

MINUTES OF HOUSTON COUNTY COMMISSION
MAY 8, 2006

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, Roy J. Roberts, Administrator.

ABSENT: None.

Chairman Mark Culver called the 10:00 A.M. meeting to order, declared a quorum present, and welcomed everyone. Rev. Oliver Allen, Jr., Pastor, Parks Chapel AME Church, gave the invocation. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Harvey.

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

Announcements and Public Comment from Chairman and Commissioners

Chairman Culver asked Mr. Mark Pool, Houston County Engineer, and Mr. Justin Barfield, Engineer in Training, to come forward. It was reported Mr. Myer Holloway, Assistant Engineer, would be late. The Chairman reported the National Association of County Commissions (NACO), which is the national version of the Association of County Commissions of Alabama, represents County Commissions all over the United States. He pointed out engineers have corresponding organizations, NACE, National Association of County Engineers and the state's association, Association of County Engineers of Alabama. He reported that for many years, NACE has had an award in excellence in county engineering and our county has never received that award. Chairman Culver reported the state decided they would develop a county engineering award named after John F. Courson, who has been employed in the county division for 38 years. Chairman Culver reported last week he was notified that the first annual John F. Courson Excellence in County Engineering Award was given to the Houston County Road and Bridge Department. He stated the award was given because of the county's 10 year program on traffic safety that reduced the death rate on Houston County roads by 80%. Chairman Culver reported by winning this award, Houston County is automatically entered into the National Association of County Engineers Excellence in County Engineering award. The chairman reported he thought it said a lot about Mr. Pool, Mr. Barfield, and Mr. Holloway along with all the employees at the Road and Bridge Department. He reported the commission tries to give them the assets they need to get the job done, but they are the ones out there doing the job for the citizens. At that time, the Chairman presented the award to Mr. Pool and Mr. Barfield.

Mr. Pool stated that it was a team effort and he was proud to be a part of the team. He complimented the commission for allowing his department to do their job. Mr. Pool reported that he could not say enough about his employees and he would put them up against anyone. He stated there is a lot of hard work involved and these type awards do not happen by accident.

Chairman Culver stated Mr. Pool and his employees should be very proud of the award and the commission is proud for the employees and our county.

Awards and Presentations

1. Proclamation – “Workforce Development Professionals Month” - Steve Turkoski, Director, Workforce Development, Dothan Area Chamber of Commerce.

Chairman Culver asked Mr. Steve Turkoski, Director, Workforce Development, Dothan Area Chamber of Commerce, Mr. David Duke, Career Center Affairs Coordinator, Alfred Saliba Family Services Center, Ms. Pam Cutchen, Manager, Alabama Employment Services, Ms. Judy Carroll, Career Link Coordinator, Alabama Employment Services, Ms. Barbara Knight, Director, Senior Aides Program, Dr. Kay Roney, Dean, Institutional Advancement, Wallace Community College, and Dr. Jack Sasser, Executive Director, Wiregrass Rehab Center to come forward. It was pointed out Dr. Sasser was not in attendance. Commissioner Forrester made a motion to declare the month of May as “Workforce Development Professionals Month.” Commissioner Harvey seconded; and the motion carried unanimously. The chairman presented Mr. Turkoski with a Proclamation declaring May as “Workforce Development Professionals Month.” Chairman Culver reported workforce development is an area of economic development that is often misunderstood and often overlooked but it cannot be allowed to be that way. He stated that he appreciated all of them attending and making the public aware of the importance of workforce development in our community.

Mr. Turkoski reported our country has been blessed with tremendous natural resources and he felt it is probably one of the reasons we fell behind other countries in the development of our human resources. He stated the world is starting to catch up and for those countries that had a dearth of natural resources have always invested heavily in human resources. Mr. Turkoski pointed out there are other countries such as India, Pakistan, and China that are putting out many more engineers than the United States. He stated our country needs to keep our population educated, and lifelong learning is the key. Mr. Turkoski reported all of these representatives are the key elements to that. He stated the Chamber of Commerce does not provide a service in workforce development, but they partner with all of the organizations and try to make sure their good deeds are recognized. Mr. Turkoski thanked the Commission and all of the

representatives present. Chairman Culver thanked Mr. Turkoski and the representatives for all they do for the community.

