

MINUTES OF THE HOUSTON COUNTY COMMISSION  
OCTOBER 27, 2014

PRESENT: Chairman Mark S. Culver, Commissioner Curtis Harvey, Commissioner Doug Sinquefield, 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 S. Culver called the 10:00 A.M. meeting to order, declared a quorum present and welcomed everyone. Chairman Culver reported it is always good to see such a good crowd. Captain Thomas Broome, The Salvation Army, gave the invocation. Commissioner McClendon 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 Comments from Chairman and Commissioners

Chairman Culver reported he had a couple of announcements. He reminded everyone on Friday, October 31<sup>st</sup>, at 4:00 P.M., the National Peanut Festival Fairgrounds open on Highway #231 South. He stated there is a lot for everyone to enjoy, and he encouraged people to attend. The chairman reported the Ribbon Cutting will be at 5:00 P.M. that day. He stated there is a lot of hard work put into the event and the volunteers put in hundreds of hours to make it successful.

Chairman Culver reported Tuesday, November 4<sup>th</sup>, is Election Day in the U.S., and he encouraged everyone to do their part by going to vote. He pointed out the polls will be open in Houston County and across the state from 7:00 A.M. until 7:00 P.M. The chairman reported on Thursday, he talked about there not being a lot of contested races locally, but a lot of important races up and down the ballot. He stated everyone should go vote because a lot of blood, sweat, tears, and lives have been given for us to have the right to vote.

The chairman reported the Commission's normal meeting time would be an Admin meeting on November 6<sup>th</sup>, but state law does not allow them to do that the week after an election when the commissioners are all on the ballot. He pointed out the next commission meeting would be on Wednesday, November 12<sup>th</sup>, at 10:00 A.M. Chairman Culver reported at 9:00 A.M., the commission would be sworn in for another term. He invited everyone who would like to come and witness the swearing in.

He reported the county offices would be closed on November 11<sup>th</sup> for Veterans Day. He encouraged everyone to take part in the Veterans Day activities at 11:00 A.M. at the VFW.

Chairman Culver reported there were 5 Proclamations on the agenda, and before he started with them, he asked Commissioner McClendon to step down to the podium. He reported this is Commissioner's McClendon's last meeting. The chairman reported she has served the commission well. He pointed out the commission is like family and when they get together they go through a lot of blood, sweat and tears. Chairman Culver reported when someone leaves, it gets quite emotional. He stated the commission wanted to take a minute to thank Commissioner McClendon for her service. The chairman pointed out it takes someone making a big decision to get in the public, put their life on hold, and have your life on a plate to be beared to the public to know that everything you do is scrutinized. He presented Commissioner McClendon with a plaque thanking her for her service on the commission from July 18, 2012 through November 11, 2014. He stated the plaque is given on behalf of all of the commission, all the department heads, and every county employee and citizen, particularly those in District IV. Commissioner McClendon received a standing ovation. Commissioner McClendon stated being a county commissioner was a great experience and it whetted her appetite to want to do more and be more involved. She thanked everyone for letting her be a county commissioner, and she stated she has loved it, and met some people who she will know and love for the rest of her life. Mrs. McClendon reported Houston County is a great county, Dothan is a great city, and are on the cusp of greatness and they need to keep moving forward.

#### Awards and Presentations

1. Proclamation – “Pro Bono Week” – Mr. Will Lee, President, Houston County Bar Association, and Mr. Cliff Mendheim, Bar Commissioner for the 20<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit, and Treasurer, Houston County Bar Association

Chairman Culver asked Mr. Mendheim, Bar Commissioner for the 20<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit, and Treasurer, Houston County Bar Association, to come forward. Commissioner Battles made a motion to approve the Proclamation declaring the Month of October as “Pro Bono Month” in Houston County. Commissioner McClendon seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously. Chairman Culver then read the Proclamation and presented it to Mr. Mendheim, and thanked him for his efforts in bringing it to the Commission's attention. Chairman Culver stated he was sorry that Mr. Lee, the President of the Bar Association was unable to attend, and glad that Mr. Mendheim could come and represent the legal community. Mr. Mendheim stated on behalf of the entire 20<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit and the Houston County Bar, he thanked the chairman and the commission for the Proclamation. He reported the Alabama State Bar a number of years back recognized and wanted to stress the need of legal services to those who are in need most. He pointed out as a result, “Pro Bono Month” was established and in Houston County they are trying to do their part to help those when they need it the most. He thanked the commission again and stated they appreciate the Proclamation.

