

MINUTES OF THE HOUSTON COUNTY COMMISSION
SEPTEMBER 10, 2012

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

ABSENT: Mark Pool, County Engineer

Chairman Mark S. Culver called the 10:00 A.M. meeting to order, declared a quorum present, and welcomed everyone. Rev. Lyn Miley, Associate Pastor, Westwood Presbyterian Church, 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 McClendon seconded; and the motion carried unanimously.

Announcements and Public Comments from Chairman and Commissioners

Chairman Culver reported a 911 Remembrance and Memorial Service would be held on September 11th, at 10:00 A.M at the Veterans Park.

He reported on September 18th, there would be an election to vote on the constitutional amendment, and he urged everyone to go and exercise their right to vote.

The chairman reminded everyone of the 3rd Annual Economic Summit on September 19th, at 8:00 A.M. at the Dothan Civic Center. He stated registration could be done online or they could register at the door .

Chairman Culver reported Houston County serves as the awarding authority for Region 2 on the bids for the Disaster Debris Removal and Monitoring that the ACCA is working on. He stated the bids were opened August 31st, and will be awarded at a later date. He pointed out anyone who might be interested can check with the ACCA office to review the bids. Chairman Culver reported the commission has been asked that this information be included in the minutes.

Awards and Presentations

1. Proclamation – “World Suicide Prevention Day” – Rose Blakey Phillips, Executive Director, Wiregrass Suicide Prevention Services

Chairman Culver asked Ms. Rose Blakey Philips, Executive Director, Wiregrass Suicide Prevention Services, to come forward. Commissioner Harvey made a motion to approve the Proclamation declaring September 10th, as “World Suicide Prevention Day.” Commissioner Battles seconded the motion; and it carried unanimously. Chairman Culver then read the Proclamation and presented it to Ms. Phillips. He reported the commission was glad to have Ms. Phillips on the actual date of “World Suicide Prevention Day.” Ms. Phillips reported her agency was hosting an open house from 11:00 A.M. – 2:00 P.M. to give area residents time to come and meet with them and for the agency to provide education regarding their services and increase awareness regarding the serious problem of suicide in the community. She stated they would be holding a Candlelight Service at Popular Head Park to remember those who have been lost to suicide and to create awareness and continue to fight for those who continue to suffer. Ms. Phillips thanked the commission for allowing her to attend, and she asked for their help to create awareness of the seriousness of the problem. Chairman Culver thanked Ms. Phillips for coming.

Regular Agenda

1. Request to appoint Commissioner Melinda McClendon to the Dothan Area Botanical Gardens Board.

Commissioner Siquefield made a motion to appoint Commissioner Melinda McClendon to the Dothan Area Botanical Gardens Board. Commissioner Harvey seconded the motion; and it carried unanimously.

2. Request to appoint Commissioner Curtis Harvey to The Downtown Group Board.

Commissioner Battles made a motion to appoint Commissioner Curtis Harvey to The Downtown Group Board. Commissioner McClendon seconded the motion; and it carried unanimously.

3. Request to appoint Robert Byrd to fill an unexpired term on the Dothan-Houston County Substance Abuse Partnership.

Commissioner Siquefield made a motion to appoint Robert Byrd to fill an unexpired term on the Dothan-Houston County Substance Abuse Partnership. Commissioner McClendon seconded the motion; and it carried unanimously.

4. Request to approve 2012/2013 Budget.

Commissioner Harvey made a motion to approve the 2012/2013 budget. Commissioner Siquefield seconded the motion. Chairman Culver reported the commission is much better off than they were 2-3 years ago, and he thanked all of the department heads. At that time, Chairman Culver asked Bill Dempsey to give an overview.

Mr. Dempsey reported he would like to begin with the ending fund balance and move forward. He stated the beginning fund balance for this year was \$5.9 million and they were projecting to end with \$6.7 million, and next year, 2012/13, the county projects to begin with \$6.7 million and end with \$5.7 million. He pointed out there was not that much difference between where the county was last year at the beginning of this year versus next year. Mr. Dempsey reported there were some good things that have happened over the last 2-3 years. He reported the revenues are expected to exceed expenses next year. He pointed out the county collected more revenue from sales tax, property tax and probate fees. Mr. Dempsey pointed out the sanitation collection fees remained flat. He reported the interest revenue and community corrections revenue were also flat due to taking large dips a few years ago. Mr. Dempsey reported over the last five years, the county had reduced the number of employees by 33 through normal attrition; thus reducing the greatest expense, salaries and wages. He stated one other position has changed from full-time to contract since he put the chart together. Mr. Dempsey reported with the elimination of the 33 positions, \$1.3 million was saved. He stated the good news is no county employee lost their job along the way because it was through attrition and department heads being able to manage their departments. Mr. Dempsey reported the costs for Workman's Comp and Liability Insurance have come down approximately \$100,000.00 each.

