

MINUTES OF THE HOUSTON COUNTY COMMISSION
AUGUST 22, 2016

PRESENT: Chairman Mark S. Culver, Commissioner Curtis Harvey, Commissioner Doug Siquefield, Commissioner Jackie Battles, Commissioner Brandon Shoupe, Pres Register, County Attorney, Barkley Kirkland, County Engineer, and W. 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. He reported the commission would be operating under a little different rules due to there not being an administrative meeting on Thursday. He stated there would be more discussion in advance of motions. Rev. David Temples, Pastor, Westwood Presbyterian Church, gave the invocation. Commissioner Brandon Shoupe led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

Announcements and Comments from Chairman and Commissioners

Chairman Culver reported the commission attended the annual ACCA Conference last week and the county was well represented by commissioners and staff. He stated that Houston County received a Safety Excellence Award. The chairman reported Mrs. Kelly Crowell, Safety Coordinator, was unable to attend due to a doctor's appointment. He called on Bill Dempsey, who reported the award received was for the 2016 Outstanding Safety Achievement Category III presented by Meadowbrook Insurance Group. He pointed out Houston County was rated the top county in the state for worker safety in the larger counties across the state. Mr. Dempsey stated the county had received worker's comp and liability insurance discounts, rebates, and a Liability Fund longevity bonus for a total of \$185,000.00. Chairman Culver reported \$185,000 will allow county employees to receive a 1% COLA that will be approved in the 2017 budget. He thanked Mrs. Crowell and stated he appreciated all of her hard work and he thanked Mr. Dempsey, the department heads, and the employees.

Chairman Culver recognized Commissioner Doug Siquefield on the completion of his service on Plan 2016. He pointed out this has been an 18 month journey for 16 second term county commissioners across the state to collectively enhance their passion, service and common vision to overcome conflict, divisiveness and limited resources in order to energize and improve the quality of life for Alabama counties and the Association of County Commissions of Alabama. Chairman Culver thanked Commissioner Siquefield for stepping into the leadership role.

The chairman reported last Friday night's Foster Fest was great with a lot of activities. He pointed out high school football also started this past Friday night.

Commissioner Brandon Shoupe reported Mr. Gary Cox, a member of the Houston County School Board, who lives in his district, lost his mother. He asked for everyone to keep the Cox family in their thoughts and prayers.

Awards and Presentations

1. Proclamation – “Suicide Prevention Week” and “World Suicide Prevention Day in Houston County”
– Rose Blakey Phillips

Chairman Culver reported Mrs. Rose Blakey Phillips had called earlier and requested this item be taken off the agenda due to her not being able to attend. The chairman stated the commission could approve the Proclamation, and it would be sent to her. Commissioner Harvey made a motion to approve the Proclamation for “Suicide Prevention Week” and “World Suicide Prevention Day in Houston County as prepared. Commissioner Shoupe seconded the motion. Chairman Culver called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously.

2. Proclamation – “Childhood Cancer Awareness Month” – Alicia Hayes, Paint the Town Gold Committee

Chairman Culver asked Mrs. Alicia Hayes and Mrs. Angie Adams to come forward and to bring their guests with them. Commissioner Battles made a motion to approve the Proclamation proclaiming September as “Childhood Cancer Awareness Month.” Chairman Culver then read the Proclamation and presented it to Mrs. Hayes. She thanked the commission, and she called on Mrs. Adams who reported such a small percentage of funding goes to help with childhood cancer and their committee is trying to raise awareness with their Paint the Town Gold banner and ribbons. Mrs. Adams stated everyone in their group has a child who has either been cured, is currently fighting their cancer, or who lost their battle.

It was reported another child who celebrated her 7th birthday, on August 21st, Libby Claire Rushing, was in Orlando taking adult treatments because all of the treatments she had been given for children have not worked.

There were several mayors from the surrounding area, and Chairman Culver asked each one to introduce himself. Mayor Mike Schmitz, City of Dothan, reported they were going to light up the Civic Center to help with awareness.

Chairman Culver reported several municipal elections were taking place on August 23rd, and Ozark’s Mayor, Billy Blackwell, who was in attendance, was not seeking re-election. The Chairman stated he appreciated his service over the years and he thanked him. Mayor Blackwell thanked Chairman Culver and the Houston County Commission, the City of Dothan, and the surrounding areas for the partnership they have developed. He pointed out as a result, there have been many new jobs created in Dale, Geneva and Houston Counties.

Commissioner Battles reported he has followed Libby Claire Rushing’s case. He pointed out she was diagnosed shortly after Morgan Hasty, who lost her battle with it. Commissioner Battles reported he had a close friend who lost his son, Zach Sizemore, over the weekend. He stated he was diagnosed at the age of 12.

