

MINUTES OF THE HOUSTON COUNTY COMMISSION  
APRIL 28, 2009

PRESENT: Chairman Mark S. Culver, Commissioner Curtis Harvey, Commissioner Bobby Snellgrove, Commissioner Frances M. Cook, Commissioner Phillip L. Forrester, Patrick Jones, Acting Attorney, Justin Barfield, Acting Engineer, William J. Dempsey, Chief Administrative Officer

ABSENT: Gary Sherrer, Attorney, Mark Pool, Engineer

Chairman Mark S. Culver called the 10:00 A.M. meeting to order, declared a quorum was present, and welcomed everyone. Chairman Culver stated before the invocation he would like everyone to pause for a moment of silence in memory of Officer Dexter Hammond who lost his life in the line of duty. He reported Officer Hammond was a personal friend and was an all around good guy. The chairman stated you hate to lose anyone but particularly those that put their lives in the line of fire daily for everyone.

Rev. Jeremy Martens, Pastor, Northside Methodist Church, gave the invocation. Commissioner Cook led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

#### Announcements and Public Comments from Chairman and Commissioners

Chairman Culver reported Mark Pool was recently named the 2009 Engineer of the Year. He stated the commission was quite proud of the award for Mr. Pool. The chairman pointed out Mr. Pool is only one of two people who have been presented the award twice in their county engineering career. He reported the commission continues to take pride in the county's roads and the department. The chairman stated a lot of other engineers around the state have been trained by Mr. Pool. Chairman Culver reported even though Mr. Pool was not present, he wanted to publicly extend congratulations to him for a job well done.

Chairman Culver reported Monday, April 27<sup>th</sup> was a holiday. He pointed out he came in and worked a while and there were a lot of citizens that came that were not aware of the holiday. The chairman reported the county does the best job possible to notify the public of the holiday schedule. He stated it was put out through the media, it is on the county's website, and it was discussed at the administrative meeting. The chairman asked for the public's indulgence as the county tries to continue to be responsive in letting people know when there is a holiday. He stated at the same time there is some responsibility on the citizens to pay attention and know when there is a holiday. He apologized to those citizens who did come to the county offices.

The chairman reported May 9<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 A.M. will be the media softball excursion against the elected officials. He encouraged everyone to attend and bring canned food to go to the Wiregrass Area Food Bank. Chairman Culver reported Commissioner Cook has rounded up about 30 cheerleaders from the local schools to come and support the elected officials. The chairman reported the game will take place at Westgate Park across from the Miracle Field.

#### Awards and Presentations

1. Proclamation – “Small Business Week” – Ms. Rona Miller – Chairperson – Small Business Committee

Chairman Culver asked Ms. Rona Miller and the committee to come forward. Commissioner Cook made a motion to approve the proclamation proclaiming “Small Business Week” May 4<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>. Commissioner Forrester seconded the motion.

Chairman Culver reported it was always a pleasure to present the proclamation because as it has been said many times that small business is the lifeblood of our community, our country and this

is a small thing the community does. He commended the Chamber of Commerce for putting Small Business Week together every year. The chairman stated it is always a great event. He pointed out they have good informational sessions, and it is a time to take note of, commemorate, and recognize our small businesses. Chairman Culver then read the Proclamation and presented it to Ms. Miller. He thanked her and the Chamber of Commerce for taking the time to recognize small businesses.

Ms. Miller thanked the Chairman for the Proclamation and introduced Mrs. JoAnne McGhee, Mr. Jim McGhee, members of the Small Business Committee, Mr. Matt Parker, President, Dothan Area Chamber of Commerce, Mr. Steve Turkoski, Project Information Manager, and Mrs. Melea McKeen, photographer. She encouraged anyone who owns a small business to take advantage of the Chamber of Commerce and the services they offer.

Mr. Turkoski reported small business is a major component of the community and the nation as a whole. He reported in Houston County during 2005-2006, there was a 2.2% growth of businesses within the county with only three tenths of one percent being large businesses. Mr. Turkoski reported the number of individual proprietorships or independent contractors grew by 5.5%, and it numbers over 6,500. He stated it is becoming more prevalent as the economy slows a little bit.

He reported a full week of activities are planned for Small Business to include the representative from the Small Business Administration in Mobile coming to speak on the recovery package and how it will affect small business.

