

MINUTES OF THE HOUSTON COUNTY COMMISSION

APRIL 29, 2014

PRESENT: Chairman Mark S. Culver, Commissioner Curtis Harvey, Commissioner Doug Siquefield, Commissioner Jackie Battles, Commissioner Melinda S. McClendon, Patrick Jones, Acting County Attorney, Barkley Kirkland, 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 present, and welcomed everyone. Rev. Andy Gartman, Pastor, Tabernacle United Methodist Church, gave the invocation. Commissioner Melinda 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. Chairman Culver called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously.

Announcements and Public Comments from Chairman and Commissioners

Chairman Culver thanked Rev. Gartman for mentioning the tornadoes, and to keep those impacted by the tornadoes in their prayers. He reported the Governor had a conference call earlier, but unfortunately he was not able to participate. The chairman reported as seems to be the case more often than not, Houston County tends to escape the severity of these. He stated the county had received a good bit of rain but nothing compared to those areas from Pike County up. Chairman Culver reported there was another line of showers coming through in the afternoon, but it seems to be less invasive. He asked everyone to keep those that were so heavily impacted last night and earlier in the day in their prayers. The chairman reported weather is something no one has any control over, and all the county can do is urge people to be prepared and be safe. He urged everyone to get their weather radios and have a safe place.

Chairman Culver mentioned the softball game on Saturday. He reported it was a tremendous success for the Wiregrass Area Food Bank. He pointed out they raised 2,422 pounds of food, and it will create 1,892 meals. The chairman reported that was pretty significant. He stated the game itself, was not so successful because the elected officials got off to a very slow start. The chairman pointed out the first 9 batters were retired in order, and normally you don't see a no hitter for 3 innings in softball. He also reported they did a sloppy job in the outfield. He stated he thought it was the largest crowd they have ever had, and he thanked everyone who participated.

The chairman reported Cottonwood will be having their DownHome Festival and Parade on May 3rd, beginning at 9:00 A.M. He pointed out there would be activities all day. He encouraged those who might be interested to get out and support the Town of Cottonwood. He stated Mayor Hamilton is doing a great job, and he reported it is always fun to see a lot of the people who attend.

Chairman Culver congratulated everyone associated with ToadLick that was held over the weekend. He stated he had received nothing but positive reports, and people were in attendance from all over the U.S. He reported everyone had a good time.

Commissioner McClendon reported she and Bill Dempsey attended the Farley event on April 24th, where EMA was given a scenario that required staging areas, and being prepared to save lives. She reported representatives from EMA, FEMA, and all over were involved. She stated she did not know what to expect, but it was unbelievable and she gave kudos to the EMA office. Chairman Culver reported Mrs. Anisa McKenzie of the Accounting Department went down to help and two FEMA representatives showed up, and they did not have their badges so she would not let them in. The chairman gave kudos to Mrs. McKenzie.

He reported he had received an e-mail from Mrs. Kerry Ferrell, Tri-State Bar-B-Que Festival, regarding the outstanding job Mr. Chuck Barthlemess did. He stated Mrs. Ferrell commended him on going above and beyond his duties to assist her in making the event successful. The chairman reported he liked to recognize county employees any time he received complimentary remarks, and he congratulated Mr. Barthlemess on behalf of the commission.

Awards and Presentations

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

Chairman Culver asked Mr. Turkoski, Project Manager, Dothan Area Chamber of Commerce, to come forward. Commissioner Sinquefield made a motion to approve the Proclamation proclaiming May 12th-16th as “Small Business Week” in Houston County. Commissioner McClendon seconded the motion; and it carried unanimously. The chairman read the Proclamation and presented it Mr. Turkoski. He stated the commission appreciated Mr. Turkoski bringing this to their attention. He reported the backbone of the community is small business. Mr. Turkoski reported on behalf of the Chamber Board, Matt Parker, President, and its 1,000 members, who mainly are small businesses, appreciate the commission for recognizing “Small Business Week.” He stated he had done some research and there are 6,700 small businesses with only the proprietor, and 2,700 who have employees within our area. He pointed out about 57% of businesses in the area have 5 or less employees. He reported small business truly drives the economy. Mr. Turkoski then covered the events scheduled for “Small Business Week.” Chairman Culver thanked Mr. Turkoski.

