

MINUTES OF THE HOUSTON COUNTY COMMISSION  
REGULAR SESSION  
August 26<sup>th</sup>, 2019

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

Chairman Culver welcomed everyone to the August 26<sup>th</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. He reminded everyone that this meeting would be operating under different rules today due to not having an Administrative Meeting last Thursday.

Absent: Commissioner Curtis Harvey

Pastor Bob Gross, Associate Pastor at First Baptist Church of Dothan, gave the invocation and Commissioner Brandon Shoupe 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 stating that the reason there was not an Administrative Meeting last week was because all members of the commission were attending the Association of County Commissioners of Alabama Annual Conference and that it was an excellent meeting. They talked extensively about "Rebuild Alabama" and the requirements, which will be presented in this meeting, that have been placed upon the use of those funds and that the county intends to abide by those requirements very strictly to gain the proper use of the funds. There was also talk about jail overcrowding, which is becoming a significant issue for all counties in the state. Chairman Culver reported that there were a lot of presentations of awards and at this time he congratulated Commissioner Ricky Herring, who was recognized for completing the mandatory 50 hour training for new commissioners and added that the commission is partial to when this training was implemented as former Chairman Robert Crowder, when he was president of the ACCA, helped to get this legislation passed to make county officials receive mandatory training in the areas that they are serving in. Chairman Culver believes that this helps the commissioners to be knowledgeable and he commends Commissioner Herring in such the short time he has completed his certificate. A round of applause was given to Commissioner Herring. Chairman Culver reported that next Monday is Labor Day and county offices will be closed for this holiday. He reminded everyone that Foster Fest will be held on Friday September 6<sup>th</sup> and he mentioned that the forum with the County Commissioners will be held on Thursday night at 6:00 p.m. at the Library located on N. Oates Street. He encourages everyone to participate in the forum.

Commissioner Siquefield wanted to express his appreciation to Pastor Mark Benson, of Dothan First Assembly of God Church, for their time of prayer “Stronger Together” in bringing awareness of “back to school”. Pastor Benson held a special prayer for all teachers, elected officials, administrators of the schools, and especially the students and he appreciates Pastor Benson taking the time to pray for everyone. Chairman Culver added that Pastor Mark does a great job and they pray for the county often and he appreciates them holding this event.

## AWARDS AND PRESENTATIONS

### 1. Proclamation – “Dothan National Ponytails Softball Team Day”

Chairman Culver stepped down the podium and began by saying that it is an honor to recognize some of our own that have gone above and beyond the norm to show what kind of young folks, what kind of athletes and what kind of character of individuals we have in our community and that is the case today. He then called up the Dothan National Ponytails Softball team along with their coaches and asked them to come up forward. Chairman Culver stated that this group of young ladies and coaches started practicing in February and went through local, state, and all the way to national and won the National Ponytails Softball Championship for the entire country. They are led by Head Coach Scotty Lingo and Asst. Coaches Mike Palmer and Cliff Mendheim.

Chairman Culver then asked for a motion to adopt the proclamation and Commissioner Siquefield made the motion. Commissioner Herring seconded the motion and it carried unanimously. At this time Chairman Culver read the proclamation. After reading of the proclamation, a round of applause was given to the team and coaches and Chairman Culver presented the team with county pins. Coach Mendheim introduced the team players in attendance; Mallory Magrino, Jazie Andrews, Maddie Norris, Ava Clair Johnson, Deanna Edwards, Marie Lingo, Kaylie Heard, and Harmony Descowzie. Those players not in attendance today were Mary Helen Mendheim, Mya Slope, Charlie Chandler, and Sarah Harris. Coach Mendheim added that on behalf of himself and the coaches, they thanked the commission for the recognition and they also appreciate all the support from the county. He stated that this is a special group of young ladies and he looks forward to them doing fantastic things now and marvelous things in the future. A member of the audience asked if this was a travel ball team or a rec ball team and Coach Mendheim replied that this is a rec ball team through the Dothan Leisure Services Dixie Softball League. He also added that these girls all played a regular season then were selected to the All-Stars Team. From there, they practiced and won the district tournament and then advanced to the state tournament in Florence, AL and won that tournament. They then proceeded to represent the State of Alabama in Sulphur Springs, TX, in which they had to play other state winners and ultimately beat everyone out there and won the World Series. He reported that this is only the third time in the history of Dixie Softball, here in Dothan, that a team has won the World Series from Dothan and that this team is a good mixture of girls that represent Houston County Schools, Dothan City Schools, and private schools in the area. A round of applause was given.

