

MINUTES OF THE HOUSTON COUNTY COMMISSION
AUGUST 11, 2014

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

ABSENT: None

Chairman Mark Culver called the 10:00 A.M. meeting to order, declared a quorum present, and welcomed everyone to the county's renovated building. He stated they were glad to be back. Due to the absence of Rev. Clark Cornelius, the invocation was given by Commissioner Curtis Harvey. Commissioner Jackie Battles led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Commissioner Harvey made a motion to approve the minutes of the last meeting. Commissioner McClendon seconded the motion. Chairman Culver called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously.

Announcements and Public Comments from Chairman and Commissioners

Chairman Culver reported as previously mentioned, it was good to be back and the departments are continuing to move. He stated on August 12th, the 6th floor would be moving back to the Admin Building, and the Revenue Commission would move on the 12th and 13th. The chairman pointed out the first and second floor would be moving next week, and everyone should be moved back in by the end of the month. He reported an Open House would be on Friday, September 5th, from 9:00 A.M. – 11:00 A.M. Chairman Culver stated there would be more information forthcoming from the media.

He recognized In-coming Sheriff Donald Valenza, and asked him for any comments. He stated they were glad to have him as the Sheriff, and that he had been here longer than some of them. The chairman reported the commission looked forward to working with him. Chairman Culver stated Sheriff Andy Hughes Farewell Reception would be on Tuesday, August 12th, at 3:00 P.M. in the Jury Assembly Room of the Courthouse. He reported the Swearing In Ceremony and Reception for Sheriff Valenza would be Thursday, August 14th, at 3:00 P.M., in the Jury Assembly Room of the Courthouse. Chairman Culver reported the commission looked forward to nothing but a great working relationship with him, and he stated they had always had that in his many years working with over 5 different Sheriffs. He congratulated Sheriff Valenza, his family, and the staff of the Sheriff's Department. Sheriff Valenza thanked the Chairman and commission and reported he was looking forward to working with them, and stated any time they needed anything to please contact him.

Chairman Culver reported he wanted to recognize Assistant County Engineer, Brittney Clayton, and her newborn daughter, Birdie, but they had gone.

The chairman recognized Mrs. Tami Culver and Ms. Hayden Camp from the Dothan Education Foundation.

Chairman Mark Culver reported since there was no Administrative meeting on Thursday, they would be operating under amended rules of order in that there could be more discussion in advance of motions if necessary.

Regular Agenda

1. Request from the Retirement Systems of Alabama to adopt Resolution for a onetime lump sum payment to retirees and beneficiaries of deceased retirees.

Chairman Culver reminded everyone the Alabama Legislature passed a bill last year that allowed a onetime bonus to retirees. The chairman reported it has been many years since state retirees and others that participate in the State Retirement System have had any kind of COLA, and they chose to do a bonus instead. He pointed out it only impacts the State one time. Chairman Culver reported it will come out of the county's 2015-16 Budget, and the county will actually be paying it back to the Retirement Systems of Alabama. The chairman reported he had received many calls from the county's retirees. He pointed out the county has always tried to do the same for their employees as the state does for theirs. The chairman stated when they had their budget hearing this item was discussed. Commissioner Harvey stated he saw that it was a onetime payment of \$75,000, and he asked what it is for? Mr. Dempsey reported it is for an additional payment to retirees. He pointed out in the 7 years he has been with the county, there has been one other time they were given a lump sum. Mr. Dempsey reported the money will come out of the 2015-16 Budget. He stated the county will make that payment back as part of its contribution rate to the state. Commissioner Harvey asked when the last time the county did this? Chairman Culver stated he did not think the county had ever done a bonus. It was pointed out there was a lump sum in 2008. Chairman Culver reported years ago, the state would always try to do a COLA. He pointed out when a COLA is given, it is there every year, so they decided to look at the bonus system which is a onetime payment this year, and will not be there next year, thus costing the state less money. The chairman reported the payment comes from the Retirement System; not from the county. Commissioner Harvey made a motion to approve the request from the Retirement System to adopt the Resolution for a one time lump sum payment to retirees and beneficiaries of deceased retirees. Commissioner Battles seconded the motion. Chairman Culver called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously. (Please see in Resolution Book)

2. Request from EMA to approve grant agreement between the Alabama Department of Public Health and Houston County EMA in the amount of \$10,000.00 to assist the County Strategic National Stockpile Program.