2. Proclamation – “Farm City Week” – Dr. Adair Gilbert, Chairperson, Farm City Week.

Chairman Culver asked Dr. Adair Gilbert, Chairperson, Farm City Week Committee, Commissioner Sinquefield, Ms. Linda McGhee, the county's representative on the committee, Mrs. Gloria Jeffcoat, and Mr. Willie Durr, who also serve on the committee to come forward. Commissioner Battles made a

motion to approve the Proclamation declaring November 21<sup>st</sup> through 27<sup>th</sup>, 2014 as "Farm City Week." Commissioner Sinquefield seconded the motion; and it carried unanimously. The Chairman then read the Proclamation and presented it to Dr. Gilbert. The chairman thanked those present who serve on the committee each year and for making it such a big activity in the community. He stated this year the city is hosting the banquet and it will be at the Dothan Civic Center. Dr. Gilbert thanked Chairman Culver and the commission. She stated this is the 58<sup>th</sup> Farm-City celebration, and it is in conjunction with Thanksgiving and it is ongoing. Dr. Gilbert reported a lot of people do not understand that the farmers not only produce the goods but they produce good, edible, safe goods. She pointed out a lot of young people today do not understand the food is coming from those who are good stewards of the land and work so hard. She reported farmers are not just driving the tractors, they are using GPS and using all kinds of scientific new instruments. Dr. Gilbert stated there is a need for young people to think about going into farming because it is not just the hard work but the matter of intelligence going into it also. She stated she loved the county's logo because this year the Farm City Week's theme is "365 Sunrises: 7 Billion Mouths to Feed." She passed out complimentary Alabama grown peanuts and pecans grown by Good Hope Farms in Columbia, Alabama. Dr. Gilbert thanked the commission for their support. Chairman Culver reported the Farm City Banquet is November 20<sup>th</sup>, at 6:00 P.M.

### 3. Proclamation – "The Salvation Army" – Captain Thomas Broome

Chairman Culver asked Captain Thomas Broome, and Mrs. Linda Bates of the Salvation Army to come forward. Commissioner Sinquefield made a motion to approve the Proclamation recognizing The Salvation Army. Commissioner McClendon seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously. Chairman Culver mentioned on Thursday that every year the Salvation Army does a great job raising funds with their red kettles. He pointed out each year the city and county ring the bell at one of the Wal Marts and try to see who can raise the most money for the kettles. The chairman pointed out the city is supposed to use their 7 commissioners and then the county uses their 5 commissioners and the Probate Judge and Revenue Commissioner. He stated they ring for an hour each and who collects the most money at the end of the day wins. The chairman reported the city cheats a lot because they have various department heads and others to ring for them. Chairman Culver stated the county won last year and they are going to defend their title again this year. He reported the Bell Ringing will be on December 10<sup>th</sup>, from 10:00 A.M. until 5:00 P.M., at the Northside Wal Mart. The chairman urged everyone to save their Christmas shopping until then, and look for the door with the county commissioners and Revenue Commissioner and Probate Judge. The chairman then read the Proclamation and presented it to Captain Broome. Chairman Culver called on Captain Broome who thanked the chairman and commission for the Proclamation. He reported it is that time of the year when they are the most visible during the Christmas season. He asked everyone to think about the families each time they hear the bells ringing this season. Captain Broome reported this year alone, they will have 1,300 children's names on the Angel Tree and over 1,500 families they will have to supply meals for this Christmas. He asked that people think about the families who will be touched with the donations from the bell ringing. The Captain pointed out the money does not just help at Christmas, it also helps throughout the year to assist people with utilities, food, medication at times, or whatever the case may be. He reported his organization could not touch the lives they do if it was not for the county

and city, and all they do. Chairman Culver reported they kid a lot about the competition, but the real thing is that it does help raise money for those that need it, and they appreciate everyone who is involved.

