

MINUTES OF THE HOUSTON COUNTY COMMISSION  
REGULAR SESSION  
June 12, 2023

PRESENT: Chairman Brandon Shoupe, Commission Curtis Harvey, Commissioner Tracy Adams, 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 June 12, 2023, Houston County Commission Regular Session. He declared a quorum as a majority of the commissioners were in attendance.

ABSENT: Commissioner Ricky Herring and Commissioner James Ivey

Pastor Carl Jackson from Rhema Rock Church gave the invocation and Commissioner Adams 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 began by stating that Chris Judah has resigned as EMA Director and that position will be open for applications as early as today or tomorrow. He added that from a chain of command standpoint, and because they have not appointed an interim director, the responsibility of EMA will be in the Chairman's hands for the next couple of weeks.

Commissioner Adams commented that he would like to recognize Cottonwood Fire Dept. as they have purchased a fire truck for over \$300,000 to serve Cottonwood and their surrounding areas. He stated that they were able to do that debt free with the help of Houston County and their own funds as they raised over \$100,000 and the town of Cottonwood helped out as well. He congratulated them on their efforts to purchase this fire truck. Chairman Shoupe added that he went and saw the truck over the weekend and he is very proud of their management of their finances in obtaining that expensive piece of equipment without any debt.

Commissioner Harvey thanked Pastor Jackson for representing Rhema Rock Church and representing them well this morning.

## AWARDS AND PRESENTATIONS

### 1. Recognition – Second Quarter Service Anniversaries – Sheri Garner, Personnel Director

At this time Ms. Garner came forward and asked all employees to come forward as well. She began by stating that they began in 2023 recognizing employees that have long term service anniversaries and she wanted to recognize the following:

Anthony Emanuel	Sanitation	10 years
Michael Vickers	Road & Bridge	15 years
Austin Nowell	Sheriff's Dept.	20 years
Brandon Simmons	Sheriff's Dept.	20 years
Stephanie Fears	HC Jail	25 years
Carla Snell	HC Jail	25 years

Ms. Garner stated that they are very thankful for these employees and asked for a round of applause.

Chairman Shoupe thanked Ms. Garner for doing such a great job in the Personnel Dept. He noted that at this time the job vacancy rate is 4.7% and it was as high as 12% just a few months ago.

## REGULAR AGENDA

### 1. Request to approve the 2022 insolvents, errors and taxes in litigation and uncollected insolvents and litigations for previous years for final settlement with the State of Alabama – Starla Moss, Revenue Commissioner

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

### 2. Request from the Personnel Board to approve Juneteenth as a county holiday, in conjunction with the State Holiday Schedule – Sheri Garner, Personnel Director

Commissioner Harvey made a motion to approve the request for the county holiday and Commissioner Adams seconded. Chairman Shoupe reported that the state is taking this holiday and the county always mirrors the state schedule. When called for the vote, the motion passed unanimously.

3. Request to award bid for the Houston County Safety Communications Fiber Optic Loop to lowest bidder meeting specs utilizing ARPA funds up to \$500,000 and authorize Chairman to execute all documents – Peter Covert, CAO

Commissioner Harvey made a motion to approve the request to award the bid for the Houston County Safety Communications Fiber Optic Loop and Commissioner Adams seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

4. Request to authorize expenditures from the Emergency Capital Replacement Fund – Tommy Dixon, County Buildings Manager

Chairman Shoupe stated that this is for repair work that has already taken place out of the emergency capital replacement fund that was approved in the budget. Commissioner Harvey made a motion to approve the request to authorize the expenditures and Commissioner Adams seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

5. Request to approve contract with Gosselin Architecture for architectural work to be performed for the Farm Center Arena