Commissioner Harvey asked Steve Carlisle, EMA Director, for some history on the request? Mr. Carlisle reported every year the Health Department gives them a grant usually in the amount of \$10,000 for training purposes and for buying equipment that they use at the Receiving Distribution Site (RDS) located in Houston County. He reported if a pandemic or a disaster occur that would require pharmaceuticals or medical equipment supplies, anything that they would need to help with this type situation, would be flown it into Houston County. He pointed out there are 8 counties in the Health Department's Area 10, everything is received into Houston County, and the other counties would come

to Houston County to receive their shipments. He reported this year, the decision was made that Houston County would receive all of the \$10,000, and it would be used in our county. Mr. Carlisle reported they would have an exercise in January or February of next year, and also some more equipment would be purchased for the RDS site. He reported the items would be tables, chairs, and a new pallet jack, and repair the current pallet jacks. Mr. Carlisle pointed out Houston County is the distributing agency for the counties in the Southeast region. Commissioner Battles made a motion to grant EMA's request to approve the grant agreement between the Alabama Department of Public Health and Houston County EMA in the amount of \$10,000 to assist the County Strategic National Stockpile Program. Commissioner Harvey seconded the motion. Chairman Culver called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously.

3. Request for a 050 – Retail Beer License (Off Premises Only) for OM1414 LLC d/b/a ZTEC – 13668 West U. S. Highway #84, Newton, AL 36352

Chairman Culver asked if anyone present objected to the Retail Beer License? There were no objections. Commissioner McClendon made a motion to approve the request for a 050 Retail Beer License (Off Premises Only) for OM1414 LLC d/b/a ZTEC – 13668 West U. S. Highway 84, Newton, AL. Commissioner Battles second the motion. Chairman Culver called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously.

4. Request for a 070 – Retail Table Wine License (Off Premises Only) for OM1414 LLC d/b/a ZTEC – 13668 West U. S. Highway #84, Newton, AL

Chairman Culver asked if anyone present objected to the Retail Table Wine License? There were no objections. Commissioner McClendon made a motion to approve the request for a 070 Retail Table Wine License (Off Premises Only) for OM1414 LLC d/b/a ZTEC – 13668 West U.S. Highway #84, Newton, AL. Commissioner Sinquefield seconded the motion. Chairman Culver called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously.

5. Request from Houston County Water Authority for an \$80,000 appropriation.

Chairman Culver stated for several years the county has been funding the Water Authority because of some issues related to a bond issue they did and the revenue not coming in as hoped. The chairman reported Danny McNeil, Chairman of the Water Authority, was in attendance. He reported they have been somewhat short on revenue that was anticipated and the county's position towards them has always been that they are not going to let them falter. The chairman pointed out the Water Authority serves two purposes; they provide water to a lot of people and they are also the governing entity on where lines are allowed to go in the county. He reported the commission has told them that the commission is there to support them. The chairman stated at the beginning of this past budget year they cut the amount of money that they provide to them significantly in hopes that a rate increase along with some potential growth down 231 would allow that decrease in the budget to suffice. He reported the growth they had hoped for did not happen. Chairman Culver reported the county is at the end of the budget year and for the Authority to meet their obligations in their budget as required by the bonds they have in place they now need the commission's support again. He stated at this point in order to

protect the county's bond rating as well as to continue to support them this is an appropriation that the commission really has very little choice in making. The chairman reported they are working on some things together to provide some additional revenue to the Water Authority, some contractual increase in billing; not rate increases, but hopefully some revenue enhancement to them. He stated there is another bond they are looking at possibly refinancing. Chairman Culver reported they are working to make things better for the Water Authority to meet their obligations and to make the commitment the commission has to make as small as possible. He stated he felt with the commission's commitment to them they have to make sure they are able to operate and meet their obligations not just from a cash flow basis but also a basis to have the cash required by their bond documents. Chairman Culver asked for comments by the commission or any questions.

