

MINUTES OF THE HOUSTON COUNTY COMMISSION

JUNE 8, 2009

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, established that a quorum was present, and welcomed everyone. Rev. Morris Bates, Pastor, Church of God of Prophecy, gave the invocation. Commissioner Snellgrove led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

Announcements and Public Comments from Chairman and Commissioners

Chairman Culver extended the commission's congratulations to everyone involved in Coffee County from the City of Enterprise, the Coffee County Commission, the law enforcement, state law enforcement and particularly the organizers of BAMA JAM, which was held over the weekend. He stated he thought it was a tremendous success, and the rain did not seem to dampen any spirits. The chairman pointed out people attended from 47 states and 6 or 7 different countries. Chairman Culver reported it was a great event and it shows the kind of acceptance and an economic stimulus that something like that can provide, and what the commission hopes can soon be provided in Houston County. He stated it is obviously something people want and something people participate in, and the commission hopes to see that type of thing going in Houston County by or shortly after the end of the year.

The chairman reported the Farmer's Market that was held downtown this weekend was quite a collaboration between the museum and the Farm Center, and it was a tremendous success. He encouraged people to check it out every Saturday in June and July.

The dedication of the Wiregrass Music Mural will be Wednesday, June 10th, at 11:00 A.M. at 306 North Foster Street next to the Wiregrass United Way office. He stated this mural will represent people who have been involved in the music industry that have touched Houston County or have been touched. The chairman pointed out some of those people will be in attendance.

Chairman Culver reported Mr. Dempsey received a notice from Standard & Poors last week that Houston County's underlying bond rating has been raised to an A+ from an A. He stated that was something the commission, county employees, and all residents of Houston County should be proud of particularly in these difficult times because many organizations are having their bond ratings lowered. The chairman reported there are very few counties in the state with an A+ rating.

Mr. Dempsey reported the rating was due to a study of the economic conditions of the area, and everything looked favorable.

The chairman reported earlier in the day, Bruner Pond Road was closed after extreme undermining of the road was discovered. He stated Mr. Pool will have some more comments under his report.

Awards and Presentations

1. Introduction of Houston County Queens – Mrs. Sue Hicks, Altrusa Club – Ms. Katie Tharp - “Miss Houston County”, Ms. Peyton Blackwell, “Little Miss Houston County”, Ms. Caroline Crowley, “Teen Miss Houston County”, Ms. Taylor Bodiford, “Junior Miss Houston County”, and Ms. KaiLynn Davis, “Future Little Miss Houston County”

Chairman Culver stated this is always one of the favorite meetings of the year because the tremendous young people in our community are showcased, and those who are actually representing Houston County and their families are publicly recognized and congratulated.

He asked Mrs. Sue Hicks, Altrusa Club, to come forward and bring the queens. Mrs. Hicks stated they were proud of the queens. She reported there were 41 girls in the pageant this year, each one of them had competition.

Mrs. Hicks then introduced the queens as follows: Ms. KaiLynn Davis, "Future Little Miss Houston County", daughter of Bryan and Tami Davis, and she will attend Rehobeth Elementary School. Ms. Peyton Blackwell, "Little Miss Houston County", daughter of Phillip and Stacy Blackwell, and she attends Montana Street Magnet School. Chairman Culver pointed out her mother taught his son, Cannon, this past year, and her grandmother, Ms. Sue Kiley, is the administrative assistant at the Houston County Water Authority. Ms. Taylor Bodiford, "Junior Miss Houston County", daughter of Scott and Teri Bodiford, and goes to Rehobeth School. Ms. Bodiford stated she was very happy to represent Houston County this year. Mrs. Hicks stated Ms. Caroline Crowley, "Teen Miss Houston County," was not able to attend. Mrs. Hicks introduced Ms. Katie Tharp, "Miss Houston County", daughter of Keith and Regina Tharp, and she attends Northside Methodist Academy. Ms. Tharp stated she was honored to be chosen as Ms. Houston County and to be the ambassador for the county and represent everyone at the Miss National Peanut Festival. Chairman Culver reported Ms. Tharp played in the Media/Elected Officials Softball Tournament. The chairman thanked all of the girls for representing Houston County and he presented each of the queens with Houston County pins.

