

MINUTES OF HOUSTON COUNTY COMMISSION  
SEPTEMBER 24, 2007

PRESENT: Chairman Mark S. Culver, Commissioner Curtis Harvey, Commissioner Bobby R. Snellgrove, Commissioner Frances M. Cook, Commissioner Philip L. Forrester, Pat Jones, Acting Attorney, Mark Pool, Engineer, and Roy Roberts, Chief Administrative Officer

ABSENT: Gary Sherrer, Attorney

Chairman Mark S. Culver called the 10:00 A.M. meeting to order, established that a quorum was present and welcomed everyone. Rev. David Anderson, Pastor, Southside Baptist Church, gave the invocation. Commissioner Snellgrove 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 Public Comments from Chairman and Commissioners

Chairman Culver reported he and Commissioner Snellgrove attended the "Good Luck" reception for the Houston County queens as they will be competing in the National Peanut Festival Pageants. He extended his appreciation to the Altrusa Club for sponsoring the Houston County queens and taking care of the float for the National Peanut Festival parade. Chairman Culver stated the Altrusa Club does a good job.

The chairman reported this is the last meeting before the changes occur on the City Commission. He thanked Commissioners Jason Rudd and Phillip Tidwell personally and on behalf of the commission for the job they have done as city commissioners and wished them well in their future endeavors. Chairman Culver also reported there would be an outgoing reception for Mr. Rudd and Mr. Tidwell at 5:30 P.M., September 23<sup>rd</sup> at the Dothan Civic Center. The chairman reported the new commissioners, John Craig and Keith Seagle, would be sworn in at 2:00 P.M., September 30<sup>th</sup>, at the Civic Center. He congratulated them on getting ready to serve the citizens of Dothan, and he extended the commission's hand to them.

#### Awards and Presentations

1. Proclamation – "World Hunger Awareness Month" – Mr. David Hanks, Executive Director, Wiregrass Area United Way Food Bank.

Commissioner Snellgrove made a motion to approve the Proclamation declaring October as "World Hunger Awareness Month" as presented. Commissioner Harvey seconded the motion. Chairman Culver asked Mr. David Hanks, Executive Director, Wiregrass Area United Way Food Bank, and Commissioner

Frances Cook, a member of the board, to come forward and presented them with the proclamation. Chairman Culver stated the commission appreciates everything the food bank does for the citizens of our community. He reported the organization is truly an example of the success a non-profit can have. The chairman pointed out it has grown from virtually nothing to what it is today. Commissioner Cook stated it is an honor for her to serve on the board. Commissioner Cook reported as everyone heard through the Proclamation, it is helping so many of Houston County's residents as well as area residents. She stated she is astounded by what they have accomplished. Commissioner Cook stated she appreciated the commission letting her serve on the board. Mr. Hanks thanked the commission and stated over the years they have had a chance to grow with their distribution as well as with their facility. He stated the commission has always been a big part of it through the years with their outstanding support.

2. Envision Update – Dr. Thomas Harrison, Executive Director, Dothan Area Chamber of Commerce.

Dr. Harrison asked the commission to refer to their copies of the 4<sup>th</sup> Quarterly Report. Dr. Harrison reported the Envision project includes a steering committee, four task forces, twenty one committees and over 200 volunteers. He then shared with the commission the many worthwhile projects they have done during their first year. Dr. Harrison then answered questions. (Please see attached in Minute Book)

Commissioner Forrester asked why Pike, Henry, and Geneva counties were not included in the business incubator program? Dr. Harrison stated when this was formed they set it up to serve specific locations. He stated he would bring it to the attention of the group because he thought their intentions were for there to be coverage of this section of our state by the business incubator and service to the communities.

Commissioner Harvey asked how in-depth would the restoration of the neighborhoods go? Dr. Harrison stated the cosmetic type things that need to be done, but also looking into the complex including things that are in the neighborhood that have not been changed over a period of time. He stated it has a primary emphasis on rehabilitating houses, having structures removed, having neighborhoods cleaned up, and establishing a neighborhood watch program as a result. He stated he thought they would go from the simple kinds of things to the very complex kind of things that deal with drugs in the neighborhood and other things of that nature.

