

MINUTES OF HOUSTON COUNTY COMMISSION
JANUARY 22, 2007

PRESENT: Chairman Mark S. Culver, Commissioner Curtis Harvey, Commissioner Bobby R. Snellgrove, Commissioner Frances M. Cook, Commissioner Phillip L. Forrester, Gary Sherrer, Attorney, Mark Pool Engineer, and Roy Roberts, Administrator

ABSENT: None

Chairman Mark Culver called the 10:00 A.M. meeting to order, established that a quorum was present and welcomed everyone. Commissioner Snellgrove led in the Pledge of Allegiance. Rev. Jeff Ross, Pastor, Pathway Baptist Church, gave the invocation.

Commissioner Forrester made a motion to approve the minutes of the last meeting. Commissioner Cook seconded; and the motion carried unanimously.

Announcements and Public Comments from Chairman and Commissioners

Chairman Culver reported some employees were approached in the parking lot by someone asking for money Friday afternoon. He requested Mr. Roberts and Sheriff Hughes to get together to see what might be done for some type protective action. Sheriff Hughes urged county employees to call his office immediately if they are confronted. Mr. Roberts stated if the employees will let him know he will go and ask the person to leave. Mr. Roberts reported a request was presented to the commission to put up a fence, and the commission declined to do it.

Awards and Presentations

1. Recognition of Volunteer Firefighters of the Year

Chairman Culver reported the Commission wanted to take the opportunity to recognize the Volunteer Firefighters of the Year. He asked Mr. Clark Matthews, EMA Director, to come forward and bring the honoree with him. The chairman stated the commission wanted the honorees and all of the volunteer firefighters to know how much they appreciate the job they do. He reported sometimes the commission does not say it enough but they realize what the volunteer firefighters mean to the county. He thanked them for all of the unselfish giving the firefighters do.

Mr. Matthews reported last summer, Mr. Gerald Morgan, who had been Chief of the Lovetown Volunteer Firefighters, passed away. He reported each year they ask the volunteer firefighters to put a nominee of the year in, and this year Gerald Morgan was nominated as the Firefighter of the Year. He stated because Mrs.

Brenda Morgan is such a vital part of that organization and is always working in the background he recognized Mr. and Mrs. Morgan. Mrs. Morgan stated they appreciated everyone, their community, and all of the commission's support. Mr. Matthews reported Mr. John Parrish and Mr. Jason Reneau were also finalists and he recognized them even though they were unable to attend. Chairman Culver stated Gerald Morgan was always where you needed him to be and sometimes before you needed him to be, and he always got the job done. The chairman thanked Mrs. Morgan for her efforts.

Consent Agenda

1. Request to take bids on one computer for Personnel Department.

Commissioner Cook made a motion to approve the consent agenda to take bids on one computer for the Personnel Department. Commissioner Harvey seconded the motion. Chairman Culver reported this computer will allow them to begin scanning documents and hopefully get rid of all of the filing cabinets they have. Chairman Culver then called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously.

Regular Agenda

1. Request to adopt Resolution in support of local legislation and authorize advertisement and expenditures.

Chairman Culver reported the three bills included in the package are: (1) removal of the mailing fee on tags, (2) adjustments in compensation, and (3) establishment of a contingency fund. Commissioner Cook made a motion to approve the request to adopt the resolution in support of local legislation and authorize the advertisement and expenditures. Commissioner Harvey seconded the motion. Commissioner Harvey asked if the motion was going to be amended? Chairman Culver stated it was up to the Commission. He reported the motion is as presented. The chairman stated he would ask for discussion and if there were any amendments, then the commission would vote on them.

Chairman Culver reported on the mailing fee, he had received a call last week from a citizen concerned about the \$3.00. He asked everyone to understand what the commission is doing is taking \$1.00 off on tags on receipts that will be mailed. The chairman stated citizens will still pay \$1.00 when the actual aluminum plate is mailed to them. He pointed out all the other times the \$1.00 fee will come off. Chairman Culver reported the \$3.00 that was discussed is coming from legislation from the Probate Office and has nothing to do with the commission. He stated he wanted everyone to understand the commission is taking the mailing fee off in an effort to increase the number of people that mail their tags in.

