

MINUTES OF THE HOUSTON COUNTY COMMISSION
SEPTEMBER 25, 2017

PRESENT: Chairman Mark S. Culver, Commissioner Curtis Harvey, Commissioner Doug Sinquefield, Commissioner Jackie Battles, Commissioner Brandon Shoupe, Pres Register, County Attorney, Barkley Kirkland, County Engineer, and William J. Dempsey, Chief Administrative Officer.

Commission Chairman Culver called the 10:00 a.m. meeting to order and declared a quorum.

Rev. Bob Sanders, Minister of Pastoral Care, Ridgecrest Baptist Church, gave the invocation and Commissioner Jackie Battles led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

Announcements and Comments from Chairman and Commissioners

Commissioner Sinquefield invited everyone to the Porktoberque BBQ festival to be held at the Houston County Farm Center this Friday through Sunday, September 29th through October 1, 2017. Admission is \$5.00 and it is always a good event.

Chairman Culver then stepped down to the podium and asked Ms. Linda McGhee, Administrative Assistant to the Houston County Commission, to come forward to the podium. Ms. McGhee, after serving 28 years and 5 months, is retiring from her position effective October 1, 2017. Chairman Culver stated that Ms. McGhee had been with the commission's office since he had been there and that it had been a joy to work with Ms. McGhee. He continued to say that she has always gone out of her way to serve the commission and the citizens of Houston County. He also stated that Linda had worked at the Chamber of Commerce prior to working at the County so she was always serving the community. She always maintained her dignity no matter the situation and always kept a professional manner. Chairman Culver wanted to take this time to give Linda proper recognition that she deserved.

After an applause from the audience, Ms. McGhee gave an excellent speech beginning with she had seen a lot of changes in our county and that had made our county one of the leading counties in our state and that all of the county citizens should be proud of that. She continued to say that she wished to thank Chairman Culver, Commissioner Harvey, Commissioner Sinquefield, Commissioner Battles, and Commissioner Shoupe, and former commissioners for the opportunity they gave her to serve as Administrative Assistant. She stated that it had been a "great ride" but that she looked forward to the next chapter of her life to spend time with her family, especially her grandchildren, at the lake and to do some traveling. She emphasized that she was going to miss everyone and that she was so blessed to have her position and she wished Chairman Culver and the rest of the commissioners continued success as they strive daily to make Houston County the wonderful place to work and live and to raise a family.

Chairman Culver then announced a “special guest” in the audience, Mayor Mike Schmitz. Mayor Schmitz came forward and Chairman Culver stated that it had been an honor to work with Mayor Schmitz for the past 8 years and thanked him for his service. Mayor Schmitz thanked Chairman Culver for the privilege of working with the commission. He added that the economic developments that have occurred with the joint efforts of the County Commission and the City Commission to include the Library, Forever Wild Trails and many other projects. Mayor Schmitz stated that it was truly an incredible honor to serve the community. At that time, Mayor Schmitz presented Chairman Culver and all the commissioners a Key to the City of Dothan on behalf of himself, the City Commission, City Manager Mike West and the citizens of Dothan. He stated that in his new role, as Chairman of the Dothan City School Board, he hopes to work with all of the commissioners and city officials and work together when things are difficult. At that time, all commissioners came down to accept their “Key to the City of Dothan”.

Awards and Presentations

1. Proclamation- “National Disability Employment Awareness Month” – Mr. Darryl Ellis, Business Relations Coordinator, Alabama Department of Rehab Services, Ms. Jennifer Robinson, Unit Supervisor, Ms. Pam Solomon, Rehab Coordinator, and Ms. Tonya Sanders, Rehab Coordinator.

Chairman Culver asked Mr. Darryl Ellis to come forward. Commissioner Battles made a motion to approve the Proclamation for “National Disability Employment Awareness Month”. Commissioner Shoupe seconded the motion and it carried unanimously. Chairman Culver then read the Proclamation proclaiming October as “National Disability Employment Awareness Month”. The Houston County Commission is recognizing National Disability Employment Awareness Month to raise awareness about disability employment issues and celebrate the many and varied contributions of people with disabilities. Activities during this month will reinforce the value and talent people with disabilities add to our workplaces and communities and affirm Houston County’s commitment to an inclusive community. A representative from the Alabama Department of Rehab Services thanked Chairman Culver. They stated that the Department of Rehab Services goal is to enable Alabamians with disabilities to achieve maximum potential. They work with individuals to help them seek employment. She thanked the commission for recognizing October as National Disability Employment Awareness Month and appreciates Houston County and Dothan and the surrounding cities. She announced that on October 6th, 2017, there will be Disability Expo at Covenant United Methodist Church from 10 a.m. – 2:00 p.m and they are bringing all the resources from the community under one roof for this expo.

2. Proclamation – “Family Day – A Day to Eat Dinner With Your Children” – Mrs. Susan Trawick, Executive Director, Dothan Houston County Substance Abuse Partnership, and Lauren Beauchamp and Molly Matthews, members of the Youth Council.

