

MINUTES OF THE HOUSTON COUNTY COMMISSION
REGULAR SESSION
November 8, 2021

PRESENT: Chairman Mark Culver, Commissioner Doug Siquefield, Commissioner Ricky Herring, Commissioner Brandon Shoupe, County Engineer Barkley Kirkland, Chief Administrative Officer Peter Covert and County Attorney Pres Register.

Chairman Culver called the 10:00 a.m. meeting to order and welcomed everyone to the November 8, 2021, Houston County Commission Regular Session. He declared a quorum as a majority of the commissioners were in attendance.

ABSENT: Commissioner Curtis Harvey

The invocation was given by Captain Nathan Jones and Commissioner Siquefield led in the pledge of allegiance.

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN AND COMMISSIONERS

Chairman Culver announced that the National Peanut Festival is going on right now and he encourages everyone to get out and enjoy the festivities. He added that Thursday is Senior Citizen's day at the fair and the parade will be held on Saturday in downtown Dothan. Chairman Culver also stated that Thursday is Veteran's Day and county offices, state offices and federal offices will be closed. He asked that everyone take a moment on Thursday and remember those that you know and those that you don't know who have served or who are serving so that we have the rights that we do that have affected our country. He asked that we remember all veterans on Thursday and to take part in the celebrations on Veteran's Day, as they deserve our thanks and commendations for their service that they have given us.

Chairman Culver reported that there will only be one meeting in December as usual but this December's meeting will be a little different as the administrative and regular meeting will all take place on one day. On the administrative meeting day, the majority of the commission will be at the ACCA Legislative Conference so there will not be an administrative meeting. If you recall, the commission adopted a new procedure that states when there is not an administrative meeting the preceding Thursday of the Monday meeting, that the administrative meeting and the regular meeting are both held on Monday. The administrative meeting will be held at 9:00 a.m. and the commission meeting will be held at 10:00 a.m. on December 13th. Agenda items will still need to be submitted in the normal time frame.

Commissioner Shoupe congratulated Wicksburg Golden Regiment Marching Band for winning the school's first ever state championship. Mr. Shoupe stated that he would have thought that at some point they would have won a baseball championship or something, but apparently not. So the first state

championship comes from the Golden Regiment Marching Band. He added that Lori Hart does a great job and it is also a great group of kids. He is very proud of them. In addition, Commissioner Shoupe announced that he will be holding a town hall this Thursday at Hardy's Family Restaurant at 6:00 p.m. Hardy's Restaurant is located at 14750 US 84 in Wicksburg. He mentioned that he historically has done a fall town hall and a spring town hall in Dothan, but due to COVID those have not been held. This will be the first town hall that has been held in over a year. Commissioner Shoupe urged anyone that is interested to please come as there will be all three announced candidates that are running for the District 4 County Commission seat.

AWARDS AND PRESENTATIONS

1. Proclamation – "The Salvation Army" – Captain Nathan Jones and Captain DeAnne Jones, Salvation Army Corps Officers

Chairman Culver stated that the commission is always honored to have the Salvation Army in attendance and it gives them an opportunity to present them with the proclamation but to also thank them for what they do for the citizens and for working closely with the EMA Department. He said that they are a strong cog in the wheel of assistance that the county provides when there is an emergency in the area. Chairman Culver continued by saying that they really appreciate them for what they do and a date has officially been set for the annual bell ringing and the commission hopes to beat the city and take back the crown in their fund raising efforts at the Northside Wal-Mart.

Commissioner Herring made a motion to approve the proclamation and Commissioner Shoupe seconded. The motion carried unanimously. Chairman Culver then read the proclamation and CAO Peter Covert presented it to Capt. Jones. Captain DeAnne Jones thanked the commission for participating in the Red Kettle Campaign and that she remembered Commissioner Shoupe last year was very intense in his bell ringing and they do appreciate it and wished the commission good luck to take back their "crown" this year. Chairman Culver responded that they need everybody to come to their door. Commissioner Shoupe stated that the secret is that the head of the commission has to stuff the box (laughter). Captain Nathan Jones then thanked the commission and said that they look forward to their second Christmas here in Dothan and they really enjoy the city and the support from the commission and the team work that makes things happen in the way they need to happen. Chairman Culver asked when the ribbon cutting would be and Captain Jones responded that it would be on Wednesday at 2:00 p.m. This will begin the Angel Tree and Red Kettle campaign. Chairman Culver encouraged the community to fill those kettles, as in the past, as our community is a very supportive community to all the organizations. Commissioner Siquefield thanked and commended Captain and Captain Jones and the Salvation Army for all they do so that kids can have Christmas and that they make a difference in their lives.

