

MINUTES OF THE HOUSTON COUNTY COMMISSION
REGULAR SESSION
November 24, 2025

PRESENT: Chairman Brandon Shoupe, Commissioner Curtis Harvey, Commissioner Tracy Adams, Commissioner Ricky Herring, Commissioner James Ivey, Interim County Engineer Tyler Reeder, Interim 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 November 24, 2025, Houston County Commission Regular Session and declared a quorum as all commissioners were in attendance.

The invocation was given by Chaplain Mark Pickett from the Houston County Jail and the pledge of allegiance was led by Commissioner Ricky Herring.

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN AND COMMISSIONERS

Chairman Shoupe began by wishing everyone a “Happy Thanksgiving” as this is Thanksgiving week and this is his favorite holiday because he loves to cook, loves his family and loves eating and if you combine all three it makes for a great holiday. He advised everyone to not take Stove Top Stuffing to their family Thanksgiving as the family would greatly appreciate it.

Chairman Shoupe announced that in the month of December there will only be one regular meeting with the administrative meeting being held on Thursday, December 4th and the regular meeting on Monday, December 8th. Only in the case of an emergency, they will not meet for a second time in December. At this time, Chairman Shoupe recognized some special guest in attendance to include Colton Cureton from the Chamber of Commerce, who is going to do a presentation this morning and also in attendance is Houston County School Superintendent Brandy White along with several members of the educational community in Houston County, Chairman Steve McKinnon from Dale County, Rehobeth Mayor Kimberly Trotter and Judge Lewis.

Commissioner Tracy Adams announced that this week there are a few fundraisers going on the community on Thanksgiving Day to include the Ashford Turkey Shoot to benefit Ashford Masonic Lodge, there is one in Slocomb and Rehobeth is holding their second annual Turkey Shoot to raise money as well.

AWARDS & PRESENTATIONS

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

At this time, Chairman Shoupe announced an extra special recognition from Houston County Schools and asked Superintendent Brandy White to come forward and give the good news concerning the county school system.

Superintendent White began by thanking the commission for recognizing Houston County Schools today and before he starts he wanted to say that he is thankful for the commission as far as Road & Bridge, especially, as Tyler Reeder and Barkley Kirkland have helped the schools a lot with different projects with their in-kind services and it makes some of the things they are trying to do do-able. Superintendent White continued by announcing that they received their State Report Card and they scored a 92, which is the highest that Houston County has ever scored. He added that along with all the things that the teachers deal with that are completely out of their control but the things that are in their control of, academic achievement and academic growth, they were the highest ranked school system in the state in academic achievement. Superintendent White said that he appreciates all that they have done and when you look at the scores, they are number one in academic achievement and he always tells them, they do more with less because when you look at the last four years, they were ranked 62 out of 67 per pupil revenue. He said that is using your tax dollars wisely and they try to invest in their pupils as 82% of their entire budget goes to the employees because they understand that's who it is about. It is about good employees and those employees getting things done. Superintendent White stated that today they brought in some of the teachers and administrators that represent each area as they are in the trenches that actually get the job done. He said that he cannot say enough about the people/staff that they have.

At this time, Superintendent White turned it over to Josh Robertson, Director of Secondary Curriculum & Instruction and he thanked the commission for the opportunity. Mr. Robertson began by saying that just to be able to recognize some of the people who make what they consider being the greatest county school system in the state of Alabama, what it is. He continued by introducing some of their teachers and the great things they did this past year regarding their achievement and proficiency. First, he recognized Ms. Bailey Fowler, from Cottonwood Elementary, and stated that she is a 3rd grade English teacher and 82% of her students scored proficient on the state assessments this past year. This was one of the highest proficiencies in the county and this is a testament to the hard work and dedication that Ms. Fowler shows her students every day. Next, Mr. Robertson said that they were going to recognize Ms. Amanda Dickerson, from Webb Elementary, but she was unable to make it today.

He did say that Ms. Dickerson's principal, Ms. Reagan Woodall, was in attendance. He also stated that Ms. Dickerson had the 59th highest percentage in proficiency in 5th grade Math in the state and added that there were 661 schools so 59th out of 661 reporting schools is what this teacher was able to do with her students in Webb. Mr. Robertson reported that they have had many people from the state come and try to figure out what is happening at Webb Elementary because they are high poverty, but they are continuing to produce high academic achievement. He said that there is one thing that is undefeated when it comes to academic achievement and that is high quality instruction and that is happening every day within that building at Webb Elementary School. Mr. Robertson said this is a testament to the administrator and what they are doing and to the teachers of what they do day in and day out and often doing more work at home than they do at school.

