

MINUTES OF THE HOUSTON COUNTY COMMISSION
SEPTEMBER 22, 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

ABSENT: None

Chairman Mark Culver called the 10:00 A.M. meeting to order, established a quorum was present, and welcomed everyone. Commissioner Jackie Battles gave the invocation, and led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Commissioner Siquefield 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 reminded everyone that Porktoberque would be September 26th and 27th, at the Houston County Farm Center, and it would be a fun family event. He pointed out the City Commission and County Commission would be competing in a Wing Eating Contest at 7:00 P.M. on September 26th, and it would be a lot of fun. The chairman urged everyone to go out and enjoy all of the events scheduled.

Chairman Culver reported on October 4th, at 10:00 A.M., there would be a Fall Festival at the Chattahoochee State Park with vendors, food, gospel singing, fishing, and other activities. He stated it would be a fun day, and urged anyone who might be interested to attend.

The chairman reported there are 5 Mondays in September and the next meeting would be on Tuesday, October 14th, due to the observance of Columbus Day on Monday, October 13th.

Awards and Presentations

1. Recognition of Mrs. Brenda Hollis, State of Alabama Department of Examiners of Public Accounts

Chairman Culver reported the commission has had the opportunity over the last few meetings to recognize several county employees. He asked Mrs. Brenda Hollis, Regional Auditor, Alabama Department of Examiners of Public Accounts, and Bill Dempsey to come forward. He stated even though she works for the state, the commission felt like she was one of the county's employees. The chairman reported Mrs. Hollis is retiring and she has worked so closely with the commission over the years, they wanted her to be a part of the meeting. Chairman Culver reported that she and her staff basically do the county's audits each year, and make sure that as county government, the commission spends the funds that the taxpayers have sent them in a proper manner. He asked Mrs. Hollis' staff to stand. Chairman Culver reported they review the county's books annually, and make sure the things that go on in the Accounting Department and the expenditures of the various departments are done

properly and according to the law. He reported Mrs. Hollis' office has been located in the back of the commission chambers behind the glass walls for years, and she is part of the county's team. The chairman stated it has been invaluable having her in the building, and working with the county. He pointed out so many times people perceive auditors as always telling them how they should not do things; but that has not been the case with her. The chairman reported the county was really going to miss her, and wondered if he could talk her into staying. He presented her with a Certificate of Appreciation on behalf of the commission, and he thanked her for her 30 years of service.

Mr. Dempsey reported the role of a State Examiner is a thankless job. He stated there are deadlines that have to be met all the time, and if the examiner finds something wrong and they take it to the person; no one wants to hear it. Mr. Dempsey reported Mrs. Hollis has done an excellent job helping him since he came on board. He stated part of her job that most people do not see is that she is a tremendous resource for the county. Mr. Dempsey pointed out she and her staff do so much more than simply doing the audits. He stated throughout the year, they answer questions that come up, and if she does not know the answer, she will find out. Mr. Dempsey stated the county was really going to miss Mrs. Hollis and stated he appreciated all she has done.

Mrs. Hollis thanked the commission for the certificate, and she stated she appreciated the office space, as well as the cooperation the county has shown them because they are state employees. She stated she was excited about retiring. Mrs. Hollis received a round of applause.

2. Proclamation – “Family Day – A Day to Eat Dinner with your Family” – Mrs. Beth Ford, Program Manager, The Prevention Project

Chairman Culver asked Mrs. Beth Ford, Program Manager, The Prevention Project, to come forward. Due to her absence, Mrs. Susan Trawick, Executive Director, Substance Abuse Partnership, and her guest came forward. Commissioner Battles made a motion to approve the Proclamation declaring September 22nd as “Family Day – A Day to Eat Dinner with your Family.” Commissioner McClendon seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously. The chairman then read the Proclamation, and presented it to Mrs. Trawick, and thanked her for her yearlong efforts to make the public aware of the issues of teen use of drugs and alcohol. He reported her organization does such a great job and brings it to the commission regularly including “Red Ribbon Week.”

Mrs. Trawick thanked the commission for the Proclamation, and she reported it contained a lot of daunting statistics. She stated everyone also heard the cost associated with teen drug use and abuse. Mrs. Trawick reported she had a very simple solution that would not cost the taxpayers anything; having dinner with your children. She pointed out we are a nation of statistics, believe in tradition, and steeped in those that people in the south hold dear. Mrs. Trawick reported everyone needed to hold dear their children because they are the greatest resource, and they are irreplaceable. She stated to sit down at the dinner table 4 times a week and have a meal together with your family, and listen to what the children have to say is the greatest thing a parent can do. Mrs. Trawick introduced Ms. Aubrey Gott, a Senior at Northview, and a member of the Partnership's Youth Council, who gave her thoughts

on the value of having a meal with your family. She stated having family dinners has made her become a better young adult because she can relate to them. Ms. Gott reported she has learned to get different opinions on certain situations, and not just rely on herself or her friends to get through them. She stated she has not only learned to get opinions, but she has learned to give opinions while discussing current events, gained social skills, a sense of accountability, and unity. She challenged everyone to go home, put down their phones and enjoy dinner with their family. She thanked the commission for allowing her to come and speak.