Chairman Culver asked Mrs. Trawick to come forward. Commissioner Sinquefield made a motion to approve the Proclamation for "Family Day – A Day to Eat Dinner With Your Children". Commissioner Harvey seconded the motion and it carried unanimously. Chairman Culver then read the Proclamation proclaiming September 25th, 2017, as "Family Day – A Day to Eat Dinner With Your Children". This Proclamation urges all citizens to join in this day's activities and programs in our community and to turn off your cell phone (and tell your kids to do the same) and make a regular date with your kids, let them know how important they are to you and listen to what they have to say. In addition, the Proclamation asks that we work all year long to build our community coalition to address the use and abuse of drugs and alcohol, increase awareness and develop education programs to create effective changes in attitude and usage that will make our community drug free. Mrs. Trawick stated that it was a great day to be at the commission meeting. She stated that tonight at Hot's Deli they would be celebrating Family Day and eating dinner together. Mrs. Trawick then introduced the two youth council members and they spoke about their different situations concerning home and spending time with family.

Regular Agenda

1. Appointments to the Southeast Alabama Health Care Authority –

Chairman Culver reported the following appointments to the SE Alabama Health Care Authority beginning with Commissioner Curtis Harvey, District 1, appointed Mr. Tellis Copeland; Commissioner Sinquefield, District 2, appointed Bruce Wozow; Commissioner Battles, District 3, appointed Chester Sowell; and Commissioner Shoupe, District 4, appointed Dr. Walter C. Young. Commissioner Harvey made the motion and Commissioner Battles seconded and it passed unanimously.

2. Request to approve \$75,000 allocation to the Dothan Commercial Development Authority to partner with the City of Dothan on intersection improvements for emergency vehicle access to the Southeast Alabama Medical Center, subject to the approval by the Dothan City Commission.

Commissioner Harvey made a motion to request the approval of a \$75,000 allocation to the Dothan Commercial Development Authority and Commissioner Sinquefield seconded the motion. Chairman Culver called for any questions and comments and stated that Mr. Matt Parker with the Dothan Commercial Development Authority was present for comments or questions. Commissioner Sinquefield commented that if it passed that they request assistance from the SAMC. Commissioner Harvey commented that he was excited about the project and what it would do for economic development on the east side of Dothan. Commissioner Battles commented that with the recent budget approval that it was hard for him to support the project due to funding. Commissioner Shoupe stated that it had been a tough decision for him. He agrees that it would be great for the county and the city for development but that he was concerned if Chick-Fil-A would build at this particular site even after the corridor was completed. At this time, he did not feel that he could support the project. He also asked about SAMC contributing to the project and what the amount would be and Chairman Culver stated that they would be asked to help. Commissioner Sinquefield addressed Mr. Matt Parker concerning the elimination of a few present buildings being removed from the site. Mr. Parker confirmed this.

Commissioner Sinquefield stated that he understands that Chick-Fil-A will build at this site if approved and this would benefit the county and city with progress and produce more jobs. Commissioner Sinquefield commented that he feels very strong about this project. Chairman Culver commented that the development is being planned but if the corridor does not happen, the developer may not go forward with the project. Chairman Culver also stated that the county involvement concerns getting emergency transporters in and out of the hospital safely. It is a very bad intersection and needs improvement. He also added that the county budget has a \$150,000 allocation for economic development so money is already there in the budget. Chairman Culver stated that there has been concern with the budget and personnel compensation. He emphasized that he wants to make sure that the employees of the county are paid at a fair market rate and personnel studies are in place to make sure of this. After much discussion, Chairman Culver called for a vote; YEAS: Commissioner Harvey and Commissioner Sinquefield and NEAS: Commissioner Battles and Commissioner Shoupe. Chairman Culver broke the tie vote voting YEA and the motion carried unanimously.

3. Request to approve expenses from Capital Replacement Fund – Bryan Skelton

Commissioner Sinquefield made a motion to approve the expenses from the Capital Replacement Fund. Commissioner Battles seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

4. Request to approve Adopt-A-Mile Program application for River Road – Road and Bridge

Commissioner Sinquefield made a motion to approve the Adopt-A-Mile Program application and Commissioner Harvey seconded the motion; and it carried unanimously. Chairman Culver stated that this was a great program to help keep the roads clean in our county.

5. Request to approve a pass-through agreement between Houston County Community Corrections and New Bridges.

Commissioner Culver stated that unanimous consent was required to add this item to the agenda. He asked that Tony Weber with Community Correction speak on this item. Mr. Weber stated that New Bridges is a transition home for women in the community corrections. Community Corrections is the contract entity for this program. Mr. Culver asked if there were any objections to adding this to the agenda and there being none, it was added to the agenda. Motion to approve the agreement was made by Commissioner Battles and seconded by Commissioner Shoupe. The motion carried unanimously.

Staff Reports:

Chief Administrative Officer

Mr. Dempsey had no report.

County Attorney

Mr. Register had not report.

County Engineer

Mr. Kirkland reported the county had three roads closed at this time: Adkinson Road, Rambo Mill Road, and St. Mary's Road. Commissioner Shoupe asked Mr. Kirkland for an update on Adkinson Road. Mr. Kirkland reported that major repair was necessary for Adkinson Road and not sure when it would re-open; it could be late winter or early spring before it reopened. Commissioner Shoupe asked how long would the repairs take and Mr. Kirkland stated that it could take at least a couple of months due to the tremendous amount of digging that was required.

Adjourn

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