

MINUTES OF THE HOUSTON COUNTY COMMISSION
REGULAR SESSION
January 23, 2023

PRESENT: Chairman Brandon Shoupe, Commissioner Curtis Harvey, Commissioner Tracy Adams, Commissioner Ricky Herring, Commissioner James Ivey, Acting County Engineer Tyler Reeder, Chief Administrative Officer Peter Covert and County Attorney Pres Register.

Chairman Shoupe called the 10 a.m. meeting to order and welcomed everyone to the January 23, 2023, Houston County Commission Regular Session. He declared a quorum as all commissioners were in attendance.

Commissioner Ricky Herring gave the invocation and Commissioner Adams led in the pledge of the 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 Shoupe began by announcing that February is Heart Health Awareness Month and Southeast Health will be having "Heart Health Awareness Month Kickoff" on Wednesday, February 1st, at 1:30 p.m. at the Southeast Health Heart & Vascular Center. They invite everyone to attend.

AWARDS AND PRESENTATIONS

1. Presentation – FY-2022 Road and Bridge Completed Work and Projects – Tyler Reeder, Asst. County Engineer

Mr. Reeder began by stating that he will be going over the Road and Bridge Dept. accomplishments for 2021-2022 fiscal year as well as some upcoming projects for this fiscal year that they are currently working on or will begin working on. He added that this is kind of a follow up from the last commission meeting as they did a presentation on the "Rebuild Alabama" program. Mr. Reeder reported that this past year they completed two major projects on County Road 75 and County Road 8 for a total of over 22 miles of resurfacing, over 44 miles of shoulder work and replaced 28 cross drains. He stated that the total cost for County Road 75 was \$779,448 and that was used from "Rebuild Alabama" funds and the county contributed \$267,000 in in-kind work, replacing cross drains, doing shoulder work and applying permanent striping. Mr. Reeder said that County Road 8 totaled \$1,955,465 from "Rebuild Alabama" funds and the county replaced 11 cross drains on that road along with 32 miles of shoulder work and 16 miles of permanent striping. The county cost was \$441,237. He added that they had an

increase in asphalt cost during these projects so they went above the estimated costs but for the entire "Rebuild Alabama" bond they were under \$400,000.

Mr. Reeder continued by reporting that MPO Projects for the year began with Hodgesville Road, where they resurfaced from Ross Clark Cr. to south of Saunders Road. This included 2 miles of leveling, resurfacing, and striping with MPO funds totaling a little over \$600,000. The county replaced 2 cross drains, 4 miles of shoulder work and stripped the road for a total cost of \$145,000. First Avenue in Ashford was another MPO project and it ran from Hwy. 84 to Old 84 for a total of .44 miles and a contract cost of \$92,000 with the county cost just over \$30,000. Mr. Reeder added that Walden Drive in Kinsey was another MPO and they resurfaced 1.77 miles, leveled and added temporary striping for a total MPO cost of \$524,000. For this project, the county replaced 5 cross drains, performed 3.54 miles of shoulder work and 1.77 miles of permanent striping with a total cost of \$207,000. They also completed 1.3 miles on Suggs Road for a total MPO cost of \$352,225. The county replaced 3 cross drains, did 2.6 miles of shoulder work and 1.3 miles of striping for \$216,000. Jordan Ave. in Ashford was resurfaced with MPO money that included 1.6 miles of resurfacing and contract cost was \$322,000. The county replaced 2 cross drains, shoulder work and permanent striping for a total close to \$100,000.

Mr. Reeder reported that the total MPO funds used for the fiscal year were \$1.9 million and total (including county funds) was about \$2.6 million. He stated that Houston County shares a striping truck with Dale County and Coffee County and so Houston County does the other counties striping as well. Houston County completed almost 216 miles of striping miles at a cost of \$150,000. He added that if the county would be contracting these striping projects out it would cost the county \$2,500 to \$3,500 per mile and to do it ourselves it is just over \$690 per mile. Road and Bridge also striped 170 miles in Coffee County and 54 miles in Dale County.

