

MINUTES OF THE HOUSTON COUNTY COMMISSION
REGULAR SESSION
May 8, 2023

PRESENT: Chairman Brandon Shoupe, Commissioner Curtis Harvey, Commissioner Tracy Adams, Commissioner James Ivey, County Engineer Barkley Kirkland, Chief Administrative Officer Peter Covert and County Attorney Pres Register.

Chairman Shoupe called the 10:00 a.m. meeting to order and welcomed everyone to the May 8, 2023, Houston County Commission Regular Session. He declared a quorum as a majority of the commissioners were in attendance.

ABSENT: Commissioner Ricky Herring

Major Linda Payton, Corps Officer of the Salvation Army, gave the invocation and Commissioner Ivey led in the pledge of allegiance.

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN AND COMMISSIONERS

Chairman Shoupe announced that the next meeting will be held on Thursday, May 18th, 2023, and the plan is to return to the Commission Chambers, if the construction allows. He also announced that Sunday is a very important holiday as it is Mother's Day. Chairman Shoupe reported that the commission traveled to Montgomery last week for the ACCA Legislative Day and it was a great trip as Alabama counties have had a very productive legislative year as a lot of things they were worried about in legislation, have been modified and are going forward. He commended Sonny Brassfield, ACCA Executive Director, for leading the counties and doing such a great job.

AWARDS AND PRESENTATIONS

1. Presentation – "Monuments and Memorials in Houston County" – Dr. Martin Oliff, Director – The Wiregrass Archives

Chairman Shoupe introduced Dr. Martin Oliff and stated that he is always interested in how the commission can improve their appreciation for their own history. Dr. Oliff began by thanking Chairman Shoupe and stated that he is a Professor of History at Troy University Dothan Campus and he is also the Director of the Wiregrass Archives. He said that his presence here today can

be blamed on Chairman Shoupe as he invited him today and he appreciates the opportunity. Dr. Oliff said that a Houston County monuments and memorials spread sheet, which he created, will be made available to the commission and available to the public. He continued by saying that in 2019 he was invited to participate in a working group, that included the Executive Director of the Clarke County Alabama Historical Group and the archivist of Limestone County, to capture historical memory, commemoration and commemoratives at the local level, but throughout the state. Dr. Oliff reported that as a result of that he did a survey of monuments and memorials in Houston County that have a physical presence. He assembled the data base of about 170 of these and the types include buildings, historical markers, and monuments of various kinds, statuary, parks, roadways, murals, historical districts and various kinds of plaques that are on other structures. He said that he has captured local information, the year they were erected, the responsible party, who or what is commemorated and photographs of each one of these. Dr. Oliff stated that he, along with his working colleagues, are working on their findings as an academic and scholarly round table presentation publication for the Alabama Review, which is the historical journal of record for the state. He added that this project goes beyond scholarship and academia as it is a public history project and he believes it has some applications for tourism as well as general civic knowledge within Houston County. Dr. Oliff said that he cannot bring this to complete fruition by himself as this is why he is contacting the county commission as he is trying to make this sustainable and on how to make it usable. He is in hopes of providing the spreadsheet to each of the commissioners in the state it is in now and he hopes to include encyclopedic knowledge about the people that created each of the monuments as well as the people and events that are commemorated in the monuments but this information is hard to locate outside of the memories of local people. Dr. Oliff is looking forward to working with some local offices to open doors that he necessarily is not able to open by himself. He ended by reporting that Troy University Dothan Campus will be unveiling a boiled peanut marker at the Troy Dothan Campus on May 17th, at 11:00 a.m. This marker is a William C. Pomeroy Foundation "Hungry for History" marker and it commemorates boiled peanuts as a food that is identified with Dothan and Houston County. He thanked the commission for allowing him to come today.

Chairman Shoupe thanked Dr. Oliff for his efforts in this project and one of the things he ran in his campaign is to enhance all local cultures and this is a good way to do this and any assistance Dr. Oliff needs they will be happy to oblige.

2. Proclamation – "Foster Care Month" – Torrie Nelson – Houston County DHR

Chairman Shoupe proceeded to the podium with Mrs. Nelson and read the proclamation in its entirety. Upon completion he thanked Mrs. Nelson for all she does with DHR. Chairman Shoupe stated that while growing up in Wicksburg they had some families that always had foster children and he knows the heartache and struggles these families go through. He then

asked Mrs. Nelson for any comments. Mrs. Nelson thanked the commission for the proclamation and stated that she is the Resource Supervisor at Houston County DHR and her role is to maintain all current licensed foster homes as well as recruitment and training of the new homes. She mention that they do have a couple of upcoming trainings for anyone that is interested in taking on this huge task of opening up their homes and hearts to provide a safe and nurturing place for children as they are in foster care. At this time, Mrs. Nelson's supervisor introduced herself as Courtney Singleton and stated that she serves as the Program Supervisor of Foster Care Resources in Houston County. She shared statics that they currently have 5,829 children in foster care in the state of Alabama and in Houston County alone they have 146 children in foster care with 71 being female and 75 are male. Ms. Singleton stated that the ages range from 0-21 and they have 35 licensed foster homes and the need for foster homes is great at this time. She reiterated that there is an upcoming training course for foster parents and that will begin on May 25 at 6:00 p.m.