2. Proclamation – Foster Care Month” – Mrs. Mary Paulk, Director of the Houston County Department of Human Resources, and Mrs. Julie Lindsey.

Chairman Culver asked Mrs. Mary Paulk, Director of the Houston County Department of Human Resources, and Mrs. Julie Lindsey, to come forward. Commissioner Harvey made a motion to approve the Proclamation proclaiming May as “Foster Care Month.” Commissioner McClendon seconded the motion; and it carried unanimously. The chairman read the Proclamation and presented it to Mrs. Paulk. He asked Mrs. Paulk to pass along to everyone involved, from the parents to the staff, what a

great job they do in the community that goes unnoticed so often. Mrs. Paulk, thanked the commission for the Proclamation on behalf of the staff and the foster parents, who are wonderful to open their hearts and their homes to provide the resources for these children on a daily basis. She pointed out the foster parents provide a need for the community. She thanked her staff for the job they do in an effort to keep these kids safe and allow them to grow up in a home to receive the benefits of becoming a good citizen. Mrs. Paulk reported they are always looking for foster parents and she asked if they knew anyone who thought they might be interested to call them. She pointed out throughout the month of May they would be doing some special recognition for the foster parents. Mrs. Paulk thanked the chairman and commissioners for their support .

3. Presentation – Farm City Week Awards – Mrs. Gloria Jeffcoat, Farm City Week Committee, and Dr. Adair Gilbert, Chairperson

Chairman Culver asked Commissioner Sinquefield to come forward and recognize some people for some Farm City Awards who have spearheaded the team. He asked Mrs. Gloria Jeffcoat and Dr. Adair Gilbert, Ms. Linda McGhee, and Mr. George Jeffcoat. Commissioner Sinquefield stated this is a small group of those who work on Farm City. He pointed out Farm City Week is more than just a week with a lot of work done in preparation of the event and after it. Commissioner Sinquefield stated Mrs. Jeffcoat works all year trying to compile and put together everything that is done. He called on Dr. Gilbert who reported on the awards the county won this year. Commissioner Sinquefield reported this promotes the importance of agriculture in our county and state. Dr. Gilbert reported the important thing is to know the real impact the farming community has. She pointed out there are more than 15,000 jobs related to the agriculture industry with a \$1.8 billion impact on the area. Dr. Gilbert stated they were glad to share the results of the efforts that have been put forth, and she reported the committee could not have done this without the county commission, the media, and sponsors. Dr. Gilbert stated the awards were broken down into 2 divisions and Houston County is in Division 1, which represents those counties with a population of 36,500. She reported there are 10 major awards and Houston County received 3 of the 10. She pointed out the awards were received because of all of the community support. Dr. Gilbert reported the first award was the Target Award, which was received because of the “Farm to Table” event Ms. Kelsey Barnard did out at Landmark Park, back in the fall. She stated it was a special event because the Target Award is not easy to come by and you have to be supported in the effort with regard to Farm City Week. Dr. Gilbert reported Farm City Week was started in the 1950’s to recognize the farming community around Thanksgiving. She thanked the commission for their support and for being there each year, and she stated another one will be coming up. Dr. Gilbert reported she mentioned the media and how important they are. She reported Houston County received the best media coverage at the State level, and she thanked WDHN, WTVY, the Dothan Eagle, the Dothan Progress, and the radio stations. Dr. Gilbert reported she did not know why Houston County did not receive the Best Farm City Committee, but got Runner Up. She stated the committee is shooting for the best next year. Dr. Gilbert reported there were 500-600 people from all over the state at the awards ceremony, and Houston County finally got the recognition. Mrs. Jeffcoat thanked Dr. Gilbert because she has made the contacts with Landmark Park, the “Farm to Table” event was a success, and WTVY brought one of their anchors out to a farm for the Farm City Swap. She stated this committee

