

MINUTES OF HOUSTON COUNTY COMMISSION
SEPTEMBER 12, 2005

PRESENT: Chairman Mark S. Culver, Commissioner Curtis Harvey, Commissioner Bobby R. Snellgrove, Commissioner Frances M. Cook, and Commissioner Phillip L. Forrester, Gary Sherrer, Attorney, Mark Pool, Engineer, and Roy Roberts, Administrator.

ABSENT: None.

Chairman Mark Culver called the 10:00 A.M. meeting to order. Rev. John Baxter, Pastor, Denton Road United Methodist 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 Snellgrove seconded; and the motion carried unanimously.

Announcements.

Chairman Culver reported that he mentioned Thursday that our community is pouring forth assistance for those who have been displaced and injured by Hurricane Katrina on the gulf coast. He pointed out there have been all kinds of groups go down to assist and last week the city and county went together and had a drive over Labor Day weekend and accumulated two tractor trailer truckloads of goods they needed down in Jackson County Mississippi which is Pascagoula and Ocean Springs area. The chairman reported the items were taken down there last Tuesday and Wednesday and he thanked Covan Worldwide and AAA Cooper for providing the trailers and the transportation to deliver the goods. Chairman Culver reported City Commissioner Jason Rudd is present and he rode down on the second trip. At that time, Chairman Culver asked Commissioner Rudd to come forward and give a report. Commissioner Rudd then gave an update. He stated the people are very grateful and he thanked the citizens of Houston County and the City of Dothan for their participation. Chairman Culver stated he appreciated Commissioner Rudd going down there. Chairman Culver thanked the deputies of the Houston County Sheriff's Department, representatives from the Dothan Police Department, fire department, along with the E-911 operators from both the city and county for manning the trucks for three days. He reported they did a tremendous job of getting all of the goods in. Chairman Culver stated at the time of the original call, our area was the first one to contact Jackson County, Mississippi and offer assistance. He stated all of our energies have been focused on taking care of those in our community. The chairman thanked the city for partnering with the county on the project.

Commissioner Harvey reported he had received a letter from the Probate Office employees concerning a memo that came from Probate Judge Luke Cooley concerning their break times. He then read the memo as follows:

“I have been noticed by U.S. Department of Labor through the Personnel Office that Federal law does not require the county to give breaks for employees. Therefore, we will no longer take scheduled fifteen minute breaks, effective September 6, 2005. The County Commission suggested I do this in order to compensate for personnel needs. You may continue to go to the restroom and get a drink of water when necessary. Please do not leave the work area if two or more employees are already away from their desk. All other drinking and eating should be done on your lunch hour. No food or drinks will be allowed on a desk with electronic equipment.”

Mr. Harvey stated that he wanted this to go on the record that this is not the consensus of the county commission. Commissioner Snellgrove asked Chairman Culver to send a memo to all department heads letting them know that the commission approves of the county employees taking a break. He reported there is not a policy in the Personnel Handbook and the commission does not have a policy stating that county employees cannot take a break. Mr. Snellgrove reported that he thought it was creating quite a bit of disturbance in the Probate Department as well as some other departments. Commissioner Snellgrove stated the way to clear it up would be to ask them if they would reconsider this letter and let them know that the commission does support employees taking breaks. Mr. Snellgrove stated if this does not happen, then the commission can put a policy in place and address the issue at the next administrative meeting. Chairman Culver asked if the commission wanted him to send a letter to all department heads basically saying the Houston County Commission supports employee breaks? Mr. Snellgrove reported that he thought it was a past practice for county employees to take a break. Commissioner Snellgrove stated he had received several phone calls. Commissioner Cook reported she had received phone calls about it and they stated their jobs are very stressful and they need their breaks. She stated she felt the commission needs to send a letter and she hoped the department heads would adhere to it. Chairman Culver asked if the commission was going to try to dictate to the department heads through this letter or whether to just say the commission is not in the position of not wanting breaks? Commissioners Cook and Snellgrove agreed that the commission is not in the position of not wanting breaks. Commissioner Forrester reported the letter reads as if we condoned this procedure, and we did not.

ITEM #1. Appointments to the Houston County Health Care Authority.

Chairman Culver reported he does not have an appointment. He pointed out the commission had received a letter with suggested names on it and typically each commissioner tells the name of their appointee and then one motion is made. Commissioner Harvey recommended Mr. James Reading as his appointment in

District 1, and stated he would take the place of Ms. Janice Williams' name on the list. Commissioner Snellgrove re-appointed Mr. Billy Womack in District 2. Commissioner Cook re-appointed Chester Sowell in District 3, and Commissioner Forrester appointed Dr. Walter Young in District 4. Commissioner Harvey made a motion to recommend the substitute name of James Reading as the appointment for District 1, Billy Womack, District 2, Chester Sowell, District 3, and Dr. Walter Young, District 4, to serve on the Houston County Health Care Authority. Commissioner Cook seconded; and the motion carried unanimously. Chairman Culver reported this will be sent by letter form to the Health Care Authority. The Chairman called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously.

ITEM #2. Re-appointment – Dothan-Houston County Airport Authority – Hayne Hollis.