Mr. Turkoski reported the Small Business Tool Kit has been updated and is on the Chamber's website and he encouraged anyone interested in starting a small business to check it out.

Chairman Culver thanked the representatives from the Small Business Committee and the Chamber of Commerce for the job they do every year.

## 2. Quarterly Envision Update – Dr. Thomas Harrison, Envision Coordinator

Chairman Culver reported the next item was to be the Quarterly Envision Update but because of a conflict, Dr. Harrison will be at the next meeting, May 11<sup>th</sup>.

## Regular Agenda

### 1. Request to grant application for cemetery.

Commissioner Cook made a motion to approve the request to grant the application for a cemetery to Mr. James E. Ingram, 1559 County Road 75 South, Pansey. Commissioner Snellgrove seconded the motion. Chairman Culver reported there is a process a person has to go through involving the Probate Office, the Health Department, the Commission, and maybe others in order to site a cemetery, and this is that portion of the process. The chairman called for the question and the motion carried unanimously.

### 2. Request to approve grant for Sheriff's Department.

Commissioner Cook made a motion to approve the grant for the Sheriff's Department. Commissioner Snellgrove seconded the motion. The chairman reported there was no one from the Sheriff's Department because they had gone to Officer Dexter Hammond's funeral. He stated this is a JAG grant and the county will be receiving some equipment. He pointed out there is a \$424.21 match. Chairman Culver called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously. (Please see attached in Minute Book)

## Staff Reports:

Chief Administrative Officer – there was no report

County Engineer

Justin Barfield, Acting Engineer, reported the crews had worked Friday and Monday on the closed roads, and there were currently nine roads closed. The chairman asked Mr. Barfield to get him a list of the roads in order to notify the media.

County Attorney – there was no report

Chairman Culver asked Mr. Clark Matthews, EMA Director, to give an update on the potential of a swine flu epidemic. Chairman Culver reported this is one of those things that you see in other parts of the world and other areas of the United States but Houston County has to take it seriously as the people responsible for preparation. He stated he did not think the general public understood the severity that it could create.

Mr. Matthews reported the county has been preparing a long time and the commission passed a lot of plans and adopted them. He stated it looks like Houston County is ready. Mr. Matthews then gave a quick update from Dr. Donald Williamson, State Department of Public Health had sent out prior to the meeting.

Mr. Matthews reported there were no outbreaks in Alabama yet but there have been cases in 5 U.S. states and Mexico, Canada, New Zealand, France, Spain, and the United Kingdom, and Israel. He stated at this time, the Alabama Department of Health, the Alabama Department of Homeland Security, and the Alabama Emergency Management Agency as well as Houston County EMA are preparing for this possible pandemic or flu season that gets severe. He reported the CDC would be sending them 25% of the county's cache within the next week. He stated they would be breaking it down and distributing it to the other counties as well as Houston County. He pointed out it will take a lot of volunteers to accomplish this. Mr. Matthews reported there would be a 1:30 P.M. meeting with all of the partners in the city and county to go over the plan and to assist any agency that may have issues that they need assistance with.

Mr. Matthews cautioned everyone to wash their hands, cover a cough or sneeze with a tissue or sleeve, stay at least 6 feet away from anyone who is sick, and clean and disinfect any contaminated surfaces. He stated if someone is sick with flu-like symptoms they should stay home, and they should update stockpiles of food, water and medications.

Mr. Matthews reported they recommended stockpiling food, water, and medications all the time and he pointed out Hurricane season begins June 1<sup>st</sup>. He stated they are saying the season will not be as bad as in years past, and he stated he hoped there would be minimal problems with hurricanes.

Chairman Culver encouraged everyone to take this with some sincerity. He stated they certainly hope that this flu would not spread like it could and if it did, it would be very severe. The chairman stated they were going to keep people advised through the state, the local EMA office, the media, and he asked for the public to be alert on the information that will come out on the issue.

Mr. Matthews reported there would be a news release later in the day. He pointed out they wanted to consult with some of the medical personnel before they release the information because they wanted people to understand that the symptoms could be different.

Mr. Matthews reported the 1:30 meeting was not an open meeting. He stated it was just for the departments, city and county law enforcement, police, fire, and people who have an interest. He stated he wanted to make sure everyone understood it was not a public meeting.

Adjourn.

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