Mr. Reeder continued by reporting that the county performed various additional work projects (such as in-kind services) which included Sam Houston Boulevard (grant provided) in which they laid over 2,300 feet of existing road and built 776 linear feet of new road for a total of 3,500 man hours, completed the work in 69 working days and the total cost was \$695,840 and this was 100% reimbursable to the county by the Industrial Access Grant. Completed for the year were the FEMA sites from Hurricane Sally; Ole Taylor Place, in which they replaced two 96" arch pipes and built two significant headwalls for a total cost of \$284,063 and this will be reimbursed at 90% through FEMA money as well. Other projects completed were a joint project with the City of Dothan on Alice Street; Ashford Fire Dept. building pad prepared; Ashford Downtown parking lot completed; replaced bridge bearing pads on County Rd. 95 N.; built a green house pad for the Botanical Gardens; constructed football fields in conjunction with the City of Dothan at Grandview; put in pipe in front of Rehobeth Elementary; constructed a building pad at Sam Houston Industrial Park for the new spec building; annual tire cleanup program included 35 loads of tires hauled off, and this is reimbursed through ADEM; and completed an overlay at

Ashford Town Hall. Mr. Reeder stated that additional cross drains were replaced throughout the county at a total of \$650,000 and right-of-way maintenance was performed to include herbicide applications spraying 6,300 linear miles of roadways for a total cost of \$283,000. Road & Bridge spray the right of ways four times a year for about \$45 per mile and mowing is performed once a year at a cost of \$376 per mile. The total miles of mowing are 794 miles per year. They also cleared 59 miles of right-of-way this past year for \$250,000 and cleaned out over 16 miles of ditches throughout the county. Grading performed was 874 miles of dirt roads for a total cost of \$373,000. He touched on work orders performed for the year and reported that town requests were \$73,000 for the year and non-town request were slightly over a million dollars. Sanitation and knuckle boom numbers were discussed and they removed over 1,000 tons of debris from the right-of-ways.

Mr. Reeder stated that the projected work for the coming year includes Fortson Rd., W. Cook Rd., National Rd., Enterprise Church Rd., Enon Rd., and Lynn Jarvis and they plan on spending \$1.7 million from the "Rebuild Alabama" funds. Upcoming MPO Projects include Ashford Rd., Bethel Rd., Hosea Rd., Coach Creek Rd., Roney Rd., Taylor Rd., Campbellton Hwy., and S. Broad St. in Ashford. Total estimated cost for MPO Projects is almost \$6.2 million dollars. He added that special projects for the year include the Hodgesville Rd. Industrial Access Grant and they have started the designing for the project. The estimated cost for this is \$1.9 million and will be 100% reimbursed to Houston County and they have just completed a small project at the Sheriff's Dept. shooting range. They are also currently working on a storage facility building pad for the Sheriff's Dept. as well.

Chairman Shoupe commented on the striping machine and asked if it was still going good and Mr. Reeder said yes and the other counties are very excited about working with Houston County. He also asked about asphalt and the rising cost of and he asked what the engineers see for the coming year for the cost. Mr. Reeder stated that there is a possibility of a new asphalt plant coming to the area and he is in hopes that it will help to bring the prices down some. He added that materials in general are just high at this time and not sure what will happen in the future. Commissioner Herring commented that he appreciates the Road and Bridge Dept. and the good job they do for the county and they deserve applause. (Applause by all) Commissioner Herring also noted that the shoulders of the roads are being completed and taken care of the way they need to be and he understands that they have an obligation to the state to keep it that way.

REGULAR AGENDA

1. Request to approve and authorize advertising local legislation to pass a bill to provide for contracting of police services by a municipality with the Sheriff of Houston County; and to provide for compensation and distribution.

Commissioner Herring made a motion to approve the request and Commissioner Adams seconded. Chairman Shoupe asked Mayor Trotter, of Rehobeth, to come forward. She began by giving a brief overview and where this legislation came from and how it started. Mayor Trotter said that when she took office in 2020, the town of Rehobeth had an empty building that they no longer used, it was the former town hall, and there was much discussion on what would happen to the building. She said that one of the ideas was maybe to offer it as a hub for the Sheriff's Dept. and then eventually it was used for commercial purposes. Mayor Trotter stated that she reached out to Commissioner Herring to see if it was a possibility due to legalities and such. She added that the reason this came back up was that other counties have passed legislation to do what they are trying to do at this time to contract with the Sheriff's Dept. Mayor Trotter stated that there are a lot of questions if this is necessary and they have conducted some citizen's surveys and it seems to be a top priority, making sure that the area is safe. She said that it could be that this local legislation is passed and is not feasible for the town of Rehobeth in the way of paying for the service, but they know that they will not know the numbers until they get to that point. She knows that it is not feasible to have their own police department in Rehobeth and there are a lot of unknowns at this time but they cannot address any of it unless this local legislation is passed. Mayor Trotter said this is where they stand on the issue at this time and this has to be on file with the state of Alabama for it even to be a possibility for the town to have this in the future. She added that they do enforce their police jurisdiction, such as sales tax, and they need to put that back in the police department, or any other policing, if they have it. As of right now it goes to the fire department which has made significant strides, especially in response time and she would love for the town of Rehobeth to have the same for police time. Mayor Trotter stated that this is where they stand with this request that is being discussed and it will be up to the mercy of the state to pass the legislation.

