

MINUTES OF THE HOUSTON COUNTY COMMISSION
REGULAR SESSION
October 28, 2024

PRESENT: Chairman Brandon Shoupe, Commissioner Curtis Harvey, Commissioner Tracy Adams, 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 October 28, 2024, Houston County Commission Regular Session and declared a quorum as a majority of the commissioners were in attendance.

Commissioner Curtis Harvey 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.

ABSENT: Commissioner Ricky Herring

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN AND COMMISSIONERS

Chairman Shoupe mentioned that in regard to the National Peanut Festival Parade held on Saturday, there has been some negativity on social media concerning the route and the date change. He, on the other hand, thoroughly enjoyed riding in the parade and watching the kids laugh and smile. He felt the different route on the smaller streets made for more interaction with the spectators.

Commissioner Ivey announced that on Friday, the National Peanut Festival will hold their ribbon cutting for opening day, which runs through Sunday, the 11th. He also mentioned that next Tuesday is Election Day and your voice is going to say which way the United States will go for the next four years so be sure to get out and vote.

AWARDS & PRESENTATIONS

1. Special Recognition – Houston County Schools – Brandy White, Superintendent

Chairman Shoupe asked Superintendent Brandy White to come forward with his special guest. Mr. White began by introducing Dr. Chris Kennedy, who was awarded the Career Tech Administrator of the Year in the State of Alabama. Mr. White said that he cannot say enough

about what Dr. Kennedy has done for the county program as when he first started at the career academy, they had less than 500 students and now they have 1,100 students. Mr. White mentioned that Dr. Kennedy has added 3 new programs to include building construction, cosmetology and ROTC. Also, this past year Dr. Kennedy applied for a grant and received \$37,000 to assist the building construction class to build a tiny home. Mr. White commented that the kids already have the tiny home framed up and ready to finish it out. He also said that they will sell that tiny home and use the funds to purchase materials to do another project in the future. In addition, Mr. White reported that Dr. Kennedy has a summer exploration camp for 7th & 8th graders, and he was amazed when he visited this summer. He stated that the kids were loving it as it gives them the opportunity to go and look at all that is offered at the career tech school. This gives them an idea of what they may want to do when they get to high school. Mr. White ended by saying that he cannot say enough about what Dr. Kennedy does for the county system. Applause was given by all.

Chairman Shoupe stated that he appreciates them attending the meeting and that his nephew attends the academy and takes advantage of the building program. He also stated that his nephew enjoys it so much that he has decided that he is not going to college but is going straight into the workforce after he receives a technical degree. Chairman Shoupe also commented that his son goes to the Career Academy and takes advantage of the IT program that they offer, as did Chairman Shoupe's brother who currently works for the government in Huntsville and is doing very well. Chairman Shoupe commended Superintendent White for the outstanding job he is doing with the county schools and the level of exceptionalism that the commission sees in the county school system is phenomenal. He added that it is a great success story and he is of the opinion that the citizens need to invest more in the county school system and he is in hopes of doing that pretty soon. Chairman Shoupe stated that if you look at Lee County, they made the decision to invest in their county school system and they have seen tremendous growth over the past twenty years. He is in hopes of supporting the schools even more in the near future.

Commissioner Adams commented that he has the pleasure of working with Dr. Kennedy, in his role as the Jr. ROTC Instructor at Dothan High School, and he said that he has watched the Career Academy build their program and they have some outstanding instructors with Col. Tatum and the new Chief Warrant Officer.

Superintendent White added that they always have construction going on in the schools and when there is a need, he can always count on the county road and bridge department. He thanked Engineer Kirkland for what his department has done for the schools and that they have saved them hundreds of thousands of dollars, and it is appreciated.

REGULAR AGENDA

1. Request to approve contract with PLS Group, Inc. for topographical services related to the Farm Center property and approve accompanying budget amendment

Commissioner Ivey made a motion to approve the contract with PLS Group, Inc., for topographical services related to the Farm Center property and approve accompanying budget amendment. Commissioner Adams seconded the motion. Chairman Shoupe mentioned that the budget amendment is for \$4,000 for this service. When called for the vote, the motion passed unanimously.

2. Request to enter into a Contractual Agreement with the Alabama Department of Environmental Management for disposal of discarded tires – Road & Bridge

Commissioner Ivey made a motion to approve the request to enter into a contractual agreement for disposal of discarded tires. Commissioner Harvey seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

At this time, Chairman Shoupe asked the commission to consider adding an item to the agenda as follows; “Request to approve Resolution to Authorize the Allocation of American Rescue Plan Act Funds for Eligible Water Infrastructure Project for the Town of Cowarts and delegating authority to the Chairman to negotiate and execute a sub-recipient agreement contingent on meeting federal and state requirements.” Chairman Shoupe then asked Chief Administrative Officer Peter Covert to comment on this item and Mr. Covert stated that this includes ARPA Funds and all ARPA Funds have to be obligated by the end of the calendar year. He reported that there are still 3 rendering projects that they are trying to get coordinated with the various towns. The paper work is beginning to come in and this particular one came in late last Friday. The funds have to be allocated as that is the first step in the process. The other two projects are in the works with the other towns and they hope to also get those completed.

Chairman Shoupe stated that at this time, if the commission would like to add this item to the agenda as item #3, he will need a motion and a second. Commissioner Adams made a motion to add the item as stated to the agenda and Commissioner Ivey seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously. The item will be added as #3.

3. Request to approve Resolution to Authorize the Allocation of American Rescue Plan Act Funds for Eligible Water Infrastructure Project for the Town of Cowarts and delegating

authority to the Chairman to negotiate and execute a sub-recipient agreement contingent on meeting federal and state requirements.

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

STAFF REPORTS

Chief Administrative Officer – No report.

County Engineer – Closed roads: Crawford, Gene Terry, Springhill, Leo Pynes, Sherman Brunson and Strong

County Attorney – No report

Adjourned