4. Proclamation – “Wiregrass BEST Robotics Day” – Mrs. Mary Hudson, Sponsor, Robotic Team, Wicksburg High School, and Brian Probert, CEO, Wicksburg BEST Robotics Team

Chairman Culver asked Mrs. Mary Hudson, Sponsor, Robotics Team, Wicksburg High School, and Brian Probert, CEO, Wicksburg BEST Robotics Team, to come forward along with the whole group of students. Commissioner McClendon made a motion to declare November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2014, as “Wiregrass BEST Robotics Day.” Commissioner Sinquefield seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously. Chairman Culver reported this is always a great group of young people. He then read the Proclamation and presented it to Mrs. Hudson. He thanked her for her leadership and skills in making the program available to the students. He congratulated all of the students for taking the initiative to be part of the program. Mrs. Hudson thanked the chairman and commission for the opportunity to come to the meeting. She stated she was not going to be the speaker, and she turned it over to Brian Probert, CEO, of the company that they have to develop as part of their strategy for winning, and she stated they wanted a repeat of last year. Mr. Probert reported BEST stands for Boosting Engineering Science and Technology, and he stated it really does that because they start off with a 6 week competition and at the beginning of the 6 weeks they give each team a challenge to build a robot and a company around the challenge. He stated the robot they build has to be marketed, the team has to be marketed to the community and to the school, and it teaches them a lot of real world experience. He pointed out they handle finances and write reports and other things. Mr. Probert turned the meeting over to Bradley Probert, Engineering Vice President, who stated each year they are given the same basic concepts, a box of parts and a game theme that they have to use to design their robot around. He pointed out this year’s game theme is Blade Runner, a wind turbine field. He reported they have to design a robot to transport wind turbine parts over to the assembly area and in the assembly area, the robot has to take those parts and put them all together to create the wind turbines. Mr. Probert stated all of it has to be done within a 3 minute time frame for each match. He pointed out at the end of the match rounds, they will come up with a final winner and tally up all the scores. Ms. Hope Watkins, Vice-President of the Marketing team, reported they have to market the robot and it has to be treated like a real business. She pointed out they make a marketing presentation, business cards, and they go out into the public. Ms. Watkins reported they had been on 3 radio stations and they have to make the public want to buy their robot. Mrs. Hudson invited everyone to the competition on Saturday, November 8<sup>th</sup>, at 9:00 A.M., at the Ozark Civic Center. She stated it is like a football game times 10. Mrs. Hudson stated they would like for everyone who attends to wear black. Mrs. Hudson thanked the commission for having them. She introduced her staff, Mrs. Thomley, photographer extraordinaire, and who also does a lot of other things for them, and Mr. Linder, who drove them to the meeting. Chairman Culver thanked them and wished them good luck in their competition.

5. Proclamation – “Red Ribbon Week” – Mrs. Beth Ford, Program Manager, The Prevention Project, and Ms. Cheyenne Trujillo, President of the Youth Council

Chairman Culver asked Mrs. Beth Ford, Program Manager, The Prevention Project, and Ms. Cheyenne Trujillo, President of the Youth Council, to come forward. Commissioner McClendon made a motion to approve the Proclamation declaring October 23<sup>rd</sup> through 31<sup>st</sup> as "Red Ribbon Week." Commissioner Battles seconded the motion; and it carried unanimously. Chairman Culver then read the Proclamation and presented it to Mrs. Ford. He thanked Mrs. Ford for sponsoring the Youth Council and the great job they do on behalf of the city and county. Mrs. Ford thanked the commission for helping spread the word about Red Ribbon. She stated it is a week set aside to spread the word about drug prevention in our community, but at the Prevention Project it is a month long activity. Mrs. Ford reported they have been going for 2 weeks and they will continue on this week and into next week seeing students in the community. She pointed out so far, they have seen approximately 4,000 kids between the three of them. Mrs. Ford stated the best thing they can do is spread the word about prevention because it is not just an adult thing; it is an adolescent thing. She reported when kids hear the message from their peers they take it to heart more than they ever would hearing it from them. Mrs. Ford stated while parents are the biggest anti-drug prevention method, their peers are just as important. She reported they were proud to have Ms. Trujillo, and at that time she called on her for comments. Ms. Trujillo thanked the chairman and commission for allowing her to speak. She stated she is a senior at Dothan High School, and President of the Youth Council. In 2009, 23.5 million kids under the age of 12 or older had a drug or alcohol abuse problem, and only 2.6 million kids received any treatment for their problems. She reported education is the first step in solving any problem, and that is why drug prevention programs are so important. Ms. Trujillo stated drug prevention programs could prevent any of the children aged 12 and older or under from ever becoming addicted to drugs. She reported organizations like the Youth Council and The Prevention Project had spoken on drug topics, and they have gone to many schools to give in-school teaching to the kids and students to prevent anyone from becoming addicted to drugs and hurting their future and their lives. She thanked the commission for their time.