Commissioner Cook stated it was her understanding that this fee will not come off until January, 2008. The chairman stated the effective date of this act is January 1, 2008 so that they would not be in the middle of getting half of the tags out and it would not result in some people not having to pay for the fee. Commissioner Forrester stated for the remainder of this year the \$1.00 fee will continue to be charged to those who mail in for their tags. Chairman Culver stated that was correct and it has to be passed as legislation.

Chairman Culver reported on Thursday, they discussed the adjustments in compensation as it relates to other counties around the state.

He pointed out the establishment of a contingency fund is primarily to recognize and let employees know how much they are appreciated by the commission.

Chairman Culver called for discussion. Commissioner Snellgrove stated on the adjustment in compensation, his stand is the same as it was on Thursday. He reported he had reviewed the bill over the weekend and he did not see how or why the commission should tie another elected official's salary to be hinged off another salary. The commissioner stated he thought it would cause problems in that it could hinder one of the three from getting a raise. He stated if the commission voted it in, he would like to see it stand on its own. Commissioner Snellgrove reported he knew it would require changing the bill but he felt there was plenty of time because the legislature does not meet until March. The chairman stated the bills have to be advertised for four weeks. He reported the reason for making it in relation was on purpose. Chairman Culver stated he thought there should be a relationship between certain elected officials. He asked them to understand the bill is making the Chairman's compensation 85% of the Probate Judge's salary. He pointed out it will not always be because the Probate Judge will continue to get increases and the compensation that is related to the Chairman will be frozen. Chairman Culver reported in discussion on Thursday, the long range plan would be for the Chairman and the Sheriff to make the same amount. Commissioner Snellgrove stated he understood it to be 85% of the Probate Judge's salary, and he asked if it is just this one time? The chairman stated that was correct. Chairman Culver reminded everyone this bill is about the position, and even though the Probate Judge's salary goes up, this compensation will be frozen for the next several years.

Commissioner Snellgrove stated he had spoken with Sheriff Hughes and he wanted to be included in the legislation. He asked if it could be addressed at that time? The chairman asked if there were any more comments from the commission? He stated they could address any motions to amend the initial motion at any time. Commissioner Harvey stated he thought it was a very big misunderstanding, and the commission actually discussed the increase in the compensation for the Sheriff's position in comparison to the five counties surrounding Houston County. He pointed out the position of Sheriff in Houston County is the most underpaid. Commissioner Harvey stated he thought the

motion should be amended and bring the Sheriff's position up to standards with every other county around us. Chairman Culver stated in order to do that there needed to be a motion to amend the compensation legislation to include the Sheriff at the same compensation he assumed as the Chairman. Commissioner Harvey then made a motion to amend the compensation legislation to include the Sheriff at the same compensation as the Chairman. Commissioner Cook seconded the motion.

Chairman Culver called on Sheriff Hughes. He stated there was a misunderstanding about this, and no one ever contacted him. He reported this is not about him but the position. Sheriff Hughes stated Houston County is a very progressive and growing county. He then told some of the salaries for other Sheriffs around the state that are similar in size, and population.

Mr. Malcolm Black voiced his concern over the \$3.00 charge that will be going into effect in the Probate Office. He also stated everyone that ran for election or re-election understood there was going to be a tax increase to the taxpayers in Houston County. He stated the information should have been made known to the taxpayers before they ran for election or re-election so that they could make a decision as to whether to put the current commission back in office. Mr. Black pointed out this affects all of the people who make minimum wage or those making slightly above minimum wage.

