

MINUTES OF THE HOUSTON COUNTY COMMISSION
SEPTEMBER 28, 2009

PRESENT: Chairman Mark S. Culver, Commissioner Curtis Harvey, Commissioner Bobby R. Snellgrove, Commissioner Frances M. Cook, Commissioner Philip L. Forrester, Gary Sherrer, Attorney, Mark Pool, Engineer, and William J. Dempsey, Chief Administrative Officer

ABSENT: None

Chairman Mark Culver called the 10:00 A.M. meeting to order, established that a quorum was present, and welcomed everyone. Rev. Scott Sessions, Pastor, First Church of the Nazarene, gave the invocation. Commissioner Phillip Forrester led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Commissioner Harvey 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 thanked Commissioner Snellgrove for chairing the administrative meeting Thursday in his absence. He reported he was attending the Association of County Commissions of Alabama's Board Retreat. The chairman also thanked Commissioner Snellgrove for his service on the ACCA Board of Directors over the last two years.

Chairman Culver congratulated Bill Dempsey on the completion of the courses for a Certified County Administrator. He pointed out that he is not officially a Certified County Administrator because he has to be in the position for three years. Chairman Culver pointed out he will have to keep up the continuing education courses.

The chairman extended the Commission's thanks and best wishes to outgoing Mayor Pat Thomas at the City of Dothan for his service to the citizens of Dothan over the past years. He stated the commission looked forward to working with in-coming Mayor Mike Schmitz. He pointed out all of them had worked with Mayor-Elect Schmitz on various projects over the years, and looked forward to a very positive relationship between the city and the county in the coming years. Chairman Culver reported the Swearing-In ceremony for the new mayor and commissioners would be September 29th, at 6:30 P.M. at the Dothan Civic Center.

The chairman reported the Chairman of the Safety Committee had sent him a letter recognizing Mickey Segó and his staff at the Farm Center for a job well done as it relates to safety material. He extended congratulations to Mr. Segó and his staff on behalf of the commission.

Chairman Culver reported on Saturday, October 3rd, from 6:00 A.M. until 11:00 A.M., there will be a gathering at Ray's Restaurant to show Ray Sizemore the community's love for him and all he has done. The chairman pointed out it will be a dutch treat breakfast. He encouraged everyone who would be available to go by and see him and express their gratitude for all he has done as he is going through a tough time.

The chairman reported that Southern Nuclear is implementing a walk down in the eastern end of the county, and they will be visiting all of the homes to be sure they have batteries for their radios and their radios are turned on.

Awards and Presentations

1. Proclamation – “Family Day” – Beth Ford, Program Manager, Dothan-Houston County Substance Abuse Partnership and Joy Brown, Youth Council President

Chairman Culver asked Ms. Beth Ford, Program Manager, Dothan-Houston County Substance Abuse Partnership and Ms. Joy Brown, Youth Council President, to come forward. Commissioner Harvey made a motion to approve the Proclamation declaring September 28th, as “Family Day” in Houston County. Commissioner Forrester seconded the motion.

Chairman Culver then read the Proclamation and presented it to Ms. Ford. Chairman Culver thanked Ms. Ford and the Substance Abuse Partnership for all of the good work they continue to do. Ms. Ford thanked the Commission and Chairman Culver for presenting the proclamation. She stated they do a lot of education programs throughout the year with the children of Houston County about the dangers of drugs and alcohol but no matter how much they get out there and talk with the kids, and no matter how much teachers, law enforcement, pastors and others comes together to show children how important they are in making the right choices, nothing impacts them like their parents. Ms. Ford reported this is one day out of the year they encourage every family to take the time to have dinner together; talk with the children and find out what is going on in their lives.

Ms. Ford introduced Ms. Joy Brown, President of the Youth Council, and a senior at Rehobeth, who shared what “Family Day” meant to her. She stated kids who spend more time at the dinner table with their parents spend less time with drugs and alcohol. She urged everyone to take the time to sit down with their family, and bond. Chairman Culver thanked them for attending, and stated the commission encouraged everyone to have dinner and spend some time with their family.

