

MINUTES OF THE HOUSTON COUNTY COMMISSION
REGULAR SESSION
July 22, 2024

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 10:00 a.m. meeting to order and welcomed everyone to the July 22, 2024, Houston County Commission Regular Session and declared a quorum as all commissioners were in attendance.

Pastor Mike Grimes, from Grandview Baptist Church, gave the invocation and Commissioner Ricky Herring led in the pledge of allegiance.

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN AND COMMISSIONERS

Chairman Shoupe began by asking EMA Director Mark Powell to come forward and speak about disaster assistance for Cottonwood. Mr. Powell began by reporting that the US Small Business Administration (SBA) provides low interest loans for qualified applicants after disasters and this applies for residential and commercial damage. He continued by saying that the January 9th tornado event did not meet the threshold for a federally declared disaster nor, individually, Houston County did not meet the requirements to qualify as it has to be a percentage of uninsured residents and has to be 40% of that. This means that uninsured, or under insured properties. Mr. Powell stated that within the last couple of weeks they found that on March 27th, the SBA did make a declaration for the Florida counties, which include Bay, Jackson, and about four or five other counties in Florida. He added that Houston and Geneva County, in Alabama, and Seminole county in Georgia, were declared contiguous counties, because we share that border in the declaration. We were lucky to be lumped into that declaration. Mr. Powell also said that the SBA, a federal organization, did not notify the state which in turn the county did not know that it was declared. He also said that they found out while in a meeting with some Florida agencies. He added that one of the deadlines to apply has expired, which is physical damage, but on July 17th, the State came back and said that if applicants still meet those criteria in the application, they can still apply because they did not know about the loans available. Now, the deadline to submit an application is December 27, 2024. Mr. Powell did say that there are some conditions, which include insurance and credit conditions. The public can go online to SBA.gov and see if they meet the criteria. Mr. Powell encourages anyone in

Houston County that sustained damage from the January 9th tornado. Handouts will be available or you can call the EMA office for additional information. Mr. Powell said this was something that they were not expecting and it is good news for the business and residents that were affected.

Chairman Shoupe asked if Mr. Powell could go to a Cottonwood Town Council meeting and pass this information on to the citizens and he agreed to do so. He thanked Mr. Powell for his due diligence in this.

Chairman Shoupe announced that the last week of the Poplar Head's Farmers Market is this Saturday. He encouraged everyone to attend and get the last of the fresh produce. He added that the farmers have been very pleased with this year's market, and it being located at the Farm Center.

Commissioner Adams announced that the Ashford Rescue Service celebrated fifty years yesterday and he, along with Chairman Shoupe and Commissioner Ivey, attended the event. He said it was a very nice event and there were a lot of people in attendance to celebrate this milestone. Mr. Adams commented that his father-in-law served there when it first opened and his wife remembered his number, which was AR-21, which stood for Ashford Rescue 21. He thanked the rescue people for what they do.

AWARDS & PRESENTATIONS

1. Proclamation – “Hawk-Houston Youth Enrichment Center” – Alva Newman, Exec. Director

Commissioner Herring made a motion to approve the proclamation and Commissioner Adams seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Chairman Shoupe stepped to the podium and asked Ms. Newman and her guest to join him. He began by thanking them for being in attendance and then read the proclamation in its entirety. He presented the proclamation to Ms. Newman and thanked her for service to the many young boys and girls that have been through the organization over the past sixty years. He asked her for any comments.

Ms. Newman thanked Chairman Shoupe and the commission for the proclamation and said she has served at the center for the past nineteen years. She then introduced the board president, Ms. Newby along with two of their board members today which was Silas and Cary. Ms. Newman then thanked Mr. Doug Siquefield for his service at the center. She said that this is monumental as they have achieved sixty years and of the nineteen years she has been there, she was not sure if they would make it to the 45th, 50th, or 60th year and they made it through Gods Grace. Ms. Newman added that they appreciate the service and support that everyone in the community has given them and they just want to continue to do what they do. They are in the final week of their summer program. She ended by thanking the commission and said there

is a book about Ms. Hawk, "Cookies and Lemonade" and they can be purchased at the center. Ms. Newman stated that Ms. Hawk was a legacy and she was the one that brought the head-start program to the city of Dothan and she founded the Hawk-Houston Boys Club. She is sure that she never expected to be a legend as she worked from her heart and from what she believed that children would bring great things if enough time was spent with them and on them. She thanked the commission again.