Chairman Culver apologized to the Sheriff for the confusion because he thought the intent was for him to be included. He stated the information the commission had was that the Sheriff did not want to be included. The Chairman stated the vote would be on the amendment to the motion to include the Sheriff in the compensation legislation. He called for the question, and the vote was: YEAS: Commissioners Cook and Harvey. NAYS: Commissioner Snellgrove Commissioner Forrester abstained. Chairman Culver stated the motion passed. Chairman Culver then called for the question on the previous motion to adopt the Resolution on all three bills as amended and authorize advertisement and expenditures. The vote was: YEAS: Commissioners Cook, Harvey, and Forrester. NAYS: Commissioner Snellgrove. The motion passed.

2. Request from Coroner to approve budget amendment for office supplies and postage.

Commissioner Cook made a motion to approve the Coroner's request for a budget amendment for office supplies and postage. Commissioner Harvey seconded. Chairman Culver stated this is the infamous typewriter that was discussed on Thursday. Mr. Roberts stated the county had several typewriters had he known about it. The chairman called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously. (Please see attached budget amendment in Minute Book)

3. Request to enter into Lease Agreement with BancorpSouth for two EMA vehicles and authorize the execution of the necessary paperwork.

Commissioner Cook made a motion to enter into a Lease Agreement with BancorpSouth for two EMA vehicles and authorize the execution of the necessary paperwork. Commissioner Harvey seconded the motion. Chairman Culver reported the interest rate is 4.19%. The chairman called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously.

4. Request to approve agreement of Medical Director for Houston County Jail.

Commissioner Snellgrove made a motion to approve the agreement of the Medical Director for the Houston County Jail. Commissioner Cook seconded the motion. Chairman Culver reported the Medical Director at the jail is there so that the county can provide services at the jail rather than having to send the inmates elsewhere. Commissioner Snellgrove asked Sheriff Hughes if he was up to date on the agreement? Sheriff Hughes stated yes. Chairman Culver called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously.

5. Liquor License Request – Retail Beer License (Off Premises Only) Odom's Petro, Inc. d/b/a Odom's Petro, 14341 S. U. S. Highway #231, Cottonwood, AL.

Commissioner Cook made a motion to approve the request for a Retail Beer License (Off Premises Only) Odom's Petro, Inc. d/b/a Odom's Petro, 14341 S. U.S. Highway #231, Cottonwood, Alabama. Commissioner Snellgrove seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

6. Request to take quotes on wrought iron fence for Courthouse parking lot.

Commissioner Cook made a motion to approve the request to take quotes on a wrought iron fence for the Courthouse parking lot. Commissioner Forrester seconded the motion. The chairman stated Mr. Pool was not here on Thursday when this was discussed. He reported that it is an attempt to put up a fence or an obstruction that will look nice from the entrance of the parking lot all the way down to the corner so that people will use the crosswalk as opposed to jaywalking and the possibility of someone being injured. Chairman Culver stated the road and bridge staff told him that Mr. Pool and the city had looked at it, and the design needs to stay as it is. He reported the commission agreed to ask Mr. Pool to contact the state to see if something could be placed out there so that the northbound traffic on Oates could not turn into the parking lot. Mr. Pool stated that was about the only thing that could be done. He reported it is an enforcement problem and when you start trying to barricade things around it seldom works. Mr. Pool stated he thought the delineators that you can run over and they will flip back up will work in that situation. Mr. Pool reported the parking lot entrance used to be at the intersection and it was real close to the intersection

and it was moved back when the parking lot was redone. Commissioner Cook stated the county is trying to save some lives by installing the delineators. Mr. Pool stated the fence will stop people from crossing, and the thing in the median should stop them from going across there. Mr. Pool reported the only other thing would be to build a wall. Commissioner Cook asked if there would be signage pointing to the crosswalk? Mr. Culver stated he had talked with Mr. Curtis about having two signs on the fence pointing people down to the corner. The chairman stated the fence will not have any impact on the automobile traffic trying to cut across, and they would ask Mr. Pool to try to work out something with the Department of Transportation and maybe the city. The chairman called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously.