Chairman Shoupe commented that Mayor Trotter is doing an excellent job as Mayor of Rehobeth and he hears this all over the county, not just in the Town of Rehobeth, and he congratulated her on that. He also stated that during the recent campaign, that was one of the main concerns he heard from the Rehobeth citizens was the response time for emergencies. Commissioner Herring then stated that he and Mayor Trotter had discussed this several years ago and it is now coming to fruition that they can have an idea to move forward with this legislation as Representative Clouse had done the same for Dale County last year. He added that this is an opportunity to put this legislation in place because if you do not have it in place you cannot move forward and he is in hopes to move forward with it. Commissioner Herring thanked the Mayor and the council members for being present.

At this time, Chairman Shoupe reported that there was one citizen that turned in privileges of the floor pertaining to this topic and that is Mr. George Trotter. Mr. Trotter approached the podium and Chairman Shoupe reminded him that he had 3 minutes for his statement. Mr.

Trotter then began by thanking the Mayor, his daughter-in-law for being here and two of the council members and he would like to see them continue to come to the meetings. Mr. Trotter then said that he wanted to remind the commission and then he stated that his name is George Trotter and he resides at 4218 County Road 203, Dothan, AL. He continued by saying that we live in the United States of America with a constitutional form of government, of the people, by the people, for the people. Mr. Trotter said that he had hoped and prayed to God that when he came back in 2023 in front of this new commission, that he would see the commission wanted participation from the citizens of Houston County and not put a greater damper than what it has been for the last 27 years. Chairman Shoupe interrupted Mr. Trotter and reminded him that he had to stay on topic. Mr. Trotter said that the topic is "Request to approve and authorize advertising local legislation" and he asked when did the commission get into making laws in Houston County. That is his question, when did they get into making laws and he said that laws are made in Montgomery. He continued "to pass a bill to provide for contracting of police services by a municipality with the Sheriff of Houston County and to provide for compensation and distribution". Mr. Trotter said that "We the People" have a lot of questions that they want answered and he has confidence that the Mayor and council members will have an open public meeting with the citizens of the Town of Rehobeth before they ever make a decision to hire anybody in relative to law enforcement. Mr. Trotter stated that when he moved to the area in 1994 with his job with BSF Corporation primarily for the schools and medical facilities but also for the law enforcement. Chairman Shoupe said that his time was up.

When called for the vote, the motion carried unanimously.

2. Request to adopt resolution for Allocation of American Rescue Plan Act Funds to carry out eligible project for the Wiregrass Food Bank and authorize Chairman to negotiate and execute agreement

Commissioner Ivey made a motion to approve the resolution and Commissioner Adams seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

3. Request to adopt resolution for Allocation of American Rescue Plan Act Funds to carry out eligible project for the House of Ruth, Inc., and authorize Chairman to negotiate and execute agreement

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

4. Request to adopt resolution for Allocation of American Rescue Plan Act Funds to carry out eligible project for the Wiregrass Angel House, Inc., and authorize Chairman to negotiate and execute agreement.

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

5. Request to approve a preliminary plat for Chase Ridge Subdivision Phase V and VI – Road & Bridge

Commissioner Herring made a motion to approve a preliminary plat for Chase Ridge Subdivision Phase V and VI. Commissioner Ivey seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

6. Request to place the following items on GovDeals from Community Corrections: (1) 2005 Chevy Tahoe and (1) 2006 Dodge Durango – Road & Bridge

Commissioner Ivey made a motion to sell the vehicles on GovDeals and Commissioner Adams seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Chairman Shoupe reminded everyone that the next meeting will be held on Thursday, February 9th. This meeting would normally be held at 5:00 p.m., but it will be held at 10:00 a.m. instead as all commissioners will be in Troy for legislative update meeting. He added that the construction that has been ongoing at the Administration Building will move to the west side of the building. This will cause the west and north side of the building parking areas to be closed for about 9 months. Adjustments will be made and additional parking will be in the parking lot on W. Newton St. Employees will be parking farther away and assigned parking will be unavailable during this construction time to make way for more citizens parking. Commissioner Shoupe wanted the public aware of this parking change.

STAFF REPORTS

Chief Administrative Officer – No report

County Engineer – Closed roads: Campbellton Hwy. for cross drain repair and hope to be finished in a day. They will then move to another location on Campbellton Hwy. and that will take about 3 – 4 weeks to complete. County Rd. 33 closed during working hours for 3 – 4 days.

County Attorney – No report

Adjourn