2. Proclamation – “Small Business Week” – Rona Miller, Chairperson, Small Business Week Committee.

Chairman Culver asked Ms. Rona Miller to come forward and bring the other people with her. Commissioner Cook made a motion to approve the Proclamation declaring May 8th-May 12th as “Small Business Week” in Houston County. Commissioner Snellgrove seconded; and the motion carried unanimously. Chairman Culver then presented the Proclamation to Ms. Miller. Mr. Steve Turkoski introduced Ms. Miller. Chairman Culver reported small business is the life blood of our community, and the commission appreciates the Chamber recognizing that once a year and all of the things they do. Mr. Turkoski reported Mr. Matt Parker was unable to make the meeting and he asked him to reiterate some of the important aspects of small business development. He stated in the U.S., about 97% of all business is small business using the criteria of the Small Business Administration of less than 500 employees. Mr. Turkoski reported small business creates 60-80% of all the jobs, and there are about 38 million people working for companies with less than 100 employees. He pointed out in Alabama, 97% also holds true with about 347,000 small businesses and they create a lot of opportunity and wealth in our state. Mr. Turkoski reported the Small Business Committee put together a program for this week, and Rona Miller is the Chairperson. Ms. Miller introduced Ms. Wendy Blair, Blair Staffing, Ms. Joanne McGhee, SE Construction, and Ms. Debbie Pilcher, Pilcher Ambulance. Ms. Miller reported events are scheduled for everyday beginning on May 9th with a luncheon seminar going through Friday. She encouraged anyone who has not registered as a chamber member to call and get the time and dates of the events.

3. Proclamation – “Foster Care Month” – Mary Paulk, Executive Director, Houston County Department of Human Resources.

Chairman Culver asked Mrs. Mary Paulk, Executive Director, Department of Human Resources, to come forward and to bring the others with her. Commissioner Cook made a motion to approve the Proclamation declaring the month of May as “Foster Care Month.” Commissioner Harvey seconded; and the motion carried unanimously. Chairman Culver then presented the Proclamation. Mrs. Paulk thanked the Commission for their support on behalf of all of the staff at the Department of Human Resources. She stated the foster parents are a very special group of people, and DHR comes to them with children who have issues, and their families are in crisis. She reported these foster parents take them in and love them and help to unite them with their parents or put them in a very safe place. She stated it is a wonderful working relationship. Mrs. Paulk thanked the members of the Rotary Club who were present for the gifts their children receive at Christmas. She introduced Ms.

Michelle Henley, a foster parent, and Mrs. Paulk stated she opens her home all hours of the day and night. Mrs. Paulk introduced Ms. Summers Bell, Supervisor of the Resource Unit for DHR, and she stated Ms. Bell is responsible for recruiting foster parents and getting them licensed to take care of the kids. Mrs. Paulk thanked the commission for everything they do.

4. Employee of the Month – Road and Bridge.

Mr. Pool asked Mr. John Sanders to come forward and presented him with the "Employee of the Month" Certificate. Mr. Pool reported Mr. Sanders has been employed in his department since 1997, and since 2002 he has had perfect attendance. Mr. Pool stated that Mr. Sanders is an excellent employee. Mr. Sanders thanked Mr. Pool for the award and stated he thanked God for giving him the strength to be able go to work each day. Chairman Culver thanked Mr. Sanders on behalf of the Commission for his hard work and dedication to Houston County.

Consent Agenda

1. Request to approve expense for printing of insert for voter's list.

Chairman Culver reported the bill that passed allows the county to have an insert rather than paying for a legal ad. He stated that the county would save around \$20,000 being able to have the voter's list as an insert. Mr. Roberts reported he had a copy of the insert that will be placed in the newspaper on May 14th and it is clear and concise, shows all of the voting places, and has a place in the end to update the information or if a person's name is not included to fill it out. Chairman Culver stated this is a good step and will save the county a lot of money. He reported in this day and age of technology he hoped one day it would be on the internet, and we would have them available but not have to publish them. Commissioner Snellgrove made a motion to approve the expense of printing the insert for the voter's list. Commissioner Forrester seconded; and the motion carried unanimously. (Please see attached in Minute Book)

Regular Agenda

1. Request to adopt Smoking Policy.

Commissioner Harvey made a motion to adopt a Smoking Policy. Commissioner Cook seconded the motion. Chairman Culver reported this was discussed at a department head meeting and those who voiced an opinion felt like we needed a policy like this. He stated it expands the policy in effect from smoking in buildings to include vehicles. The chairman stated there was discussion about other forms of tobacco and this policy does not address those. He stated he assumed it is the desire of the commission not to address those other forms. He pointed out if the commission wished to do that then the policy before them needed to be

amended before it is approved. Commissioner Snellgrove stated Ordinance #92-115 was put in place back in 1992 by the City of Dothan. He reported this policy to be approved states the prohibition in vehicles shall be enforced as a Group One disciplinary offense. He asked if there would be any disciplinary action for an employee who smokes in the building? Mr. Snellgrove reported in reading the policy it excludes them from the Group One disciplinary offense. Chairman Culver reported the Resolution the county passed in June, 1992 simply referenced the City Ordinance allowing the county to make the building smokeless. He stated at this time, he thought it is a matter of violating a city ordinance if an employee smokes in the building. Chairman Culver stated the policy could be adjusted any way the commission would like but is was written the way it was because that is the policy currently in effect on buildings per the Resolution dated in 1992. Commissioner Snellgrove reported smoking in the building is \$100.00 for the first violation and the second violation shall not exceed \$200.00, and/or 80 hours community service. Commissioner Snellgrove stated he thought the department heads needed to understand they do not use the Group One disciplinary offense against county employees if it is not going to be in the county's policy. Chairman Culver stated that was correct. He reported if this policy is adopted would be in effect if someone smokes in the building whether an employee or otherwise, a city ordinance would take effect and he assumed a city officer would be called to come and do something about it. He stated because there is no city ordinance against smoking in vehicles the only thing the county can do is to make it an offense through the personnel policies. He stated the commission could expand the Group One disciplinary action to include anyone who smokes in the building if that is the commission's desire and then they would be subject to the \$100 fine and a Group One offense. The chairman called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously.