Chairman Culver thanked the Paint the Town Gold Committee for bringing this to the commission's attention.

3. Presentation – “Sign and Support Law Enforcement” Banner – Sheriff Donald Valenza and Chief Steve Parrish, Dothan Police Department

Chairman Culver asked Sheriff Donald Valenza and Chief Steve Parrish to come forward. He reported his wife came up with a simple way to support law enforcement with the “Sign and Support Law Enforcement” banner. The chairman stated law enforcement personnel come any time when called and stand between a citizen and harm. The chairman reported in this part of the country, we support law enforcement and he felt this is a simple way to let them know how much they are appreciated. He pointed out the banner has been to Wiregrass Commons Mall, the Dothan Area Chamber of Commerce, the Roller Derby, Foster Fest, and the City of Dothan. The chairman reported the banner has allowed people to literally put their name in ink as supporting all law enforcement personnel and the tremendous job they do for our citizens. He stated he has manned the banner at most of the locations and he has heard many positive comments. Chairman Culver thanked the Chamber of Commerce, Wiregrass Commons Mall, NuGraphics for the banner, and the commission along with the people who have signed it. He reported the banner would be taken down to the Sheriff's Office and displayed for a week, and then it would be taken to the City of Dothan and displayed.

Sheriff Valenza thanked everyone for this project and he stated in the 37 years he has been in law enforcement he has never seen times like they are. He stated there are a lot of good people in Houston County and there are good people in the Sheriff's Department and the Dothan Police Department.

Chief Parrish also thanked the Commission for the wonderful gesture, and he stated we are blessed by men who truly support law enforcement. He stated on behalf of the Dothan Police Department, he was proud to be a partner with Houston County and others as they strive to develop and enhance those partnerships.

Regular Agenda

1. Request from the United Methodist Children's Home to acquire property on Redmond Road from the County for a Dothan Campus.

Chairman Culver asked Mark Saliba, Chairman of the State Board of the United Methodist Children's Home, and his guest, Dr. Blake Horne, President/CEO, United Methodist Children's Home, to come forward. Chairman Culver reported the property is located at the corner of Redmond Road and Flynn Road. He pointed out the state deeded this property to the county years ago, and at one time it was an old prison camp. The chairman reported the United Methodist Children's Home would like to acquire this property for a Dothan Campus. He stated he hoped the commission could begin the process and authorize him as chairman to work with them on the negotiations and then report back to the commission.

The chairman called on Mr. Saliba for comments. He thanked the commission for their consideration. He reported the United Methodist Children's Home provides important services for foster children and at-risk youth and families throughout Alabama and Northwest Florida. Mr. Saliba stated they have served thousands of children, youth and families in the Wiregrass since the 1970's, and their largest concentration is in the Dothan area where they have a group home, transitional living apartments for 10 teenage boys in Headland, a foster care program that serves 35 children per year, as well as a family preservation program that serves around 200 families per year. He pointed out they have 25 full time employees.

Dr. Horne reported their agency would like to create a single family campus in the Dothan area that could host all of the services they offer. He stated they believe the new group home facility will increase enrichment opportunities for youth and volunteer opportunities for Dothan churches. Dr. Horne reported there would be more centralized office space for their therapeutic foster care and family preservation workers, and create opportunities to serve more children, youth, and families in the Dothan area.

Chairman Culver reported the property does have some deed restrictions thanks to the work of the county attorney, but he did not see it as an obstacle. He stated he felt the property location would be a good fit and enhance that part of town. Commissioner Battles asked if the property is vacant? Chairman Culver stated yes. Commissioner Shoupe made a motion to approve the request from the United Methodist Children's Home and to authorize the chairman to negotiate and work in collaboration with the Methodist Children's Home. Commissioner Sinquefield seconded the motion. Chairman Culver called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously.

Chairman Culver thanked Mr. Saliba and Dr. Horne.

2. Request to adopt Resolution for CDBG Grant and authorize supporting documents for Folklore Brewing and Meadery Economic Development Project – Mrs. Emily VanScyoc, Economic Development Director, SE Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission.

Chairman Culver asked Mrs. Emily VanSycoc, Economic Development Director, SE Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission to come forward. Mrs. Van Sycoc reported a Public Hearing was held prior to the commission meeting regarding a CDBG Infrastructure Grant for sewer system improvements to benefit Folklore Brewing and Meadery, LLC, located in Houston County. She stated the estimated cost of the CDBG eligible portion of the project would be \$69,468.00, and Folklore Brewing and Meadery would be responsible for \$32,824 for their portion on the project. Mrs. VanSycoc reported with this project, Folklore would be retaining 9 jobs and creating 6 new jobs. She pointed out that Houston County was the applicant, but there would be no cost to the county.

