

MINUTES OF THE HOUSTON COUNTY COMMISSION
REGULAR SESSION
April 25, 2023

PRESENT: Chairman Brandon Shoupe, Commissioner Curtis Harvey, Commissioner Tracy Adams, Commissioner Ricky Herring, Commissioner James Ivey, County Engineer Barkley Kirkland, 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 April 25, 2023, Houston County Commission Regular Session. He declared a quorum as all commissioners were in attendance.

Pastor Vann Cooley, from First Baptist Church of Columbia, gave the invocation and Commissioner Harvey 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 Ivey. The motion passed unanimously.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN AND COMMISSIONERS

Chairman Shoupe commented that a few members of the commission attended the Commanding General Picnic and it was a well ran event and they were able to meet with the Commanding General, elected officials from Dale County and Coffee County and some of the soldiers and airman in attendance. They were honored to receive an invitation for this event.

AWARDS AND PRESENTATIONS

1. Presentation – “History of Columbia, Alabama” – Karen Mann

Chairman Shoupe introduced Ms. Mann and stated that he had toured the new museum in Columbia recently and was very impressed and that Ms. Mann was present to speak about the history of Columbia, AL. Ms. Mann began by thanking the commission for allowing her to come and speak on this and she introduced Eugene Armstrong, who is the Columbia historian and President, Peggy Smith who is the Secretary and David Hunter who is a historian and is the editor of the Old Columbia Chronicle, which is published and comes out monthly. Ms. Mann also introduced two Columbia council members present, Fred Gainer and Spencer Hayes and a very important and vital person in their society, Mr. Elliot Whitton, local genealogist. She mentioned that there were other Columbia Historical Society Members present and she was glad that all could attend.

Ms. Mann reported that the documentary, which she will be showing some parts of, came about as she was a teacher and became interested in the town through Mr. Whitton. She added that there is over 200 years of history in the town of Columbia and it was probably a settlement before Alabama was a state. Ms. Mann stated that a lot of “firsts” came out of Columbia, Alabama, and they are very proud of that. She mentioned that electricity came to Dothan from Columbia, as the commission will see in the documentary. In addition, Columbia has a claim to fame with the famous Anglin Brothers, which were brothers that robbed the bank in Columbia and that was their trail to Alcatraz and the vault that they robbed is now in the museum. Columbia also has one of the oldest wooden jails left in the country, which can be visited as well. Ms. Mann announced that the museum is open every second Saturday from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. and the historical society is hosting the Tri-State’s Revival Bike Ride in the next few weeks. She also reported that the historical society is involved with the Omussee Creek Mound as this area needs to be on the Alabama Mound Trail. They are currently working with the Core of Engineers and others on this mound project. In order for the documentary to come to fruition, they received two grants from the Wiregrass Foundation. Ms. Mann then electronically presented the documentary and all watched. Upon completion, Chairman Shoupe thanked Ms. Mann for her presentation today and thanked all the members of the historical society for preserving the past as it is very important.

2. Proclamation – “Crime Victims’ Rights Week” – Katy Lewis, Outreach Director – Wiregrass Angel House

Commissioner Herring made a motion to approve the proclamation and Commissioner Harvey seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Commissioner Herring and Katy Lewis, Outreach Director for Wiregrass Angel House, approached the podium. Commissioner Herring read the proclamation for “Crime Victims’ Rights Week” and presented it to Ms. Lewis and thanked her and her staff for what they do at the Angel House and asked her for comments. Ms. Lewis began by stating that this week is all about elevating survivor voices and getting the stories out. She thanked the commission and announced that they are doing a “Dine & Donate” all week and today the restaurant is Dante’s Pizza, tomorrow is Delflippo’s in Ozark and Thursday is Hot’s Deli and the Angel House staff will be there waiting tables for tips to benefit the Wiregrass Angel House. She encouraged everyone to come out and support this cause and to spread awareness.

3. Proclamation – “Small Business Week” – Lori Wilcoxon – Dothan Area Chamber of Commerce

Commissioner Herring made a motion to approve the proclamation and Commissioner Ivey seconded. The motion carried unanimously. Chairman Shoupe approached the podium along with Lori Wilcoxon from the Dothan Area Chamber of Commerce and he thanked her for

coming today. Chairman Shoupe read the proclamation, presented it to Ms. Wilcoxon and asked her for comments. She began by stating that since 1963, the US Small Business Association has set aside one week to honor the accomplishments of small business owners, innovators and small business advocates. The Dothan Area Chamber of Commerce, in conjunction with Houston County, has declared May 8th – 12th as “Small Business Week” and the Chamber recognizes that it is the efforts of small businesses that are prudent to the economic success of the area, whether it is a local brewery, small boutique shop or a lifetime family member business, “Small Business Week” is created to celebrate the drive and ambition of entrepreneurs. She added that “Small Business Week” shines the spotlight on businesses helping local consumers to understand why supporting a small business is one of the best things that they can do for their community. Ms. Wilcoxon stated that when small businesses thrive, jobs are created and the economy flourishes for everyone’s benefit. She also reported that there will be events happening May 8th – 12th, and she encouraged everyone to attend those events to include the luncheon on the 9th, a women’s event on Thursday night and on Monday, May 8th, there is a kick-off with a hundred of the oldest members and a hundred of the newest members of the Chamber for a ribbon-cutting. She ended by thanking the commission for all they do for the community, and for the chamber, and for including them with the proclamation.

