

## MINUTES OF HOUSTON COUNTY COMMISSION

June 23, 2008

PRESENT: Chairman Mark S. Culver, Commissioner Curtis Harvey, Commissioner Bobby R. Snellgrove, Commissioner Frances M. Cook, Commissioner Phillip L. Forrester, Gary Sherrer, Attorney, Barkley Kirkland, Acting Engineer, and Bill Dempsey, Chief Administrative Officer

ABSENT: Mark Pool, Engineer

Chairman Mark Culver called the 10:00 A.M. meeting to order, established that a quorum was present and welcomed everyone. Rev. Ted Richter, Pastor, Trinity Lutheran 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 Harvey seconded the motion; and it carried unanimously.

### Announcements and Presentations

Chairman Culver reported due to the fact that June had five Mondays, the commission would not meet for three weeks. He stated the next Administrative meeting would be on July 10<sup>th</sup>, and the Commission meeting would be on July 14<sup>th</sup>.

He encouraged everyone to be safe and have a very family friendly Fourth of July Holiday. The chairman stated there are several celebrations going on in the area. He pointed out Fort Rucker will have festivities and the Kiwanis Club will have a huge celebration at the National Peanut Festival. Chairman Culver encouraged everyone to get out and be involved in the celebration of the birth of our nation.

Chairman Culver reported he attended a meeting last week at the Wiregrass Veterans Alliance, and they presented him, on behalf of the commission, with a plaque that states:

“In sincere appreciation of your major efforts in the successful establishment of the Wiregrass Veterans Memorial Park” Presented to the Houston County Commission

He stated he appreciated the Veterans Alliance working with the two commissions and particularly Mr. Forrest Register and his group whose initiative really put forth the effort to get the Veterans Memorial Park completed.

Chairman Culver stated the commission has had two work sessions on updating the Policy Manual. He stated they were almost complete but were still working on one policy. He reported they were in discussions with Mr. Sherrer and wanted to make sure they got it right.

Chairman Culver reported the plan is to have it on the agenda for the July 24<sup>th</sup> Administrative meeting and he wanted all department heads to be in attendance. He stated that would be the time to discuss the policies and place the updated Policies and Procedures Manual on the agenda for approval. Chairman Culver reported they were not going to go through all of the policies but there were some changes that will impact some of the department heads and the commission wants to discuss those and

answer any questions at that meeting. He stated he would get out a memo later regarding the July 24<sup>th</sup> Admin meeting.

The chairman reported they had done some research on the four day work week. He stated Bill Dempsey and Judge Cooley had done some work on it as well as others. He reported he had received a tremendous outpouring from the employees and a pretty significant outpouring from the community about the potential for that being a good idea. He stated he had not received any negative feedback that would cause the commission to halt moving forward on the research. Chairman Culver reported they would be looking at what laws might impact it. He pointed out that Judge Cooley did identify a couple of laws that he wanted Mr. Sherrer to look at or the Association of County Commissions of Alabama to see what ramifications it might have. Chairman Culver reported they will continue to look at that and at some point, will be making a recommendation, and then the commission will determine whether or not they want to move forward with it. He encouraged the public to continue to let the commission know their thoughts on it. Chairman Culver reported the county offices in this building and others would be open Monday through Thursday or Tuesday through Friday from 7:00 A.M. until 6:00 P.M. with the exception of the Probate Office, and it would close at 5:30 P.M. He stated the county employees would be off the other day and they hopefully could shut down the Administrative Building and save on fuel. He pointed out the employees would save significantly on fuel having to drive to work four days a week instead of five days a week. Commissioner Forrester stated he had received a couple of calls regarding whether the offices would be open through the noon hour? He stated the commission determines the hours the buildings are open but it is up to each department as to whether or not they are open during the noon hour. He stated if they are currently open, he would assume they would continue to be open. Commissioner Cook asked if anyone had spoken with the SE Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission about it? Chairman Culver stated no, but if they wanted to remain open the arrangements could be made. He stated he thought air usage could be zoned off, if not, they need to be able to do that. Commissioner Cook stated that was one of her concerns if they remain open. He stated that is one of the details the commission will have to investigate as they move forward.

Chairman Culver stated the county continues to make every effort to ensure everything is done appropriately regarding the county's fuel consumption. He stated the county has become more aware of the way they operate with fuel pumps. He pointed out every car has a key that goes with that car that accesses the fuel pump. He reported in the past, there have been some keys being used for multiple cars and keys being used for tanks to fill lawnmowers, and when it was done in that manner it made it hard to track. Chairman Culver reported in the future, every car should have its own key that is only used for that car and a miscellaneous key will be used for filling up fuel cans, etc. He stated everyone understands the procedure on the log sheets that when anyone obtains county fuel that it is to be logged on the sheet so that it can be monitored and that the fuel is going where it is supposed to be.

