

MINUTES OF THE HOUSTON COUNTY COMMISSION  
NOVEMBER 24, 2008

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

ABSENT: None

Chairman Mark S. Culver called the 10:00 A.M. meeting to order, established that a quorum was present, and welcomed everyone. Rev. David Willis, Pastor, Highland Park United Methodist Church, gave the invocation. Commissioner Cook led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

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

Chairman Culver asked everyone to pause this week and give thanks for the many blessings we all have. He stated we should all be thankful for what we have, and the nation we live in.

The chairman reported Wednesday, November 26<sup>th</sup>, would be "Wear Your Colors Day" for all county employees. He encouraged everyone to wear their colors and show their spirit.

Chairman Culver reported the county's Health Fair was last week and he stated there were 112 employees who participated. He pointed out it was up from the 89 employees who attended last year. He stated it was good to know that more employees are thinking of about their health. Chairman Culver reported a healthy employee is a good employee.

He reported he had received the Jail Report last week and there were 435 inmates. He stated the number is significantly better than it was. He stated he appreciated Commander Reed's efforts along with the Judicial system and Mr. Sherrer, and anyone else involved with getting people out of the jail. Chairman Culver stated he understood there would be a criminal term in December that should help bring the numbers down.

Chairman Culver reported county offices would be closed Thursday this week for Thanksgiving and reminded everyone they would be closed on Friday since the county has been on the four tens work schedule.

#### Awards and Presentations

1. Proclamation – "Winter Weather Awareness Week" – Clark Matthews, EMA Director

Chairman CUVler asked Mr. Clark Matthews, EMA Director, to come forward. Commissioner Harvey made a motion to approve the Proclamation declaring " Winter Weather Awareness Week" November

17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup>, as prepared. Commissioner Snellgrove seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously. Chairman Culver then read the Proclamation and presented it to Mr. Matthews.

Mr. Matthews reminded everyone that November and December pose a severe tornado threat for Houston County. He pointed out records in the past have shown there have been 225 tornadoes in November and in 2007, there were 40 tornadoes in Houston County. Mr. Matthews stated they wanted to draw attention to the fact that winter weather does not affect Houston County as much as the tornadoes do. He reminded everyone to stay prepared for severe weather. The chairman stated we do not normally think about tornadoes in the winter but they do occur. Chairman Culver thanked Mr. Matthews.

## 2. Envision Quarterly Update – Dr. Thomas Harrison, Envision Coordinator

Dr. Thomas Harrison, Envision Coordinator, and Executive Director of the Wiregrass Foundation, gave the quarterly Envision update. Dr. Harrison reminded everyone as a Social Studies teacher, our country has celebrated more than 400 Thanksgivings and they have been brought about by good decisions leaders have made. He reported the good decisions leaders made early on are those that need to be made now. He commended the Commission for their strong leadership for our community.

He reported the Envision initiative was in its third year and it would be an evaluation year. He asked the commission to refer to the last sheet of the material he had handed out. He pointed out how they were shifting some of the things over to an evaluation process. He then covered the various task forces. Dr. Harrison reported this was the third and final year, and he stated they would be able to make recommendations at the end of this year if they continue at all.

Chairman Culver thanked Dr. Harrison for coming and giving the update. (Please see attached in Minute Book)

## Regular Agenda

1. Request to adopt a Resolution approving an application seeking authority to incorporate a Public Corporation as a Capital Improvement District.

Commissioner Cook made a motion to adopt the Resolution approving an application seeking authority to incorporate a Public Corporation as a Capital Improvement District. Commissioner Snellgrove seconded the motion. The chairman reported this is the improvement district that would be doing the work on the project south of Dothan and actually will be issuing the bonds. The chairman called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously. (Please see in Resolution Book)

2. Request to adopt a Resolution appointing three (3) directors to the Board of Directors of the Cooperative District of Houston County—Country Crossing Project.

