

MINUTES OF HOUSTON COUNTY COMMISSION  
JULY 24, 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, and Roy Roberts, Administrator

ABSENT: None

Chairman Mark S. Culver called the 10:00 A.M. meeting to order, established that a quorum was present, and welcomed everyone. Mr. Danny Sharp gave the invocation. Commissioner Frances Cook led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

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

Chairman Culver welcomed Vice-President Dick Cheney to Dothan/Houston County. He pointed out the Vice-President would be arriving later in the day, and someone who would be seeing him could let him know. The chairman reported it is always good for our community when we have Presidents, Vice-Presidents, and other notable dignitaries to come, and he stated he was glad the Vice-President chose to join us.

The chairman reported this is the last meeting before the Sales Tax Holiday. He reminded everyone that the first weekend in August starting early Friday morning and ending on Sunday at midnight the first Sales Tax Holiday in Houston County would be observed. He pointed out the city, county, and stated sales tax would be exempt in Dothan and Houston County. The chairman encouraged the citizens of Dothan/Houston County as well as the surrounding communities and states to take advantage of the Sales Tax Holiday.

#### Presentations and Awards

1. Recognition of Houston County Queens – Mrs. Sue Hicks.

Chairman Culver reported it is always a pleasure every year to have these beautiful young ladies to come and visit with the commission and let the citizens see the good quality young people we have in Houston County. He asked Mrs. Sue Hicks of the Altrusa Club, the sponsor of the Houston County queens, to come forward with the queens. Chairman Culver reported the Altrusa Club is also responsible for putting the National Peanut Festival float together. Mrs. Hicks then introduced the following: Ms. Carlee Colbert, "Future Little Miss Houston County", Ms. Cara Hamilton, "Little Miss Houston County", Ms. Amaris

Sawyers, “Junior Miss Houston County, Ms. Shamiyah McGlon, “Teen Miss Houston County”, and Ms. Jessica Mann, “Miss Houston County.” Ms. Mann spoke on behalf of the queens. She stated all of the girls were proud to represent Houston County and she hoped they represented the county well in the National Peanut Festival Pageant and other events throughout the year. Chairman Culver stated the girls had already done the county proud in the way they had represented them so far. He wished them the best and thanked them for coming.

2. Request to adopt Resolution in support of Envision Plan – Thomas Harrison, Executive Director, Dothan Area Chamber of Commerce, and Envision Plan Coordinator, Barbara Alford, Chairperson, Dothan Area Chamber of Commerce, and Danny Sharp, Chairman, Envision Steering Committee.

Chairman Culver asked Mr. Thomas Harrison, Executive Director, Dothan Area Chamber of Commerce, Ms. Barbara Alford, Chairperson, Dothan Area Chamber of Commerce, and Mr. Danny Sharp, Chairman, Envision Steering Committee, to come forward. Commissioner Cook made a motion to adopt the Resolution in support of the Envision Plan. Commissioner Forrester seconded the motion. The chairman called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously. Chairman Culver then read the Resolution. Chairman Culver thanked Mr. Harrison for spearheading this project. Mr. Harrison thanked the commission for continuing the journey. He stated in 2004, this commission was a vital partner with the other partners in committing to a strategic plan for the Dothan area. Mr. Harrison commended the commission for their continuing support. He introduced Mr. Danny Sharp, Chairman of the Envision Steering Committee, and Dr. Barbara Alford, Chairperson of the Dothan Area Chamber of Commerce, and Matt Parker, President, Dothan Area Chamber of Commerce. He had the other members of the Chamber and staff to raise their hands. Mr. Harrison reported they are promising to provide as good a leadership in management as they can of the Envision activities. He asked the commission to continue in their support of the activities as they look at improving our public school system, our college and our university and as they grow the economy, but more important he stated that this is about an improved quality of life for all the citizens of the region. He thanked the commission again for their support and stated they looked forward to constant communications and seeking their input. Chairman Culver thanked Mr. Harrison. (Please see in Resolution Book)

#### Consent Agenda

1. Re-appointments – Wiregrass Resource Conservation & Development Council – Chairman Mark Culver and Commissioner Bobby Snellgrove.
2. Appointment – alternate to SE Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission’s Board – Mr. Tol Dozier.

