

MINUTES OF THE HOUSTON COUNTY COMMISSION  
REGULAR SESSION  
September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2019

PRESENT: Chairman Mark Culver, Commissioner Doug Siquefield, Commissioner Ricky Herring, Commissioner Brandon Shoupe, County Attorney Pres Register, Acting County Engineer Brittney Clayton, and Chief Administrative Officer Peter Covert.

Chairman Culver welcomed everyone to the September 23<sup>rd</sup> 2019, Houston County Commission Meeting and called the 10:00 a.m. meeting to order. He declared a quorum as the majority of the commissioners were in attendance.

ABSENT: Commissioner Curtis Harvey

Pastor Joel Sigler, Youth Pastor at Harvest Church, gave the invocation and Commissioner Ricky Herring led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved on a motion by Commissioner Siquefield and seconded by Commissioner Herring. The motion passed unanimously.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN AND COMMISSIONER

Chairman Culver began by reporting that there is an item that needs to be added to the agenda, which came in after last Thursday's meeting, and it requires unanimous consent to add the item. This would be item number ten and would be a request to add a temporary clerical position for two days in the Registrar's Office. There being no objections, the item was added to today's regular agenda.

Chairman Culver announced that Foster Fest will be held on Friday, October 4<sup>th</sup>, and this will be the last one of the year. He encouraged everyone to get out and enjoy the festivities. Commissioner Siquefield congratulated the Ashford Girls Volleyball Team for winning the Wiregrass Athletic Conference. Chairman Culver noted that we have a lot of successful athletic teams in our county this year which says a lot about the kids as well as the coaches that put in a lot of time and invest in our youth. Commissioner Shoupe wished the former Mayor, Mike Schmitz, good luck as he will be traveling to Mt. Everest and climbing to one of the summits.

AWARDS AND PRESENTATIONS

1. Proclamation – "Family Day" – A Day To Eat Dinner With Your Children" – Judy Guiler and Olivia Burgess, Dothan-Houston County Substance Abuse Partnership

Chairman Culver stepped to the podium and asked Judy Guiler and Olivia Burgess to come to the podium and asked for a motion to approve the Proclamation. Commissioner Shoupe made a motion to

approve the Proclamation and Commissioner Sinquefield seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously. Chairman Culver then read the proclamation and presented it to Ms. Guiler and asked for comments. Ms. Guiler began by thanking the commission and then introduced the newest employee of the Dothan-Houston County Substance Abuse Partnership, Roxie Fuentes whom is the new SADD Coordinator for the agency. Ms. Guiler also commented that if anyone in the community is looking for volunteers that the SADD Chapter is available to help as long as it is an event that does not have alcohol involved. She then introduced Olivia Burgess, who is a SADD Officer at Dothan High School, and asked her to comment on what "Family Day" means to her. Ms. Burgess stated that "Family Day" is a day to spend quality time with your family and that the best part of her day is when she sits at the dinner table and talks to her parents about their day. She reported that, according to research, most people spend at least three hours a day on social media but only spend an average of thirty-seven minutes a day with their family and that sixty-three percent of families with teens from ages twelve to seventeen, feel that they can communicate with their children openly. The key to keeping this alive is time and patience. Ms. Burgess stated that there are many activities you can do as a family such as movie night, helping your child with their homework, weekly family dinners with no phones, or just by asking them how their day was. She concluded by stating that "Family Day" is not a one-and-done holiday; it is a reminder to spend time with the people that you love and she asked that everyone not neglect this day of celebration but to make every day "Family Day". A round of applause was given by all. Chairman Culver thanked them for coming and for their comments.

#### REGULAR AGENDA

##### 1. Request to approve the 2019-2020 Budget

Commissioner Sinquefield made a motion to approve the 2019-2020 budget and Commissioner Herring seconded the motion. At this point, Chairman Culver turned the meeting over to Chief Administrative Officer, Peter Covert, to present the information in the budget. Chairman Culver reminded everyone that the budget, by law, is to be approved by October 1<sup>st</sup> of each year and that everyone has been working hard to get this done. CAO Covert stated that this is his first budget and he wanted to thank all the department heads for their kind consideration, their time, and their patience as he worked through this. He mentioned that he has a very able bodied staff that assisted him greatly in putting this budget together.