needs the media because Montgomery doesn't even recognize the group without them. Mrs. Jeffcoat stated she hopes that when contacts are made about sponsoring Farm City people will know what it is thanks to the media. Mrs. Jeffcoat reported the most important aspect is the relationship the farming community has with the city. She thanked Dr. Gilbert and everyone. Chairman Culver reported this is another one of the joint efforts between the county and city, and he stated the county appreciated the partnership with them and the committee.

Regular Agenda

1. Appointment to the Dothan-Houston County Library System – Mr. Vince Edge

Chairman Culver reported the recommendation was Mr. Vince Edge. Commissioner McClendon made a motion to appoint Mr. Vince Edge to the Dothan-Houston County Library System. Commissioner Battles seconded the motion. Chairman Culver called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously.

2. Request from the Dothan-Houston County Library System for the county's assistance with grass cutting at the Ashford Branch Library.

Commissioner Sinquefield made a motion to approve the request from the Dothan-Houston County Library System for the county's assistance with grass cutting at the Ashford Branch Library. Commissioner Harvey seconded the motion. Chairman Culver reported there is a Branch Library in Ashford, and because of some circumstances there is some difficulty getting the grass mowed. He stated he talked with Mickey Segó, Farm Center Manager, and he went by the Library and he stated it would not be any trouble for them to stop by on their way to the parks. Chairman Culver reported they did get a price on contracting it out and it would cost \$1,000 annually during the growth season. He stated the county is not committing to plant flower beds; just to mow the grass. Chairman Culver called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously.

3. Request to approve Cooperative Emergency Management Performance Grant for 2013.

Commissioner Battles made a motion to approve the request for the Cooperative Emergency Management Performance Grant for 2013. Commissioner Harvey seconded the motion. Chairman Culver reported this is an annual grant that is normal and customary, and there will be no impact on the budget. He called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously.

Staff Reports:

Chief Administrative Officer – there was no report

County Engineer -

Mr. Kirkland reported they lack a day of paving on Stateline Road, and depending on the weather, they will be moving to County Road #22 this week or next week.

County Attorney –

Acting County Attorney, Patrick Jones, stated he had no report.

Chairman Culver reported he had a couple of calls about the shoulder work on Stateline Road. Mr. Kirkland reported the shoulder work would begin next week after they finish the shoulders on County Road #33. Mr. Kirkland reported after Stateline Road, they will move to County Road #22, and they will work on Saunders, Forrester, and part of Glen Lawrence.

Chairman Culver asked Mr. Kirkland to thank Mrs. Brittney Clayton for doing such a great job keeping everyone informed about road closings and openings.

Chairman Culver asked Mr. Kirkland about any road closings? He reported Indigo Pond Road and Lanier Road remain closed due to being under water.

Chairman Culver asked if anyone else would like to address the commission?

Mr. Ricky Stokes addressed the commission concerning the great volunteers the county has. He reported there was a medical case last week in Columbia with CPR in progress, and there were no volunteers in Columbia. He pointed out one of the problems is that the volunteers work during the day, and are unable to respond. Mr. Stokes stated Pilcher's does a wonderful job on backup but they have to come from Dothan to Columbia. He stated at budget time, the commission needed to address the issue with the volunteers because it is getting harder and harder for them who to take off work.

Mr. Stokes also asked the commission to look at helping fund the Dale County Sheriff Department's helicopter. He stated that helicopter is a tremendous resource, and it comes to Dothan/Houston County many times. He reported Sheriff Hughes does give him some money from the funds he has control over, but he needs a budget item to help fund that helicopter.

Adjourn.

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