Next, Mr. Robertson recognized Ms. Allie Marshall from Rehobeth Primary School. He reported that she was a 3rd grade teacher last year and this year she is the local reading specialist so she not only has her hand on what happens in 3rd grade, but she is able to work with teachers across the county. Mr. Robertson stated that last year Ms. Marshall's 3rd grade class produced students that were 82% proficient in the ELA scores on state assessments and that played a huge part in the fact that Rehobeth Primary School was able to be one of the highest report card scorers as a district as they scored a 98 on the state report card. He added that this is due to teachers like Ms. Marshall and the work of their principal, Ms. McKinley and he congratulated them. Mr. Robertson said he would also like to recognize Ms. Becky Lewis, which is a 6th grade Science teacher at Ashford Middle School. He said that Ms. Lewis had the highest proficiency percentage in science in the district. He added that if you step into Ms. Lewis class, it is guaranteed there is high quality instruction every day and that is why her students are able to perform at the level they are as it is directly tied to what Ms. Lewis does every day. He thanked Ms. Lewis. He said he cannot go without recognizing Jared Andrews, who is the principal at Ashford Middle School, as over the last 4 years they have seen a steady rise in their report card scores and to the highest report card score that the school has seen in the past 4 years. They were an 88 on the state report card and one point shy of an "A" on the federal report card, which means they scored higher on the federal report card than the state. He congratulated Mr. Andrews on this achievement.

Last, but not least, Mr. Robertson said he would like to recognize Mr. Dakota Morris. He said that Mr. Morris is a 7th grade math teacher at Wicksburg High School and he had 75% of his students score at a level 3 or 4 on the state assessment and this was the 3rd highest in the entire state. This was not just for county schools, but for all schools in the state which means this was 3 out of 432 schools in the state of Alabama and this is happening right down the road in Wicksburg because of what Mr. Morris is able to do every day with his students and the quality of instruction that he is able to provide. He would not be able to provide this instruction

without the work that Mr. Lee Hyde, the principal, does as he does a phenomenal job at Wicksburg over the last 4 ½ year. Also, on the last report card, Wicksburg High School scored a 97 and at a high school, this is very hard to do as a lot of things are out of their control but Mr. Hyde is able to keep a close eye on things and keep his hands in it and able to let his teachers do what they are hired to do, which is to teach.

Mr. Robertson said that it seems that every year the state legislators are deciding to add more and more things to the teacher's plates, but they are doing a great job of handling those items. A lot of things should be happening in the homes with the families, but they understand that in some situations, the staff is their family. Mr. Robertson reported that these teachers, with their dedication, and these administrators, and their dedication, make his job as a district administrator easy. He said they hire great people and they let them do what they were hired to do. He ended by thanking the commission for their support every day and they look forward to an even better year next year. A round of applause and standing ovation was given by all.

Chairman Shoupe thanked the administrators for the update and he believes that Houston County has the best teachers in the state along with the best superintendent as Brandy White has done an excellent job as he has also educated him since he got in the role of Chairman with the struggles that teachers face and the problems that are imposed from Montgomery. He congratulated the superintendent, teachers, administrators and the citizens of Houston County for having an outstanding school system.

2. Presentation – CSX Economic Development Project – Matt Parker, Dothan Area Chamber of Commerce

Chairman Shoupe announced that there is more good news as they have a presentation of the CSX Development Project. He said that Matt Parker could not be in attendance, but Coleton Cureton is here from the Chamber. Mr. Shoupe said that he asked one of them to be here to talk about this because they understand the significance of it and can explain it to the commission.

Mr. Cureton began by thanking the commission for the opportunity to come this morning and share the good news, even though it does not top the good news from the County School system, but it is a lot to be proud of and we are fortunate to live in Houston County and have the support that they have. He continued by saying that when you think about economic development across the state of Alabama, across the country and across the southeast and then right here in our community, you cannot win without having quality sites for development as that is number one. Mr. Cureton stated that the county commission and the city commission had the foresight to invest in a quality site and that is the Westgate Supersite and it is a proven

factor of how important and significant that this site is to our community and to the state of Alabama. He reported that the 446-acre site that was paired with funding from the county, the city and the state, was acquired two years ago. They have had the opportunity to submit this site on many projects over the last two years and they were recognized on a national level from CSX as being named a CSX Platinum Select Site. Mr. Cureton said that this puts them in the top 1% of the country when it comes to quality sites. As he was doing some research over the last week he found that there only 18 in the country that are CSX Platinum Select Sites and we have one right here in Houston County, which is a lot to be proud of. That means that there has been an abundance of due diligence on a site to remove any barriers that may be perceived there and it is identified as shovel ready. Mr. Cureton reminded everyone that this is something that will eventually have a generational impact on our community that will bring great opportunities for our families, for our students to have more career opportunities eventually. He said that every project that comes across their desks and they have had the opportunity to submit on, has been at least \$800 million or more in investment and at least 500 jobs or more in job creations. Mr. Cureton stated that this is a lot to be proud of as a community and a lot to be thankful for this week as we think about Thanksgiving and what is important to us as a community to take the opportunity and recognizing that and investing in the future and thanked the commission.