Chairman Culver thanked Mr. Dempsey for his outstanding report. He stated this commission has done a lot of hard work on putting this together, but it is really because the department heads and Mr. Dempsey and his staff are now monitoring the expenses; thus making it much easier for the department heads to know what they are spending. Chairman Culver reported he thought it was interesting to note that this time last year when they were approving the budget, the projected fund balance in the budget was \$3.3 million, and this year's budgeted ending fund balance is almost a \$2.5 million increase in the budgeted ending fund balance. Chairman Culver reported the county needs to be over \$5 million in the fund balance. He pointed out the county has a policy that calls for fund balances to equal at least two months of county expenses or approximately \$6 million. He stated several years ago, they decided they would not go below \$3 million and last year there were discussions about furloughing and other things, but fortunately they did not have to do that.

The chairman reported from a personnel perspective, the budget contains a 3% step increase for classified employees not topped out, and a 1% COLA effective the first pay period in October, 2012 for all employees. He stated there is no increase to the county or the employees in healthcare or dental costs. The chairman reported a reduction of \$100,000 each in Workmen's Comp and Liability costs. He thanked Ms. Kelly Crowell, Safety Coordinator, for her diligence in those areas. Chairman Culver pointed out the savings paid for the step increase. Chairman Culver reported one person has been added in Probate funded by the Probate fees.

He stated in Road and Bridge, there are 4 dump trucks and a lowboy. The chairman pointed out in Sanitation, there are two garbage trucks, one of which was carried over from the current budget, and two trash trucks. Chairman Culver reported the paving of Billy Snell Road is included in the budget which is the first paving that has been done in quite a while. He stated several special projects are

included: paving the roads at ACOM, library site work, Prevatt Road resurfacing, ATRIP, and Fortner and Brannon Stand Intersection. The chairman reported they also plan to resurface the courthouse parking lot as soon as the city gets the bonding building torn down.

Chairman Culver reported Mr. Dempsey had stated there were two new vehicles for the Sheriff's Department but there are actually five new vehicles purchased because of some funds that the Sheriff may not spend by September 30th, or it will roll into next year. The chairman reported this is significant because they have gone two years without buying any new vehicles, and with a fleet if you do not replace or rollover you end up spending a lot of money. He reported the Sheriff's office had requested a camera system, but the Sheriff has agreed to fund it out of new revenue he receives from court costs and the bail bond bill last year. The chairman pointed out the Sheriff had a position and he retired, and he is going to be hired back part-time to do their accounting at a savings of approximately \$19,000.

Chairman Culver reported the aerial photography for mapping the county will be done in February.

He stated there will be a new telephone system. Chairman Culver reported as far as the agencies are concerned, the first of three \$150,000 payments to the Library will be made from this budget. He stated the Health Department's appropriation was increased in exchange for doing \$180,000 worth of work on the county's building. The chairman reported most all of the agencies have been level funded.

Chairman Culver reported there had been discussion about the county doing a personnel study, but they have deferred it for one more year, and they want to look at it on a five year basis. He stated next year hopefully they will be funding a personnel study that needs to be done every five years to make sure the positions are still in line with other counties, cities, and the private sector. Chairman Culver thanked the staff, department heads, and employees who have worked hard all year to keep the county at a level that will allow a much better budget. Commissioner Sinquefield thanked the chairman and the commission for their help and support in bringing some dirt road paving back in line where they can pave some of the roads for the citizens. Chairman Culver called for the question on the motion to approve the 2012-2013 budget; and the motion carried unanimously.

5. Request from EMA to approve annual SNS Grant from the Department of Health in the amount of \$11,000.00 (100% Grant) – Clark Matthews, Director.

Commissioner Harvey made a motion to approve EMA's request for the annual 100% SNS Grant from the Department of Health in the amount of \$11,000.00. Commissioner Sinquefield seconded the motion. Commissioner Battles asked Mr. Matthews to explain? Mr. Matthews reported this is for a Strategic National Stockpile grant, which is funding provided annually to be ready for healthcare emergencies and bio-terrorism, etc. Mr. Matthews reported they have actually used this on two occasions. He stated the items are unloaded in Houston County and stored at the Farm Center, and distributed to 8 counties in the region. Chairman Culver reported there have been some extensive exercises over the last couple of years. Commissioner Sinquefield asked what Houston County's amount would be from the grant? Mr. Matthews reported they estimated approximately \$900.00 to \$1,100.00. Chairman Culver called for the question on the motion; and it carried unanimously.

Staff Reports:

Chief Administrative Officer – there was no report

County Engineer – there was no report

County Attorney – there was no report

Adjourn

Commissioner Harvey made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Sinquefield; and it carried unanimously.