3. Proclamation – “National Disability Awareness Month” – Mr. Steve Turkoski, Project Manager, Dothan Area Chamber of Commerce

Chairman Culver reported Mr. Steve Turkoski, Project Manager, Dothan Area Chamber of Commerce, would be accepting the Proclamation, and he asked him to come forward. Commissioner Sinquefield made a motion to approve the Proclamation declaring October as “National Disability Awareness Month.” Commissioner McClendon seconded the motion; and it carried unanimously. The chairman then read the Proclamation and presented it to Mr. Turkoski, and he thanked him for annually bringing it to the commission’s attention. Chairman Culver stated he hoped the Proclamation helped spread the word that we need to be more cognizant of making ourselves available to people with disabilities and making it easier for them to be part of the workforce.

Mr. Turkoski reported not only is he the Chamber’s Project Manager, but he is also Chairman of the Dothan Area Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities. He pointed out they have quarterly meetings and they have an Awards Ceremony for both people with disabilities to award their performance and their employers and service providers in the month of October. He reported 16.4% of people with disabilities have been identified in the county, and the number goes up tremendously by the time the population gets to 65. He stated it is a significant number of people and the unemployment rate for people with disabilities is almost twice that of the national average. Mr. Turkoski reported there are many organizations in the community to help these people to overcome their disability, but unfortunately they could not make it to the meeting because they are working with them. He thanked the commission for the awareness. Chairman Culver thanked Mr. Turkoski.

4. Proclamation – “Hunger Awareness Month” – Mr. David Hanks, Executive Director, and Mrs. Julie Gonzalez, Development Director, Wiregrass Area United Way Food Bank.

Chairman Culver asked Mr. David Hanks, and Mrs. Julie Gonzalez, Development Director, Wiregrass Area United Way Food Bank, to come forward. Commissioner Battles made a motion to approve the Proclamation declaring September as “Hunger Awareness Month.” Commissioner McClendon seconded the motion; and it carried unanimously. Chairman Culver then read the Proclamation and presented it to Mr. Hanks, and stated the commission appreciated him bringing it to them because their organization serves such a great purpose. He stated people who have not been out to the Food Bank and seen the amount of food that flows through to the agencies that are served should make a trip out there. He

reported the commission is proud to create awareness through the annual Elected vs. Media softball game each spring.

Mr. Hanks thanked the commission for helping their organization to bring awareness about hunger to the community. He reported it is something they fight every day. Mr. Hanks stated he is asked how the food bank is doing on a daily basis? He reported it is always the same because with the economy, they cannot get enough food to satisfy all the needs they have due to so many people struggling. Mr. Hanks reported it is a challenge and they are doing the best they can. He stated the awareness for the food bank helps so much because there are so many aspects of life that food insecurity affects. Mr. Hanks thanked the commission for their support.

Regular Agenda

1. Appointment to the Houston County Port Authority – Mayor Lanny Lancaster

Commissioner Battles made a motion to appoint Mayor Lanny Lancaster to the Houston County Port Authority. Commissioner McClendon seconded the motion. Chairman Culver called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously.

2. Request to approve Long Term Detention Subsidy Contract with Department of Youth Services.

Commissioner Battles made a motion to approve the Long Term Detention Subsidy Contract with the Department of Youth Services. Commissioner Siquefield seconded the motion. Chairman Culver reported the cost of handling juvenile incarceration was brought out in the Proclamation for the Substance Abuse Partnership. He stated fortunately, the county's costs have come down but they are still spending almost \$800,000 a year on juvenile detention and incarceration. He thanked Mrs. Trawick for her organization's efforts to keep people out of the cycle. He stated this is the contract with the state to send money to the determined location, the Diversion Center. Chairman Culver called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously.

3. Request from Wiregrass Museum of Art for permission to use Houston County property located on the south façade of 179 N. Foster Street for a public art project – Ms. Dana Lemmer, Curator, Wiregrass Museum of Art.

Commissioner Siquefield made a motion to approve the Wiregrass Museum of Art's request to use Houston County property located on the south façade of 179 N. Foster Street for a public art project. Commissioner Harvey seconded the motion. Chairman Culver reported this was discussed on Thursday, and it is a 3 month project that will be at that location and will liven up the street with color. The chairman called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously.

4. Request to approve purchase of five garbage trucks (\$1,379,478.40), 13,098 95-gallon trash containers (\$715,723.50), and five antenna cable & loom (\$64,250.00) for the automated garbage collection program to be implemented Fall, 2014.

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5. Request to approve Lease-to-Purchase Garbage Trucks and Garbage Containers.

Commissioner Harvey made a motion to approve the Lease to Purchase Agreement for Garbage Trucks and Garbage Containers as recommended with the trucks being leased through Hancock and the garbage containers and cable being leased through Bancorp. Commissioner Sinuefield seconded the motion. He stated the only discussion on Thursday was the potential differential on the local but the rate being the difference. (Please see attached in Minute Book)

Staff Reports:

Chief Administrative Officer – there was no report

County Engineer –

Mr. Kirkland reported they would start the last ATRIP paving project at the end of this week or the first of next week. He stated it is Glen Lawrence Road, South Park, and Saunders Road.

County Attorney – there was no report

Adjourn

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