## 2. Proclamation – “Year of the 4-H Centennial Youth Initiative in Houston County” – Willie Durr, County Extension Coordinator

Chairman Culver asked Mr. Willie Durr to come forward. Commissioner Sinquefield made a motion to approve the proclamation and Commissioner Shoupe seconded. The motion carried unanimously. Chairman Culver then read the proclamation and presented it to Mr. Durr and thanked him for not only this achievement but for all the good work that the Extension Office does for the citizens of Houston County. Mr. Durr reported that 4-H has been around a long time and that it is a youth development program of the Alabama Cooperative Extension System and its main initiative is to give youth a chance to develop the skills they need. Mr. Durr introduced their team that is here from Auburn University which included Dr. Gary Lemme, who is the Director of the Alabama Cooperative Extension System, and Dr. Tommy Elliott, the Director of the 4-H Foundation. He continued by introducing the local 4-H Team which includes Mr. Doug Summerford, Centennial Youth Initiative Agent, Ms. Margaret Reeves, Administrative Associate, and Ms. Sheila Andreasen, County Extension Agent. Tonya Kirkland was also introduced as the Henry County Centennial Youth Initiative Agent along with Ms. Marilyn Agee, who is the Urban Regional Agent, Ms. Le’anne Almond, which is the SNAP-Ed Educator, Ms. Deborah Crawford, Administrative Associate, and Mr. Rayfield Vester, Retired Extension Agent. Mr. Durr also recognized Mr. McMillan, who represents the volunteers of the system and Landon Cox who is a 4-H Ambassador along with his mom. Mr. Durr then asked Dr. Lemme to come forward for his presentation. Dr. Lemme thanked the Chairman and the Commissioners and all the 4-H volunteers, members and supporters. He began by stating that the Alabama Cooperative Extension System wants to recognize excellence with 4-H and Houston County has achieved that level of excellence and as a result of that excellence he wants to recognize the people of Houston County but also reward them by adding another half FTE to both Houston County and Henry County so each of them will have a dedicated 4-H agent. He continued by stating that they have earned that by developing excellence in programs and making a difference in the lives of youth and the future leaders of Alabama. He then presented Houston County with a crystal clover trophy and he stated that this takes dedication by the staff and he then presented each staff member with a medal of excellence. Dr. Lemme ended by thanking everyone in Houston County, the Commission, the extension program, and particularly the young people in this area.

## REGULAR AGENDA

### 1. Request to approve resolution for proposed polling place changes and boundary adjustments; Map (A) – Patrick Davenport, Judge of Probate

Chairman Culver asked Judge Davenport to come forward for discussion on this item. Judge Davenport reminded the commission that they each have a copy of the maps in their packages and he is bringing forward a few requests to make some modifications to various polling locations. He started by saying that there are two different categories with the first being the modification of voting location which is moving one precinct voting location to another. He added that this will not be changing any individuals that vote at these locations, but just merely moving the location to better facilitate the flow of traffic. He began by reporting that Map (A) reflects a number of modifications to include a precinct change as

well as some cleaning up of some boundary lines. It also shows the precinct voting place as the City Water/Electric Complex and there are some issues at this facility such as parking, a long concrete ramp that ascends about ten feet in elevation over about a sixty foot distance which can be challenging for senior citizens and handicap citizens. Then there is the voting area which is in the warehouse area and the lighting is of concern. Selma Baptist Church is directly across the street and they are willing to be a community partner and Judge Davenport is requesting to move this precinct voting place to the church. Continuing, Judge Davenport pointed out that there are minor line corrections on Map (A) that need to be cleaned up to stay consistent with the boundary lines and he added that there are about 8,000 voters that will be affected by this change. Of the 8,000 voters, 7,000 are merely the moves to the three locations. Judge Davenport noted that Madrid is just another move and it will not change any voters as it is just moving from the Madrid Senior Center to the Madrid Baptist Church Fellowship Hall, which will be much better parking.