Commissioner Adams made a motion to approve the contract with Gosselin Architecture and Commissioner Harvey seconded. Commissioner Harvey asked if Mr. Gosselin would come forward and tell about what he will be doing with this project. Mr. Gosselin came forward and began by stating that he will work closely with the county to rein vision, restore or rejuvenate the Farm Center back to its' original iconic status or its' importance in the community as a place to hold important events. They are looking to make it as universal of a space as they can as they have to clear out some infrastructure in order to make it a universal space. They are in hopes that the Farmer's Market will find a home there for their weekend farmers market and many other events that contribute to the community. This could include weddings, music events, revivals and other events. They will work close with the county to make sure this happens. Chairman Shoupe said as long as they can hold wrestling matches there... laughter by all. Commissioner Harvey asked how many people will be able to occupy the building and Mr. Gosselin answered that in the current state they can hold 3,000 – 4,000 and that is very crowded. They are looking at about 3,000 occupancy as it is a 35,000 square foot structure. When called for the vote, the motion carried unanimously.

6. Request to approve resolution and application for Storm Water Grant – Road & Bridge

Commissioner Harvey made a motion to approve the resolution and application for Storm Water Grant. Commissioner Adams seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

## 7. Request to enter into an Interagency Cooperative Agreement for Remediation of Solid Waste – Road & Bridge

Commissioner Harvey made a motion to approve the request to enter into an Interagency Cooperative Agreement and Commissioner Adams seconded. County Engineer Kirkland asked that Jim Nunley come forward to answer any questions the commission may have. Chairman Shoupe asked Mr. Nunley to talk about this new agreement and how it came about. Engineer Kirkland said that those that do not know, but Jim Nunley is a bulldog when it comes to the garbage cans, trash sites and dump sites. He added that people would call and want the county to clean up trash sites and Jim would get with the public health department and together they put a program in place. Mr. Nunally has acquired a \$150,000 grant to help with this effort. They are guidelines for this grant and they have to pre-approved and strictly followed. Commissioner Adams asked if mattresses and couches can be picked up with this program and Engineer Kirkland answered no as this is for dump sites. Mr. Nunley stated that there are two sites as one is on Dusty Lane and it seems to be growing. It is in a creek and the other site is on Ludlam and the county put in two 80 inch pipes a few years ago and it is too far gone to clean up and he asked Barkley about getting some help with an excavator. Mr. Kirkland recommended getting a grant for this and Mr. Nunley called ADEM and they came and looked at seven sites and the two for mentioned qualified for the grant.

Chairman Shoupe thanked Mr. Nunley and commented that the commission appreciates all that he does.

When called for the vote, the motion carried unanimously.

## 8. Request to sell the following items on GovDeals: Misc. Office Equipment

Commissioner Harvey made a motion to approve the request to sell the office equipment on GovDeals. Commissioner Adams seconded and the motion carried.

### STAFF REPORTS

Chief Administrative Officer – No report but he wanted to announce that Martha Walker, from the accounting dept., has recently enrolled in the Dothan 101 Program, which is a nine week course through the City of Dothan. She used her personal time to attend this class and learned the services provided by the City of Dothan and the way in which it impacts our community. Mrs. Walker graduated from the program and has already come back with two and maybe three suggestions that are going to aid and help in the county services that are provided. Mr. Covert said that he is very proud of Martha and he appreciates her taking the time to attend this program. He added that she graduated with a certificate of participation and she proudly displays that in her office. Chairman Shoupe and the Commission gave a round of applause and

asked her for any comments. Mrs. Walker said that she does recommend this to everybody as it opened her eyes as to what the city does and the services they provide and she encourages others to attend.

County Engineer – Update on paving: So far this year they have completed the cross drain clearing and patching and completed paving on Hosea, Bethel, Roney, Cowarts Creek, and Broad Street, Ashford Road, S. Broadway, and National Rd. They are currently paving on Taylor Rd. and started shoulder work on all these roads as well. This will continue for the next month or two and they will finish paving Campbellton Hwy., Enon, Fortson, Lynn Jarvis, Enterprise Church, and West Cook.

2 closed roads: Fortson & Pea Market Rd.

County Attorney – No report

Adjourn