Mrs. Hicks thanked the commission on behalf of the Altrusa Club for allowing them to help promote the youth of the county. Chairman Culver thanked Mrs. Hicks for all she does.

2. Discussion of Kickoff for Be Counted U.S. Census 2010 – Rev. Paul Holliman

Chairman Culver asked Ms. Cyla Harrell, Ms. Chancey Sinquefield, and Commissioner Curtis Harvey to come forward. Chairman Culver reported in 2010 there would be a census which would determine how many representatives will be in the Federal government, funding, road money, etc. He pointed out the 100,000 mark for cities places them in a different category of funding. The chairman reported it is very important that an accurate and complete count of the census be done next year. He reported work has been going on for a little over a year, and they are to the point to where it is time to talk about the count itself. The chairman reported the kickoff will be June 19th in the county parking lot, located behind the Administrative Building. At that time, he turned it over to Ms. Sinquefield.

Ms. Sinquefield stated the committee was very excited about the Kickoff and she stated they wanted to have everyone come out and join them. She reported it would begin at noon and lunch would be served, and there would be entertainment. Ms. Sinquefield reported their main goal is to get the word out about the census and make sure everyone knows about the kickoff and joins them. She pointed out in 2000, only 61% of the citizens of Houston County participated in the census, and she stated their goal is to get as many as they can but they will not take less than 85%. Ms. Sinquefield reported not only is the census federally mandated, but it is crucial to Houston County. She reported approximately \$987.00 per person per household is received when the questionnaires are completed. She urged everyone to come out and enjoy the Kickoff on June 19th.

Commissioner Harvey stated there would be balloons, flags, food, the firemen, police officers, and the Sheriff would be attending the gala event. He asked Mark Pool to explain the procedure for the gas tax. Mr. Pool stated it was based on population. He stated the gas tax is collected statewide and divided by the population.

Ms. Harrell stated she wanted to thank everyone in advance for coming to the kickoff and that she knew they would help spread the word.

Chairman Culver thanked them and he stated the committee would be going into the faith based community, business community, education community, Hispanic community and all aspects of the community to insure everyone gets counted in the 2010 Census.

2. Request to adopt Resolution for “Honoring our Heroes” Program, a salute to all Alabama Firefighters and Emergency Medical Personnel.

Chairman Culver reported Mr. Clark Matthews was unable to attend the meeting due to a personal conflict. He stated these people who give their lives in order to keep the citizens safe and take care of us in our times of need are truly heroes. He then read the Resolution.

Commissioner Harvey made a motion to adopt the Resolution for “Honoring Our Heroes” Program, a salute to all Alabama Firefighters and Emergency Medical Personnel. Commissioner Cook seconded; and the motion carried unanimously. Chairman Culver thanked all of the firefighters and emergency medical personnel for their service. He stated he would get this to Mr. Matthews in order for him to get it to the appropriate place. (Please see in Resolution Book)

Chairman Culver thanked Commissioner Snellgrove for chairing the Administrative meeting on Thursday while he was gone.

Regular Agenda

1. Request to adopt Resolution for water improvements on CDBG Project located on West Smithville Road – Mrs. Emily Waters.

Commissioner Cook made a motion to adopt the Resolution for water improvements on CDBG Project located on West Smithville Road. Commissioner Snellgrove seconded the motion. Chairman Culver reported this project has been approved by the commission but they are pursuing stimulus money for the project. He reported it is a competitive project and if the funding is not approved, the commission has another route to pursue before the county has to use 100% of its funds. Commissioner Cook stated she thought Mrs. Waters had reported on Thursday, they would know on the 21st or 22nd of June about this project. Mrs. Waters stated that was correct. Commissioner Cook stated there were no matching funds. Chairman Culver stated that was correct it would be 100% money. The chairman called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously. (Please in Resolution Book)

2. Request to approve policy concerning FEMA Funding or Federal Highway Administration Funding for small towns with a population of less than 5,000 during a presidential declared disaster.

