

MINUTES OF THE HOUSTON COUNTY COMMISSION
REGULAR SESSION
June 28, 2021

PRESENT: Chairman Mark Culver, Commissioner Curtis Harvey, Commissioner Doug Siquefield, Commissioner Ricky Herring, Commissioner Brandon Shoupe, Asst. County Engineer Tyler Reeder, Chief Administrative Officer Peter Covert and County Attorney Pres Register.

Chairman Culver welcomed everyone to the June 28, 2021, Houston County Commission Regular Session and called the 10:00 a.m. meeting to order. He declared a quorum as all of the commissioners were in attendance

The invocation was given by Associate Pastor Billy Rich of Memphis Baptist Church and Commissioner Shoupe led in the pledge of allegiance.

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved on a motion by Commissioner Siquefield and seconded by Commissioner Harvey. The motion carried unanimously.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN AND COMMISSIONERS

Chairman Culver began by stating that the upcoming weekend is Independence Day weekend as the 4th of July is on Sunday and the County will be observing this holiday on Monday as all county, state and federal offices will be closed. He noted that the Houston County Sanitation will be running on the 5th, as normal. He mentioned that a lot of activities will be going on this weekend and he encouraged everyone to celebrate the birth of our nation. Chairman Culver announced that the Peanut Festival will be having their annual event on Saturday, the 3rd, and several municipalities are having activities as well. Commissioner Brandon Shoupe announced that Rehobeth will be having their celebration on July 2nd for their annual Red, White and Blue celebration. This will be held at True-Value Hardware in Rehobeth with gates opening at 5:00 p.m. and it is a family friendly event and no charge to get in.

REGULAR AGENDA

1. Request to approve Resolution to transfer Lot 2 of Porter's Market Subdivision to the Dothan Downtown Redevelopment Authority

Commissioner Harvey made a motion to approve the resolution and Commissioner Herring seconded. Chairman Culver stated that this was talked about several times and this is the final piece of the project for the property that was purchased by the County of the property surrounding the Hobo Pantry at the intersection of Oates St. and Powell St. He added that this property they are transferring will be used by the DDRA to support the Farmer's Market. With no further questions or comments, the motion carried unanimously.

2. Request to approve a 4.3% Cost of Living Adjustment effective with payroll beginning July 5, 2021, and obligate SSUT funds for current and future increases – Chairman Mark Culver

Commissioner Sinquefield made a motion to approve the request for a 4.3% Cost of Living Adjustment and use SSUT Funds. Commissioner Shoupe seconded the motion. Commissioner Harvey made an amendment to the initial motion to amend the motion to approve a 5.6% COLA. Chairman Culver called for a second to the amendment. With no second to the amendment, the amended motion died due to lack of second. Chairman Culver then went back to the initial motion and asked for discussion. Commissioner Shoupe stated that he agrees with the 5.6% increase and he would like to do that sooner rather than later, but not today. He mentioned that he has looked at some policy changes that they could make at Road & Bridge that would help pay for that increase, but it would take time to implement and that is his reason for not seconding Commissioner Harvey's motion but he is in total agreement that they need to go to 5.6% sooner, rather than later. Chairman Culver stated that the possibility of implementing the 5.6% COLA is certainly probable but they want to implement things that will help pay for it and that they will probably put that in the budget effective October 1, 2021, would be a good point. Chairman Culver asked Commissioner Harvey if he was good with that and Commissioner Harvey answered that he does not think it is any different if they do that today or October 1st, but he will go with whatever the rest of the Commission goes with.

Chairman Culver called for the vote and the motion passed with 3 Yea's from Commissioner's Herring, Sinquefield and Shoupe and one Nay from Commissioner Harvey. Chairman Culver recognized a citizen in the audience and he approached the podium. He stated his name as Jerry Charles Dillard, long time Houston County taxpayer, and with "We the People" and "We the People" object to this because our economy is bad. He added he has a lot of friends and that both have lost their jobs and the county employees are not any better and they just need to tow the line.

Commissioner Harvey stated that for public record the commission is very much on one accord, but sometimes they do not always agree.

Ricky Stokes approached the podium and asked if all elected officials get this raise and Chairman Culver answered "no" that not all elected officials, some elected officials that are authorized by law but he did not know right off the top of his head. Mr. Stokes asked if the commissioners get it (increase) and Chairman Culver answered that they do get it.

Sheri Garner, Houston County Personnel Director, approached the podium and stated that she feels very strongly about this and she wanted to make a point that when the wage study was implemented in 2018, the consultant gave them three different pay plans to consider. At that time, the commission felt like they could not afford the one that was recommended and they went with a different pay plan with the promise in future budgets to make up the difference and they have not done that. She added that is why the county is in the position that they are in today and she strongly asks to reconsider the 5.6% and if you vote on 4.3% today that you do not forget them (employees) in October in which was promised. Chairman Culver commented that the cost of living that the county has to compete with, the job market that we have to compete with, the ability to hire people and provide services to our constituents, has to

be considered by Sheri and department heads and, quite frankly, they are not able to hire or maintain people and hopefully this increase will help. When called for the vote, the original motion passed 3 to 1.

3. Request to authorize lease agreement for budgeted item of (9) vehicles for the Sheriff's Dept. – Peter Covert, CAO

Commissioner Sinquefield made a motion to approve the request to authorize the lease agreement and Commissioner Harvey seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

4. Request to award bid for Houston County Jail Phone System and authorize Chairman to execute contract – Peter Covert, CAO

Commissioner Harvey made a motion to award the bid and authorize Chairman to execute contract. Commissioner Shoupe seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

5. Request to approve preliminary plat for the Porches at Wicksburg Subdivision as amended – Road & Bridge

Commissioner Shoupe made a motion to approve the preliminary plat and Commissioner Herring seconded. Acting County Engineer Tyler Reeder stated that they had received the revised plan as discussed on Thursday and changed the location of the storm drain as the citizens had requested. When called for the vote, the motion carried unanimously.

6. Request to sell the following items on GovDeals; Metal Desks from Accounting Dept. and a Generator from Maintenance Dept.

Commissioner Sinquefield made a motion to approve selling the items on GovDeals and Commissioner Harvey seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

STAFF REPORTS

Chief Administrative Officer – No Report

County Engineer – Closed roads; intersection of Taylor and Campbellton, Hopkins and Pleasant Grove. Engineer Reeder stated that final surfacing on the roundabout will be today and then they will work on curb work and they are well ahead of schedule.

County Attorney – No Report

Meeting adjourned.