

MINUTES OF THE HOUSTON COUNTY COMMISSION
REGULAR SESSION
August 26, 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 August 26, 2024, Houston County Commission Regular Session and declared a quorum as all commissioners were in attendance.

Pastor Tommy Green, Bay Springs Baptist Church, gave the invocation and Commissioner James 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 Ivey. The motion carried unanimously.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN AND COMMISSIONERS

Chairman Shoupe began by announcing that the commission's third budget meeting would be held today at 1:00 p.m., in the 6th Floor Conference Room and it is an open meeting, so everyone is welcome to attend. He also announced that this will be the last meeting for Revenue Commissioner Starla Moss, as she will be retiring at the end of the month. Chairman Shoupe said he wanted to publicly congratulate her as she has been an outstanding revenue commissioner for several years. Chairman Shoupe added that Ms. Moss has always been a pleasure to work with and he knows that she is looking forward to spending more time with her friends and family and he looks forward to getting there one day as well. He congratulated her again for a job well done. Applause was given by all.

AWARDS & PRESENTATIONS

1. Presentation – Wicksburg Senior Center, Wicksburg Rescue, Wicksburg Volunteer Fire Department & Bay Springs Volunteer Fire Department

Commissioner Ivey approached the podium and asked all involved in this presentation to come forward. He began with the Wicksburg Senior Center, Ms. Laurel Kornowski, and said that this check presentation is on behalf of the Houston County Commission. Commissioner Ivey acknowledged that Ms. Kornowski is new to the center, and they have had a lot of positive feedback on the job she is doing. He added that the commission is very proud of the job she is

doing working with the seniors in the Wicksburg and Bay Springs area. He presented the check to Ms. Kornowski and asked her for comments.

Ms. Kornowski thanked the commission and said that it is a privilege to be the director of the senior center. She said that the seniors teach her more than she ever does for them, and it is a great group of people. Ms. Kornowski said that it is a great program, and she thanked the county for supporting the center and what all they do. Applause was given by all.

Commissioner Ivey then presented checks to the Wicksburg Rescue, Wicksburg Volunteer Fire and Bay Springs Volunteer in the amount of \$500 each. He said that he appreciated all they do for the community, the time they give volunteering, and it does not go unnoticed.

Commissioner Ivey thanked each organization and asked for comments. Representative from Wicksburg Rescue approached and thanked the commission for all they do to keep the organizations rolling. She also stated that they strive each day to get better and she is proud to say that Wicksburg Rescue will have two medics on every truck as each one will be certified medics with the exception of one, who is in training now. She added that they strive every day to make Wicksburg Rescue a better unit and with this money it will help quite a bit. A round of applause was given by all.

Bay Springs Volunteer Fire representative approached and said that they are growing in number, and they are also growing in attendance to serve their community in District 4. He thanked the commission for the donation to help with things they need.

2. Presentation – Houston County Career Academy

Chairman Shoupe joined Commissioner Ivey for the presentation to Houston County Career Academy. Chairman Shoupe began by stating that the career academy was just a dream for a number of years when he was attending school as they had to travel to Ashford each day to attend career school back then. He noted that Chris Kennedy is only the second principal they have had at the career academy since its conception. Chairman Shoupe reported that wherever he goes in the community, everyone speaks very highly of the work that is done at the academy and that they have such a great facility. He added that the commission believes in their mission, and he presented Mr. Kennedy with a check for \$1,150 to help with a leadership conference that is coming up soon. Chairman Shoupe asked Mr. Kennedy for comments, and he approached the podium. Mr. Kennedy began by thanking the commission for their support and stated that they focus on students getting credentials and dual enrollment as well, but an important part of this training is to learn leadership skills and one way to do this involves the leadership development conference in Montgomery. He said that these funds will be used for this trip. Mr. Kennedy thanked the commission for their support.

Chairman Shoupe added that leadership is a skill that is often overlooked, and he believes that all across the United States, including Houston County, there is a leadership deficit, and we need to do a better job of growing leaders and developing them. He added that communities rise and fall on leadership as schools do as well. Chairman Shoupe noted that poor leadership always leads to bad outcomes. He congratulated Mr. Kennedy and the attending students for a job well done and presented them with their check. Applause was given by all.

REGULAR AGENDA

1. Request to appoint Chairman Brandon Shoupe to the ACCA Legislative Committee

Commissioner Ivey made a motion to approve the appointment of Chairman Shoupe to the Legislative Committee and Commissioner Harvey seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

2. Request to approve purchase of additional GPS Tracking devices at a cost of \$270 per year and approve accompanying budget amendment.

Commissioner Herring made a motion to approve the purchase and the budget amendment. Commissioner Adams seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

3. Request to approve lease and maintenance agreements for copier located at Road & Bridge

Commissioner Herring made a motion to approve the lease, and the agreement and Commissioner Adams seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

4. Request to approve the 2025 Rebuild Alabama County Transportation Plan – Road & Bridge

Commissioner Ivey made a motion to approve the 2025 plan and Commissioner Adams seconded. Asst. County Engineer Tyler Reeder came forward to give the presentation. He began apologizing that the map on the screen is small and may be difficult to see, but this is a map showing this year's plan to include 10 projects, which 4 are rollovers from last year. Mr. Reeder stated that they did not get to those 4 projects due to the storm damage they had to deal with. Mr. Reeder said that the first 4 projects are the rollovers, and they include Bill Yance Road, County Road 75 S, County Line Rd and Garrett Rd. He said that the new proposed paving projects for this year include Furnie Folks Rd., E. Cook Rd., Prevatt Rd., Rice, Rd., Judge Logue Rd., and Power Dam. Mr. Reeder reported that these new projects total approximately 28 miles and roughly over 4 million dollars. He stated that this will be posted on the website for citizens to look at as it is required by law. Mr. Reeder noted that other projects are proposed in the upcoming budget. Chairman Shoupe reminded everyone that this is funded by the gas tax which was passed by legislation to be used on repaving roads only. This is the law. Mr. Reeder said that in January each year they come with the actual dollars spent with the rebuild funds as those stated in the plan are estimates. He also reported that, at the ACCA Conference last week, it was said that since the rebuild program was approved Alabama has been able to pave enough roads to cover from Orange Beach to Anchorage, Alaska as that is how many miles have been paved across the state.

Commissioner asked when the projected start date is for these projects. Mr. Reeder said that they obviously want to get the roads that were in last year's budget completed first as they have been promised and they also have the additional 3 roads that they are finishing that were not included in this plan. He said they have 47 miles of paving to do, which is a lot, and the new projects will probably start late fall of next year. Mr. Reeder reported that they are currently finishing County Road 75, and they should have Garrett Rd. paved this fall.

Chairman Shoupe commented that they are asking for quite a bit this next year and they may ask for a little bit more, but he has no doubt that Road & Bridge has the capacity to get it done. They are just in hopes that there are no more storms, tornados or floods that cause major damage.

With no further questions or comments, the motion passed unanimously.

STAFF REPORTS

Chief Administrative Office – Mr. Covert had no report, but he said that he has a presentation he would like to do. He then approached the podium and asked Stacey Walker, Accounting Manager to join him. Mr. Covert began by saying that Mrs. Holland has completed all the requirements to meet the certification of the ACCA County Administration. A round of applause was given by all.

County Engineer – 2 closed roads: County Road 75 S and Sidney Wells

County Attorney – No report