

MINUTES OF THE HOUSTON COUNTY COMMISSION  
REGULAR SESSION  
November 25<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 November 25<sup>th</sup>, 2019, Houston County Commission Meeting and called the 10:00 a.m. meeting to order. He declared a quorum as a majority of the commissioners were in attendance.

ABSENT: Commissioner Curtis Harvey

Pastor Don Tew, from Enon Baptist 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 announcing that there are two items to add to the agenda, with unanimous consent from the Commission, that came up after last Thursday's Administrative Meeting. The first item is a request to approve an agreement with Southeast Alabama Youth Services and the Alabama Department of Youth Services, for transfer of funds. Chairman Culver stated that there is not money involved in this request as it is just the way the funds are transferred and Chief Administrative Officer Peter Culver has been working on this for some time now and the first check has to be issued December 1<sup>st</sup>. There was no objection to adding this item to the agenda. He then proceeded with the second item requested adding to the agenda is a request to approve reclassification of the Election Machines Manager to Election Specialist. He added that there are no funds involved with this as it is just a reclassification due to some changes in duties of this position and changes in the DOL laws. The Personnel Board only has one more meeting coming up so it needs to be approved in advance of the meeting. There was no objection to this item being added to the agenda.

Chairman Culver reported that there will not be an Administrative Meeting on December 5<sup>th</sup> and the Regular Meeting will be held on December 9<sup>th</sup> with that being the last meeting of the year. He also reminded everyone of the Downtown Dothan Christmas that will be held on Saturday, December 7<sup>th</sup>, and encouraged everyone to enjoy this great activity.

Chairman Culver announced that today would be The Dothan Eagle Staff Reporter Jeremy Wise's last day covering the Houston County Commission as he is leaving The Dothan Eagle to pursue another

career. Chairman Culver thanked Mr. Wise for all he has done for the Commission in getting the news out to the public and he wished him the very best of luck in the future.

Commissioner Siquefield recognized Mr. Curtis Sellers and his son Travis and added that Travis is with the Boys Scouts of Dothan, Troop 106. Chairman Culver asked Travis to stand and Commissioner Siquefield thanked him for being at the meeting. A round of applause was given to Travis and his father Curtis.

Commissioner Herring announced that he had two announcements and began by reporting that he had been given a “thank you” from Mr. George Trotter for what Road and Bridge has been doing in his area and Mr. Herring thanked County Engineer Barkley Kirkland and the Road and Bridge Department for doing a great job. He then reported that the Sheriff’s Department is selling Boston Butts to help a fellow deputy that is battling his second term with cancer. Commissioner Herring stated that he had tickets for this or anyone interested in purchasing can call the Houston County Sheriff’s Department for further details. There is also a give away with this event for those that pay an extra \$5 for a Boston Butt. Deadline is December 8<sup>th</sup> to purchase tickets.

#### REGULAR AGENDA

1. Request to present the 2018-2019 departmental over/under spending summary report – Peter Covert, Chief Administrative Officer

Mr. Covert began by reporting that it is usual and customary that at the end of the fiscal year, and after the books are closed, a report is presented to the Commission that reflects the actual expenses incurred by each budgeted department. He stated that after the presentation, and as required by state law, the commission will be asked to approve those areas whose expenditures exceed the end of the year budgeted amounts. Mr. Covert pointed out that the department heads need to be commended on their efforts in controlling their budgeted and approved expenditures. They were able to operate their areas at a cost that was over 2.25 million dollars less than what was budgeted. He added that the county generated revenue in excess of the budgeted amount by slightly over 2 million dollars and the major contributors of this are from nearly a million dollars in sales tax revenue, which includes local sales tax and internet sales tax, slightly over \$700,000 in Hurricane Michael relief cost reimbursements, \$250,000 from the Sheriff’s Dept. for a variety of fees along with \$150,000 in interest income earned from a new deposit banking relationship. He stated that this combined variance of 4.25 million dollars is important because the approved amended budgeted projection for 2019 expenses were expected to exceed revenue by 4.75 million dollars. Mr. Covert ended by stating that the result of the ongoing positive proactive efforts of the Commission and the County’s Department Heads, along with the boost to our local economy and some expense reimbursement from a devastating natural disaster, the county experienced only a \$500,000 reduction in fund balance, which is the smallest reduction in the fund balance in several years.