#### Regular Agenda

1. Request to adopt Resolution encouraging a No vote on Amendment 2 on the November 4<sup>th</sup> ballot.

Commissioner Sinquefield made a motion to adopt the Resolution encouraging a No vote on Amendment 2 on the November 4<sup>th</sup> ballot. Commissioner Battles seconded the motion. Chairman Culver reported they had a lengthy discussion on Thursday, and they would have any further discussion they might want. He stated he was going to read the Resolution as presented because everyone did not get a copy of it. The chairman reported the Resolution would be sent to the Association of County Commissions of Alabama so that they can have it on file. He pointed out several other counties around the state have passed the same Resolution. The chairman reported he and the mayor have spoken to several groups around and they would be speaking that night about it at some other places. He stated as was pointed out Thursday, it is a deviation of what has historically been done on Trust Fund withdrawal of funds. The chairman reported if they were going to pay the money back it would be one thing and if they were holding cities and counties as well as the state harmless it would be another thing. He stated this is basically taking money out to spend on the National Guard Armories, and he stated they need some help. He reported nobody is saying that they don't. He stated as was discussed

on Thursday, when you look at some other issues we have in the state, repairing our armories might not quite reach the level of us raiding the Trust Fund to meet the needs of what the state has. The chairman reported if this was something the state needed to do there is \$2.8 billion in the Trust Fund, why not take the \$50 million out and then interest would not have to be paid in order to borrow the money. He stated they think it is a bad idea and they encourage the citizens to vote no because from the counties and cities perspective is not something you need to vote yes on. The chairman called for the question on the motion; and the vote was: YEAS: Commissioners Harvey, Sinquefield, and Battles  
NAYS: Commissioner McClendon The motion passed. (Please see in Resolution Book)

2. Request to adopt Resolution authorizing the review and implementation of the refinancing of the 2008-A General Obligation Warrants.

Commissioner Battles made a motion to adopt the Resolution authorizing the review and implementation of the refinancing of the 2008-A General Obligation Warrants. Commissioner McClendon seconded the motion. The chairman reported this is an opportunity to save some money for the county. He pointed out this will get the ball rolling, and they would not actually exercise this until after the first of the year. He stated it would save the county approximately \$150,000. The chairman called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously. (Please see in Resolution Book)

3. Request to approve a one year Lease Agreement for farm land located at the Houston County Industrial Park.

Commissioner Sinquefield made a motion to approve a one year Lease Agreement for farm land at the Houston County Industrial Park. Commissioner McClendon seconded the motion. Chairman Culver reported this is an annual Lease Agreement that has been ongoing for several years. He called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously.

4. Request to approve budget revisions for EMA Grants, and authorize the proper budget amendments.

Commissioner Sinquefield made a motion to approve budget revisions for EMA Grants, and to authorize the proper budget amendments. Commissioner Battles seconded the motion. Chairman Culver called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously. (Please see attached Budget Amendments)

5. Request from the Town of Gordon to provide site preparation and building pad for the new Senior Citizens Building.

Commissioner McClendon made a motion to approve the Town of Gordon's request to provide site preparation and building pad for the new Senior Citizens Building. Commissioner Sinquefield seconded the motion. Chairman Culver reported a cost estimate was given on Thursday. He stated they are still negotiating on this but the commitment would be per the county's policy. He stated on the site work, they would take care of the materials and if the project does not happen, then the county will not do anything. Chairman Culver called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously.

#### Staff Reports:

Chief Administrative Officer – there was no report

#### County Engineer

Mr. Kirkland reported that they would complete the paving of Webb Road today, and would begin G-treatment on South Park on October 28th. He reported the 5 garbage trucks are in and they began their 2 week training at the Farm Center earlier in the day. Mr. Kirkland stated they would begin putting out the cans on November 4th, and it will be a 2 week process. Chairman Culver stated between November 4th and 20th, citizens should start to see cans being delivered to their house. Mr. Kirkland stated they are to begin using their can as soon as they receive it.

County Attorney – there was no report

Commissioner McClendon congratulated Tony Weber on receiving the State's Outstanding Community Corrections Director of the Year. He received a round of applause. Chairman Culver reported the commission is very fortunate to have the leadership in the county that they do. He stated the commission appreciates them for working with Houston County and representing our citizens.

#### Adjourn

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