2. Presentation – Boosting Engineering, Science, and Technology (BEST) – Beverlye Magnet School – Mrs. Jeanie Solomon

Chairman Culver asked Mrs. Jeanie Solomon, Beverlye Magnet School, to come forward and explain their project. Mrs. Solomon stated BEST is a national competition and they are competing through the War Eagle BEST hub through Auburn. She pointed out there are 29 teams competing with most of the teams being from high schools with a few middle schools. Mrs. Solomon reported Dothan Technology Center and Beverlye have teams. She stated they build a robot but that is not the most important thing because they document everything they do. Mrs. Solomon asked Matt Parker, Captain of the Robotics Construction Team, to come forward and he explained about their trip to Auburn. Mr. Parker stated they received a returnables kit full of parts. He pointed out they could not change any of them and they had to use what they had. Mr. Parker stated their task is to make the robot push balls into a square where the spotter can pick up the balls and place them and make energy from what they have. Mrs.

Solomon reported the theme is “High Octane—Alternative Fuel.” Mr. Parker then demonstrated the robot. She stated the robot will pick up various chemical elements and make a compound from them.

Mrs. Solomon reported the robot is the smallest part of the project and another part is the Notebook. She asked Ms. Ashley Davis, Captain of the Notebook Team, to come forward and she explained that everything has to be documented. She reported that they will receive the most points off the notebook. Ms. Davis reported they have a twitter account, a part on the school web site, and a blog as well as e-mail address in order to keep people informed on the project. Mrs. Solomon invited the commission to come visit them at Beverlye or to visit their blog or their twitter account, BMSBEST. She thanked the commission for having them.

Consent Agenda

1. Appointment of mayor-Elect Mick Schmitz to SARCOA Board to fill unexpired term effective October 5, 2009.
2. Appointment of Mayor-Elect Mike Schmitz to the SE Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission effective October 5, 2009.

Chairman Culver reported these appointments are due to the change in leadership at the City of Dothan. Commissioner Snellgrove made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda to include the appointment of Mayor-Elect Mike Schmitz to the SARCOA Board to fill an unexpired term effective October 5, 2009, and to the SE Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission effective October 5, 2009. Commissioner Harvey seconded the motion. Chairman Culver called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously.

Regular Agenda

1. Request from Coroner to approve (5) five Deputy Coroners – Ben Earnest, Larry Crawford, Jack Persch, Keith Stowers, and Jarrett Maddox.

Commissioner Harvey made a motion to approve the Coroner’s request to approve five (5) Deputy Coroners – Ben Earnest, Larry Crawford, Jack Persch, Keith Stowers, and Jarrett Maddox. Commissioner Cook seconded the motion. Chairman Culver reported a relatively new law was passed that created the commission having to do this and it was brought to Mr. Byrd’s attention that he was not doing this. Commissioner Snellgrove pointed out it was reported on Thursday that there would be no additional funds involved. The chairman called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously.

2. Request to adopt Resolution requesting ALDOT to consider the removal of the attached list of projects from the Annual Maintenance Inspections.

Commissioner Cook made a motion to grant the request to adopt the Resolution requesting ALDOT to consider the removal of the attached list of projects from the Annual Maintenance Inspections. Commissioner Harvey seconded the motion. Mr. Pool reported the state does an inspection on

projects that they have financed or used federal funds on. He pointed out some of the projects are 40-50 years old and a civil resurfacing project and it is worn out. He reported the county has resurfaced it two or three times and they are still grading the original resurfacing project. Mr. Pool stated it is basically cleaning up paper work. Chairman Culver called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously. (Please see in Resolution Book)

3. Request for approval to develop a Paupers Cemetery.

Commissioner Harvey made a motion to approve the request to develop a Paupers Cemetery.

Commissioner Cook seconded the motion. Chairman Culver stated the commission did not have any impact in determining who is or who is not a pauper. He reported the commission is designated by law for the paying of the cost for the interment of those that are indigent burials. Chairman Culver stated the commission has been doing this for quite some time, and years ago they established \$250.00 to be given to the funeral home that had the body at that time. He pointed out the funeral home took care of the arrangements and that worked for quite a while. The chairman stated costs in the funeral business went up and recently, the commission took prices from various funeral homes and the best price received was approximately \$1,800.00 to take care of a body when they are deemed indigent.

Chairman Culver reported the process goes through the Department of Human Resources. He pointed out the commission does not do anything until a letter is received from DHR stating they have done their due diligence to make sure that there are no family members and no assets that could take care of the cost. He reported the county used to have 3 or 4 a year but the county is now having 8 or 9 a year.

