

MINUTES OF THE HOUSTON COUNTY COMMISSION
REGULAR SESSION
February 28, 2022

PRESENT: Chairman Mark S. Culver, Commissioner Curtis Harvey, Commissioner Doug Sinquefield, 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 February 28, 2022, Houston County Commission Regular Session. He declared a quorum as all commissioners were in attendance.

Pastor Larry Flowers from The Harbor gave the invocation and Commissioner Shoupe led in the pledge of allegiance.

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN AND COMMISSIONERS

Chairman Culver began by stating that as a commission they would like to keep everyone involved with the ongoing issues in Europe, our military and our leadership are in our thoughts and prayers. He added that we all don't realize how significant the things that are going on are, but they are. It is a potentially scary time and he ask everyone to keep our nation's leadership and military in their thoughts and prayers and ask God to give them the wisdom they need and also everyone in Europe dealing with the situation. Chairman Culver also asked for prayer for our EMA Director, Chris Judah, as his father passed away over the weekend and we have them in our thoughts and prayers.

On a happier note, Chairman Culver wanted to commend everyone involved with the Mardi Gras Parade this past Saturday. The parade has become one of the best days in Dothan. The crowd was unbelievable as were the effort that was put in by all of those that make the floats and throw the beads. It was a fun time and it was also a beautiful day as, even though it was February, the azaleas were blooming and you could not have asked for better weather. It was a day to remember and they appreciate everyone's involvement and appreciate everyone for coming out. He added that it gets bigger and better every year. Fun was had by all.

AWARDS AND PRESENTATIONS

1. Presentation – “Life Saving Award” presented to Shannon Morgan Dixon – Commissioner Ricky Herring

At this time, Chairman Culver asked Commissioner Herring and Mrs. Dixon to come to the podium. Commissioner Herring began by saying that on January 22nd, around 7:00 a.m., it was a day that about 41 degrees was the high and 26 degrees was the low. Shannon, her husband Jimmy and her mother were traveling down Cottonwood Road and they saw something that did not look right. Shannon said to her family, “hey, that is someone that is down on the ground”. Her husband made a comment that he thought it was a wheelbarrow and her mother said no that she thought something was there. They turned the car around and stopped and found an elderly lady that was laying on her back on the ground. Commissioner Herring said that by being observant there is a time when the public needs to notice things and be observant of their surroundings. He told Shannon that she saved that lady’s life just by being observant and because of that he hopes and prays that people will see how important it is for law enforcement, EMS, Fire and others to be observant. He stated that the lady laying on the ground had a stroke and had been lying on the ground for a while. Commissioner Herring said that on behalf of the commission he presented a life saving award to Mrs. Dixon. The plaque read:

“Life Saving Award presented to firefighter Shannon Morgan Dixon. On behalf of the Houston County Commission, we would like to recognize your courageous and observant actions at the scene of a medical emergency of an elderly lady on January 22, 2022, in Houston County, Alabama. You saved another humans life with dedication and courage.”

A round of applause was given by all. Mrs. Dixon said that it was not her, but God that did that and if it was not for Him she may not have seen her but He shined that light where she needed to see her in the dark. She thanked the commission.

Commissioner Sinuefield recognized Fire Chief Jimmy Dixon with Lovetown Fire Dept. and Brenda.

2. Presentation – Legislative Report – Commissioner Brandon Shoupe

Chairman Culver began by stating that they should do this more, but as everyone knows, being a county in the state of Alabama means that you can’t do much of anything without going to the Alabama Legislature. He added that we are very fortunate in Houston County in that two serve on the ACCA Board (he and Commissioner Sinuefield) and Commissioner Shoupe serves as the Legislative Committee delegate and at this time he called on Commissioner Shoupe to give a legislative report on what is going on as it relates to counties and Alabama Legislature.

Commissioner Shoupe began by thanking Chairman Culver and reporting that they had recently got back from their County Day in Montgomery as he, Chairman Culver and Commissioner Sinuefield had talked to their legislators and he wanted to commend them on the job they do. He said that they vote on some incredibly difficult bills and as they don't always agree, they are a great group to work with and just about always do the right thing for the citizens of this county. He thanked the delegation.

Commissioner Shoupe stated that the SB 125, is a proposed amendment to the Alabama Constitution. It would allow county commissions to provide incentives to private companies to expand broadband. Commissioner Shoupe said this is significant because the Alabama Constitution disallows county commission giving anything of any value to any private entity. So this would be an exception that would be carved out from that rule and it would require a vote by the people of the state of Alabama for that to become law. He said that if signed and the citizens vote affirmative on this bill, we would be able to provide incentives to private companies to expand broadband access in Houston County. This has been passed in the House and is awaiting consideration in the Senate.

Commissioner Shoupe said that HB 70 has been passed in the House and is awaiting consideration in the Senate and if passed in current form, it would allow people suffering from mental health issues to be treated instead of dropped off in county jails. Currently, the mental health situation is not the best in state of Alabama and certainly Houston County is part of that. Commissioner Shoupe reported that there are not a lot of programs like in the past for people suffering from mental health issue and a lot of those individuals land in county jails, which he does not think is a good place to be treated for mental health. They are in hopes that this will pass.