Chairman Culver reported the Joint Land Use Study (JLUS) has been going on in several communities in the area to work with Fort Rucker on making sure that encroachment issues around Fort Rucker that could contribute to issues that maybe passed on to Washington and impact them in some BRAC closing. He reported there would be three public meetings about the study coming up in a month or so. He pointed out there are two stagefields in the Wicksburg area that are impacted by this study. Chairman Culver reported he believed the commission is of the mind that they want to do everything they can to protect the use of those fields by Fort Rucker. He stated they wanted to encourage Fort Rucker to continue to be a strong part of our community and not do anything to create encroachment issues.

He then reported the three meetings are as follows:

1. Monday, June 30<sup>th</sup> 6:30 P.M. Ozark Municipal Building
2. Monday, July 7<sup>th</sup> 6:00 P.M. Daleville Convention Center
3. Monday, July 14<sup>th</sup> 6:00 P.M. Enterprise Civic Center

Chairman Culver reported people from Houston County should attend the meeting in Daleville on July 7<sup>th</sup>, and he encouraged everyone to attend that might be interested.

Chairman Culver read a letter from the Alabama Department of Transportation stating:

“This office recently received the subject reports for all counties and bridges which were constructed with state or federal funds. After reviewing all of the counties, this office is pleased to announce that Houston County’s average grade ranked 1<sup>st</sup> statewide.”

Chairman Culver reported for seven of the last eight years, Houston County’s county roads have been rated the best in the State of Alabama. He stated that is something the commission is very proud of and continue to earn and something that many of the men present today have a lot to do with. He stated as a commission, they try to budget the things the crews need to do their job, but it is the men out on the road that make these type letters possible. At that time, he asked Mr. Barkley Kirkland, Acting Engineer, to introduce the following Supervisors: Harold Fleming, Jason Harper, and Brad Burgess. Mr. Kirkland stated they are over various county roads and special projects. He reported they are three outstanding members of the county’s workforce who make sure the work gets done. The commission then personally thanked them and commended them for the excellent job they do.

Chairman Culver stated he did not think resurfacing 50 miles this year would hurt. Mr. Kirkland stated it would help a lot. Commissioner Forrester asked how it impacts the county’s safety? Chairman Culver stated he thought that was the primary reason when the program began. He pointed out along the way, Mr. Pool did some outstanding research on how the care you take of a road actually impacts the number of accidents and deaths on the road. He stated the work that has been done on the county’s roads has significantly lowered the death rate in Houston County, and that is what it is all about. He stated the commission is proud to receive the letter ranking our roads as 1<sup>st</sup> in the state, but where it really counts is at the safety level. Chairman Culver reported the county has documented evidence that the work that has been done on the roads directly impacted the safety of the county’s roads.

## Awards and Presentations

### 1. Introduction of Ms. Audrey Kent, "Little Miss Houston County."

Chairman Culver reported at the last meeting, the commission had the pleasure of recognizing most of the queens that have recently won the opportunity to represent Houston County. He stated unfortunately, "Little Miss Houston County" was not able to attend, and the commission did not want her slighted. At that time, he asked Ms. Audrey Kent, "Little Miss Houston County," to come forward, and introduced her. He stated the county was looking forward to her representing them in the "Little Miss National Peanut Festival" pageant. Ms. Kent stated she was honored to represent Houston County. Chairman Culver then presented her with a Houston County pin to wear on her banner. Ms. Kent received a round of applause.

### 2. Dirt Pit Presentation.

Mr. Barkley Kirkland, Acting Engineer, gave a presentation on the dirt pits located across the county. He stated three years ago, they had three pits they could get base, and he stated they were having to haul sand from Highway #22 down to McLane to make base. He stated with the rise in fuel, they started looking for base pits and they now have four pits. Mr. Kirkland reported before, the average haul to the center of the county was 15 miles, and today, it is 12 miles. He stated they are still looking for pits with base dirt. Chairman Culver stated the county has been able to reduce its cost on hauling dirt but it continues to be a battle because of the cost of fuel.

## Regular Agenda

### 1. Request to award bid on Generator for EMA and the appropriate budget amendment.

Commissioner Cook made a motion to award the bid on the generator for EMA to Kossen Equipment Company, low bidder meeting specs, in the amount of \$53,856.00, and to make the appropriate budget amendment. Commissioner Snellgrove seconded the motion. Chairman Culver reported this was done several months ago and the bid is actually being awarded. He pointed out there is a match, but it is just a flow through for the county. Chairman Culver called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously. (Please see attached Bid Summary Sheet and budget amendment in Minute Book)

### 2. Request to sell one 40 ton low boy trailer in Philadelphia, MS, July 16, 2008 through DeanCo Auction.

Commissioner Harvey made a motion to sell one 40 ton low boy trailer in Philadelphia, MS, July 16, 2008 through Deanco Auction. Commissioner Snellgrove seconded the motion. Chairman Culver called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously.