2. Presentation – Dothan Airport Update – Adam Hartzog, Director

Mr. Hartzog was not in attendance and this item will be put on the next commission meeting agenda.

REGULAR AGENDA

1. Request to approve Assignment of Abatement Agreement for Dothan Warehouse Investors, LLC – Matt Parker, President, Dothan Area Chamber of Commerce

Commissioner Ivey made a motion to approve the Assignment of Abatement Agreement for Dothan Warehouse Investors, LLC. Commissioner Adams seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

2. Request to approve partnering with the towns of Taylor and Rehobeth to conduct a Roadway Corridor Traffic Study for AL-605 from Alabama Highway 52 to US Highway 231

Commissioner Herring made a motion to approve the request to partner with the towns of Taylor and Rehobeth to conduct a Roadway Corridor Traffic Study for AL-605 from Alabama Highway 52 to US Highway 231. Commissioner Ivey seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

3. Request to approve formation of the Volunteer Fire & EMS Improvement Task Force

Commissioner Harvey made a motion to approve formation of the Volunteer Fire & EMS Improvement Task Force and Commissioner Adams seconded. Chairman Shoupe reported that this was talked about at Thursday's meeting and the commission has had time to review. He asked if there were any changes to be made and Commissioner Herring asked if it was too late to add an item to the agenda to make an appointment, from the commission, to the Task Force Board. Attorney Pres Register responded that that after this particular item is approved, and then the commission can vote to add the item to the regular agenda. Chairman Shoupe said they would now vote on this item and then he would entertain a motion to add an item to the agenda. At this time, the commission voted to approve item #3 and with no further discussion, the request to approve formation of the Volunteer Fire & EMS Improvement Task Force was unanimously approved.

At this time, Commissioner Herring asked to make a motion to add to the agenda for the commission to make their appointment to the Volunteer Fire & EMS Improvement Task Force. Chairman Shoupe said this would be a request to appoint Joey Pilcher to the Volunteer Fire &

EMS Improvement Task Force. Chairman Shoupe said at this time there is a motion on the floor to add item #8 to read "Request to appoint Joey Pilcher to the Volunteer Fire & EMS Improvement Task Force". Chairman Shoupe said they would now need a second and Commissioner Ivey seconded and the motion carried unanimously to add the item as #8 on the agenda for today.

4. Request to approve resolution to initiate MPO resurfacing project on Old Webb Road from the Webb City limits easterly to SR-52

Commissioner Adams made a motion to approve the resolution and Commissioner Harvey seconded. When called for the vote, the motion carried unanimously.

5. Request to approve the 2024 Rebuild Alabama Contractor Report – Road & Bridge

Commissioner Ivey made a motion to approve the 2024 Rebuild Alabama Contractor Report. Commissioner Adams seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

6. Request to sell the following items on GovDeals from the Probate Department
(a) 54 AeroCleanse sanitizer stands

Commissioner Herring made a motion to approve the request to sell 54 AeroCleanse sanitizer stands on GovDeals and Commissioner Adams seconded. When called for the vote, the motion passed unanimously.

7. Request to approve Memorandum of Understanding between the Alabama Department of Public Health, The Alabama Public Health Care Authority and Houston County Alabama for improvements to the Houston County Public Health Facility

Commissioner Ivey made a motion to approve the Memorandum of Understanding for improvements to the Houston County Public Health Facility and Commissioner Adams seconded. Chairman Shoupe commented that this is approving the state to make improvements to the county owned building, but no county funds are involved with these improvements. When called for the vote, the motion carried unanimously.

8. Request to appoint Mr. Joey Pilcher to the Houston County Volunteer & EMS Fast Force

Commissioner Ivey made a motion to approve the request to appoint Mr. Joey Pilcher to the Task Force. Commissioner Harvey seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

STAFF REPORTS

Chief Administrative Officer – No report

County Engineer – 4 closed roads: Green Briar, County Road 75, Jack Bruner, Prevatt

County Attorney – No report

Adjourned