7. Request to approve agreements with Deanco Auction to sell equipment.

Commissioner Cook made a motion to approve the agreements with Deanco Auction to sell equipment. Commissioner Snellgrove seconded the motion. Commissioner Snellgrove stated in the conversation on Thursday, it was discussed that Mr. Pool was going to ask them to put a minimum bid on the trucks. Mr. Pool stated he already had, and if they do not sell for \$90,000 then they are not going to sell. The chairman called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously. (Please see attached in Minute Book)

8. Request from Houston County Soil & Water Conservation District for assistance with the 2007 Land Career Development Event.

Commissioner Cook made a motion to approve the request from the Houston County Soil & Water Conservation District for assistance with the 2007 Land Career Development Event. Commissioner Snellgrove seconded the motion. Chairman Culver stated the county has assisted with this in the past and it involves some holes being dug and after the judging is completed the holes are filled back up. The chairman called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously.

Reports from Staff:

a. County Administrator

Mr. Roberts reported for the record, on those 17 dump trucks that will be sold, 10 of them were previously financed and those have been paid off in order to get a clear title on them in time for the sale. He stated generally through Mr. Pool's efforts the county has been able to obtain more money for them. Chairman Culver reported that is why there were only 10 financed and the policy has been that any excess money from the sale would be applied so that we do not finance more. He pointed out if the county continues with the process with the way it is going, the county will be eventually be buying and selling trucks every year with no financing involved. Chairman Culver stated this is the long range goal with

the current plan not to have to finance any. Mr. Roberts pointed out it not only saves interest but it also saves a lot of maintenance. Mr. Roberts stated Mr. Pool has done an excellent job.

Chairman Culver congratulated Mr. Roberts on his 60th Birthday on January 20th.

b. County Engineer

Mr. Pool reported the City of Dothan contacted him Friday about resurfacing Flowers Chapel Road. He pointed out on a map a portion they want the county to resurface. Mr. Pool reported this section needs a G treatment which will cost an additional \$15,000, and the only time it can be put down is in the summer. Mr. Pool recommended that the county not do it until summer with the county's contract. He stated the G treatment will make the road last longer. Chairman Culver stated Flowers Chapel Road is partially maintained by the county and the city has let a contract to resurface that road. He pointed out they were supposed to begin today but due to the rainy weather, he did not think they could start the project. He reported in the past, the city and county have both done work on the gaps on the roads that are maintained by the city and maintained by the county. He stated Mr. Pool is recommending the county not do in conjunction with the city at this time because it needs G treatment and it has to be put down in the summer. Chairman Culver stated it would create a gap temporarily. The chairman stated if the county honors the city's request to do it all at one time, the city would send the county an invoice in the amount of \$67,000. The chairman stated it is whether the commission wants to do it all in one project now or adhere to the recommendation of the engineer and commit to the city that the county will take care of it expeditiously this summer. Commissioner Cook stated since half of the road is in her district she would go along with the Engineer's recommendation. Commissioner Forrester asked if the county went along with the city would the city be resurfacing the county's portion? Mr. Pool stated yes. Mr. Pool stated if the county waits until the summer, a G treatment will be put down and then the plant mix at the same thickness as the city plans to put down. Chairman Culver stated the cost now would be around \$67,000 but if the commission decides to wait until this summer the cost will be \$76,000 because of the cost of the G treatment. Commissioner Cook asked if she was correct in that the G treatment would make the road last longer? Mr. Pool stated yes. Commissioner Snellgrove asked about the rest of the road as far as the G treatment? Chairman Culver stated the rest of the road is under the maintenance of the city and it is not the county's call. Chairman Culver stated a motion would be necessary if the county was going to compensate the city for doing the resurfacing. He reported no action would mean the county will do the work in the summer. The chairman stated hearing no motion for any action, he stated the county would do the work in the summer.

c. County Attorney – There was no report.

The chairman recognized Representative Benjamin Lewis. He stated the commission had already spoken with Sheriff Andy Hughes. He pointed out this is Sheriff Hughes first meeting, and he congratulated both the Sheriff and Representative Lewis and stated the commission looked forward to working closely with them in the coming years.

Adjourn

Commissioner Harvey made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Snellgrove seconded; and the motion carried unanimously.