Commissioner Cook reported she had attended a "Keep America Beautiful" meeting last week and one of their goals is to get the residents involved, and she asked if that would work along with the restoration of the community program? Dr. Harrison stated yes. He stated they hoped to tie as many existing efforts

together in that specific neighborhood so that there would be a massive infusion of talent, energies and resources. Dr. Harrison reported there is an accountability factor involved because neighborhoods do not want this done. He stated if they cannot get the support of the overwhelming majority, then they will go to another neighborhood. Commissioner Cook stated the lady involved in the "Keep America Beautiful" emphasized getting the residents involved in order to be successful because they will take pride in what they are doing. Dr. Harrison stated he thought Commissioner Cook got a feeling there were some good things happening with the litter campaign. He reported the commission was responsible for that because they were the first to agree to say they were willing to participate in sharing personnel. Chairman Culver stated there is a significant litter problem in both Dothan and Houston County. He stated in some of the county's long range planning, the commission had talked about a public awareness campaign to help keep Houston County clean and the City of Dothan had also talked about doing it. Chairman Culver stated this brings it all together through "Keep America Beautiful" and enables the community to do one big campaign. He stated Commissioner Cook and Barkley Kirkland would represent the county on the 9 or 10 member committee. He stated he looked forward to them bringing some things back to the commission to help with this difficult problem.

Dr. Harrison thanked the commission for their support in the community development activities. He stated with community development it is about the process as well as the product. He stated they want to set good role models and demonstrate how they solve problems as they achieve their goals.

## Regular Agenda

1. Request to renew sublease with Montgomery Aids Outreach.

Commissioner Harvey made a motion to approve the request to renew the sublease with the Montgomery Aids Outreach. Commissioner Cook seconded the motion. The chairman reported this is the last year that the county will have to do the sublease, and act as the pass through. He stated this is a facility that the county had leased for the Health Department, and it did not work for the original purpose but it is serving a good purpose now. The chairman called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously.

2. Request from Houston-Love Memorial Library for financial assistance to update the restrooms at the library.

Commissioner Harvey made a motion to approve the request from the Houston-Love Memorial Library for financial assistance to update the restrooms at the library through the appropriate budget amendment not to exceed \$1,500.00. Commissioner Cook seconded the motion. The chairman reported the restrooms are in dire need of repair and the City of Dothan will do all of the work if the county will split the cost of materials with them. The chairman called for the

question; and it carried unanimously. (Please see attached budget amendment in Minute Book)

3. Request to authorize Brannon Stand Road bridge detour. (Cost estimate \$126,000 materials)

Commissioner Forrester made a motion to authorize the Brannon Stand Road bridge detour. Commissioner Cook seconded the motion. Chairman Culver reported this was discussed at the administrative meeting and stated this is a very important project. He stated he wanted to be sure the public understands what the county is doing. Chairman Culver reported he had tried to have a time set up for a public meeting at the Highland Oaks Clubhouse before the project begins. He pointed out he would notify the media and the public as to when the meeting will be. He stated he wanted to be sure that anyone who might have questions about the project would have the opportunity to ask. He stated the clearing for the detour will start sometime after the 20<sup>th</sup> of October, but they hope to have the meeting within the next couple of weeks. Mr. Pool reported he had some questions he could not answer on Thursday. He stated the old bridge was built in 1965, the detour is one quarter of a mile long, and the weight limit on the existing bridge is 18 tons. Chairman Culver reported the weight limit on the detour will be the weight of a loaded school bus. The chairman reported the people involved in trucking materials need to be thinking between now and June about how they will get to and from. Mr. Pool reported they will work up a detailed traffic control plan and get it worked out with the City of Dothan very soon. Chairman Culver reported the easement has been signed by Mr. Pool and the City Board of Education, and they are waiting on the city commission to approve it and sign it because they have a requirement to provide law enforcement traffic control during the detour. He stated as soon as they get the city's approval and signature the county will be ready to go. Chairman Culver called for the motion; and it carried unanimously.

4. Request to compensate Coroner for personal phone use and cancel county contract.

Commissioner Snellgrove made a motion to approve the request to compensate the Coroner for his personal phone use and to cancel the county contract. Commissioner Cook seconded the motion. Chairman Culver pointed out this will be a net savings to the county. The chairman called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously.

5. Liquor License Request – Retail Liquor – Class 1 – Philip Martin Mixon d/b/a Dixieland Sports Bar – 5245 S. State Highway 109 (Rural Houston County)

Commissioner Cook made a motion to approve the request for a Retail Liquor license - Class 1 - for Philip Martin Mixon d/b/a Dixieland Sports Bar – 5245 S. State Highway 109 (Rural Houston County). Commissioner Snellgrove

seconded. The chairman called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously.