### 3. Request to revise definition of "Subdivision" in the Subdivision Regulations.

Chairman Culver stated he understood the change involved one word. Commissioner Snellgrove made a motion to revise the definition of "Subdivision" in the Subdivision Regulations. Commissioner Cook

seconded the motion. Mr. Kirkland stated the word lease is coming out because it applies to trailer parks and the county does not regulate parks because it is private property. The chairman called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously.

4. Request from Sheriff to transfer funds due to increase in fuel cost.

Commissioner Harvey made a motion to approve the sheriff's request to transfer funds due to the increase in fuel cost. Commissioner Snellgrove seconded the motion. Sheriff Hughes reported his department's fuel needs went up also. He stated they cannot control the number of calls for service from the citizens of Houston County and it is also hard to control the number of prisoner transports, orders from the court to transfer the prisoners, mental patients, etc. He stated they are asking for an additional \$90,000 in funds. He pointed out the monies are already in the Sheriff's budget, and the money will come from other areas within their budget to help them get through this fiscal year. The Sheriff pointed out they are taking measures to help conserve as much fuel as they can. He reported two weeks ago they swapped their civil division, which consists of two sworn deputies and six non-sworn personnel to a four day 10 hour day work week. He reported that is one extra day those cars are not running. Sheriff Hughes reported they still have people working Monday-Friday and some working Monday-Thursday and some working Tuesday-Friday. He stated the way the shifts run during the day, they have two three hour overlap periods, and during the overlap periods, they are teaming up two deputies to a car. He stated it also provides them with immediate back-up plus it allows for some other cars to sit still during the overlap periods for a total of six hours a day. The Sheriff stated he hoped they would not have to spend the \$90,000 and they could put it back in the budget for next year.

Commissioner Snellgrove stated he appreciated the Sheriff reaching into his budget and getting the \$90,000 instead of asking for new money. He reported that was a plus that the Sheriff was doing a good job with the administrative end of it, and the commission appreciated it. Sheriff Hughes reported there are some areas that they can take money from that they do not necessarily need, but they could not cut services to the community and they needed to add it to the fuel budget. The sheriff stated he appreciated the commission's cooperation. Chairman Culver reported a significant portion of the monies the sheriff was taking out was on conferences, and lodging and meals. Chairman Culver questioned the amount he was taking out of advertising. He asked if that amount was for advertising for employees? Sheriff Hughes stated it was for legal advertising. Chairman Culver stated he wanted to be sure people could still be hired if there were openings. The sheriff stated they could. Chairman Culver called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously.

5. Request from Town of Cowarts for in-kind service work on Recreational Trails Project.

Commissioner Snellgrove made a motion to approve the request from the Town of Cowarts for in-kind service work on the Recreational Trails Project. Commissioner Cook seconded the motion. Mr. Kirkland reported this is a walking trail behind their Town Hall, and they are going to widen the existing trail. Mr. Dempsey stated he wanted to confirm the in-kind services would be coming from the existing budget instead of additional funds. Mr. Dempsey stated he wanted to make sure it is part of what is now budgeted from the general fund. Chairman Culver stated he thought it was new money that would

come out of the reserve fund like other projects. He stated he thought it should be part of the motion. Commissioner Snellgrove then amended his motion to approve the request from the Town of Cowarts for in-kind service work on the Recreational Trails Project to approve the appropriate budget amendment to include the monies to come out of the reserve fund like other projects. Commissioner Cook seconded. Chairman Culver reported when these type projects are done the funds are taken out of the reserve and transfer them to road and Bridge. He stated Road & Bridge cannot pay for these type projects because all of the gas funds they receive are earmarked. Chairman Culver stated it was his understanding that this project and all of the others like it are not in the funds that were approved in the budget; that it should come from the reserve. Chairman Culver stated it is not a problem; it is just a matter of transferring the money. Commissioner Snellgrove asked if they knew what the additional money would be? Mr. Kirkland stated their estimate was \$60,000 for labor and equipment and materials. Chairman Culver stated the commission was approving the budget amendment today when they approve the work. Chairman Culver called for the question; and it carried unanimously. (Please see attached budget amendment in Minute Book)

6. Request to approve new computer for Commission Office.

Commissioner Cook made a motion to approve a new computer for the Commission Office. Commissioner Snellgrove seconded the motion. The chairman stated the administrative assistant's computer quit working. He reported the price for a new one was around \$1,200-\$1,300, and they have determined that some of the more recently hired personnel can actually build one for approximately \$800.00, which is a significant savings. He stated they had looked at a ThinClient but due to the documents the administrative assistant prepares she needs a PC. Chairman Culver called for the question ; and it carried unanimously.

Staff Reports:

- a. Chief Administrative Officer – there was none
- b. County Engineer – there was none
- c. County Attorney – there was none

Adjourn.

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