Commissioner Cook made a motion to adopt the Resolution appointing three (3) directors to the Board of Directors of the Cooperative District of Houston County—Country Crossing Project. Commissioner

Forrester seconded the motion. Chairman Culver called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously. (Please see in Resolution Book)

3. Request to enter into amended contract with Lee Helms & Company to update the Houston County Emergency Operation Plan.

Commissioner Cook made a motion to enter into an amended contract with Lee Helms & Company to update the Houston County Emergency Operation Plan. Commissioner Forrester seconded the motion. Chairman Culver reported this is to update the county's required emergency operation plan. He stated the county has grant money that was approved in a previous meeting to pay for the plan. Chairman Culver called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously.

4. Request to award bids for the Alabama County Joint Bid Program.

Commissioner Forrester made a motion to award bids for the Alabama County Joint Bid Program. Commissioner Cook seconded the motion. Chairman Culver reported Houston County has been operating in conjunction with the ACCA for the past several years, and is the awarding authority for the program that allows all counties across the state to purchase items at a better price than they could individually get. He stated the administration of the program is handled by the ACCA in Montgomery. The chairman reported the requirement of the law is that a county award the bids and accept them. Chairman Culver commended Mark Pool for his involvement in helping write and make sure that all the specs are met.

Commissioner Snellgrove asked if it was mandatory that the counties buy off the bid list? Chairman Culver stated no. Commissioner Snellgrove asked if Houston County bought pretty much off the bid list? Mr. Pool stated they compare the state bid with the county joint bid, and then sometimes they bid their own. He pointed out they bid it three different ways and go with the one that is the best route to take. Mr. Pool stated he would like to make Mr. Clark Matthews aware that this time, items are included for EMA such as sirens, generators, etc. Chairman Culver reported this program was put in place to provide opportunities to bid things that are usually not on the state bid. He pointed out counties can buy off the state bid, joint bid, the NACO U.S. Communities Program, or take prices. Mr. Pool reported usually when it is bid, the manufacturer comes up with extra incentives because the whole state will be buying from them. He pointed out when they buy motorgraders, the county usually saves several hundred thousand dollars buying off the joint bid program. Chairman Culver called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously. (Please see attached Bid Summary in Minute Book)

5. Request to make four day work week permanent.

Commissioner Cook made a motion to approve the request to make the four day work week permanent. Commissioner Forrester seconded the motion. Chairman Culver reported he asked the department heads if there had been any significant issues that had come up? He stated all responses were there were none and the majority of the employees supported it. The chairman pointed out the department heads supported it unanimously. He reported there had been a few issues they have had to work through. Chairman Culver stated in general, it appears to be working smoothly. He reported the county

will not know for a while about the savings to the county. He stated he did not think it would be hundreds of thousands of dollars. The chairman reported he and Mr. Dempsey and Mr. Curtis would be meeting to discuss ways that it can save money to the county. He pointed out if the commission makes it permanent, there are some things that can be done that they did not want to do if it was going to be temporary. He stated he appreciated the public working with the county during the transition and he thanked the media for helping get the word out.

Commissioner Cook stated it was her understanding that Judge Cooley is working with the ones in her department that had problems. She stated the commission wanted everyone who had problems with the hours, have some flexibility to work it out. Commissioner Cook thanked Judge Cooley, and any others that have had problems in their departments.

Commissioner Forrester stated he would hope that this might open the county's labor pool prospects for those people who might not have the opportunity of a four day work week in other businesses where the county might be more attractive. Chairman Culver stated he thought that was a very significant point that has not been mentioned. He reported this is a benefit to employment to be able to work four tens and have a three day weekend. The chairman stated that he thought ongoing, as the county hires people more and more will want to come to work under those circumstances.