Mr. Covert began with summary highlights for Labor as follows: (see original attached to minutes)

- Sheriff's Dept. additions would be a net 3
- Jail additions would be a net 2
- Probate will add 1 Asst. Vehicle Registration Supervisor
- COLA of 1/5%
- Increased Health Care Cost of 5%
- County pension contribution for 2019-2020 if 7.95% for Tier I and 7.12% for Tier II

Capital and major spending includes the following:

- Road and Bridge – 16 Dump trucks; 3 crew trucks; 2 F350 trucks; 1 55 ton low boy trailer; 1 Roller Packer; 2 loaders (leased)
- County Buildings – 2 ¾ ton work trucks; \$150,000 for capital replacements; \$1,400,000 for various major infrastructure repairs throughout the county
- Probate – 1 van
- Sanitation – 3 garbage trucks (leased); 2 pick- up trucks
- Sheriff – 5 Tahoe’s with accessories
- ALL – County wide computer upgrades or replacements.

Mr. Covert pointed out that the 2019-2020 Projected Beginning Fund Balance would be \$6,774,450 as of October 1, 2019 with revenues of \$46,495,189 and Expenses of \$48,376,934, with a projected ending fund balance of \$4,892,705 as of September 30, 2020.

Mr. Covert made presentation on total revenue for all departments with the Revenue Commission making up 36% of the revenue for the County. Sales and Use Tax made up 19% with State Income at 12%, Probate at 11%, and Road and Bridge at 11%. Other departments made up the rest of revenue percentages. Presentations were also made on expenses with Labor & Benefits, Departmental Operations, Capital & Other, and Agencies. Other topics were Safety, Liability and Worker’s Compensation as well as Recordable Medical Cases. Mr. Covert stated that due to the conscientious actions from the Safety Director and Department Heads that we continue to enjoy almost a half million dollar decrease from the year 2011 for Liability and Worker’s Compensation Insurance Premiums.

Chairman Culver asked if there were any questions from the commission. Chairman Culver stated that a couple of things in the budget that he would like to comment on include that there are 16 new dump trucks but the county will be selling 16 used dump trucks to help offset the cost. The Fund Balance is not where it needs to be but this is a conservative budget and the fund balance typically runs in the five to six million dollar range and employment has to be budgeted at one hundred percent. He stated that the Commission feels comfortable with this budget and that the increase in the revenues is due to Rebuild Alabama and it will pump approximately 1.4 million dollars in the county budget for road infrastructure. Chairman Culver commented that the down side is that labor and benefit cost continues to rise and the needs in the Sheriff’s Dept., Sanitation, Probate Dept., and Road and Bridge continue but the funding is not in the budget. He feels that something needs to be done long term with funding so that services and safety needs can be provided to the citizens of the county. Commissioner Shoupe commented that on the Rebuild Alabama Act he continues to get some questions concerning the use of the funds from this and he reiterated that documentation has to be submitted to prove that the money is used on roads and not labor. He agreed with Chairman Culver concerning the labor needs for the county.

Chairman Culver then asked for any comments from the public and Mr. George Trotter identified himself. He commented that he feels that it is embarrassing and insulting to the public the way that the

budget process is handled. Chairman Culver stated that he is not going to let him stand before the commission and insult them and he asked Mr. Trotter to sit down unless he has comments about the budget. Mr. Trotter said he did have comments about the budget and stated that he commends the Town of Ashford for moving forward and progressing but he is against the Commission leaving an “open door” to a demolition job which he asked about at the last meeting. Chairman Culver stopped Mr. Trotter and told him that particular item is on the agenda later and he can comment on that a later time during the meeting. Mr. Trotter commented on the red and blue line that he saw on the budget presentation and he feels that there are two ways to cure this; with revenue and cuts. He questioned the money spent on Foster Fest and helping with an Abbeville saw mill could better be used for road repair and volunteer fire departments.

When called for the question, the motion carried unanimously.