Chairman Culver reported this is a joint appointment with the City of Dothan. Commissioner Cook made a motion to re-appointment Mr. Hayne Hollis to the Dothan-Houston County Airport Authority. Commissioner Forrester seconded; and the motion carried unanimously. Commissioner Cook reported Mr. Hollis has done an excellent job and represented us well. Chairman Culver reported the whole board has done a great job.

ITEM #3. Appointment – Houston-Love Memorial Library Board – Mike Dove.

Commissioner Forrester made a motion to re-appoint Mike Dove to the Houston-Love Memorial Library Board. Commissioner Harvey seconded; and the motion carried unanimously.

Chairman Culver asked to amend the agenda due to Mr. Roberts having to leave at 10:30 A.M. He stated if the commission is not down to his report by 10:30, he would like to move his report forward if there were no objections. There were no objections.

ITEM #4. Liquor License Request – Retail Beer and Table Wine License (off premises only) Willie James Baxter d/b/a River Road Grocery and Hardware, 5791 St. Highway 95, Gordon, Alabama.

Commissioner Snellgrove made a motion to approve the retail beer and table wine license request (off premises only) for Willie James Baxter d/b/a River Road Grocery and Hardware, 5791 St. Highway 95, Gordon, Alabama. Commissioner Cook seconded; and the motion carried unanimously.

ITEM #5. Request to adopt Resolution for Retirees Act 2005-316.

Chairman Culver reported this act was passed by the Alabama Legislature granting state retirees a cost of living increase, and the letter is requesting that

our county retirees be given the same benefit. Commissioner Cook made a motion to approve the request to adopt the resolution for retirees as per Act 2005-316. Commissioner Harvey seconded the motion. Commissioner Snellgrove asked Mr. Roberts if the retirees receive a cost of living raise each year? Mr. Roberts stated no that the last one they received was in 2002. He stated it represents a 4.25% increase with an annual approximate cost of \$48,000 to the county. He pointed out it only comes up when the state grants a cost of living increase to its employees and any county in the state that participates in the program has the option to support a cost of living increase for their employees. The chairman called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously. (Please see in Resolution Book)

ITEM# 6. Request to take bids for one small garbage truck.

Commissioner Snellgrove made a motion to approve the request to take bids for one small garbage truck. Commissioner Harvey seconded; and the motion carried unanimously.

ITEM #7. Request to approve grading work for Ashford Industrial Park.

Chairman Culver reported Ashford's Mayor, Bryan Alloway, was present to answer any questions. He pointed out he thought it was discussed in detail on Thursday. Commissioner Snellgrove made a motion to approve the grading work for the Ashford Industrial Park. Commissioner Forrester seconded the motion. Mr. Pool reported all of the utility work, water lines and sewer lines would be done by the City of Ashford before the county does the grading work. He stated the City of Ashford was also going to dig a ditch before the county crews start. Commissioner Snellgrove reported this has been a much needed project especially for the road coming to the elementary school out the four lane. He stated discussions have gone on with the Board of Education for the last 5-6 years. Mr. Snellgrove reported it will help industry and the City of Ashford and improve the safety of the school kids traveling to the elementary school. He stated it will also do away with a lot of the traffic congestion in that area. The chairman called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously.

ITEM #8. Employee of the Month.

Mr. Pool asked Len McKenzie to come forward. He reported Mr. McKenzie was hired in 1992 as Equipment Operator II, and was promoted in 2000 to Equipment Operator III. He pointed out the last 3 years he has had perfect attendance. Mr. Pool stated Mr. McKenzie could be counted on to be at work. Mr. McKenzie thanked Mr. Pool and the commission. Chairman Culver thanked him on behalf of the commission for the great job he does.

ITEM #9. Administrator's Report.

Mr. Roberts reported the budget presentation will be at the next meeting. He stated a request was received on Friday from the Houston-Love Memorial Library. He stated in August, 2004, the commission voted to appropriate \$30,000 in matching funds for a bookmobile pending the receipt of a like amount from the City of Dothan. Mr. Roberts reported according to the Director of the Library, the City of Dothan has issued their check for \$30,000, and she is requesting the county's check in the same amount. Chairman Culver reported this has already been approved. Mr. Roberts reported it is for informational purposes.

ITEM #10. Engineer's Report.

Mr. Pool reported the last set of nine trucks that were sold at auction sold for a lot more money than the guaranteed price. He stated the county paid \$81,500 each for them and they sold for \$82,888. Mr. Pool reported they were four years old and had an average of 137,000 miles on them. He stated that was a pretty good deal. Commissioner Cook asked Mr. Pool if he stated the county bought the trucks for \$81,500? Mr. Pool stated yes and they sold for \$82,888. Chairman Culver stated that the county used them for four years and got paid for them. Mr. Pool stated that was correct. The chairman asked if the county could buy some more of those? Mr. Pool stated there were 17 more on order and were supposed to be delivered in February. Commissioner Cook thanked Mr. Pool and Mr. Roberts for a job well done.

ITEM# 11. Adjourn.

Commissioner Harvey made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Snellgrove and it carried unanimously.