

MINUTES OF THE HOUSTON COUNTY COMMISSION

APRIL 13, 2015

PRESENT: Chairman Mark S. Culver, Commissioner Curtis Harvey, Commissioner Doug Siquefield, Commissioner Jackie Battles, Commissioner Brandon Shoupe, 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. Rev. Caleb Free, Pastor, Abiding Love Lutheran Church, gave the invocation. Commissioner Jackie Battles led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Commissioner Harvey made a motion to approve the minutes of the last meeting. Commissioner Siquefield seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

Announcements and Public Comments from Chairman and Commissioners

Chairman Culver reported the next commission meeting would be on Tuesday, April 28th, due to the county observing Confederate Memorial Day, a state and county holiday, on Monday, April 27th.

He reported the Tri-State Bar-B-Que Festival was held at the Farm Center over the past weekend, and he congratulated everyone involved with the Festival. He stated there were a lot of good people and really good food that he enjoyed. The chairman stated he thought the weather might have kept the crowd away a little bit but those that did attend seemed to have had a good time. He reported it was a great event, and he extended kudos to Mrs. Kerry Farrell and her staff for putting it on.

The chairman reminded everyone on May 16th, at 10:30 A.M., the 7th Annual Media vs Electeds Softball Game would be held at Colby-Bottoms Field. He reported this is a food/fundraiser for the Wiregrass United Way Food Bank, and is always a lot of fun. The chairman encouraged everyone to attend. He also reported after the game, everyone would be invited to Red Elephant for lunch and a certain percentage of the cost of their meal will be donated to the Food Bank.

Chairman Culver reported that ToadLick would be held at the National Peanut Festival April 23rd-25th. He stated there would be a lot of great entertainment, and a lot of people would be visiting our community. He encouraged everyone to welcome them and be polite.

He reported the Dothan Area Chamber's Annual Prayer Breakfast would be April 14th, at 7:30 A.M., at the Dothan Civic Center.

Chairman Culver reported he had spoken with the Alabama Department of Transportation earlier in the day regarding the traffic signal at the intersection of Brannon Stand Road and Fortner Street. He pointed out it has been in the flashing mode since April 8th in an effort to get people accustomed to it. The chairman stated on April 15th, it would then become fully functional. He reported it would be a timed traffic signal and the longest time would obviously be on Brannon Stand because it has most of the traffic. The chairman reported the only issue they see will be on Brannon Stand if someone is turning left there maybe some backup, and he asked for everyone's patience because it is a one lane road. Chairman Culver reported they are excited about the signal and he urged everyone to be aware of the changes when traveling through the intersection. He reported the long range plan for the intersection is to have a turn lane installed by the Fall of 2016, and he felt everyone would be looking forward to it when the intersection is completed.

Commissioner Battles reported that Mayor Elaine Williams and the Town of Madrid are having a spring clean-up day in their town on April 15th. He pointed out they were paying the Houston County Sanitation Department to pick up the community's trash and debris on that day only. He encouraged the residents to separate their limbs and debris from household items. Commissioner Battles reported this is a great time for the residents of Madrid to do their spring cleaning.

Chairman Culver thanked Commissioner Siquefield for representing the Commission on April 12th at the Dothan-Houston County Library System, as they received a national award, The Library-Aware

Community Award, plus a \$10,000 cash prize. Chairman Culver stated it was also a retirement celebration for Ms. Bettye Forbus, longtime system director, for her many years of service to the community. He extended well wishes to Ms. Forbus.

Commissioner Shoupe reported he and City Commissioners Hamp Baxley and Beth Kenward would be hosting a Town Hall meeting on May 19th, at 6:30 P.M., at the Westgate Library. He stated they would be there to answer any questions or concerns any of the citizens might have.

Chairman Culver stated it was Ms. Sheri Thompson's birthday, and he wished her a Happy Birthday.

Awards and Presentations

1. Proclamation – "Houston County Gives Day" – Mrs. Laura Stakelum, Volunteer

Chairman Culver asked Mrs. Laura Stakelum, Volunteer, Houston Gives Day, to come forward and bring her guests. Commissioner Battles made a motion to approve the Proclamation declaring April 17th as "Houston County Gives Day." Commissioner Shoupe seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously. Chairman Culver then read the Proclamation and presented it to Mrs. Stakelum. Chairman Culver reported this event is tied to Spirit of Service Day and it gives members in the community a chance to recognize the good volunteerism in the agencies and organizations and also to show their support for the various agencies on this one day. He thanked Eagle Eye Outfitters for their support and being part of this event. Mrs. Stakelum reported 20 non-profits were participating in Houston County Gives Day this year and they look forward to the event on April 17th, at Eagle Eye Outfitters. She pointed out everyone will be showing and explaining what each of the non-profit agencies do, and they would have food, music, and entertainment. Mrs. Stakelum reported the first 100 people to attend would receive a goody bag. She reported Houston County Gives Day grew out of a statewide effort called Alabama Gives Day about 3 years ago, and when the statewide effort did not continue, they decided to keep it going in Houston County because of all the people who are so giving and supportive. Mrs. Stakelum stated it is a real pleasure to work with the non-profits and to network with them and provide services to the community. She encouraged everyone to come out on April 17th from 3:00 P.M. – 7:00 P.M., at Eagle Eye Outfitters. She presented each commissioner with t-shirts. She thanked the commission for the Proclamation. Chairman Culver thanked each of them not just for their participation in this event, but what they do for the community in their individual agencies. He pointed out without this day these agencies often would go unnoticed. The chairman reported as previously stated, our community is made up of so many fine giving people.