2. Request to approve Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) Grant in the amount of \$10,000 – Chris Judah, EMA Director

Commissioner Shoupe made a motion to approve the SNS Grant in the amount of \$10,000. Commissioner Herring seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

3. Request to approve Resolution to authorize Chairman to sign an amendment to the agreement with Dothan Solar, LLC, for certain tax abatements – Matt Parker, Dothan Area Chamber of Commerce

Commissioner Shoupe made a motion to approve the Resolution and Commission Sinquefield seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

4. Request to utilize a licensed, bonded, and insured outside professional service for the transportation of deceased individuals – Robert Byrd, Coroner

Commissioner Sinquefield made a motion to approve the request to utilize a licensed, bonded, and insured outside professional service for the transportation of deceased individuals. Commissioner Herring seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

5. Request from Ashford Downtown Redevelopment Authority to demolish building in downtown Ashford pending all clearance from City of Ashford – Brad Kimbro, Ashford DRA

Commissioner Sinquefield made a motion to approve the request from the Ashford DRA and Commissioner Herring seconded the motion. Commissioner Sinquefield commented that he appreciated Brad Kimbro, Mayor Carol Barfield, and Council Member Denise Herndon for their presence here today. When called for the vote, the motion carried unanimously. Chairman Culver then recognized Mr. George Trotter and he stepped to the podium. Mr. Trotter asked if there was an estimate for the cost of the demolishing of the building in Ashford. Acting County Engineer Brittney Clayton responded that she did not have an estimate with her but it will be during the down time of the

Road and Bridge Department. Chairman Culver stated that they did not have an estimate partly because they do not know exactly what the work is going to be as the town of Ashford has to do some advanced work. Mr. Trotter then asked if he could ask the Chairman a question and Chairman Culver replied to Mr. Trotter that he could ask the commission a question. Mr. Trotter proceeded to ask if the commission feels justifiable in going to each and every township that has needs and should they “open this can of worms” when the county, he feels, is broke. He also commented that each commissioner should stand up for the best interest of their constituents in their district. Chairman Culver responded that everything that this Commission does is in the best interest of the public. After call for the question, the motion carried unanimously.

6. Request to approve emergency expenditures from the Capital Replacement Fund for HVAC package unit at Farm Center small building – Sean Curtis, Maintenance Manager

Commissioner Herring made a motion to approve the emergency expenditure. Commissioner Sinquefield seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

7. Request to negotiate and enter into an agreement with the South Alabama Youth Services and the State Department of Youth Services to modify the payment procedure for services – Peter B. Covert, CAO

Commissioner Sinquefield made a motion to approve the request to negotiate and enter into an agreement with the South Alabama Youth Services. Commissioner Shoupe seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

8. Request to adopt Resolution authorizing the review and preparation of terms and provision regarding the refinancing of the Series 2014A General Obligation Warrants – Peter B. Covert, Chief Administrative Officer

Commissioner Shoupe made a motion to approve the adopting of the Resolution authorizing the review and preparation of terms and provision regarding the refinancing of the Series 2014A General Obligation Warrants. Commissioner Herring seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

9. Request for 050 Retail Beer License (Off Premises Only) and a 070 Retail Table Wine License (Off Premises Only) – 3 Dillard, LLC, d/b/a Dillard Country Store located at 4541 S. Co. Rd. 75, Pansey, AL – Sheriff’s Dept.

Commissioner Sinquefield made a motion to approve the request for the license and Commissioner Shoupe seconded. Chairman Culver asked if anyone was present that was in objection of this request and with there being none, he called for the vote. The motion carried with 2 YEAS and 1 NAY.

10. Request to approve fund for temporary clerk position in Board of Registrar’s Office – Molly Meadows, Chairperson, Board of Registrars

Commissioner Sinquefield made a motion to approve and Commissioner Sinquefield seconded. Chairman Culver stated that this is for \$210. The motion carried unanimously.

STAFF REPORTS:

Chief Administrative Officer – No Report

County Engineer – 2 closed roads; Cumbie Road and Wicksburg Road

County Attorney – No Report

Commissioner Shoupe asked Acting County Engineer when Wicksburg Road will be closed for the repaving project and Mrs. Clayton responded that the weather will be a limitation but worst case scenario will be next spring.

Meeting adjourned.