Chairman Culver reported there are CDBG grants available, but there is a stipulation that it has to be low to moderate income, and there are not that many that qualify.

Commissioner Battles made a motion to adopt the Resolution for a CDBG Grant and authorize supporting documents for the economic development project for Folklore Brewing and Meadery, LLC.

Commissioner Shoupe seconded the motion; and it carried unanimously. (Please see in Resolution Book)

3. Request to adopt Resolution authorizing tax abatement for Wayne Farms, LLC – Matt Parker, President, Dothan Area Chamber of Commerce.

Chairman Culver asked Mr. Matt Parker, President, Dothan Area Chamber of Commerce, to come forward. Mr. Parker stated he was pleased to come before the commission to request the Resolution authorizing the tax abatement for Wayne Farms, LLC. He stated the project will add 22 more jobs with an additional \$21.2 million investment. Mr. Parker reported the project is for a Variable Retention Freezer System and Freezer (VRT), which is another major investment for Wayne Farms, LLC, and will compliment the already on-going \$64.5 million investment and the 624 jobs already underway. He pointed out this project will fall under the new incentive law and requires taxing jurisdictions in order to support the investment. Mr. Parker thanked the State, City, and the County, for their support to implement this significant project and time schedule to meet Wayne Farms current and future needs. He also thanked the Wayne Farms family for their investment and support to grow their operation in our community. Commissioner Sinquefield made a motion to adopt the Resolution authorizing the tax abatement for Wayne Farms, LLC. Commissioner Harvey seconded the motion. Chairman Culver reported a couple of meetings ago the commission had authorized the transfer of the property on Burdeshaw Street to the Houston County Industrial Development Authority to negotiate the sale of the property to Wayne Farms, LLC, for the sub-station. He stated today is another huge investment by their company in our community. The chairman thanked Mr. Parker and his team for his work on this project. The chairman asked if any of the commissioners have any comments. Commissioner Sinquefield referred to a commercial "Eat More Chicken." The chairman called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously. Mr. Register, County Attorney, stated he had worked on this and everything seemed to be in order. (Please see in Resolution Book)

4. Request from EMA for a Subaward Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) in the amount of \$12,000 – Steve Carlisle, EMA Director.

Chairman Culver asked Mr. Steve Carlisle, EMA Director, to come forward and explain the grant. Mr. Carlisle reported this is a sub-award performance grant in the amount of \$12,000. He pointed out they had recently received another performance grant in the amount of \$10,000. Commissioner Battles made a motion to approve the request from EMA for a sub-award Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) in the amount of \$12,000. Commissioner Shoupe seconded the motion. Chairman Culver called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously. (Please see in Minute Book)

5. Request from Wiregrass Area United Way Food Bank for the county to spray the weeds in the parking lot and along the fence line.

Commissioner Shoupe made a motion to approve the request from the Wiregrass Area United Way Food Bank for the county to spray the weeds in the parking lot and along the fence line. Commissioner Battles seconded the motion. It was pointed out this was similar to the work the county does at

Landmark Park on their parking lot. Chairman Culver called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously.

6. Request to award bid for Flexmat-Tied Concrete Block Material – Road and Bridge.

Commissioner Sinquefield made a motion to award the bid for Flexmat-Tied Concrete Block Material to Southern Pipe, the only bidder, in the amount of \$3.75 per square foot. Commissioner Battles seconded the motion. Mr. Kirkland reported this is an EWP project being paid for by NRCS, and it had to be bid out. Chairman Culver called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously. (Please see Bid Summary Sheet in Minute Book)

Staff Reports:

Chief Administrative Officer – there was no report

County Engineer –

Mr. Kirkland reported there were closed roads – D Hodge, S. Bay Springs, Blackman, and Cobb Road.

County Attorney – there was no report

Commissioner Shoupe asked Mr. Kirkland about Bay Springs Road. Mr. Kirkland reported they hope to pave it in September or October.

Chairman Culver reported they heard about a self-filling pothole mix at the ACCA Conference, and he stated he wanted to hear more about it. Mr. Kirkland reported he planned to attend the next seminar regarding it.

Chairman Culver reported Mrs. Kelly Crowell was back and had just walked into the meeting. He thanked her for all of her safety efforts in the county, and he stated he appreciated all she does.

Chairman Culver asked if anyone from the audience would like to address the commission? There was no one.

Adjourn

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