Commissioner Shoupe mentioned that any time a voting location is changed, there are procedures that must be followed to make sure the area is handicap accessible for parking, restrooms, and such. Judge Davenport reported that all the sites have been assessed to insure that they meet all the requirements for the handicap. Commissioner Shoupe asked how the affected voters would be notified of these changes and Judge Davenport stated that they have included in their budget to pay for a mail notification to each of the affected voters. Also, when a voter record is changed in the Registrar's Office, the state system will generate another mail notice from the Registrar's Office. Signage will be placed at the previous locations directing them to the new precinct locations. Lastly, Judge Davenport will be in contact with the media outlets to help provide information and updates.

At this time, Commissioner Shoupe made a motion to approve the resolution for proposed polling place changes and boundary adjustments of Map (A). Commissioner Herring seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

## 2. Request to approve resolution for proposed polling place changes and boundary adjustments; Map (B) – Patrick Davenport, Judge of Probate

Judge Davenport reported that this proposed change reflects a similar strategy as agenda item #1. This will move one precinct location to the Memphis Baptist Church Gymnasium from the Hodgesville Volunteer Fire Department and cleaning up some boundary lines that are detailed in the resolution.

Commissioner Herring made a motion to approve the resolution for the proposed polling place changes and boundary adjustments in Map (B). Commissioner Siquefield seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

Judge Davenport added that Senator Chesteen insured that a bill was passed this year allowing for 16 & 17 year old interns to work at the polls on Election Day and that will include two per precinct. He stated that Houston County will be implementing a program to help get the young people involved to help but also to encourage them to learn about the voting election process.

3. Request for 160 Special Retail License – TCBC Development Company, Inc., d/b/a The Crossing at Big Creek located at 300 Crossing Pkwy., Cottonwood, AL – Sheriff’s Dept.

Chairman Culver asked if there was anyone present that is in opposition of the request. Being there was no response, he asked for a motion. Commissioner Shoupe made a motion to approve the request. Commissioner Siquefield made a substitute motion to table the request. Chairman Culver called for the discussion. Commissioner Siquefield noted that no one was present from the establishment for questions. Chairman Culver stated that this has already gone through the Sheriff’s Dept. as normal procedure and this is just a name change for the establishment. Commissioner Siquefield commented that there are some unanswered questions on this and he is not sure if they currently have a liquor license. Chairman Culver asked Major Rafferty to come forward and Major Rafferty stated that he is not familiar with this particular request. Chairman Culver then read the last sentence in the Sheriff’s letter; “I find no legal reason that a license should not be issued.” He added that this is just a normal liquor license request. Commissioner Siquefield responded that he is requesting to table this item until the Sheriff’s Dept. can look into this a little more in detail to determine exactly what they have currently at this establishment and what they are proposing and there are some unanswered questions and no one is present to answer. Chairman Culver stated that normally we do not have anyone come for a liquor license request, but if we would have known we could have had them present. He also reiterated that the Sheriff has sent a letter that he has found no legal reason that the license should not be issued and he asked Commissioner Siquefield to let the Sheriff know what he needs to look into, that he hasn’t already looked into, that states that everything is legal. Commissioner Siquefield responded that this is the reason he asking for it to be tabled at this time is to gather a little more information. Commissioner Shoupe asked what happens if we table this or if it is declined, what would be the scenario. Chairman Culver stated that if it is declined, the establishment will go to court and get the license as there is nothing wrong with the license and if it is tabled it will go back on the agenda at the next meeting. Commissioner Shoupe stated that since there is not a consensus to pass the request that he will make a motion to table this request for two weeks. Commissioner Siquefield seconded the motion to table and it carried unanimously.