Chairman Culver reported in the county's discussions with the coroner about how to handle these increasing costs, they talked about establishing a pauper's cemetery. He stated the county had just purchased 70 acres and they also looked at a couple of other places and determined that the county property might be a good place to establish a pauper's cemetery, and the cost could be as little as \$100.00 and no more than \$200.00 to do it this way. He reported long term, it will save the county a significant amount of money. Chairman Culver reported the commission is going to make the cemetery a place that has the respect a cemetery should have, and they are going to do landscaping, and have markers for the graves. He stated the county would dispose of the bodies in a proper manner.

Chairman Culver reported the coroner would oversee it as the county does not do any of the work embalming, or the interment, but it will provide a place to put them at a much reduced cost. The chairman reported at this meeting, the commission is approving moving forward with the process and at one of the next couple of meetings, there will be a policy about the individuals that qualify, and who is allowed to be buried in such a cemetery. Chairman Culver reported at this time, if they are citizens of Dothan and are indigent, then they can be buried in the City Cemetery, but the city will not allow those that are not citizens of Dothan to be buried there. He stated there have been a few times when bodies were sitting and waiting, and he stated he thought this would be a more respectful way to take care of it and they will be put in a place with some dignity and save the taxpayers some money by doing it in this manner. Commissioner Cook asked if there would be a separate area designated for the cemetery and kept up in a manner that would have some dignity? Chairman Culver stated there is another cemetery adjacent to where they plan to do it. He reported it is a corner of the property the county bought, and it is away from the shooting range and the dirt pit and it will be treated just as any other cemetery with

maintenance and dignity. Commissioner Snellgrove asked how much land was going to be set aside for the cemetery? Mr. Pool stated 1.1 acres is what they have set up, and it could be expanded. Chairman Culver reported the coroner had stated 1,000 bodies would go in one acre, and that should last the county a long time. Mr. Dempsey stated there were a couple of other issues: 1. Monetary, and 2. More formal way of handling every situation. He stated in the past, the county has known where they would end up but there is always a trail to go down. He stated the coroner and DHR have been a tremendous help in this matter, and this will make it very clear as to what the county will do. He stated by establishing a proper cemetery the county will have an ongoing procedure that the county will be able to determine who is there and document and keep the records. Commissioner Snellgrove asked how much time will lapse before an individual is declared a pauper? Chairman Culver reported it has varied over time in part because the process with the situations involved with the bodies is different. The chairman stated he hoped this would help that aspect also knowing how it will be handled. Chairman Culver reiterated that the county does not make the indigency determination. He stated it is made by DHR and certified to the commission via a letter. Commissioner Cook asked if there would be markers for the graves? Chairman Culver stated yes. Mr. Dempsey stated a permanent flat marker would be at the grave site showing the name, date of birth, and date of death if those things are known. He stated there may be situations that the date of death might not be known depending if someone is found on a highway. Chairman Culver called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously.

Staff Reports:

Chief Administrative Officer – there was no report.

County Engineer

Mr. Pool reported work had been going slow due to the rain, and he stated he was glad to see some good weather and could start making some progress on a lot of projects.

Mr. Pool reported since the last meeting, FEMA did send someone down to work with them on the dirt and they commented that they have done the 1.4 dirt before and they paid the county for all of it. He stated there are some other issues and they have an item called Miscellaneous Repair where they missed stuff and added things wrong, left things out and it is approximately \$61,000. Mr. Pool stated he had tried to get a timetable from them as to when they would be coming and when they would get it worked out, but he had not been able to do so. He stated since the meeting with FEMA on August 11th, they have gotten communication that the county is going to receive \$384,000.00 out of the \$669,000.00.

Chairman Culver stated after the county made its point, FEMA responded quickly, and they are working with the county better and understanding the county's position. He stated he thought they had changed the personnel who the county was working with which was probably the biggest step in all of this. The chairman reported they have had significant events in the Atlanta area and it has drawn their attention and resources, and we need to understand they have other things going on.

Mr. Clark Matthews reported there had been a lot of interest in the river and according to the correspondence he had with the Corp of Engineers, the river should be going down September 29th.

County Attorney – there was no report.

Adjourn.

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