

MINUTES OF THE HOUSTON COUNTY COMMISSION
REGULAR SESSION
February 24, 2020

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

Chairman Culver welcomed everyone to the February 24, 2020, 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 Brandon Shoupe

Commissioner Curtis Harvey 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 Harvey and seconded by Commissioner Sinquefield. The motion carried unanimously.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN AND COMMISSIONER

Chairman Culver began by commending everyone, to include law enforcement, organizers, families and everyone involved with the Mardi Gras Parade festivities this past Saturday. He stated that he thought it was one of the best days our community has seen in a while and it continues to grow each year. This is a fun family event that was attended by at least 50,000 people from all over the Wiregrass area. Chairman Culver added that on Friday, a press conference was held to announce the Alabama State Games are returning to our community. The State Games were held here about three years ago and was the largest economic impact of any activity in the area. He added that it was a 2.3 million dollar impact for the 2017 State Games. The games will be held the weekend of June 12th. Enterprise will be included this time as they have a new track facility.

Chairman Culver reminded everyone to vote in the primary election to be held on Tuesday, March 3rd and he encouraged everyone to get out and exercise their right to vote. He also announced that the annual Elected Officials vs. Media Softball game will be held on Saturday, April 25th to benefit the Wiregrass Area Food Bank and the first Foster Fest of the year will be held on Friday, March 6th. He concluded by announcing that the Houston County Pageants

would be held this Saturday, February 28th, at the Dothan Opera House with three different time frames being utilized for the different age groups. The winner of the Miss Houston County and Little Miss Houston County will continue to the Miss National Peanut Festival Pageant.

Commissioner Doug Siquefield announced that the National Peanut Festival won the Grand Champion 4A Award from the Association of Alabama Fairs. He added that there were over 212,000 guests that entered the gates of the Festival this past year.

AWARDS AND PRESENTATIONS

1. Presentation – Life Saving Awards – Sheriff Donald Valenza

Chairman Culver stepped to the podium and announced that today was a very special presentation and called Sheriff Donald Valenza to come forward for the life saving awards. Sheriff Valenza began by thanking the commission for allowing the time to present the awards to these deserving officers and added that it is not often that they get to recognized law enforcement for the good deeds they do, but these officers went beyond the regular call of duty. He stated that one thing about life saving is that it is an event that took place where if officers were not involved, individuals would have been deceased at the time of the event.

Sheriff Valenza reported that on July 30th, 2017, Deputies Leck Killingsworth and Scott Gilchrist responded to a medical call in reference to a severe allergic reaction from a wasp sting. He added that the victim was unconscious and unresponsive when the deputies arrived and they began CPR until medics arrived and transported the victim to the medical facility. Sheriff Valenza then presented Deputy Gilchrist and Deputy Killingsworth with their awards.

Sheriff Valenza stated that on another incident on October 29th, 2019, deputies arrived on the scene of a single vehicle accident in which the vehicle was completely submerged in approximately fifteen feet of water and upside down. Sergeant David Asbill, Deputy Eric Rice, and Deputy Darcy Bingham arrived on the scene and immediately went into the water and removed the victim from the vehicle in which then was transported to medical facility. In addition, Sheriff Valenza thanked Wicksburg Rescue for being involved in this rescue. Sheriff Valenza then presented the awards to the deputies.

Sheriff Valenza continued that on December 28th, 2019, deputies were dispatched to a residence with threats of suicide and after multiple attempts to get the subject to surrender, deputies heard a single gunshot. The deputies, Corporal Jon Givens and Sergeant Bradley Shaw, approached the subject, assessed the injuries and immediately performed First Aid tactics until

the victim was transported to the medical facility. Sheriff Valenza then presented the awards to deputies.

Sheriff Valenza continued that on February 4, 2020, deputies were dispatched to a residence in reference to an attempted suicide. The subject was located in the bathroom unconscious and bleeding severely from lacerations to both wrists. Captain Donavon Arias and Sergeant Ricky Herring applied tourniquets to each arm and then applied pressure bandages to the wrists until medics arrived and could transport the victim to the medical facility. He then presented them with their awards. A round of applause was given to all the deputies for their life saving efforts.