Chairman Culver asked if there were any other questions concerning the report that Mr. Covert presented. He reiterated what Mr. Covert had said that the county department heads do a tremendous job in budgeting each year. Chairman Culver stated that the reason that this report has to be done is that years ago elected officials and department heads would spend all the money they wanted and there was not any way to recoup the money. A law was passed years ago that required this over/under report and if any department head went over their budgeted amount they would have to personally submit a check for the overage amount. Chairman Culver was pleased to say that Houston County has never had to do this.

Commissioner Shoupe made a motion to approve the 2018-2019 over/under spending summary report. Commissioner Sinquefield seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

2. Request to award bid for Virtual Tape Library to lowest bidder meeting specs – Danny Cumbie, IT Director

Commissioner Shoupe made a motion to approve the request to award the bid for the Virtual Tape Library. Commissioner Herring seconded the motion. Commissioner Shoupe asked about the security of this virtual library and Danny Cumbie answered that they are satisfied with the security. When called for the question, the motion passed unanimously.

3. Request to approve necessary improvements to the lobby area of the Administration Building due to security measures and accompanying budget amendment – Sean Curtis, Maintenance Manager

Commissioner Sinquefield made a motion to approve the request for the improvements to the lobby area of the Administration Building and Commissioner Shoupe seconded the motion. Chairman Culver stated that as discussed at Thursday's meeting, this is to get the metal detector up and running at the entrance and expedite the entering of the building. Sean Curtis reported that work should start within the next few weeks. Mr. George Trotter, of 4218 County Road 203, was recognized and asked about the security entrance and wanted to know if there were any persons that enter the building and do not come through the front doors. Chairman Culver responded that there are some employees that do use another entrance. Mr. Trotter commented that it concerns him as a citizen and the reason is that statistics show that a large percentage of terrorist activity and shootings are in the workplace. He asked why we would be exempting those while we are spending the money to upgrade the security of the building. Mr. Trotter continued by stating that he was at a ball game recently at an area school and he was more fearful than he has ever been in Houston County. He reported that he did not see a deputy sheriff and the principal of the school shut the activity down quickly. Mr. Trotter just wanted the commission to think about it that all employees should enter the front door entrance.

When called for the vote, the motion carried unanimously.

4. Request to approve trash compactor to be located behind the Community Corrections Building and accompanying budget amendment – Sean Curtis, Maintenance Manager

Commissioner Shoupe made a motion to approve the request for the trash compactor to be located behind the Community Corrections Building. Commissioner Herring seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

5. Request to approve agreement with Southeast Alabama Youth Services and Alabama Department of Youth Services for transfer of funds – Peter B. Covert, Chief Administrative Officer

Commissioner Herring made a motion to approve the agreement and Commissioner Sinquefield seconded the motion. Mr. Covert stated that this is a three-way agreement between the state and local youth services facility and the county. The request was originated by the agency to send our funding through the state rather than sending to the agency in order to help them in their operating activity. This is a culmination of a prior agreement, as we have been paying the local agency, but now we will pay directly to the state. When called for the question, the motion carried unanimously.

6. Request to approve reclassification of Election Machines Manager position to Elections Specialist – Patrick Davenport, Judge of Probate.

Commissioner Sinquefield made a motion to approve the request to reclassify the stated position and Commissioner Herring seconded the motion. Judge Davenport came forward and commented that due to a new federal law, this position needs to be reclassified as a classified hourly position and titled Elections Specialist. Judge Davenport also stated that the reason for doing this at this meeting is because the Personnel Board meets the first of December and this needs to be approved first by the commission and then presented to the Personnel Board. Chairman Culver added that there is no funding with this position at this time and they will absorb this in the Probate Judges current budget and if not, it will be addressed at a later time. Commissioner Shoupe clarified that this position will not only be used during election time, but will be available for various Probate Department needs. When called for the question, the motion carried unanimously.

#### STAFF REPORTS:

Chief Administrative Officer – No Report

County Engineer – 2 closed roads; N. Broad St. in Cowarts and County Road 81

County Attorney – No Report

Commissioner Sinquefield asked Engineer Barkley Kirkland to give an update on N. Broad St. with the cross drain replacement. Engineer Kirkland responded that the main cross drain is in place and they have laid 450 feet of about 500 feet of side drain pipe and are now waiting on water line work. Commissioner Sinquefield also recognized two council members from the Town of Cowarts that are in attendance today. He introduced Ed Marshall and Mr. Rogers. Commissioner Sinquefield thanked them for what they do for the Town of Cowarts.

Meeting adjourned.