

MINUTES OF THE HOUSTON COUNTY COMMISSION
REGULAR SESSION
June 10, 2024

PRESENT: Chairman Brandon Shoupe, Commissioner Curtis Harvey, Commissioner Ricky Herring, 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 10, 2024, Houston County Commission Regular Session and declared a quorum as a majority were in attendance.

ABSENT: Commissioner Tracy Adams and Commissioner James Ivey

Pastor Larry Flowers, from The Harbor, gave the invocation and Commissioner Curtis Harvey led in the pledge of allegiance.

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN AND COMMISSIONERS

No announcements or comments from the Chairman or Commissioners.

AWARDS AND PRESENTATIONS

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

In the absence of Sheri Garner, Ms. Anisa McKenzie, Payroll & Retirement Administrator, came forward and introduced the following Second Quarter Service Anniversary employees. She began by thanking the employees for their service to the county and to the citizens of Houston County.

Stan Devane	Sheriff's Dept.	5 years
Wayne Jenkins	Probate	5 years
Caleb Creech	Jail	5 years
Derrill Morris	Road & Bridge	10 years
Faye Gray	Facilities Maint.	15 years

A round of applause was given to all the employees and Ms. McKenzie thanked the commission for recognizing the employees for their hard work and dedication to Houston County.

2. Proclamation – “Volunteer Firefighter Recognition Day”

Chairman Shoupe stepped to the podium and asked the volunteer firefighters to come forward. Commissioner Herring made a motion to approve the proclamation and Commissioner Harvey seconded. The motion carried unanimously. Chairman Shoupe began by saying that he has intended to do this for a while in order to bring attention to the citizens that live in Houston County so they could recognize how important the volunteers are. He added that this is not only for the safety and well being of the citizens, but if they would just realize how much money the volunteers have saved the citizens because of their time and energy they use for what they do. Chairman Shoupe said if the citizens were made aware of this, he is sure that they would personally thank them. He also stated that there had been discussions about what it would take to have a full county service and the number is astronomical. In addition, the money does not exist in the budget and if it was initiated that would bring on higher taxes to the citizens. Chairman Shoupe commented that he is glad that the volunteers are present today. He then read a statement from Commissioner Tracy Adams, as he could not be present today and it read as follows:

“I would like to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt and sincerest appreciation and respect to our Volunteer Firefighters everywhere, but most especially those of Houston County District 2!!! I hate that I am unable to be at the Commission meeting this morning to recognize you as True Heroes of Houston County, however, my bride of 35 years has taken me on a little celebration trip to kick off our 36th year of marriage. Know that you are in my heart and prayers daily. Thank you for your service, dedication, and commitment to our community.”

Chairman Shoupe then read the proclamation and presented it to Jason Reneau, from the Houston County Volunteer Firefighter Association. Chairman Shoupe added a tid bit of information saying that Benjamin Franklin was the first volunteer fire chief in America. (a round of applause was given to the volunteers)

Mr. Reneau began by thanking the commission and added that Commissioner Adams had called them this morning to thank them. He said that of those 3,000 emergency calls they receive that the volunteers are leaving their families, and they miss out on a lot of things with their families. Mr. Reneau added that when a volunteer receives a call that they may be in church or shopping for groceries and they have to just stop and go. He thanked all the volunteers and their families for their sacrifices as they do this for love and not for pay. Mr. Reneau reported that the funding for Houston County is from the \$30 property tax fee which comes out to about \$20,000 per the 17 departments. He also reported that they receive tobacco tax and that comes out to about \$20,000 per department which means that each one runs on about \$40,000 per year but a new fire truck costs about \$750,000. Mr. Reneau added that Houston County gave the volunteer association \$750,000 last year and he thanked them and pointed to a display board

which showed what the money had been spent on. Mr. Reneau asked that when you see a volunteer to be sure and thank them. He then recognized some of the volunteers that were present with one that had been doing this selfless job for 50 years and one for over 40 years. He thanked the commission and Chairman Shoupe added that he appreciates all that the volunteers do for the county.

Commissioner Ricky Herring commented that the volunteers do not go unnoticed as when he is in the field working, he can hear the radios going off and he appreciates all they do and so do many citizens. He added that without their sacrifice and selfless acts, the county would not have what they have in Houston County.

Mr. Reneau said that they are ISO graded and their volunteers have to have as many training hours as the Dothan Fire Department, which consists of 192 hours of training for each volunteer. A round of applause was given by all.