Commissioner Snellgrove asked what departments were not on four tens? Chairman Culver reported the Administrative building, Road and Bridge Department, and patrol units in the Sheriff's Department worked four tens. He pointed out the remainder of the Sheriff's Department, EMA, and the Farm Center worked 5 days a week. Chairman Culver reported it is up to the Sheriff as to how he coordinates his employees. Chairman Culver called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously.

6. Request to change the holiday for the day after Thanksgiving to Christmas Eve.

Chairman Culver reported the request was a little different. He then stated it should be a request to change the holiday for the day after Thanksgiving to Christmas Eve for ten (10) hour employees and to add Christmas Eve for eight (8) hour employees. Commissioner Cook made a motion to approve the request as read by the Chairman. Commissioner Forrester seconded the motion.

Chairman Culver reported this is one of the issues that had to be worked out. He stated the new holiday schedule will be presented at the next meeting. He stated next year, there will probably be a two step holiday schedule; one for eight (8) hour employees and one for ten (10) hour employees. Chairman Culver reported the commission did not want to take away any holidays and the one after Thanksgiving was already designated as a holiday. He pointed out now that the Administrative building is working four ten hour days, that holiday is on an off day. The chairman stated they were moving the ten hour holiday to Christmas Eve, and also giving the eight (8) hour employees Christmas Eve as they usually do in the county. Chairman Culver reported it amounts to there being four hours difference if you take into consideration the two extra hours the ten hour employees had on Veterans Day and Columbus Day when you add it back to the time given off on this program, then it is almost the same with four (4) hours difference which was as close as they could get it.

He reported if the schedule is adopted the county will be closed Thursday, November 27<sup>th</sup> and Friday, November 28<sup>th</sup> of this week, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, and the day after Christmas during Christmas week and New Years Day of New Years week. He pointed out county employees will work on New Years Eve. He reported eight (8) hour employees will work the day after New Years Day as usual.

Sheriff Hughes asked if the county was adjusting to make up for hours since the county employees in the Administrative building have not been on the four day schedule for the whole year? Chairman Culver reported they were adjusting the schedule in order to prevent the employees in the Administrative building from losing a holiday. Sheriff Hughes stated his concern was for his ten hour deputies that they are not getting a day for a day. He reported they had been on ten hour schedules for almost the entire year. The Sheriff asked if the ten hour deputies should be getting an extra day? Chairman Culver reported the ten hour deputies should receive ten hours of holiday pay when they are off. Sheriff Hughes asked if the commission was changing the holiday for Thanksgiving by moving the Friday after Thanksgiving to Christmas Eve? Chairman Culver reported it was the same ten hours but it would now be on Christmas Eve. Sheriff Hughes reported according to the schedule Commissioner Snellgrove had shown him, the ten hour schedule would not get the three days at Christmas; Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and the day after Christmas. Chairman Culver reported the day after Christmas, the employees are off anyway. Sheriff Hughes stated tower employees would be but not necessarily his deputies. He pointed out sometimes they work 4 on and 4 off for several weeks and 5 on and 3 off for several weeks but it all still equates to a 40 hour work week. Chairman Culver stated the Sheriff sets their holiday schedule. Sheriff Hughes stated he wanted to make sure there would be no conflicting problems with payroll once the payroll reaches the tower. Chairman Culver pointed out the Friday after Thanksgiving will not be a holiday for ten hour employees, and it was; but now Christmas Eve will be a ten hour holiday and it was not. He reported the employees will not be losing a holiday. The chairman reported the intent was for no one to lose any time, and they have gotten it down to four hours. He reported this should be resolved when next year's holiday schedule is presented at the next meeting because there will be two different schedules. Chairman Culver stated the Sheriff's employees were in a different situation because they have to work whether it is a holiday or not. The chairman stated he thought this was a Personnel/Attorney situation, but he thought the Sheriff sets his own times. Sheriff Hughes stated he wanted to make sure there would not be any problems once it got to payroll. Chairman Culver stated there was not any he was aware of. He asked Ms. Sheri Stephenson, Personnel Director, if she envisioned any problems, and she stated she did not. Commissioner Snellgrove stated all Houston County employees will get either an eight (8) hour or a ten (10) hour holiday on Christmas Eve. He stated he thought the Sheriff's concern was if any employees were going to be shorted a holiday? Chairman Culver reported that was not the intent. The chairman wanted them to understand that 13 ten hour holidays is not the same as 13 eight hour holidays. He stated when some of these days fall on Fridays, they are not holidays for ten hour employees. The chairman reported this is one of the issues they are working on. He suggested they work with Personnel to make sure what is presented at the next meeting addresses all of the issues fairly. The chairman called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously.