6. Request to award bids on Disaster Debris Removal, Disposal and Reduction contract.

Commissioner Snellgrove made a motion to award the bid on the Disaster Debris Removal, Disposal and Reduction contract to DRC Emergency Services, low bidder meeting specs, in the amount of \$87,880.00 and should the low bidder fail to meet its obligations, then it would be offered to the second low bidder, TAG Grinding Services, Inc., in the amount of \$96,975.00. Commissioner Harvey seconded the motion. Chairman Culver reported this would get a professional cleanup company in place under contract to our county so if our county ever has a bad storm or a hurricane, they can be called to come in and clean up. He stated they are required to be here within 24 hours, and begin the clean up process. Chairman Culver stated they would be compensated for their clean up. Chairman Culver stated by having these contracts in place it creates a little bit of additional revenue from FEMA should we have a storm. Mr. Pool stated he did not have anything in writing but he understood it would be 5%. Chairman Culver called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously. (Please see attached summary sheet in Minute Book)

7. Request from the City of Ashford for site work at new ball field.

Commissioner Snellgrove made a motion to approve the request from the City of Ashford for site work at the new ball field. Commissioner Harvey seconded the motion. Commissioner Forrester asked if this request was under the jurisdiction of the City of Ashford or the Houston County Board of Education? Mr. Pool stated it was the City of Ashford. Chairman Culver reported this is a tee ball field. Chairman Culver called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously.

8. Request to approve agreement for purchase, operation, and maintenance of striping and marker equipment jointly with Dale and Coffee counties.

Commissioner Harvey made a motion to approve the agreement for purchase, operation, and maintenance of striping and marker equipment jointly with Dale and Coffee counties. Commissioner Forrester seconded the motion. Mr. Pool stated this is a good program. Chairman Culver reported as far as the commission knows, it is the first of its kind where 3 counties have gone together to share costs to provide services to their citizens. He stated it will save all three counties a significant amount of money. The chairman commended the three engineers who were involved in putting this together and the three commissions for agreeing to do it and funding it. Chairman Culver reported this is very unique and very forward thinking and progressive. Mr. Pool stated this should be a savings of approximately \$150,000 annually, and it will allow the county to have better striped and marked roads. Commissioner Cook asked if the county was

going to eventually offer their services to the municipalities? Chairman Culver stated they have had some discussion about that and it is still under review. He called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously.

#### Staff Reports:

##### a. Chief Administrative Officer

Mr. Roberts reported he had several things because they have some time factors involved and if the commission chooses not to address them at this time then the commission can get around it.

The first item was a consulting contract. He pointed out the water lab is required to be supervised by a state certified person to oversee that the reports and things are turned in. Mr. Roberts reported the county has had a contract for several years with one person who handled this, and the contract expires on October 1<sup>st</sup>. Mr. Roberts stated they had an opportunity to bring back the former director of the water lab prior to the change over with the state. He pointed out he has since retired from the state, and has expressed an interest in the position at a reduced rate from what the county was paying. Mr. Roberts reported they have discussed this with David Evans, who supervises the lab, and Mr. Evans is very interested in that. Mr. Roberts reported the consultant who did the job had a full time job and when Mr. Evans went on vacation they tried to keep the lab open or they had to close it. He stated this person would be available to fill in. He reported the agreement has been adjusted to include an hourly rate when he filled in on a full time basis to cover for Mr. Evans when he went on vacation, and it would allow the county to pay that and still come out better than what was budgeted. Mr. Roberts stated because it starts October 1<sup>st</sup> the commission can either approve it now and get it in place or it can be placed on the first meeting of October's agenda and make it retroactive to October 1<sup>st</sup>. He stated the county is required to have someone there to be certified for the state reporting that is required. Mr. Roberts reported the contract is exactly the same as the previous one except for the hourly rate which was put in at \$25.00 per hour if he has to work on a full time basis for vacation relief, and the other is at a rate of \$250.00 per month compared to \$450.00 per month in the old contract. He reported it gives the county a better deal, and it gives more immediate coverage instead of having to rely on someone with a full time job and trying to get him to come when he could. Chairman Culver stated the commission appreciates the job the current consultant has done in allowing the lab to be operational. The chairman reported when the lab first opened, the commission tried to get Mr. Kirkland to come. Commissioner Cook asked if Mr. Evans was in agreement with this? Chairman Culver stated he was very much in agreement. Commissioner Snellgrove asked if this item could wait until the next meeting? Mr. Roberts stated yes. Chairman Culver stated the commission could wait and it requires unanimous consent to be brought up at this meeting, but he hoped it would be addressed since the contract begins October 1<sup>st</sup>. Chairman Culver reported the other guy has been