3. Appointments – Houston County Council SE Alabama EMS – Mr. Brian Harvin and Mr. Clark Matthews.
4. Request to award bid for one laptop computer for EMA.
5. Request to extend food service contract at the jail for one year.

Commissioner Harvey made a motion to re-appoint Chairman Mark Culver and Commissioner Bobby Snellgrove to the Wiregrass Resource Conservation and Development Council, to appoint Mr. Tol Dozier as an alternate to the SE Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission, to appoint Mr. Brian Harvin and Mr. Clark Matthews to the Houston County Council of the SE Alabama EMS, and to award the bid for one laptop computer for EMA to Florida Micro, LLC, low bidder meeting specs, in the amount of \$1,603.07, and to extend the food service contract at the jail for one year with ABL Management, Inc. at a negotiated rate of 0.8149. Commissioner Cook seconded the motion; and it carried unanimously. (Please see attached Bid Summary Sheet in Minute Book)

#### Regular Agenda

1. Request from Houston County Port Authority to provide financial backing for the Industrial Park land.

Commissioner Forrester made a motion to approve the request from the Houston County Port Authority to provide financial backing for the Industrial Park land. Commissioner Cook seconded the motion.

Mr. Tom Steely, resident of eastern Houston County, expressed his concern about the loan the commission has been asked to give the Houston County Port Authority. He stated according to the rules and regulations of the Port Authority, they have more than enough power to stand on their own. Mr. Steely reported he would like to correct a statement that was made at the administrative meeting. He stated according to public records, the 4.065 acres in Columbia sold for \$1,230.01 per acre, not \$5,000.00 per acre. Mr. Steely reported it was hard for him to understand how property could be sold at \$1,200 per acre in one portion of the county and 30 miles across the county the price was \$12,000 per acre. He stated the 22 acres that Dr. Garrett, Chairman of the Port Authority, had requested the commission guarantee the loan on was not needed to gain access to the 49 acres they already own. Mr. Steely pointed out the cost for the 22 acres would be approximately \$264,000. He reported the power is given to the Port Authority by the Alabama Legislature, and they can access by whatever means they deem necessary. He then asked the commission not to grant the request to the Houston County Port Authority? Mr. Steely stated he felt the taxpayers would be better served if the property was bought by private investors because they would pay taxes creating revenue for the county and the city. He

pointed out by state law the port authority is tax exempt. He asked over the past 22 years if the commission had received any annual reports, financial reports and future plan reports from the Port Authority? Chairman Culver stated he felt they had received financial reports. Mr. Steely reported there is one statement in the rules and regulations that states the Port Authority's jurisdiction is on the banks of a river and they are not to extend inward more than three miles. He pointed out there are certain things in the regulations that the commission cannot and should not do at this time. He recommended each commissioner become familiar with the regulations before they make the decision to put the taxpayers in debt for \$264,000.00. He thanked the commission.

Mr. Matt Parker, President, Dothan Area Chamber of Commerce, discussed the county's effort to support the purchase of more property. Mr. Parker reported when the commission gets the opportunity they need to take advantage of it because you never know what site and what type of typography and infrastructure is going to be needed for a project. He stated in his game, there is never enough property because projects require special infrastructure items and you never know what you are going to come up with. Mr. Parker pointed out this is a great opportunity for the Port Authority to purchase some property and utilize the Wiregrass Electric Cooperative Loan Fund, which was created by the purchase of the county's distribution park. He reported that when it was paid back it created the Revolving Loan Fund pool to not only help port authorities, industrial development boards, or towns do other activities but also help businesses expand and grow. He stated this is investing in our community through this process and it will roll around and trickle down throughout many projects in our area. Mr. Parker reported this is a great project and it is some of the best financing we can get to undertake this type project, and it will still be there to fund future projects as it is paid back. He stated this property is more urbanized, and it is a good deal with the infrastructure that is there and in place. He reported the county will benefit. He thanked the commission for their support in purchasing the land.