3. Recognition – Wicksburg High School State Championship Softball Team

Commissioner Herring made a motion and Commissioner Harvey seconded. The motion to approve the recognition of the Wicksburg High School State Championship Softball Team passed unanimously.

Chairman Shoupe began by saying “Wicksburg High School State Champions” and that he wasn’t sure if he would ever be able to say that and now he can. He said that Josh (Coach Josh Cox) was the quarterback at Wicksburg High School with the Chairman and that Coach Josh still coaches on the football team and has done an outstanding job coaching softball as well. Chairman Shoupe then read the proclamation in its entirety and presented it to Coach Cox. A round of applause was given by all and he asked Coach Cox for comments. Coach Cox began by stating that all the girls were not able to be in attendance as they had prior engagements, but all but two players were present. He introduced the players and below is the complete list with coaches:

Asst. Coach	Jackie Amos
Asst. Coach	Blake Gibson
Asst. Coach	Monica Purkey
Players:	Kelsey Ellenburg, Olivia Reynolds, Anslie Ellenburg Lana Carpenter, Addison Kelley, Emalee Mathis Sarah Turvin, Dahlia Ganz, Tylaya Lingo, Natalie Cole Ella Grace Kelley, Chloe Joyner, Ellie Cox Abbie Ellenburg, Madelyn McVey, McKenzie McFarlane Anleigh Wood, Allie Potter, Madison Wilson Kynlee Holland

Coach Cox said that last year they were defeated in the state championship game, and they vowed that they would never see another team pile up on the field in front of them again so that gave them the drive to go and win a state championship this year. He said he cannot say enough about the team and that he cannot take credit as he does not play but sits in the dugout and calls the shots and the players get it done. Coach Cox added that this is a group of girls that made history as there has never been a state championship won at Wicksburg and they were able to do it themselves as they set a goal and accomplished it. He stated that the girls are already talking about doing it next year so they hope to find a way to get it done even though they do move up in classification. Coach Cox thanked the commission for having them today and honoring the team.

Chairman Shoupe congratulated them again and said that while he was on the football team they always had dreams of winning a state championship in football, baseball or basketball, but leave it to the girls to get the job done. A round of applause was given by all.

REGULAR AGENDA

1. Request to approve expenditure from the capital replacement fund in the amount of \$25,000 for the reconfiguration of the Information Technology and Board of Registrars Department – Tommy Dixon, County Buildings Manager

Commissioner Herring made a motion to approve the expenditure from the capital replacement fund in the amount of \$25,000 and Commissioner Harvey seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Request to award bid for (2) Lenco Armored Vehicles to lowest responsible bidder meeting specs and authorize Chairman to execute all necessary financial documents

Commissioner Harvey made a motion to approve the request to award the bid for (2) Lenco Armored Vehicles and Commissioner Herring seconded. Chairman Shoupe reminded everyone, as discussed on Thursday, that the Sheriff is going to be paying for one vehicle outright and the county will be financing one on behalf of the Sheriff's Dept. and they will pay the county back quarterly for three years. When called for the vote, the motion carried unanimously.

3. Request to adopt Resolution for Adjusted Expenditure of American Rescue Plan Act Funds for Government Services Due to Change Order in the amount of \$39,424.24 – Road & Bridge

Commissioner Herring made a motion to approve the request to adopt the Resolution and Commissioner Harvey seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Request to approve final plat for Chase Ridge Subdivision Phase V – Road & Bridge

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

STAFF REPORTS

Chief Administrative Officer – No report but he wanted to point out to the commission that all but three of the ARPA water projects have been approved. They have three that are in the process and they are currently actively pursued and he will come back to the commission and request the allocation resolution at the next commission meeting. Chairman Shoupe commented that this brings a good point. He continued by saying that at one point there was a lot of discussion about whether they should go in with IAC and there have been some counties in Alabama that chose not to go into the IAC, Investing in Alabama Counties program that the ACCA set up. Chairman Shoupe stated that he had some conversations on Friday and there several counties that are very nervous about not being able to spend the money and that every stated, besides Alabama, did not form a similar organization and because of this there will be money sent back to Washington that could be spent. Chairman Shoupe commends this commission for joining the program so the money could be spent.

County Engineer – 5 closed roads: Eddins, Hicks Rd., Prevatt, Jack Bruner, Ebenezer

County Attorney – No report

Chairman Shoupe reminded everyone that the county and the state offices will be closed on Wednesday, June 19th, for the Juneteenth holiday.

Adjourned