7. Request to cancel the December 18<sup>th</sup> Administrative meeting and December 22<sup>nd</sup> Commission meeting.

Commissioner Cook made a motion to cancel the December 18<sup>th</sup> Administrative meeting and December 22<sup>nd</sup> Commission meeting. Commissioner Harvey seconded. The chairman called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously.

8. Request to approve prior year expenditures.

Commissioner Snellgrove made a motion to approve the prior year expenditures. Commissioner Harvey seconded the motion. Chairman Culver reported this is per the new county Modernization Act that states all of those things have to be approved or they become the responsibility of the department head personally. Chairman Culver called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously. (Please see attached in Minute Book)

9. Request to award bids for computers.

Commissioner Harvey made a motion to award the bids for computers to the lowest bidder meeting specs in each category. Commissioner Cook seconded the motion. Chairman Culver called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously. (Please see attached bid sheets in Minute Book)

10. Request to adopt Resolution to reconstruct County Road #81 from County Road #75 to County Road #8. (approximately 3.31 miles)

Commissioner Snellgrove made a motion to adopt the Resolution to construct County Road #81 from County Road #75 to County Road #8 (approximately 3.31 miles). Commissioner Cook seconded the motion. Mr. Pool reported this started the process of working through the federal funds. Chairman Culver reported that the road is in need of repair. The chairman called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously. (Please see in Resolution Book)

11. Request to grant assistance to the Town of Cottonwood to pave driveway and parking area in front of the Housing Authority on Sealy Wells Road.

Commissioner Snellgrove made a motion to approve the request to grant assistance to the Town of Cottonwood to pave the driveway and parking area in front of the Housing Authority on Sealy Wells Road per policy. Commissioner Harvey seconded the motion. Chairman Culver reported this property is owned by the Town of Cottonwood. The chairman called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously.

12. Request to approve list of items to be sold on GovDeals.

Commissioner Harvey made a motion to approve the list of items to be sold on GovDeals. Commissioner Snellgrove seconded the motion. Chairman Culver called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously. (Please see attached list in Minute Book)

Staff Reports:

Chief Administrative Officer – there was no report

County Engineer

Mr. Pool reported the bridges on Wallace Buie Road and Windmill Road were under construction. He stated the intersection at Murphy Mill Road and Brannon Stand Road was under construction and they hoped to have it completed by Christmas. Mr. Pool reported the Ardilla intersection was under construction. He also reported they are working at Wiregrass Rehab. He stated all the projects are going well.

Commissioner Snellgrove asked about the expected completion date of the Ardilla intersection? Mr. Pool stated depending on the weather, the county's portion should be completed sometime in January or February. Mr. Pool reported he did not know when the city or the state would begin on their part. Chairman Culver reported the county needed to stay in contact particularly with the state so they know the timeframe and can get their work done. Mr. Pool reported there was a letter written informing them that the county had started the project.

Mr. Pool reported on the new striping they have striped 80 miles so far, and in the next week or two, they are going to begin striping on the new roads they have resurfaced. The chairman reported they had been practicing on the old roads and now they are going to get on the new ones.

Chairman Culver stated it was good to have Mr. Pool back after an absence of a couple of meetings.

County Attorney – there was no report

Adjourn.

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