notified that the contract will not be extended, and he felt the commission should go ahead and do it. Chairman Culver asked if anyone objected to immediate consideration of this item? Commissioner Snellgrove asked if this was an oversight or if it could not have been received at the last meeting? Mr. Roberts stated he should have put it on this agenda but at the time they were working on getting the contract done and he failed to get it on the agenda. Chairman Culver stated this did just come up and it was not something they have been working on for months and months. Mr. Roberts reported if this matter is not approved at this meeting, then they cannot turn in any reports to the state between October 1st and October 9<sup>th</sup>, the date of the next meeting. Commissioner Snellgrove asked if Mr. Sherrer had looked at it. Mr. Roberts reported Mr. Sherrer created the first one and they used the same form. Chairman Culver asked if there was any objection to immediate consideration of this item? Commissioner Snellgrove stated he would like to see it held up until the next meeting. Chairman Culver reported it would be on the next meeting's agenda.

Mr. Roberts reported since Thursday's meeting, a siren in Madrid had been struck by lightning, and the cost to repair it would be approximately \$2,241.00. He stated the repair would require a budget amendment. He stated the commission could either proceed on the emergency or come back on the first meeting in October to handle this matter. Chairman Culver asked if this had already been repaired? It was reported that it had not, and the Chairman asked if one of the sirens goes down if the county did not need to look into some type of Declaration of Emergency repair? He reported the expenditure could be approved later. He stated there should never be any question about repairing the sirens because they do not need to be down for an extended time. Mr. Roberts reported he deemed this an emergency situation and they were going ahead to repair the siren unless the commission stopped them. Chairman Culver asked if anyone objected to the immediate consideration of the item? There were no objections. Commissioner Harvey made a motion to approve the emergency repair of the siren in Madrid through the proper budget amendment in the amount of \$2,241.00. Commissioner Cook seconded; and the motion carried unanimously. (Please see attached budget amendment in Minute Book)

Mr. Roberts reported someone failed to send the paperwork in time to have it placed on the Administrative meeting's agenda. He stated Sheriff Hughes has requested to eliminate a Lieutenant position and create a Captain's position. Mr. Roberts reported he will delay hiring someone in a secretarial position or eliminate the secretarial position to fund the Captain's position. Mr. Roberts pointed out the Lieutenant's position covers all but approximately \$10,000 and he has money without having to make a budget amendment. Mr. Roberts reported the Sheriff has asked that the commission approve this request so that the Captain's position will become effective October 1<sup>st</sup>. Chairman Culver asked Mr. Roberts if the Sheriff is not going to fill a secretarial position and eliminate a Lieutenant's position in order to fund the Captain's position with his existing budget money? Mr. Roberts stated that was correct. Commissioner Harvey

asked the Sheriff if he was going to fill the secretarial position at a later date? The Sheriff reported the secretarial position had been in the budget and has been unfilled and at this time, they do not have a current need for that position, and he wanted to convert that existing money into the salary of a Captain's position. He reported the captain's position will be an appointed position; an unclassified position. Chairman Culver asked the Sheriff if he was saying he was going to eliminate the secretarial position? The Sheriff stated yes. He reported there is already money left over for the vacated Lieutenant's position by Lt. Valenza who was promoted to Chief Deputy when he took office. The chairman reported the secretarial and administrative positions are through the Personnel Board and he asked the Sheriff to send a letter requesting them to eliminate that position. Commissioner Snellgrove asked Mr. Roberts if he stated the Sheriff was \$10,000 short? Mr. Roberts stated that was without the secretarial position, and he would use some of the money from the secretarial position to offset the salary. The chairman asked if there was any objection to the consideration of this item? There was none. Commissioner Harvey made a motion to approve the request from the Sheriff to eliminate the Lieutenant's position and create a Captain's position to become effective October 1st. Commissioner Snellgrove seconded; and the motion carried unanimously.

b. County Engineer – There was no report.

c. County Attorney – Pat Jones, acting Attorney stated there as no report.

Adjourn.

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