2. Proclamation – "Community Service Day" – Ms. Amy Shutz and Mr. Kevin Murphy, Spirit of Service Co-Chairs

Chairman Culver reported Ms. Amy Shutz and Mr. Kevin Murphy are this year's Spirit of Service Co-Chairs. Commissioner Battles made a motion to approve the Proclamation declaring April 18th, as "Community Service Day." Commissioner Sinquefield seconded the motion and it carried unanimously. Chairman Culver reported as everyone knows, Houston County Spirit of Service Day is very near and dear to the county. He stated it was started 26 years ago by Robert Crowder, former Chairman of the Commission. He stated he got the idea from the State of Maryland and brought it back and there have been many projects done around the community. The chairman reported many hours of volunteerism have gone into the community to help those less fortunate, and to help beautify our community. He stated that is what Spirit of Service Day is all about in that it gives everyone an opportunity to take a day to pause to help those who need help or in some cases to get a company's employees together to go out and cleanup around the business. He thanked Ms. Shutz and Mr. Murphy for doing an excellent job chairing this year's Spirit of Service Day. Chairman Culver then read the Proclamation and presented it to Ms. Shutz. Chairman Culver asked if anyone was present from the Spirit of Service Core Committee? Chairman Culver reported Spirit of Service Day used to be done by a committee and in 1996, they turned it over to the Chamber of Commerce, and Ms. Linda Kelley does an outstanding job in handling this event and working with the Core Committee. He stated they appreciate everything Ms. Kelley does in making the event successful. The chairman reported the main project this year is great and he hoped the weather would hold off. He called on Ms. Shutz for comments. Ms. Shutz reported the true spirit of a community is experienced when people come together; they help their friends, neighbors, and even

strangers. She stated the first Spirit of Service Day was held September 22, 1990, and for 26 years volunteers have come together to help individuals, schools, and non-profits in Houston County with various projects. She reported they have truly worked to show the community that having a heart for service, that spirit of service can make a lasting difference. She pointed out over the years volunteers have worked on beautification projects, construction improvements, and anywhere you look around the community you will see projects that have been done. Ms. Shutz thanked the volunteers who have donated thousands and thousands of hours and their talent over the years to make it better. She reported this year they will have projects in Webb, Columbia at the Houston County High School, and Ashford at Ashford Elementary as well as projects in Dothan. She stated many of the non-profits will also have projects, and that is why it is such a great thing to be able to combine it with Houston County Gives Day. She thanked the commission on behalf of the Spirit of Service Task Force for recognizing the dedication and service of thousands of volunteers who have spent countless hours working to make our community a better place to live and work. Chairman Culver thanked Ms. Shutz and Mr. Murphy for leading the effort and looked forward to the rain holding off and getting a lot of projects done.

3. Proclamation – “Crime Victims’ Rights Week” – Mrs. Shelly Linderman, Director, and Mr. Gary Maxwell, President of the Wiregrass Angel House Board

Chairman Culver asked Mrs. Shelly Linderman, Director, and Mr. Gary Maxwell, President of the Wiregrass Angel House Board, to come forward. Commissioner Siquefield made a motion to approve the Proclamation declaring April 19th-25th “Crime Victims’ Rights Week.” Commissioner Shoupe seconded the motion and it carried unanimously. Chairman Culver then read the Proclamation, and presented it to Mrs. Linderman. He thanked them for letting the commission remind the citizens of the importance of Crime Victims’ Rights Week. Mr. Maxwell stated having been in law enforcement all of his life, he has seen all types of crimes and the impact it has on victims. He stated he was just a figurehead and Mrs. Linderman does all of the work along with her group at Angel House. He asked everyone to recall when the man went through Geneva County on a killing spree several years ago, Mrs. Linderman and her group went over there and comforted those people, helped them with funeral arrangements, and cleaned up the crime scenes. Mr. Maxwell pointed out to this day Ethan, the little boy held in the bunker in Dale County, that Mrs. Linderman is an integral part of his day to day life. He stated they do not get the credit they deserve and this is an opportunity to help shine a little light on what these fine people do. Chairman Culver thanked Mrs. Linderman and Mr. Maxwell. The chairman stated if the rain holds off, they hope to have a golf tournament for the Angel House on April 16th.

Regular Agenda

1. Request to approve the implementation of Spending Efficiency Program.

Commissioner Battles made a motion to approve the request to implement the Spending Efficiency Program. Commissioner Siquefield seconded the motion. Chairman Culver reported on Thursday a couple of minor changes were mentioned, and there were no substantive changes. The chairman called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously.