REGULAR AGENDA

1. Request to award bid for Virtual Tape Library to lowest bidder meeting specs – Danny Cumbie, IT Director

Commissioner Siquefield made a motion to approve the request to award the bid for the Virtual Tape Library and Commissioner Shoupe seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

2. Request to enter into an agreement with Troy Bank and Trust for the deposit of county funds during the three year period beginning 1/1/2022 through 12/31/2024 – Peter B. Covert, CAO

Commissioner Herring made a motion to approve the request to enter into an agreement with Troy Bank and Trust and Commissioner Siquefield seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

3. Request to approve and advertise local legislation increasing Sheriff's compensation

Commissioner Shoupe made a motion to approve the request and Commissioner Siquefield seconded. Chairman Culver asked for questions or comments and Mr. George Trotter of 4218 County Road 203 approached the podium. Mr. Trotter stated that he said on Thursday that a good Sheriff is priceless and he knows that he is not suppose to ask any questions so he wanted to make the following statement. He believes that the Sheriff was already included, as deputies were included, in the recent increase plus he said that his math may be wrong but from \$108,000 to \$120,000, and that the public would love to see the numbers on the agenda of what the Sheriff is currently making and what the Sheriff is going to make and the percentage of pay raise like most corporations and employers do, that they are looking at roughly a 15% pay raise within the last year. He asks that they consider that as the county is broke and stays broke and they can't do things in the field, in the roads, pot holes, shoulders, and just basic things but yet we can give this kind of a pay raise to an employee and he stated that he is sure that there has got to be other elected officials out there they are wondering why they are not considered in this nice 15% pay raise.

When called for the vote, Commissioner Herring stated that he was going to abstain from voting due to the perception of a conflict of interest being that he works for the Sheriff. The motion passed with Commissioner Shoupe and Commissioner Siquefield voting yea.

4. Request to approve preliminary plat for Ryma Oaks – Road & Bridge.

Commissioner Siquefield made a motion to approve the preliminary plat for Ryma Oaks and Commissioner Herring seconded. When called for questions or comments, Chairman Culver recognized Mr. George Trotter. Mr. Trotter approached the podium and commented that he lived in the Rehobeth community and they are getting wonderful people moving out there by "flocks" and he would say that in the last couple of years there have been hundreds of homes. Mr. Trotter stated that he is in hopes that this subdivision and from this time forward that all subdivisions are on a sewer system of some sort other than septic tanks in the ground. He said that this has been a problem and it will be more and more of a problem and these developers need to put in a self contained sewer system until they can get on a system. He hopes that Rehobeth and Taylor have been working towards getting a sewer system for the last couple of years and he said that they have got to get away from putting the sewer in the ground. Mr. Trotter commented that he owns a well and has been there for 27 years and he owns a private well and is on Taylor water because he is frightened to death about drinking water and his children out of

that well and it is getting contaminated more and more every day. He said that the county better start looking ahead and being proactive instead of waiting. He added that the day is coming with all the developments that is going on that we have got to start treating this water problem properly.

Commissioner Shoupe commented that they meet with the developers on Thursday and they were excited to hear that they are going to do walking trails in with this subdivision and hopefully future subdivisions will consider adding those as an amenity as well.

When called for the vote, the motion carried unanimously.

5. Request to adopt a resolution requesting the Houston County Legislative Delegation and County Attorney to prepare legislation changing manor of appointments of the Houston County Health Care Authority members

Commissioner Herring made a motion to approve the request and Commissioner Shoupe seconded.

Chairman Culver then read the resolution which is attached to the original minutes. Commissioner Sinquefield made a motion to table agenda item #5 until all commissioners can be present to vote.

Chairman Culver now stated that we have a motion to table until all commissioners are in attendance.

He called for a second but with hearing no second, the motion failed and they went back to the original motion and he asked if there was any additional discussion on the original motion. There being none, he called for the vote and the original motion carried two to one with Commissioner Shoupe and Commissioner Herring voting yea and Commissioner Sinquefield voting nay.

STAFF REPORTS

Chief Administrative Officer – Mr. Covert announced that at this time they are accepting quotes for the lease of the land on State Line Road. This is an annual lease to an individual that uses the acreage for agriculture purposes. This will be published in the paper and hopes to receive bids before December 7th. Mr. Covert commended the commission for their foresight and their planning to engage in the Investing in Alabama Counties subset of the ACCA. He stated that the Investing in Alabama Counties has had several meetings recently about the strategic use of counties American Rescue Plan Act Funds and as the Houston County Commission is a participant in the IAC Program this provides customized assistance, expertise, guidance and implementation assistance to insure that the county's federal restricted funds which are allocated under the American Rescue Plan Act are utilized within the requirements provided by the US Dept. of Treasury. Mr. Covert continued to state that in addition that the program provides the County with partners throughout the state utilizing the funding in a transformative way to enhance the quality of life and services in Houston County. He wanted the commission to know that this is underway and although they have not yet received the final interim rule from the US Treasury, they have issued recently as of last Friday implementation guidelines to help to make sure that the counties adhere to the restrictions and requirements of these funds. Once they have established thoughts and ideas, they will come back to the commission for approval of the projects that will be recommended for these funds. Chairman Culver thanked Mr. Covert for this report and stated that the entity that has been set up (IAC) will be extremely beneficial as they move forward. They need to be sure that they spend those funds based on what is allowable. He added that particularly based on what Mr. Trotter's comments that they intend to spend those funds on some water lines, sewer expansion, COVID related expenditures, reimbursement of funds but all of those will come before the commission as they move

forward and will be approved or authorized by our oversight group to be sure that they are eligible and appropriated expenditures.

County Engineer – County Rd. 75 has three different road sections that are being looked at. This is the last road from the bond issue.

County Attorney – No Report

Meeting adjourned.