Commissioner Cook made a motion to approve the policy concerning FEMA Funding or Federal Highway Administration Funding for small towns with a population of less than 5,000 during a presidential declared disaster. Commissioner Forrester seconded the motion. Chairman Culver stated the county does quite a bit of maintenance at the request of the small towns within the county and not many counties in the state do that for their towns. He reported the county does not mind doing this but in this particular case, their towns will be re-paid by FEMA for the work on their roads. Chairman Culver stated this policy would set up a procedure so that if the county does the work they will know the money will come to who does the work. Chairman Culver called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously. (Please see in Policy Manual)

3. Request to approve list of items to be sold on GovDeals.

Commissioner Harvey made a motion to approve the list of items to be sold on GovDeals. Commissioner Forrester seconded the motion. Chairman Culver called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously. (Please see attached list in Minute Book)

4. Request to adopt Resolution to enter into a lease agreement with Hancock Bank for the lease of a 2009 Ford F-250 Crew Cab Pick-up Truck for EMA.

Commissioner Cook made a motion to adopt the Resolution to enter into a lease agreement with Hancock Bank for the lease of a 2009 Ford F-250 Pick-up Truck for EMA. Commissioner Harvey seconded the motion. Commissioner Snellgrove asked if this would be handled after the meeting? Mr. Dempsey stated payment is expected to be to them by Wednesday. Chairman Culver called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously. (Please see in Resolution Book)

5. Request from Sheriff to approve Memorandum of Understanding for the 2009 Byrne Justice Assistance Grant – County Portion - \$8,489.85.

Commissioner Harvey made a motion to approve the Memorandum of Understanding for the 2009 Byrne Justice Assistance Grant – County Portion - \$8,489.85 as requested by the Sheriff. Commissioner Snellgrove seconded the motion. Chairman Culver stated this is the same type of grant that the commission approved last month. He asked if the motion needed to include a budget amendment? Commissioner Harvey included in the motion to cover the appropriate budget amendment. Commissioner Snellgrove seconded the motion. 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

Mr. Pool covered the road closed list as follows:

Lamp Brothers Road - expect to have it open in two weeks

Lanier Road – still waiting for the water to go down

Sealy Wells Road – expect to have it open in two weeks

Ebenezer Road – expect to have it open in two weeks

Windmill Road – expect to have it open in one week - it is paved and they need to stripe it and a few other things

East Cook Road Bridge – just let it and it will probably be a year

County Road 55 South – expect to have it open in two weeks

Pilgrim Church Road Bridge – expect to have it open in one month

Bruner Pond Road – just closed it and expect to have it open in one month

Mr. Pool stated all the stuff they are finding is invisible such as a little hole coming in the road and when they check it there is a hole the size of a truck. Mr. Pool pointed out they will continue to find those problems as they go along. He reported the state came down and performed an underwater inspection of the bridges and found significant damage in 12 bridges.

Chairman Culver asked how long the county has to find the problems and be covered under FEMA? Mr. Pool reported it was approximately 6 months. Mr. Pool stated they were dealing with three different agencies, the EWP, the Federal Highway Administration, and FEMA, and they all have different rules.

Mr. Pool stated he had dodged questions on cost estimates from the first day. He gave half way numbers as follows:

Federal Highway Administration – written DSR's for 100% of the sites and only 20% of the roads

He stated of \$810,000 EWP, they have 3 sites for \$149,900

FEMA – 4% of their sites and there are 165 sites - \$167,000 which is a total of \$1,100,026.00 or 15%. He reported prorated out it would be around \$7.5 million in damages.

Mr. Pool reported there are total of 183 sites and there are damage survey reports on 28 sites or 15% of all the known sites. Chairman Culver asked Mr. Pool if he was stating based on that the county's total damages will be approximately \$7.5 million? Mr. Pool stated that was pro-rating from the 15% number. Mr. Pool pointed not all of the sites are firm prices.

Mr. Pool stated the county was mandated to change all of their signs, and reported his department has picked up on a grant by 3-M for the signs in the county. He pointed out it is only one order, and it will save 28.3% and they ordered all of the signs. Mr. Pool reported they ordered \$85,000 worth of signs and they will cost \$61,000 for a savings of \$24,090. Chairman Culver asked Mr. Pool if he was ordering a big order in an effort to get the savings? Mr. Pool stated yes. He asked Mr. Pool if he had the money in his budget? Mr. Pool reported they would probably overspend a little bit but they would have a little bit of revenue coming in that would take up for it. Chairman Culver stated if they were saving 20% on what the cost would have been, then overspending is not terrible.

County Attorney – there was no report

Adjourn.

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