

MINUTES OF HOUSTON COUNTY COMMISSION
MARCH 10, 2008

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 William J. Dempsey, Chief Administrative Officer

ABSENT: None

Chairman Mark S. Culver called the 10:00 A.M. meeting to order, declared a quorum present, and welcomed everyone. Pastor Tommy R. Davis, New Miranda Baptist Church, gave the invocation. Commissioner Harvey led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

Announcements and Public Comments from Chairman and Commissioners

Chairman Culver reported he had received a lot of calls about the commission's procedures, and from people wanting to come speak at the meeting. He reported he needed to make everyone aware that the Monday meeting is driven by an agenda and the rules and regulations only allow floor discussion about agenda items. The chairman pointed out privileges of the floor are allowed at the administrative meeting and the only discussion from the public that will be allowed in the commission meeting per the regulations the county has been operating under for several years is directly related to anything on the agenda. Chairman Culver then suggested that anyone who had comments they would like to provide to the commissioners that those comments be given to the commission after the meeting. The chairman stated the commission appreciated them being here. He reported for future reference, if anyone wanted to make comments, the Thursday administrative meetings are when they open the floor for any and all comments from citizens. The chairman reported once they set the agenda at Thursday's meeting, Monday's meeting is strictly for comments based on items on the agenda. He reported commissioners can make announcements and public comments.

Commissioner Snellgrove reported he attended a Freedom Salute Ceremony at the Dothan Civic Center on March 9th for the 186th Engineering Company of the Alabama Army National Guard. He stated there were approximately 150 soldiers that had just returned from Iraq, and they awarded these soldiers. Commissioner Snellgrove reported the commission wanted to thank them for what they have done for us and being prepared to do what they did. He thanked their families for the sacrifices they made while they were deployed. Commissioner Snellgrove thanked the parents of the soldiers for raising young men and women who volunteered to protect us both at home and away.

Chairman Culver read the following statement and announcement:

Since our meeting two weeks ago, there has been much excitement in our county and the region concerning Country Crossing, the entertainment related development that will bring jobs, tourism, and opportunity to our community. We know there are concerns about some parts of the project. One of those concerns that has been expressed is that the charitable contributions generated by this project for our community will never be in the million dollar plus range that has been mentioned. Some expect all the charitable funds would be consumed by expenses.

He stated he had contacted the developers of Country Crossing on behalf of the Commission and expressed those concerns to them. He asked them to discuss it with their investors and if they could address the concern. He stated this

morning he received confirmation that Country Crossing has agreed to make a contribution to charities in Houston County annually if necessary to make sure that at least \$2,000,000 per year is distributed to education and charitable organizations in our county. This commitment will mean hundreds of thousands of new dollars for our school systems, it will support our seniors in their efforts to obtain services through the many resources available to our community, and it will support those who are less fortunate than we are as they struggle to pull their lives together. This commitment certainly addresses the issue of the charitable revenue not being as presented. Additionally, we will continue as a Commission to address other concerns that we have and that have been presented. We encourage continued communication on this once in a lifetime economic development project.

Awards and Presentations

1. Presentation by SARCOA – Senior Resource Directory – Robert Crowder, Executive Director

Mr. Crowder thanked the commission for allowing him to come and speak. He reported SARCOA's main thrust is dealing with senior citizens and trying to help them in any way they can. Mr. Crowder stated they represent seven counties from Coffee County through to Covington County, and there are currently over 70,000 senior citizens over the age of 60. He pointed out that does not include the people between the ages of 50 and 60. Mr. Crowder reported they try to provide these senior citizens with information and referral and assistance to get them to the right point of destination that they can receive the services they need and are entitled to. He stated they have just completed their third Wiregrass Senior Leadership Class, and because of that they have created senior advocates.

Mr. Crowder then introduced Mr. Dave Geiger, President of the group. Mr. Crowder reported upon graduation from the Wiregrass Senior Leadership Program, they continue to volunteer and provide services and try to figure out new ways to help senior citizens. He stated one of the offshoots of that has been the Senior Resource Directory. Mr. Crowder reported the directory has involved a tremendous amount of time and effort on the part of the senior advocates. He stated it is the most comprehensive publication about senior services that are available in the seven counties of southeast Alabama. Mr. Crowder then handed out directories to the commission.

Mr. Geiger reported the directory is quite an accomplishment and was taken on by the first Leadership Class. He pointed out the senior advocates are all volunteers and they volunteer their time to offer assistance and to help in anyway possible for seniors. Mr. Geiger reported seniors are one of the largest growing elements of the local community and there are a lot of things they can do to help. He then asked some of the members of the leadership classes to stand. Mr. Geiger reported they volunteered a lot during the Christmas season, and this year they are going to expand the program to help with home maintenance for seniors. He stated if anyone would like to volunteer to contact the SARCOA office. Chairman Culver reported the directories contain very good information, and there are some available in the Commission office. He commended those who have participated in the Senior Leadership Program, and stated the commission appreciated them stepping forward and taking a leadership role in the community. Chairman Culver thanked Mr. Geiger and Mr. Crowder.

