

MINUTES OF THE HOUSTON COUNTY COMMISSION  
REGULAR SESSION  
June 13, 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 June 13, 2022, Houston County Commission Regular Session. He declared a quorum as all of the commissioners were in attendance.

Commissioner Ricky Herring 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 Sinquefield and seconded by Commissioner Herring. The motion passed unanimously.

#### ANNOUNCEMENTS AND COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN AND COMMISSIONERS

Chairman Culver began by reminding everyone to vote on Tuesday, June 21<sup>st</sup>, for the run-off election. He urged everyone to exercise their right to vote and not to take it for granted as the candidates have worked hard to earn the votes and it would honor them for people to get out and vote. Chairman Culver stated that the polls open at 7 a.m. and close at 7 p.m. and the staff of the probate department will handle this very well as they always do. He added that, pending an item being passed that is on the agenda, that more than likely the county will be closed on Monday, June 20<sup>th</sup>, in observance of the Juneteenth holiday.

Commissioner Sinquefield commented that he would like to recognize Mr. John Parkhurst, Operations Mgr. with Knology Technology and that he has some exciting news pertaining to broadband in Houston County. At this time, Mr. Parkhurst approached the podium and stated that he wanted to present some maps to the commissioners so they could visualize what areas he is talking about. He thanked the commission and stated that this all started when he moved to Houston County about five years ago from Montgomery County. He stated that he learned quickly that he could not get internet at his house on Gene Terry Road so this led him down the path to get his company engaged in not only receiving government funds, but also to invest in themselves with funding. Mr. Parkhurst said that at the beginning he was lowering rates to the customers due to them not being able to receive the adequate internet service. He felt that this let the customers know that Knology was working on a path to give them a better product. The maps that he presented to the commission show the first phase of the ADECA funding for broadband. He added that the areas are currently underserved completely, no service, or less

than 25 megs of internet. Mr. Parkhurst reported that it is their goal to put fiber optics in some of the towns, all the way through and also, instead of replacing old technology, putting fiber in the ground in the very rural areas. He also stated that if they get the \$5 million requested from ADECA they will invest in other areas and then the next phase will be to try and receive additional funding from other grants. Mr. Parkhurst said that his goal is to fill in all of Houston County within the next three years in the areas that are within WOW's footprint. Chairman Culver thanked Mr. Parkhurst for coming and stated that there has been a ton of money pushed down from the feds for broadband which helped the county from not having to fund this type of project. Also, Chairman Culver said that the county is spending money on sewer, water, etc, and broadband is part of the infrastructure that helps communities grow and, by Knology putting this fiber in, it will create and spur growth in the county areas. He ended by saying that the letter that the county provided to Knology is just a support letter for the grant and there is no commitment of funds from the commission as this is customary for the commission to initiate letters of support. Mr. Parkhurst added that they are only investing in Houston County at this time with the funding.

#### REGULAR AGENDA

1. Request to award bid for grounds maintenance to lowest bidder meeting specs – Sean Curtis, Maintenance Manager

Commissioner Sinuefield made a motion to approve the bid and Commissioner Harvey seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Request to award bid for HVAC maintenance services to lowest bidder meeting specs – Sean Curtis, Maintenance Manager

Commissioner Shoupe made a motion to approve the bid and Commissioner Harvey seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Request to approve (5) Alabama Mutual Aid System pass through grants and (1) Strategic National Stockpile grant and accompanying budget amendment – Chris Judah, EMA Director

Commissioner Herring made a motion to approve the grants and Commissioner Sinuefield seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

4. Request to enter into an agreement with SunLife Ins. Co. for employee basic life insurance coverage – Sheri Garner, Personnel Director

Commissioner Sinuefield made a motion to approve the request to enter into an agreement with SunLife Ins. Co and Commissioner Shoupe seconded.

Chairman Culver stated that the questions that were addressed were answered by email regarding the cost. Commissioner Shoupe stated that he was not present on Thursday and he asked if this is term life insurance. Ms. Garner stated that this is term while they are employed, but upon resignation/retirement that this insurance has portability conversion options. When called for the vote, the motion carried unanimously.

5. Request from the Personnel Board to approve Juneteenth as a county holiday, in conjunction with the State and Federal holiday schedule – Sheri Garner, Personnel Director

Commissioner Harvey made a motion to approve the request for the county holiday and Commissioner Sinquefield seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

6. Request to amend approval of funding for the Town of Gordon audit to allow reimbursement of the expense

Commissioner Harvey made a motion to approve the request to amend approval of funding for the Town of Gordon audit and Commissioner Sinquefield seconded. Chairman Culver reported that at Thursday's meeting they explained that when this item was approved at a prior meeting that a caveat was to see if the county could write the auditors a check directly and after research, that is not possible but the county can reimburse the Town of Gordon for the expense. Commissioner Sinquefield asked who the auditor would be for the Town and Chairman Culver stated that they had not yet contracted with anyone but they are in discussions. He added that the dollar amount has not changed. The motion carried unanimously.

7. Request to approve Memorandum of Agreement with the Alabama Department of Transportation – Road & Bridge

Commissioner Herring made a motion to approve the Memorandum of Agreement and Commissioner Harvey seconded. Chairman Culver reported that the Memorandum of Agreement is a very broad item but it relates to funding that was withheld and has now been used. The motion carried unanimously.

#### STAFF REPORTS

Chief Administrative Officer – No Report

County Engineer – No closed roads. Will begin paving 8 roads soon.

County Attorney – No report

Meeting adjourned.