Grant. Commissioner McClendon seconded the motion. Chairman Culver called for the question; and it carried unanimously.

3. Request from EMA to approve the purchase and bid on a prime mover for the Sheriff's Department (100% Homeland Security Grant) - Clark Matthews, Director.

Chairman Culver reported a prime mover is a truck that is used to move all of the Homeland Security equipment. He stated the purchase of a new truck is at the request of Homeland Security. The chairman pointed out Houston County is the regional hub for about 8-10 counties in the area, and the county is responsible for housing all of the equipment. Commissioner Battles made a motion to approve EMA's request to purchase and bid on a prime mover for the Sheriff's Department through a 100% Homeland Security Grant. Commissioner Sinquefield seconded the motion. Chairman Culver called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously.

4. Request from Road and Bridge to approve item to be sold on GovDeals.

Commissioner Harvey made a motion to approve the request from Road and Bridge to sell an item on GovDeals. Commissioner Sinquefield seconded the motion; and it carried unanimously. (Please see attached in Minute Book)

5. Request from Road and Bridge to award bids for 32 cubic yard compaction garbage truck, low sulphur diesel fuel, all grades unleaded gasoline, and bituminous coated roadway drainage pipe.

Commissioner Harvey made a motion to award bids for 32 cubic yard compaction garbage truck, low sulphur diesel fuel, all grades of unleaded gasoline, and bituminous coated roadway drainage pipe to the low bidder meeting specs. Commissioner Battles seconded the motion.

Chairman Culver asked Mr. Pool if the county only bids diesel fuel and basic unleaded fuel? Mr. Pool stated yes. The chairman stated there was no higher or lower octane, some with ethanol and some without ethanol. Mr. Pool stated that was correct. The question was asked if the county had off-road diesel fuel? Mr. Pool stated it was all the same because the county does not pay taxes.

The chairman asked Mr. Sherrer if they needed to mention about the question on the garbage truck? Chairman Culver reported one of the bidders had a question about the garbage truck. He stated the bid had been delayed, the staff looked into it and Mr. Sherrer had looked into it. Chairman Culver reported prior to the meeting Mr. Sherrer had given them a letter he wrote stating in his opinion there was no problem, and it was okay to award the bid. Chairman Culver stated he thought the bidder's question was regarding the bid specs, and he asked if there were any questions? Mr. Pool reported their specs were detailed in that they called for a 5 year 300,000 mile warranty on the transmission, 3 years on the brake system, the transmission, and the engine which should save a lot of money in the future. He stated there is an extended engine warranty for 5 years with 300,000 miles, a base warranty bumper to bumper for 36 months, and he stated the bid also included a 60 months 300,000 mile warranty on the engine. He stated he has a new shop foreman and they have really worked hard on these and this is excellent training for him. Mr. Pool stated they are bidding one or two trucks. He reported there is a 210 day delivery date after the bid is awarded, and if they do not deliver it within the 210 days, then they are charged \$25.00 per day per truck. Mr. Pool reported most everything in the specs is based on something that has happened in the past. Chairman Culver reported one of the trucks was in the current budget and they put one in next year's budget. He stated since they are going to come in the next calendar year as well as the budget year, they will both be in next year's budget. It was pointed out they will be on a lease/purchase.

Commissioner Battles asked if Coffman International bid three different trucks? Mr. Pool stated it was one truck, two trucks, three trucks, it was not a different truck. After further discussion, it was determined they were different trucks. Commissioner Battles asked with all the different truck dealers, there was only one that could meet the specs? Mr. Pool stated they wanted to get someone local and they wanted to have the engine brake and transmission brake. Mr. Pool reported years ago, the county

was having trouble with the back of the garbage trucks and they talked to the City of Dothan and they were running Leach bodies. He stated they started using those bodies, and they have not had any problems. He stated it is hard to change when you have had something that works. Commissioner Sinquefield asked if the difference in the trough floor and the flat floor was one of the reasons for the change in the bid? Chairman Culver stated the trough floor was in the bid. He stated it was part of the question that was raised by the company that caused this. Mr. Pool asked if the motion was to bid on all of it? Chairman Culver reported he assumed they were voting on two trucks. 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

Mr. Dempsey reported that the budget Work Session would be at 3:30 P.M. in the Conference Room.

County Engineer

Mr. Pool reported the county was well prepared for Isaac if it should come our way. Chairman Culver reported we have been truly blessed because this is about the 5th or 6th storm that has been projected to come close to us, and it changed its path.

County Attorney – there was no report

Adjourn

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