2. Road and Bridge Annual Report.

Mr. Pool reported this is a seven year report. He pointed out a couple of items. He stated right of way clearing has increased up to 205 miles compared to what they did last year. Mr. Pool reported the paint striping was down on purpose with the participation of the new striping. He stated the report does not contain how the death rate has been lowered on the county's roads, and being rated #1 in the

State. Mr. Pool pointed out that it costs \$91,948 to resurface 1 mile of road today compared to \$41,840 10 years ago. He reported the cost to pave 1 mile of dirt road today is \$336,913 compared to \$157,998 10 years ago. Chairman Culver reported in miles of resurfacing the last couple of years the county did 5.3 miles and 8 miles the year before that. He stated the commission is getting ready to begin a \$4.5 million 45 mile resurfacing program that the commission approved in the bond issue. Mr. Culver stated it will begin the first of May. Mr. Pool reported bids will be opened on 22 miles of resurfacing on March 11th. Chairman Culver stated it was his understanding part of the resurfacing will be done this year and part of it will be done next year. He stated those numbers will go up dramatically over the next two years thanks to the foresight of the commission. Chairman Culver asked if there were any questions on the annual report?

Commissioner Forrester commended Mr. Pool on the progress being made on the temporary bridge on South Brannon Stand Road at the Highlands Elementary School. He stated he goes by there a least a half a dozen times a day, and he can actually see the project getting into shape and it appears that it will be in place prior to diverting the traffic. Mr. Pool thanked Commissioner Forrester and stated they had intended to be way ahead of the game in case of bad weather. He stated they did not need to close the bridge down and be paying for a detour and the detour not there.

Chairman Culver urged the commission to look through the report and to contact Mr. Pool if they have any questions.

Regular Agenda

1. Request to extend current price for concrete for an additional six months at \$92.00 per cubic yard with fiber (BHC Concrete)

Commissioner Harvey made a motion to approve the request to extend the current price for concrete for an additional six months at \$92.00 per cubic yard with fiber (BHC Concrete) Commissioner Snellgrove seconded the motion. Mr. Pool stated anytime they can get a product at the same price they need to do it. Chairman Culver called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously. (Please see attached in Minute Book)

2. Request to approve agreement with ALDOT for bridge over Beaver Creek on County Road #59.

Commissioner Cook made a motion to approve the agreement with ALDOT for the bridge over Beaver Creek on County Road #59. Commissioner Forrester seconded the motion. Chairman Culver reported this is the bridge that Mr. Forrester mentioned, and this agreement has already been approved, and the commission is approving again. The chairman stated at the meeting in two weeks he thought the commission will be asked to concur in the bid that was taken on the replacement of the bridge. Chairman Culver stated he thought the price was around \$1.4 million, which is the most expensive bridge the county has ever attempted to replace. He reported the commission received some assistance from the federal government, the state government and the City of Dothan. Mr. Pool complemented the commission on the \$245,000 from the federal government. He sated he did not know of any county chairman or county any where that has gone to Washington and gotten the money on a county project. Chairman Culver stated the entire commission kept on top of it, and it was about a two year project. He reported Congressman Everett spearheaded it and the chairman stated the commission appreciated his efforts in getting the money. The chairman called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously. (Please see in Resolution Book)

3. Request to approve contract to sell 2 tractors with DEANCO.

Commissioner Harvey made a motion to approve the contract to sell 2 tractors with DEANCO. Commissioner Cook seconded the motion. Chairman Culver stated these are two that were previously discussed and there were some issues about getting prices that would allow DEANCO to handle the bid. Mr. Pool stated they had tried to sell the tractors on GovDeals but they could not get what they got at one DEANCO sale. Chairman Culver called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously.

4. Request to approve position and funding for Building & Flood Plain Permit Coordinator, Grade 16.

Commissioner Harvey made a motion to approve the request for the position and funding for the Building & Flood Plain Permit Coordinator, Grade 16. Commissioner Forrester seconded the motion. Mr. Pool stated when they get it all set up they will be ready the first of May and they need to know two months ahead of time because he has to advertise, hire someone, and wants to take that person to Lee County to see their operation before anything is implemented here. Chairman Culver stated his understanding is the county is approving this position because the Flood Plain Permitting has already been taken out to Road & Bridge and they need to be addressing it. He stated secondly, on the Building Permitting the county is going to implement there needs to be some study into how it will be done, fees, etc. Chairman Culver stated he assumed Mr. Pool would bring that back to the commission before it is implemented, and once that is done, the county would begin implementing the project. He stated he thought two months would be reasonable time to look into all that. Mr. Pool stated he felt it was an excellent time to do it while building was off; implement it and advertise it. Chairman Culver called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously.

5. Request to approve budget amendment to transfer money for striper.

Commissioner Cook made a motion to approve the budget amendment to transfer money for striper. Commissioner Harvey seconded the motion. The chairman called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously. (Please see attached budget amendment?)

Reports from Staff:

- a. Chief Administrative Officer

Mr. Dempsey reported in response to a request he had received the day he started to provide budget to actual information quicker, especially for Mr. Pool, that as of last Thursday they had a meeting that will roll out the budget to actual spending on a real time basis. Chairman Culver stated that was a big step and a real accomplishment for the Chief Administrative Officer and the Accounting Department, and everyone else that provides that information. He thanked Mr. Dempsey, and the department heads for their work.

- b. County Engineer

Mr. Pool stated he knew of no county anywhere that has a live budget up to date. He reported Mr. Dempsey had done something that needs to be shared at one of the conferences. Mr. Pool stated this would give him no excuse to be out of budget on any line item, and has made his life easier as a county engineer. Mr. Culver stated he felt it had made it easier on all department heads.

- c. County Attorney

There was no report.

Adjourn.

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