

MINUTES OF THE HOUSTON COUNTY COMMISSION
REGULAR SESSION
February 14, 2022

PRESENT: Chairman Mark S. Culver, Commissioner Curtis Harvey, Commissioner Doug Sinquefield, Commissioner Ricky Herring, Commissioner Brandon Shoupe, Asst. County Engineer Tyler Reeder, 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 February 14, 2022, Houston County Commission Regular Session. He declared a quorum as all commissioners were in attendance.

Dr. Ricky Plummer, Senior Pastor at Bethel Baptist Church, gave the invocation and Commissioner Sinquefield led in the pledge of allegiance.

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN AND COMMISSIONERS

Chairman Culver began by announcing that one week from today is a county holiday (President's Day) and all county, state and federal offices will be closed. He also reminded everyone that a week from this Saturday, the Mardi Gras Parade will be held beginning in the Garden District and ending in downtown Dothan. This year's event will be bigger than ever as they have lots of entries for the parade and it will be a lot of fun for everyone.

Commissioner Sinquefield announced that downtown Ashford will be hosting a car show this Saturday with a lot of older cars, vendors and fun for everyone. He encouraged everyone to attend.

AWARDS AND PRESENTATIONS

1. Presentation – "Life Saving Award" presented to Preston Anderson – Sheriff Donald Valenza

Chairman Culver called Sheriff Valenza to the podium. Sheriff Valenza began by stating that on December 18, 2021, he heard dispatch call multiple units and then he received a phone call from Ricky Stokes saying that they were looking for one of the Sheriff Patrol units that was missing. Sheriff Valenza stated that Deputy Ben Parrish was responding to a call outside of Ashford, heading towards Columbia, when he struck a large deer with his vehicle. When this

happened, he veered off the road and hit a culvert. Preston Anderson, a citizen that goes by this area frequently, was riding by and said that something caught his attention in the road and he stopped. Sheriff Valenza said that when Preston stopped he could not see much to start with so he walked down a little bit and saw the rear axle of the tires from the deputy's vehicle. He continued moving and then noticed the Sheriff emblem on the vehicle and called 9-1-1. The deputy was unconscious in the vehicle and had multiple injuries and is currently doing a lot better. Sheriff Valenza said that he and the department wanted to thank Preston for saving the deputy's life. He then presented Preston with a crystal award and read what was inscribed as follows:

"The Houston County Sheriff's Office Lifesaving Award presented to Preston Anderson
For his actions on December 18th, 2021".

At this time a round of applause was given to Mr. Anderson. Deputy Parrish walked into the meeting at this time (not expected) and hugged Mr. Anderson. A round of applause was given to both. Chairman Culver told Deputy Parrish that they are glad to see him today on a lot of levels and his service was appreciated. Chairman Culver thanked the Sheriff as well.

REGULAR AGENDA

1. Request to approve resolution for the expansion of the Industrial Development Authority of Houston, Henry, and Geneva Counties – Matt Parker

Commissioner Shoupe made a motion to approve the resolution for the expansion of the IDA and Commissioner Harvey seconded. Chairman Culver stated that Mr. Parker is in attendance if anyone has any questions for him. He added that on Thursday they discussed this item and the advantages that it gives to Houston County and the surrounding partners and communities. With no questions, the motion passed unanimously. Chairman Culver thanked Pres Register for working with Mr. Parker and the IDA on this item.

2. Request to adopt resolution opposing of Senate Bill 157 concerning weight restrictions on county road and bridges

Commissioner Sinuefield made a motion to approve the request to adopt the resolution and Commissioner Shoupe seconded. Chairman Culver stated that on Thursday, they had spoke a little on this and this is a bill that is put forth primarily by the logging industry that would add additional weight and shorten axle distance. This would add, significantly, to the wear and tear on county roads, but particularly on the bridges. He asked Asst. Engineer, Tyler Reeder to make comments on this as he is familiar with the Engineer Assoc. in the state of Alabama that has done a lot of study on this particular item. Chairman Culver stated that County Engineer