4. Proclamation – “National Library Week” – Chris Warren, Director – Dothan Houston County Library System

Commissioner Ivey made a motion to approve the proclamation for “National Library Week” and Commissioner Herring seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Chairman Shoupe asked Chris Warren to join him at the podium and thanked him for being present. Chairman Shoupe then read the proclamation and presented it to Mr. Warren and asked him for comments. Mr. Warren began by thanking the commission and that he appreciates the support the commission gives to the library system. He added that the library does a lot during the year by being creative and innovative to bring awareness of what the library does. He also stated that “National Library Week” is obviously one of his favorite times of year, but this day in particular is “National Library Workers Day” and this is the day they celebrate all the people that work in the library as the front line employees make the programs, collections and all the resources possible. He said that obviously the library is about books, technology and information, but they are also a people business, and about the people that make those things possible and there is a lot that the library would not be able to do without these workers. Mr. Warren reported that for “National Library Week” they have launched a community awareness campaign built around the phrase “What my Library Does” and the workers are wearing shirts that says “my library does _____” and they fill in the blank with a lot of creative and innovative things that they do such as “my library does e-books”, “my library does passports” and yes “my library does leaf blowers” as they have a library of things that can be borrowed

from the public library. He stated that all these things are possible because they have great leadership with their library board as well as here at the county commission and he thanked all of them again. Lastly, Mr. Warren reported that the summer ready program kicks off on May 22nd and they will be sending out invitations soon so everyone can see the great things that the library does.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Request to enter into a Federal Aid Construction Agreement with ALDOT for the funding of the resurfacing project on S. Broadway St.
2. Request to enter into a Federal Aid Construction Agreement with ALDOT for the funding of the resurfacing project on Taylor Road
3. Request to enter into a Federal Aid Construction Agreement with ALDOT for the funding of the resurfacing project on Campbellton Hwy
4. Request to approve Resolution for the resurfacing of Ashford Rd. from Ben Ivey Rd. to Midland St. (MPO Funds)
5. Request to approve Resolution for the resurfacing of Enon Rd. from Ashford Rd. to AL Hwy 52 East (MPO Funds)

Commissioner Harvey made a motion to approve all items on the consent agenda and Commissioner Ivey seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

REGULAR AGENDA

1. Request from Wicksburg Youth Athletic Association for in-kind services for their recreation park

Commissioner Ivey made a motion to approve the request from Wicksburg Youth Athletic Association and Commissioner Adams seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

2. Request to increase Water Lab testing fee from \$15 to \$20

Commissioner Harvey made a motion to approve the request to increase the Water Lab testing fee from \$15 to \$20. Commissioner Herring seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

3. Request to adopt resolution approving the issuance of a tax exempt revenue obligation by the Cooperative District of Southeast Alabama and accompanying approval by Chairman related to refinance of district's bond related to ACOM facilities

Commissioner Herring made a motion to approve the request to adopt resolution approving the issuance of a tax exempt revenue obligation by the Cooperative District of Southeast Alabama and accompanying approval by Chairman related to refinance of district's bond related to ACOM facilities. Commissioner Harvey seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

4. Request to approve budget amendment for Youth Services Facilities due to increase in cost of services provided – Peter Covert, CAO

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

5. Request to approve budget amendment for Pistol Permit Grant Reimbursement Fund – Sheriff's Dept.

Commissioner Ivey made a motion to approve the budget amendment for Pistol Permit Grant Reimbursement Fund and Commissioner Adams seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

6. Request to approve budget amendment for contract services – Road & Bridge

Commissioner Adams made the motion to approve the budget amendment for contract services for Road & Bridge. Commissioner Herring seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

7. Request to approve budget amendment for revenues from municipalities – Road & Bridge

Commissioner Ivey made a motion to approve the budget amendment for revenues from municipalities for Road & Bridge. Commissioner Harvey seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

8. Request to approve budget amendment for materials and supplies – Road & Bridge

Commissioner Harvey made a motion to approve the budget amendment for materials and supplies for Road & Bridge and Commissioner Herring seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

9. Request to award bid for crushed limestone to lowest bidder meeting specs (Johnston Trucking) – Road & Bridge

Commissioner Ivey made the motion to award the bid for crushed limestone and Commissioner Adams seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

10. Request to sell the following item on GovDeals: 1 lot of sorted metal tin – Road & Bridge

Commissioner Herring made the motion to approve the request to sell the stated item on GovDeals. Commissioner Adams seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

STAFF REPORTS

Chief Administrative Officer – No report

County Engineer – 4 closed roads; Long Rd, Moffet, Lyn Jarvis and West Cook Rd.

County Attorney – No report

Chairman Shoupe announced that the next meeting will be on Monday, May 8th, with the Administration Meeting beginning at 9:00 a.m. and the Commission Meeting at 10:00 a.m. The meeting will most likely be held in the 6th Floor Conference Room due to construction.

Request to convene into executive session

Chairman Shoupe stated that executive session is not something that commission likes to do but they have been doing it a lot lately. Fortunately, the law provides the commissioner the ability to do this and the county has several real estate deals that they are in the middle of or are contemplating. There is a request to convene into executive session to discuss real estate matters. Commissioner Herring made a motion to convene into executive session and Commissioner Adams seconded. The motion carried unanimously. The meeting convenes at 10:37 a.m. and Chairman Shoupe said they would reconvene on or after 11:00 a.m. and there would be no more business to discuss as they would only reconvene to adjourn the regular session.

At 11:32 a.m., Commissioner Harvey made a motion for the commission to come out of executive session and reconvene the regular session. Commissioner Ivey seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Herring made a motion to adjourn the regular session and Commissioner Adams seconded. The motion carried and the meeting was adjourned.

Adjourn