REGULAR AGENDA

1. Request to recommend appointment to the Wiregrass Houston County Foundation

Chairman Culver commented that this appointment would be Peter Covert. Commissioner Sinuefield made a motion to recommend Peter Covert as appointment to the Wiregrass Houston County Foundation. Commissioner Herring seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

2. Request to re-appoint Chairman Mark Culver, Commissioner Albert Kirkland, and Dr. Donna West to the SARCOA Board

Commissioner Sinuefield made a motion to approve the re-appointments and Commissioner Harvey seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

3. Request for 010 Lounge Retail Liquor License – Class I – Our Place Bar and Grill, 14805 W. US Hwy. 84, Wicksburg, AL 36352 – Sheriff's Dept.

Commissioner Sinuefield made a motion to approve the request and Commissioner Harvey seconded the motion. Chairman Culver asked if anyone was in attendance that is in objection to this request. With no objections, the motion passed with 2 YEAS from Commissioner Harvey and Sinuefield and one NAE from Commissioner Herring.

4. Request to approve agreement with DDRA for Foster Street Merchants use of compactor

Commissioner Herring made a motion to approve the agreement with the DDRA for Foster Street Merchants use of compactor and Commissioner Harvey seconded the motion. Chairman Culver reported that the commission had a copy of the agreement and County Attorney

confirmed that all legal paperwork was complete. After a call for the question, the motion carried unanimously.

5. Request to approve South Alabama Mutual Assistance Agreement

Commissioner Siquefield made a motion to approve the request for the South Alabama Mutual Assistance Agreement and Commissioner Herring seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

6. Request to approve Resolution and Order authorizing the issuance and making provision for the payment of \$7,545,000 General Obligation Warrants, Series 2020-A, of the County

Commissioner Harvey made a motion to approve the resolution and Commissioner Siquefield seconded the motion. Chairman Culver reminded everyone of the discussion on Thursday but added that the timing of this financing could not be better. He thanked all those that were involved in the efforts that have been made to make this possible. He then introduced Reid Cavanaugh. Mr. Cavanaugh reported that with the county's strong credit rating it helped to drive the interest rate down in addition to the market that we are in today. He added that the refunding was originally quoted at over \$500,000 but it ended up being about \$650,000 and that is money that can be paid to bond holders or kept in the county. He stated that on the road cost financing, it was locked in at one and half percent and fixed for ten years. He ended by thanking Peter Covert for the outstanding job in helping with all the paperwork needed for this project. Mr. Barry Staples commented that he would like to commend the county, Mr. Peter Covert, County Attorney Pres Register and Chairman Culver, for their work on this and that Houston County is the best they get to work with.

Chairman Culver added that is the lowest financing cost in thirty years and this is a significant accomplishment. When called for the question, the motion carried unanimously.

7. Request to approve Resolution and Order authorizing the issuance and making provision for the payment of \$5,335,000 General Obligation Road and Bridge Warrants, Series 2020-B, of the County

Commissioner Herring made a motion to approve the Resolution and Commissioner Siquefield seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

8. Request to sell (3) Crown Victoria's on Gov.Deals for the Sheriff's Dept. – Road and Bridge

Commissioner Sinquefield made a motion to sell the vehicles and Commissioner Harvey seconded the motion. After discussion Commissioner Harvey made a motion to table this request and Commissioner Herring seconded the motion. The motion to table this item was approved unanimously.

STAFF REPORTS:

Chief Administrative Officer – No Report

County Engineer – Closed roads – County Road 8, Littlefield and Old Hwy. 431

County Attorney – No Report

Chairman Culver asked Engineer Kirkland the status of the round-about at S. Park and Taylor Road. Mr. Kirkland responded that it is slow work due to laying pipes, water lines, etc. The city is there working now.

Meeting adjourned.