Barkley Kirkland is not in attendance today due to a death in his family. Tyler Reeder began by reporting that the logging industry is trying to sell this deal by adding 3,400 pounds per axle, which does not sound like a lot but in studying the asphalt in what this actual increase would cause and the increase of 100 trucks is equivalent to 187 trucks if they allow this bill to pass. This almost doubles the impact on the roads and bridges from just that small additional weight. Mr. Reeder stated that this is something that Rebuild Alabama, which we put into place to repair roads, and we do not need to take this step to allow further damage the roads. Chairman Culver stated that his understanding is that if this passes that many bridges, both state and county, across the state will end up being posted and Mr. Reeder added that the state has done a study and at this time they have six bridges throughout the state that are posted and if this bill goes into effect, they will have 395 bridges posted (with weight restrictions). He said that regulating the restrictions is very difficult throughout the state so more than likely the loggers will continue to travel these bridges that are weight restricted and cause severe damage and then it will be up to the county to pay for repairs. Chairman Culver said that no more work needs to be placed on the Sheriff's Dept. to have to monitor restrictions on bridges. Commissioner Sinquefield thanked Mr. Reeder and he encouraged the public to call their senators and representatives on this Senate Bill 157. He stated that they met last Wednesday with ALFA for the legislative meeting and this was brought to those representatives concerning this increase and weight loads. Commissioner Sinquefield added that there has been a lot of progress made with Rebuild Alabama Act and roads are in good condition and will last a long time, but if they increase this weight limit things will go right back to where the roads/bridges were before. With no further comments or questions, the motion carried unanimously.

3. Request to recognize and reward county employees Stephanie Chandler and Jason Smoak as part of the county's Spending Efficiency Program and approve appropriate budget amendment – Sheri Garner, Personnel Director

Commissioner Sinquefield made a motion to approve the request and the budget amendment and Commissioner Herring seconded. At this time Chairman Culver called Personnel Director Sheri Garner to the podium to recognize these individuals and added that this has been an ongoing program for a while and these employees have done an outstanding job and he thanked Commissioner Sinquefield, Peter Covert and Ms. Garner for bringing this to the commission's attention. Ms. Garner began by reporting that these two employees began this project when there were negotiations rates for inmate hospital bills. After one entity was approved Mrs. Chandler took it upon herself to negotiate with more health care providers to include sixteen other entities. Ms. Garner added that Mr. Smoak's rule is to review all the bills that are submitted and he was able to find errors with the billing to include non-billable procedures and individuals that were not part of the county. These two employees were able to save the county \$1.5 million dollars since the year 2018. Ms. Garner said that she is thankful that we have this recognition program that Commissioner Shoupe started and she is happy to

give them a bonus for their efforts. Chairman Culver stated that this is not a small amount of money that was saved by this program and the commission appreciates their efforts and this is how the program should work. Chief Administrative Officer Peter Covert commented that Mrs. Chandler has worked diligently and tirelessly on this program to save the county money and she is well deserving, as is Jason. Chairman Culver said they have worked well together and it shows that they are part of the county team. Applause was given at this time for these two employees. The motion carried unanimously.

4. Request to appoint James Ivey to fill vacancy on the Dothan-Houston County Substance Abuse Partnership Board

Commissioner Sinuefield made a motion to approve the request to appoint James Ivey to the Dothan-Houston County Substance Abuse Partnership Board. Commissioner Shoupe seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

5. Request to appoint Mrs. Loree Cox to fill vacancy on the Houston County Department of Human Resources Board

Commissioner Herring made a motion to appoint Mrs. Loree Cox to the Houston County Department of Human Resources Board. Commissioner Shoupe seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

6. Request for 050 Retail Beer (Off Premises Only) License and a 070 Retail Table Wine (Off Premises Only) License – Dolgencorp, LLC, d/b/a Dollar General Store #23253, located at 55 Decatur Rd., Cottonwood, AL 36352

Commissioner Shoupe made a motion to approve the request and Commissioner Sinuefield seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

7. Request to enter into a supplemental construction agreement with ALDOT for the resurfacing of Hodgesville Road and Ross Clark Circle to East Saunders Road (MPO) – Road & Bridge

Commissioner Herring made a motion to approve the construction agreement with ALDOT and Commissioner Shoupe seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

8. Request to enter into a supplemental construction agreement with ALDOT for the resurfacing of South County Road 33 (First Ave.) from U.S. Hwy. 84 to Old U.S. Hwy 84 (MPO) – Road and Bridge

Commissioner Sinquefield made a motion to approve the construction agreement with ALDOT and Commissioner Herring seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

9. Request to ask the Houston County Health Care Authority to withdraw the names previously submitted for the District 3 appointment and resubmit three names to include Mr. Steve Hicks

Commissioner Herring made a motion to table this request and Commissioner Harvey seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

STAFF REPORTS

Chief Administrative Officer- No Report

County Engineer- 2 Closed roads: National Rd. and Suggs Rd.

County Attorney- No Report

Commissioner Shoupe asked Engineer Reeder what has happened on National Road and Mr. Reeder responded that the road had started to settle and when evaluated, the pipe had busted out the bottom.

Meeting adjourned.