4. Request to approve final plat for Thomley Ridge Subdivision – Road and Bridge

Commissioner Shoupe made a motion to approve the request for the final plat for Thomley Ridge Subdivision. Commissioner Siquefield seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

5. Request to approve Rebuild Alabama FY 2020 County Transportation Plan – Road and Bridge

Chairman Culver reported that as of Saturday, there will be an increase in fuel tax in the State of Alabama. This law passed during the summer months overwhelmingly and all county governments are working diligently to ensure that the funds received from this tax are used in the proper manner, that all the funds are put on highways, asphalt, bridges, and concrete and not used for anything else. This was the charge in the Act and there are reporting requirements in this Act that are to be met and these are

ongoing during the life of the Act. Chairman Culver stated that we are to report back to the citizens on the progress of the plan and keep everyone informed of the projects that are being done. He added that today is the first step of this process as they set a deadline on the counties that by August 31<sup>st</sup> cities and counties are to adopt a Transportation Plan for this year. In the plan, it has to be stated what projects are to be done in the next year and a half. Everything about this plan is transparent and the public will know where the funds are going. Chairman Culver commented that it is very important that the County stay in the guidelines of this Act.

Engineer Kirkland reported that the law states that this funding has to be used for materials only, such as asphalt and concrete and not for salaries, labor, or equipment. He then presented the plan and stated that this will be put on the county website as well as being posted in the required areas. The presentation listed the roads and dollar amounts to be spent along with the funds, as there are two which include the Rebuild Alabama funds and the Federal Exchange funds. These are two different types of money used on two different types of roads and all is explained in the Act. Engineer Kirkland reported that when the Act starts in September, there should be roughly \$850,000 CRAF funds and \$400,000 in Federal Exchange funds. There will also be a bond issue in the amount of \$5.4 million and it can be repaid by half of the Rebuild Alabama funds and the other half will be banked to use into the next year's paving projects. Engineer Kirkland stated that all funds will have to be accounted for as required by the law. Commissioner Shoupe commented that this is not the complete Houston County Transportation Plan but is the transportation plan as it pertains to just these particular funds. Resurfacing of Wicksburg Road and Cumbie Road will proceed as planned. Engineer Kirkland commented that the county is fortunate that there is an MPO Fund that will carry on as usual for paving projects. Chairman Culver reported that there are two other pots of money in the Rebuild Alabama Act that is competitive for special projects that may come up and we can partner with surrounding counties and cities to apply for those funds. One being the ATRIP 2 Fund with a significant amount of money and then a smaller fund called the Rebuild Alabama Fund that is there for smaller grants. Commissioner Shoupe asked if a link can be added to the county website for the constituents to see the Rebuild Alabama Act and Engineer Kirkland answered that it has to be posted per law and has to be physically posted here and at the court house. Commissioner Shoupe commented that without this funding that none of the submitted projects would happen and Engineer Kirkland concurred. Commissioner Sinquefield stated that this is just the beginning and we should continue to see improvements in the county infrastructure and our roads in the future as we receive the funds. He appreciates all the work Engineer Kirkland has done for this project.

Commissioner Sinquefield made a motion to approve the request for the Rebuild Alabama FY 2020 County Transportation Plan. Commissioner Shoupe seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

#### 6. Request to enter into an agreement with the Town of Kinsey for repaving portions of Old Highway 431 and Broad Street – Road and Bridge

Engineer Kirkland reported that this is the tax money that the Town of Kinsey gets and they have elected to partner with Houston County on paving the stated roads in their town limits and it is certainly

appreciated. Chairman Culver stated that the money that a lot of the towns receive is not quite enough to do a significant project so they partner with the county and it makes their dollar go longer and it helps the town and the county. He added that partnering with surrounding towns and even with the City of Dothan is just a good thing and makes the money go further and he appreciates it as well. Engineer Kirkland added that Kinsey received \$17,000 per year which is better than nothing but there is not a lot you can do with \$17,000 and partnering with the County is easier. Commissioner Herring made a motion to approve the request and Commission Shoupe seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

7. Request to sell the following items on GovDeals – Road and Bridge

1. Assorted office equipment (Probate)
2. Industrial kitchen equipment (Maintenance)
3. Old air compressors (Road and Bridge)
4. Misc. tamps and small engines (Road and Bridge)

Commissioner Sinquefield made a motion to approve the request to sell the items on GovDeals. Commissioner Herring seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

STAFF REPORTS:

Chief Administrative Officer – No Report

County Engineer – 2 closed roads; BJ Mixon and Willie Varnum to replace cross drains.

County Attorney – No Report

Meeting adjourned.