Commissioner Harvey made a motion to approve the request from the Houston County Water Authority for an \$80,000 appropriation. The chairman asked for a second and there being none, he declared the motion dead. Chairman Culver reported he felt it was potentially very damaging to the Commission not to appropriate the money. A couple of commissioners stated they had some questions. The chairman stated there was a motion on the floor, and he had to address it. Commissioner Harvey then pulled his motion.

Commissioner Battles asked Mr. McNeil to come forward. He asked Mr. McNeil if his board members met on a regular basis? Mr. McNeil stated they meet as needed. He reported they do not meet if there is no business that needs to be discussed. He pointed out it is a nonpaying position and they don't meet just to meet. Commissioner Battles asked if the board members are up to speed on everything going on and when there are purchases made are they all brought up to speed? Mr. McNeil stated agenda items are mailed out monthly and there are telephone conversations, etc. He pointed out there is a meeting coming up next week dealing with the funding issue. Commissioner Harvey asked Mr. McNeil the biggest reason they are facing with the funding issue? Mr. McNeil reported they have the monies that were spent as the Chairman reported regarding the anticipation of some increases coming on a 231 South project that did not come through. He pointed out they are still left with the infrastructure they put in and the business did not come as they thought, and they are left with the expenditure.

Commissioner Harvey stated he felt the Water Authority was the commission's baby. Commissioner Sinquefield asked Mr. McNeil if the amount they have in reserve would be what they would be asking for to keep them from financial distress by not using any of that money? Mr. McNeil reported they had obligations and had to borrow money from that reserve, which is an emergency reserve. He stated they had to borrow and deplete it, and this request is to put that amount back in that they had to spend.

Commissioner McClendon asked if this is a problem the commission will continue to have? Mr. McNeil reported it all depends on the growth that is expected down the 231 corridor. He reported with the Chinese Symposium and things they hoped were coming, the infrastructure had to be in place in order to have it available, and the Water Authority still has to make those payments. He pointed out there is still potential. Chairman Culver pointed out the commission has been funding the Water Authority for several years. He reported they have a request from them asking for \$110,000 for next year. The chairman stated they are working on some things to redo some bonds in an effort to save some money over the next four years as well as working on a potential billing of a customer that will help, and with

that they will receive more revenue. He stated with the potential income from the above mentioned things they are working on, it would be a win-win situation for both entities because they would require less from the county. The chairman reported the fact of the matter is that the county is probably going to have to fund them for some years until some business is generated. He stated there are a lot of good things going on down 231 that potentially enhance the use of water in the Houston County water system, and they hope it happens. Chairman Culver stated if they could get a good user in the Distribution Park that would certainly help. He pointed out there are a lot of good things that could offset the problem and be good for more than just the Water Authority. Mr. McNeil stated the Water Authority wants to be self sufficient; they do not want to have to ask for a handout but things have not happened as projected. Commissioner Harvey made a motion to approve the request from the Houston County Water Authority for an \$80,000 appropriation. Commissioner McClendon seconded the motion. Chairman Culver stated he did not mean to be short but according to the rules, when there is a motion on the floor, he has to address it. Mr. Dempsey asked if this was a onetime appropriation in this fiscal year? The chairman stated yes. Chairman Culver called for the question; and it carried unanimously.

Staff Reports:

Chief Administrative Officer

Mr. Dempsey reported as mentioned earlier, the major moves are about to begin back to the Admin building. He stated this week 5th and 6th floors will move, but most importantly, August 18th and 19th, Probate will be moving in. He stated the plan is to have offices opened at both places, and when the offices are set up in the Admin building, the offices across the street will be shut down. He stated the middle of the month is a slower time for Probate, and they are hoping for minimal interruption. Mr. Dempsey reported there was a budget review meeting on Thursday, August 14th, at 8:30 A.M.

County Engineer

Mr. Kirkland reported they had replaced 6 out of 8 pipes from FEMA and they had opened up 6 roads. He pointed out they had not all been paved. Mr. Kirkland reported they have Webb Road paved, and working on Kinsey, and Billy Snell Road. He stated they were the overtime projects they have been doing. He stated he wanted to make the commission aware they are using some of the overtime.

County Attorney – there was no report

Adjourn

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