Dr. Fred Garrett, Chairman, Houston County Port Authority, reported they operate as an arm of the county and they have been in operation for a number of years. He stated their agency has the authority to operate lands anywhere in the county. Dr. Garrett stated there was one correction he would like to make in the statement that the land was purchased for \$1,230 .00 per acre. He reported the property was sold for \$5,000 per acre, and the money they have from that will go towards helping with the property they are asking for.

Chairman Culver reported after some of the discussion at the administrative meeting and about how much money would be put down, he contacted Dr. Garrett. He stated he would like to request that the Port Authority put 20% down. He pointed out Mr. Parker had stated at one of the Port Authority meetings, the financing could be 80-90% and he stated the commission would ask that the Port Authority put down the 20% so that the payback over five years for the county

taxpayers would be a little less. He reported Dr. Garrett stated he would present it to his committee and it would be no problem. The chairman encouraged the Port Authority to get with the City of Dothan to be sure of any planning and zoning issues that might be on the property before any agreement is signed. He reported the request is for the commission to provide financial backing. Chairman Culver pointed out this is the decision of the Port Authority to purchase the property and they are asking the commission to agree to do annual funding to them. He reported this will be the Port Authority's loan and the commission would ask that the sale of this property to industrial prospects would be used to pay this money back. Chairman Culver encouraged the Port Authority to get with Mr. Sherrer, county attorney, to insure that some of the comments that Mr. Steely made are addressed and be sure they are within their realm to be able to do what they want to do. The chairman called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously.

2. Request to adopt Resolution for Land and Water Conservation Fund grant for restrooms at Chattahoochee State Park – Mrs. Emily Waters, SE Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission.

Commissioner Snellgrove made a motion to approve the request to adopt a Resolution for a Land and Water Conservation Fund grant for restrooms at Chattahoochee State Park. Commissioner Cook seconded the motion. The chairman reported this grant will provide restrooms and possibly shower facilities on the other side of the lake where the RV camping is located at Chattahoochee State Park. He stated this grant will allow 50% of the project. Chairman Culver called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously. (Please see in Resolution Book)

3. Request from Farm Center to use money from sale of assets to purchase a new riding mower.

Commissioner Cook made a motion to approve the Farm Center's request to use money from the sale of assets to purchase a new riding mower. Commissioner Forrester seconded the motion; and it carried unanimously.

4. Request form Town of Webb – assistance in repaving the Town Hall's parking lot.

There was no motion and the chairman stated no action would be taken. He reported the issue of the voting place has not been resolved. Commissioner Harvey then made a motion to table this request until the next meeting. Commissioner Cook seconded; and the motion carried unanimously.

5. Request from EMA to award bids on 7 sirens.

Commissioner Harvey made a motion to award the bids on 7 sirens to McCord Communications, only bidder meeting specs. Commissioner Forrester seconded the motion. Chairman Culver reported at the administrative meeting they talked about approving the sirens through the grant. He asked Mr. Roberts if they needed to go ahead and make a budget amendment on the county's portion of the max or did they need to wait until they get the invoice? Mr. Roberts asked when the county would receive the sirens? Mr. Shelby Womack stated it would be in the next fiscal year. Mr. Roberts recommended that they wait on the budget amendment until the sirens arrive. The chairman called for the question and the motion carried unanimously. (Please see attached Bid Summary Sheet in Minute Book)

Reports from Staff:

a. County Administrator

Mr. Roberts reported the budget hearings will be August 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>, and they have not developed a schedule by departments yet.

b. County Engineer

Mr. Pool reported they will begin resurfacing on Hodgesville Road in the next three weeks but he is not exactly sure when.

c. County Attorney – there was no report.

Adjourn.

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