

MINUTES OF THE HOUSTON COUNTY COMMISSION  
REGULAR SESSION  
July 10, 2023

PRESENT: Chairman Brandon Shoupe, Commissioner Curtis Harvey, Commissioner Tracy Adams, Commissioner Ricky Herring, Commissioner James Ivey, County Engineer Barkley Kirkland, Acting Chief Administrative Officer Stacey Holland, and County Attorney Pres Register.

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

Pastor Chase Faulk from Ridgecrest Baptist Church gave the invocation and Commissioner Harvey led in the pledge of allegiance.

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

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

Chairman Shoupe began by thanking County Engineer Barkley Kirkland and his Road & Bridge staff for their help over the weekend in the cleanup efforts due to a storm that passed through our area. He also thanked the volunteers that were out as well. Chairman Shoupe announced that "Tax Free Weekend" will be held July 21- 23 for the upcoming school year. He also announced that they will begin towing cars that are parked behind the court house in unauthorized parking spaces. Eligible employees have been given parking passes for the area behind the court house. The parking lot across the street from the court house continues to be public parking. Chairman Shoupe stated that there have been issues for a number of years where the employees cannot find parking spots, especially after lunch, in order to report to their job. There are also some security concerns that the building is not well defended and it is best that the public parking be away. Handicap is still assessable for the public near the building. This will go into effect on Wednesday, July 12<sup>th</sup>.

#### AWARDS AND PRESENTATIONS

##### 1. Personnel Department Update – Sheri Garner, Personnel Director

Chairman Shoupe asked Ms. Garner to come forward to the podium and she then asked Tony Weber, Community Corrections Director, to come forward. Ms. Garner began by reporting that she and Chairman Shoupe have been working on employee statistics. She asked Mr.

Weber how long he has been employed with Houston County and he answered almost 28 years. She then asked how long had he been the director of Community Corrections and he answered 11 or 12 years. Ms. Garner continued by reporting that Mr. Weber had been promoted in 2012 to Director of Community Corrections and during his tenure as a manager of the department he has had “zero” turnover rate. Mr. Weber said that it may change after today. (Laughter by all) Ms. Garner said that she sent an email to his staff member and asked them to tell her some things that they liked about the department and why have they stayed and she began to read the positive replies. One employee said they have been waiting for this all their life while another quoted Tony Weber’s most beloved and favorite quote is “Grab yourself, your (blank), and hang on” and they said they have heard it hundred times during their 8:00 a.m. staff meetings. She continued by saying that another employee said that Tony is by far the best manager they have ever worked for as not only is he fair he is also fun. Ms. Garner added another employee said that they considered them self very fortunate to work for Mr. Weber because he has high expectations. Another said that she has never missed one ball game with any of her children while she has worked for Mr. Weber and that they also have the same common goal as to see that the inmates complete the program successfully. Ms. Garner continued with another employee stating that Mr. Weber listens to their new ideas and ways to improve an existing protocol and uses it even if it is not a workable idea, he listens and bounces back with ideas that maybe were not thought of and they continue to work on solutions together.

Ms. Garner then asked Mr. Weber if he knew, in football terms, what a “GOAT” is and she said it stands for “Greatest of all time”. She told Mr. Weber that she had ordered him something special and it will be delivered this week and her entire staff will be delivering it to him. She then presented him with a coffee cup and she told the commission that she wanted to recognize him today as a “zero” turnover rate is absolutely unheard of. Applause was given by all for Mr. Weber.

Chairman Shoupe said that this is an amazing static and that Mr. Weber should be commended for this.

## 2. Presentation – “Wiregrass Honor Flight” – Travis Parker

Mr. Parker came to the podium and began by explaining what “Honor Flight” is. He said that a brief history of it began in 2005 when someone had an idea and got six of his pilot friends with six plans and they took twelve veterans to Washington, DC, to see the WWII monument. This venture spread quickly and in 2009 and 2010 it spread to the Wiregrass area and they had an honor flight which consisted of five flights in two years and it was almost 400 veterans. Mr. Parker reported that since then they have added Korean War Veterans and Vietnam Veterans. He also reported that there is about 40,000 Vietnam Veterans still on the waiting list and they

are trying to get things set up so they can do two to three flights each year. Mr. Parker stated that the end goal is to raise money to send the veterans to Washington for free and the guardian chaperone pays their own way which cost about \$700. They are currently visiting different groups and talking to them about donations to raise money to help send the veterans. They are also bringing the "Vietnam Wall" here to Dothan in September and that cost money as well so they are looking for sponsorships to help offset this money and the extra money raised goes to pay for flying the veterans to Washington. In addition, Mr. Parker reported that they are also bringing a replica of George Washington's war tent and other items as this will be a mini history tour for people and students. This will be held at the Peanut Festival Fairgrounds and their goal is to educate people on the Vietnam War which ended fifty years ago.

Chairman Shoupe asked when the date is for this and Mr. Parker stated it will be September 7 – 11, 2023, and they hope to have an event each day as the opening ceremony will be on the 7<sup>th</sup>. Chairman Shoupe commended Mr. Parker for leading this organization and bringing the wall to the area. Commissioner Adams said that he would be interested in getting his ROTC students involved and they support him 100%.

#### REGULAR AGENDA

##### 1. Request to appoint representative for the 2023-2024 ACCA Legislative Committee

Commissioner Herring made a motion to approve Chairman Brandon Shoupe as the representative for the 2023-2024 ACCA Legislative Committee. Commissioner Adams seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

#### STAFF REPORTS

Chief Administrative Officer – No report

County Engineer – 2 closed roads: Pea Market & Faulkner

County Attorney – No report

Adjourn