Commissioner Shoupe also stated that HB 3 has been passed by the House and it would statutorily recognize our EMA professionals for the public safety services they provide. He added that this is significant because by statutorily recognizing them for providing public safety services, it would open up a lot of federal grant opportunities for county EMA offices. This has passed in the House and is waiting consideration in the Senate at this time.

Chairman Culver thanked Commissioner Shoupe for his report.

REGULAR AGENDA

1. Request to approve site work for spec building – Matt Parker

Commissioner Harvey made a motion to approve the request and Commissioner Herring seconded. Chairman Culver stated that Mr. Dean Mitchell is in attendance and this is a request from the IDA Board of the City of Dothan. Commissioner Harvey made a motion and Commissioner Herring seconded. Commissioner Shoupe asked if there was an update and Engineer Barkley stated that the set of plans they received were for review only so they can't do a complete take on this but they believe it would be about six to eight weeks to complete. Chairman Culver said that they have equipment out there and this is just moving off the road and on to the site. Engineer Barkley reported that they have actually cleared and put some material out at the site as they use it as a storage area so some of it is done.

At this time, Mr. Dean Mitchell thanked the commission for their continued support of the industrial economic recruitment for the area and it is vital that they continue to try and create jobs and help grow our economy and the commission have been super strong partners and they appreciate the consideration of this request. When called for the vote, the motion passed unanimously.

2. Request to approve appointments to the Houston County Health Care Authority

Chairman Culver said this would be done in two motions with the first motion being a request to fill an unexpired term caused by the resignation of Taylor Knight and that appointment would be Steven Hicks. Commissioner Herring made a motion and Commissioner Harvey seconded. At this time, Mr. George Trotter of 4218 County Road 203, Dothan, approached the podium. He stated that this has been a pretty controversial subject for a while and he is glad to see it get resolved. He said that a lot of citizens are asking why there is not a list published of the members of the board and also a question that has not been answered is do these members have any authority or vote or are they just there? Chairman Culver answered that he is sure that they vote at every board meeting they have on things that come before them. Mr. Trotter commented "so they have a voice in what goes on with this medical authority" and Chairman Culver responded that this is the board of the Houston County Health Care Authority and they run the business of the Health Care Authority. With there being no further comments or questions, the motion passed unanimously.

The second motion is to fill a new term and the appointment would be Mr. Brownie Browning. Commissioner Herring made a motion to approve and Commissioner Sinuefield seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

3. Request to award bid for newspaper publication of Houston County Voter List – Patrick Davenport, Judge of Probate

Commissioner Siquefield made a motion to approve the request to award the bid for newspaper publication of the Houston County Voter list. Commissioner Shoupe seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

4. Request to approve annual Alabama Alcoholic Beverage Control Board License Fees for Houston County

Commissioner Siquefield made a motion to approve the request for the license fees and Commissioner Shoupe seconded. Chairman Culver stated that these are not changing and the commission does not have the authority to change them but the law says that the commission has to approve them. The motion passed unanimously.

5. Request to re-appoint Ted Fagan to the Dothan Houston County Library System

Commissioner Harvey made a motion to approve the re-appointment of Ted Fagan to the Library System. Commissioner Herring seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

6. Request to approve agreement between Houston County Revenue Commissioner and the Atlantic Group, LLC, related to geospatial services and deliverables and authorize Chairman to make any changes in the contract – Greg Holland, Chief Appraiser

Commissioner Harvey made a motion to approve the agreement and Commissioner Siquefield seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

7. Request to award bid for bulk cement to lowest bidder meeting specs – Road & Bridge

Commissioner Shoupe made a motion to approve the awarding of the bid and Commissioner Herring seconded. Commissioner Shoupe commented that he wanted to thank Engineer Kirkland for bringing this to us and coming up with ways to save money and make our crews work more efficiently. When called for the vote, the motion carried unanimously.

8. Request to award bid for Hot Plant Mix to lowest bidder meeting specs – Road & Bridge

Commissioner Siquefield made a motion to approve the awarding of the bid and Commissioner Harvey seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

9. Request to approve resolution for MPO Project for the resurfacing of Taylor Road – Road & Bridge

Commissioner Herring made a motion to approve the resolution. Commissioner Harvey seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

10. Request to approve resolution for MPO Project for the resurfacing of Campbellton Highway (County Road 203) – Road & Bridge

Commissioner Herring made a motion to approve the resolution and Commissioner Shoupe seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

11. Request to approve resolution for MPO Project for the resurfacing of South Broadway Road – Road and Bridge

Commissioner Siquefield made a motion to approve the resolution and Commissioner Herring seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

12. Request to sell the following on GovDeals: 2000 Ford Expedition; 2012 Chevrolet Impala; 2002 Ford Crown Victoria

Commissioner Harvey made a motion to approve the request to sell the above items on GovDeals. Commissioner Siquefield seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

STAFF REPORTS

Chief Administrative Officer- No Report

County Engineer- 3 Closed roads: Eddins Rd, National Rd. and Suggs Rd.

County Attorney- No Report

Meeting adjourned.