Commissioner Harvey made a motion to approve the proclamation and Commissioner Ivey seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

3. Proclamation – “National Salvation Army Week” – Major Linda Payton, Corps Officer – The Salvation Army

Chairman Shoupe asked Major Payton to come forward and he asked for a motion for the proclamation. Commissioner Ivey made the motion and Commissioner Adams seconded. The motion carried unanimously. Chairman Shoupe read the proclamation and thanked Major Payton for what they do for the citizens of Houston County and the City of Dothan and asked her for comments. Major Payton began by saying that they have the opportunity to be able to help people in Houston County and it is year round as people do not realize what is done. She added that their hope is to try and keep people in their homes to prevent homelessness. They try to keep people feed as they can't ahead if all they are worried about is your next meal. Major Payton also said that the Salvation Army is well known at Christmas time for the bell ringing and the Angel Tree. She added that the purpose of the Angel Tree is to make sure that children have a memory of a happy moment similar to every other child as that is what they wish for every child. Major Payton announced that next week they will be recognizing people in their community that are helping the Salvation Army to help others and they will be dropping some things off at the Sheriff's office and the Dothan Police office. They will also be helping other agencies in town with feeding and washing up for them as the Salvation Army is volunteering for the agencies because in this county they understand actual working together. She added that it is with the help of all the different organizations as they cannot, alone, achieve what can be achieved but they can through a combination of all the agencies working together. Major Payton ended by saying that she is very honored and pleased for this

recognition and if anybody knows of anybody that the Salvation Army need to help, please let them know.

4. Proclamation – “National Corrections Officers Week” – Sheriff Donald Valenza

Commissioner Ivey approached the podium for the next proclamations. Commissioner Adams made a motion to approve the proclamation and Commissioner Harvey seconded. The motion carried unanimously. Commissioner Ivey then read the proclamation and then thanked the corrections officer that are present and those that could not attend, for all they do as their job takes a lot to stand behind the walls of the jail and put up with what they have to put up with on a daily basis. Sheriff Donald Valenza then approached the podium and said that as of today they are at 436 inmates and positions of employment are down at the jail. He added that he started off working in the jail and it is a very hard job that goes unnoticed. He told them he really appreciates the job they do and to let him know if they need anything. Round of applause was given by all.

5. Proclamation – “National Police Week” – Sheriff Donald Valenza

Commissioner Adams made a motion to approve the proclamation for “National Police Week” and Commissioner Harvey seconded. The motion carried unanimously. Commissioner Ivey read the proclamation and thanked those in attendance. Sheriff Valenza commented that Commissioner/Captain Ivey did a great job with the proclamation and added that it is a great profession but it is one that gets a lot of criticism. He added that he is so proud of the deputies that are willing to get out every day and serve as they do not know if they will get back home safe each day. He feels that the deputies are doing a great job and he is so proud of them and will stand behind them. Chairman Shoupe added that they do a great job in the community and he knows that a lot of the citizens appreciate what they do as it is a tough job and does get a lot of criticism. He also feels that they are extremely professional and he thanked them. Round of applause was given by all.

REGULAR AGENDA

1. Request to authorize and approve sub-recipient agreement to expend ARPA Funds for the Town of Rehobeth Infrastructure project

Chairman Shoupe said that this was talked about in the Administration Meeting. Commissioner Harvey made a motion and Commission Ivey seconded. When called for the vote, the motion passed and the request was approved.

2. Request to approve bank qualified general obligation debt with SmartBank to purchase (3) garbage trucks and (1) bulldozer, approve accompanying budget amendment and authorize chairman to execute financing documents – Peter Covert, CAO

Commissioner Harvey made a motion to approve the request and Commissioner Adams seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

3. Request to approve Resolution Approving One-Time Exemption of Debt Payment Prohibition for the Houston County EMS Association Regarding Cottonwood Volunteer Rescue

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

4. Request to approve Vehicle Use Policy for Houston County

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

5. Request to award bid for Hot Plant Mix to lowest bidder meeting specs (Midsouth Paving) – Road & Bridge

Commissioner Harvey made a motion to approve the request to award bid for Hot Plant Mix and Commissioner Adams seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

6. Request for Chairman to negotiate the agreement to obtain professional services with Poly, Inc., for design of a Regional Strategic Stockpile Warehouse – Road & Bridge

Commissioner Ivey made a motion to approve the request for Chairman to negotiate the agreement to obtain professional services with Poly, Inc., for design of a Regional Strategic Stockpile Warehouse. Commissioner Adams seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

STAFF REPORTS

Chief Administrative Officer – No report

County Engineer – 3 closed roads; W. Cook, Lindborg, and Broad St./Cowarts Creek

County Attorney – No report

Adjourn