2. Request to purchase two (2) radar speed detection trailers at an estimated cost of \$38,000, 80/20 funding using MPO funds.

Commissioner Cook made a motion to approve the request to purchase two (2) radar speed detection trailers at an estimated cost of \$38,000, 80/20 funding using MPO funds. Commissioner Snellgrove seconded the motion. Commissioner Snellgrove asked if the \$38,000 was the total cost of both of them? Mr. Pool stated that is a high estimate. He pointed out they would have to write specs and bid it. He reported it has not been approved by the MPO. Chairman Culver stated he thought it would be prudent to amend the motion to state pending MPO approval. The chairman stated he is concerned because if the purchase has been approved and then the funding is not received then it would be purchased with 100% county funds. Chairman Culver asked Commissioner Cook is she would amend her motion to include pending MPO funding approval? Commissioner Snellgrove agreed on his second on the motion. Commissioner Snellgrove asked if \$38,000 is the total price on them then will the county only pay 20% of that amount? Mr. Pool stated that was

correct. The chairman called for the question on the motion; and it carried unanimously.

3. Request to approve budget amendment for the emergency replacement of air conditioner in SARCOA building at the Farm Center.

Commissioner Harvey made a motion to approve the budget amendment for the emergency replacement of the air conditioner in the SARCOA building at the Farm Center. Commissioner Forrester seconded the motion. Commissioner Snellgrove reported there was discussion on Thursday about the county's agreement with SARCOA on maintenance of the building. He pointed out they are getting the building rent free. He asked Mr. Roberts about a written agreement. Mr. Roberts stated it was all handled at budget time and presented as part of the budget proposal and approved within the budget. Commissioner Snellgrove stated the question was if the county wants to pay for it or ask SARCOA to pay for part of it. Mr. Snellgrove reported he did not have a problem with the county fixing the air conditioner because the building belongs to the county. He stated it might be that the chairman be authorized to discuss this with SARCOA and see if they would help with the cost. Commissioner Snellgrove reported he thought the cost was \$4,400.00. He stated he thought the county should go ahead and fix it and then there needed to be a clear understanding on the maintenance in the future. Chairman Culver reported SARCOA has purchased a piece of land and will construct a building that will house this and all of their other activities hopefully within a year. He stated if he were in their shoes he would not invest \$2,200 for a partial payment on an air conditioner in a building that he would not be in but for 8-10 months. The chairman reported Mr. Curtis, Maintenance Manager, stated the air conditioner should last 20 years and if it is prorated out, the cost would be about \$17 per month. Chairman Culver asked the commission to request that SARCOA pay the county \$50.00 per month or some figure the commission could agree on for the remainder of the time they are there. He reported it will cover some of the cost of the air conditioner plus a little bit to cover electrical costs. He stated he would like it to be pro-rated rather than a lump sum. Chairman Culver reported the county will put someone back in the building when SARCOA moves out and the air conditioning needs to be in there. Commissioner Snellgrove suggested when the county puts someone else in a building rent free that some type of agreement be drawn up on maintenance. Chairman Culver reported there is a motion to approve the request and he asked if the commission wanted to amend the motion to include some payback stipulation in it or not? Commissioner Cook stated she thought \$50.00 per month would be a reasonable amount. She asked the chairman if he knew approximately how long SARCOA would be in the building? Chairman Culver stated it depends on how long the financing, construction, and building takes but they are thinking the maximum time would be a year. Commissioner Forrester asked about the new location? Chairman Culver stated it is out in the unincorporated area of Houston County on Brannon Stand Road.

Mr. Tom Steely, resident of Columbia, suggested that the commission ask SARCOA to be responsible for the utilities for the remainder of time they are in the building. He stated SARCOA nor the county will not have a partial bill.

Commissioner Cook asked Commissioner Harvey to amend his motion to include SARCOA paying \$50.00 per month for the remainder of the time they occupy the building? Commissioner Harvey accepted the amendment and Commissioner Forrester accepted on his second. Chairman Culver reported the motion now would state to approve the budget amendment for the emergency replacement of the air conditioner in the SARCOA Building at the Farm Center and ask SARCOA to compensate the county \$50.00 per month once the air conditioner is installed until they vacate the building. The chairman called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously.

Reports from Staff:

1. County Administrator – there was none
2. County Engineer – there was none
3. County Attorney – there was none

Adjourn

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