

MINUTES OF THE HOUSTON COUNTY COMMISSION  
REGULAR SESSION  
April 13, 2020

PRESENT: Chairman Mark Culver, Commissioner Curtis Harvey, 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 April 13, 2020, Houston County Commission Meeting and called the 10:00 a.m. meeting to order. He declared a quorum as all commissioners were in attendance.

The invocation was led by Commissioner Harvey and Commissioner Siquefield led in the pledge of allegiance.

The minutes of the previous (3) meetings were approved on a motion by Commissioner Harvey and seconded by Commissioner Herring. The motion carried unanimously.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN AND COMMISSIONER

Chairman Culver began by stating that today's meeting is operating under a different situation, due to COVID-19 guidelines, as we are limited to social distancing by being six feet apart and only having ten people in the commission chambers at one time so those that are on the agenda will be waiting in the hallway until their time to speak. The meeting today is live streamed to the public and Chairman Culver thanked the IT Department for working through this procedure. He added that this type of meeting set-up will continue until things change with the Governor's orders. The agenda was posted last Thursday on the website, and social media, and the public was asked that if they had any questions to please submit them by email and they would be answered today. For the record, no questions were submitted.

Chairman Culver wanted all the citizens of Houston County to know how much they are appreciated for their efforts that they are making in continuing to do the things they are asked, such as social distancing and staying at home, and they should continue to do so. He encouraged everyone to stay six feet apart and stay at home to continue to save lives. Chairman Culver reported that last Friday the CDC and the Health Department asked everyone to please wear mask in public and he encourages everyone to abide by their guidelines and do so. He added that the commission encourages everyone to spend their money locally as restaurants are doing an excellent job with curbside pickup and other local retail businesses are doing so as well. Also, Chairman Culver mentioned a "Go Natural April to Jump Start May" event in which they are asking people to not shave, cut their hair or nails and be ready to support our local salons when they are able to reopen. He stated that the next commission meeting will be held on Monday, May 11<sup>th</sup>, as the commission is meeting only once a month during this time, or as needed, special meetings can be called. He reminded everyone that April 27<sup>th</sup> is a state holiday and county offices will be closed on that Monday.

Commissioner Shoupe commented that he was especially thankful for the hospitals and their staff as they work diligently through this time and especially Southeast Health in keeping the public informed of the COVID-19 stats. He added that Chris Judah and the emergency task force have done a great job getting information out and he thanked the county employees, elected officials, and the citizens of Houston County for their help in doing their part in trying to slow down the spread of the COVID-19. Commissioner Shoupe ended by thanking Chairman Culver for his leadership in handling this situation during these trying times.

Chairman Culver thanked Commissioner Shoupe local law enforcement, first responders and, particularly, the medical community, for all they are doing. They are faced with things that we cannot imagine and they are the true heroes.

Commissioner Siquefield mentioned that last Saturday, the area fire departments, ambulance services, volunteer fire/rescue divisions, made a tour through the parking lots of Southeast Health and Flowers Hospital to pay their respects to the entire staff of the hospitals.

#### AWARDS AND PRESENTATIONS

##### 1. Proclamation – “National Library Week”

Chairman Culver announced that we have two proclamations to approve that are not on the agenda with the first being “National Library Week”. With a motion by Commissioner Harvey and a second by Commissioner Shoupe, the motion passed to approve the proclamation. Commissioner Harvey read the proclamation and it will be mailed to the Library Director, Cynthia Plesner.

##### 2. Proclamation – “Child Abuse Prevention Month”

Commissioner Herring made a motion to approve the proclamation for “Child Abuse Prevention Month”. Commissioner Siquefield seconded the motion and it carried unanimously. Commissioner Herring read the proclamation and it will be mailed to Scarlett Chramer at the Southeast Alabama Child Advocacy Center.

Chairman Culver noted that Sean Curtis and his department, Building Maintenance, have done an excellent job in working with the Child Advocacy Center in getting the blue ribbon illuminated on the side of the administration building during this month.