2. Request to approve budget amendment increasing Overtime Budget for Sheriff’s Department.

Commissioner Siquefield made a motion to approve the budget amendment increasing the Overtime Budget for the Sheriff’s Department. Commissioner Harvey seconded the motion. Mr. Dempsey reported the money coming in through the grants is actually allocated to overtime plus benefits, which are made up of retirement and social security/ FICA. He stated the bottom line is the amount is the same. Chairman Culver called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously. (Please see attached Budget Amendment in Minute Book)

3. Request from EMA to approve a pass through grant from the Alabama Department of Public Health in the amount of \$9,000.00.

Commissioner Siquefield made a motion to approve EMA’s request for a pass through grant from the Alabama Department of Public Health in the amount of \$9,000.00. Commissioner Harvey seconded the motion. Chairman Culver called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously.

4. Request to approve the pre-order of one (1) garbage truck for fiscal year 2015/16 in the amount of \$298,000.00.

Commissioner Harvey made a motion to approve the pre-order of one (1) garbage truck for fiscal year 2015/16 in the amount of \$298,000.00. Commissioner Siquefield seconded the motion. Chairman Culver called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously.

5. Request to approve the realignment of a portion of Barnes Road.

Commissioner Siquefield made a motion to approve the request for the realignment of a portion of Barnes Road. Commissioner Harvey seconded the motion. Chairman Culver asked if there were any questions, discussion, or comments? There being none, he asked if anyone would like to address the commission?

Mr. Steven Peacock, a resident of 2135 Barnes Road, stated he wanted clarification of what was going to be done. He reported the rumor got out that they were going to close it and he stated he lives on that road and he would not want it closed because at times it is their only way out due to the flooding on the other end. Mr. Kirkland then explained the project. He stated on the Granger Road end, they are going to re-route that road and do away with the real wide intersection, and bring it in more at Guy Branch Road. He stated it will just be closed while it is being built. Mr. Kirkland stated he figured it would take a month of work depending on the weather. He stated they would not close it until the land owner is ready to begin work on it.

Mr. Irell McCord, resident of Draughon Road, stated where they plan moving that road over is a swamp, and he asked if the county was going to spend a lot of money to build it up? Mr. Kirkland reported the county is not going to spend any money; the local land owner would be doing all of the work. Chairman Culver reported it would be done at no cost to the county. He stated they were curious because it so hard to get a road grader down there. Mr. McCord reported if they were going to build a new road why not put the funds to take care of what they have. Chairman Culver reported that is one of the reasons they are in agreement to moving the road is because of the issue at the intersection stays wet all the time. Mr. McCord stated on Granger Road there is a low spot, and considering it is not costing the county digging the ditch out and putting a culvert in would be cheaper than putting in another road. He pointed out they did not know that the land owner was going to be doing the project. He stated the information they received from the news media was that they were closing the road. Chairman Culver reported this was discussed on Thursday and it just did not get in the paper. The chairman reported this is all being done by the land owner and he is paying all the cost of moving the road. Commissioner Siquefield stated he appreciated the citizens from that area coming and voicing their opinions and he stated they wanted to make sure that everything is done in accordance with the Road and Bridge Department. He reported there have been numerous problems at that intersection, and this will make it a lot better for the citizens and benefit the county. Commissioner Battles asked if the land owner could build the road before the other one is closed? He stated since that is a swampy area, he may have problems building it through there. Commissioner Battles pointed out it would have to be built according to the county's specs. Mr. Kirkland reported the land owner is going to have to use some of the dirt off the existing road to build the new road, and there are banks that have to be cut down. Mr. Kirkland reported there are other avenues to go south and north, and it will only be closed for a short period of time. Chairman Culver called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously.

Chairman Culver asked Mr. Steve Carlisle, EMA Director, to give an update on the weather. Mr. Carlisle reported according to the Weather Service in Tallahassee, our area is predicted to have rain and thunderstorm activity every day this week and into next weekend.

Staff Reports:

Chief Administrative Officer

Mr. Dempsey reported as the commission approved several months ago, they will begin mailing out letters immediately to any Sanitation customer who is 60 days past due notifying the person if payment has not been made by 90 days, a second letter will be mailed and at that time the garbage can will be picked up until the payment is made.

County Engineer

Mr. Kirkland reported the Webb to Kinsey Road is closed. He pointed out they were scheduled to open this week, but that is probably not going to happen, and it will be extended another week or two depending on the weather. He reported it is an MPO project and they are replacing some cross drains. Mr. Kirkland also stated Memphis Church and Trawick Road should start the first week of May.

County Attorney - there was no report

Commissioner Battles asked Mr. Kirkland how long it would take to pave Memphis Church Road and Trawick Road? Mr. Kirkland reported there would be paving and all of the shoulder work. He stated it would be 3 weeks of work on Memphis Church Road and 2 weeks on Trawick Road. Mr. Kirkland pointed out the roads would not be closed the whole time with traffic would be down to a single lane.

Adjourn

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