#### REGULAR AGENDA

1. Request to approve relocating Pansey polling place from Pansey Volunteer Fire Department to Liberty Baptist Church and approve accompanying resolution – Patrick Davenport, Judge of Probate

Angie Christian, Elections Supervisor, approached the podium and reported that the Elections Department had received a request from Chief Givens, of Pansey Volunteer Fire Dept., asking them to search for a new location for a polling place. Mrs. Christian stated that they had spoken to Sara Ingram, their Chief Inspector of Pansey, AL, and she suggested Liberty Baptist Church which is about three-tenths of a mile from Pansey Fire Dept. Mrs. Christian stated that she made a visit to the church and everything checks out according to guidelines for a polling place. Chairman Culver reiterated that it is less than a mile away from the present polling place so there would not be any inconvenience to the citizens with the issue of distance. He asked if this would be used for the run-off election and Mrs. Christian confirmed. Chairman Culver called for questions and comments and with there being none, Commissioner Sinquefield made a motion to approve relocating the Pansey polling place to Liberty Baptist Church. Commissioner Shoupe seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

2. Request to approve emergency expenditure from the Capital Replacement Fund to replace 5 ton split HVAC system at the Board of Education building – Sean Curtis, Building Maintenance Manager

Sean Curtis approached the podium for remarks and questions on this request. Mr. Curtis stated that this unit was one of the old units that needed replacing but due to an emergency situation in it breaking down, it has been replaced. Chairman Culver called for questions. There were no questions or comments and at this time Commissioner Herring made a motion to approve the emergency expenditure. Commissioner Sinquefield seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

3. Request to approve budget amendment for insurance reimbursement – Maj. Bill Rafferty, Sheriff's Dept.

Major Rafferty approached the podium and stated that this is a reimbursement check from Alabama Municipal Insurance Court where the Town of Columbia Rescue Squad backed into one of the Sheriff's Dept. vehicles. They issued a check for damages for \$2,172.27 and Maj. Rafferty asked that it be put back into the maintenance budget as a pass through item. He also noted that the vehicle has been fixed. Commissioner Harvey made a motion to approve the budget amendment as stated and Commissioner Shoupe seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Request to donate (3) Crown Victoria vehicles to the Ashford Ambulance and Rescue Squad, Cottonwood Ambulance and Rescue, Inc., and Rehobeth Fire and Rescue

Chairman Culver reminded everyone that this request is for the vehicles that were first requested to sell on GovDeals and then the EMS Association asked for the vehicles to be donated to the association for their use. After research, the commission found that it would be best to donate to the organizations individually. The commission will execute the proper paperwork to each organization pending approval. Commissioner Sinquefield asked if the vehicles had been checked for operational conditions. Maj. Rafferty approached the podium and answered by stating that the three Crown Victoria vehicles belonged to the commission and they had been purchased for the Sheriff's Department for their use. He added that each vehicle has been under the maintenance plan and serviced regularly but that the

vehicles did have high mileage on them. Chairman Culver responded that the vehicles are donated without a warranty and paperwork should state "as is" or some reference to that.

On a motion by Commissioner Herring and a second by Commissioner Sinquefield, the motion carried unanimously.

5. Request to enter into an agreement with the Department of Transportation to resurface 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue and Hodgesville Road – Road and Bridge

Acting Engineer Brittney Clayton approached the podium and stated that this is the first two of four MPO projects that will be going on this year and all paperwork and preliminary work had already been approved. Before the commission today is the actual agreement so that work can begin. Commissioner Herring made a motion to approve the request. Commissioner Shoupe seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

#### STAFF REPORTS:

Chief Administrative Officer – No report

County Engineer – Road paving updates: Completed "Rebuild Alabama" projects; resurfaced Old Hwy. 431 and Broad Street in Kinsey. The next three "Rebuild Alabama" projects will be Day Road and parts of Otis Buie and Peacock Road. Thursday begins Wicksburg Road (Ft. Rucker funds) and Cumbie Road begins tomorrow. Willie Varnum Road will also begin this week.

County Attorney – No Report

Commissioner Sinquefield asked about the status of S. County Road 81 at Bazemore. Mrs. Clayton stated that it was delayed due to the weather and the split shifts in which the Road and Bridge Dept. are working at this time. Chairman Culver commented that almost all employees are working split shifts at this time due to COVID-19 guidelines and all the road work is being done at half strength and he feels that they are doing a really good job with a lot of work load. The county is trying to maintain social distancing and the employees are commended for a good job during this transition.

Chairman Culver thanked everyone for being willing to operate under these odd conditions and he asked everyone to continue to do their part and stay safe and encourage others to stay home and stay safe.

Adjourned