Chairman Shoupe commented that he knows that some of the projects that they have submitted for have been even close to \$2 billion, but he is excited. When that investment comes you cannot abate education taxes, nor would he be in favor of doing that, it will be tremendous windfall for education. They look forward to the coming great days.

Commissioner Ivey thanked Mr. Cureton and to Matt Parker and the entire team for striving to make Houston County a priority and thanked them for their hard work.

REGULAR AGENDA

1. Request to re-appoint Ms. Beverly Lampkin to the Houston County Department of Human Resources Board

Commissioner Herring made a motion to approve the re-appointment of Ms. Beverly Lampkin to the Houston County Department of Human Resources. Commissioner Adams seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

2. Request to establish county levies for new ABC license types

Commissioner Ivey made the motion to approve the request to establish county levies for new ABC License types and Commissioner Adams seconded. Chairman Shoupe stated that the law

does not give them the ability to change these; it is just required by law. When called for question and vote, the motion carried unanimously.

3. Request to make appointment to fill Chief Administrative Officer vacancy upon retirement of Peter Covert

Commissioner Ivey made a motion to approve the request to make appointment to fill Chief Administrative Officer vacancy upon retirement of Peter Covert and Commissioner Harvey seconded. Chairman Shoupe stated that the appointment is current Accounting Manager Stacey Holland and he congratulated her and asked her for comments. Mrs. Holland thanked the commission for the opportunity and he appreciated being chosen and entrusting her for the important position. She also thanked her co-workers and her staff for the encouragement and support and she knows working together is going to make a positive impact for the commission and she is looking forward to the opportunity. Chairman Shoupe congratulated her and reminded everyone that this will take effect January 1, 2026. After the vote, the motion carried unanimously to appoint Stacey Holland.

4. Request to adopt resolution Authorizing Houston County to Protect the County's Interests by Intervening as a Defendant in the Simplified Seller Use Tax (SSUT) Litigation

Commissioner Ivey made a motion to approve the request to adopt resolution Authorizing Houston County to Protect the County's Interests by intervening as a Defendant in the Simplified Seller Use Tax (SSUT) Litigation and Commissioner Herring seconded. Commissioner Adams asked if Chairman Shoupe could explain this to the public so they can easily understand it. Chairman Shoupe began by saying that the numbers that are being given are incorrect as they are using national averages instead of state averages as nationally it is 17% e-commerce and in the state, it is about 11%. This would mean they are overstating by 60%. When called for the vote, the motion carried unanimously.

5. Request to approve budget amendment in the amount of \$250 for Tri Rivers Waterway Development membership agency funds – Peter Covert, CAO

Commissioner Ivey made a motion to approve the budget amendment in the amount of \$250 for Tri Rivers Waterway Development membership agency funds. Commissioner Adams seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

6. Request to approve budget amendment in the amount of \$6,600 for American Disabilities Act Website Compliance – Del Hollis, IT Director

Commissioner Herring made a motion to approve the budget amendment in the amount of \$6,600 for American Disabilities. Commissioner Adams seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

7. Request to approve budget amendment in the amount of \$46,438 for AI Software and authorize Chairman to negotiate and execute documents – Del Hollis, IT Director

Commissioner Adams made a motion to approve the budget amendment in the amount of \$46,438 for AI Software and authorize Chairman to negotiate and execute documents. Commissioner Ivey seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

STAFF REPORTS

Chief Administrative Officer – Acting CAO Stacey Holland reported that in regards to Houston County Policy #43 Titled Identify Theft Prevention Program, more commonly referred to as the “Red Flag Policy” required that the Chief Administrative Officer reach out to all know departments that accept credit cards for any payments of any kind to the county. The Chief Administrative Officer is to request to be informed of any instances where it has come to the department’s attention that any kind of fraud or indications of fraud is detected. All departments so identified have reported that there has been and remains that there are no detected fraudulent activities noted during the recently completed fiscal year or since then up to the notification of this report.

County Engineer – Closed Roads: East Cook Rd. and their goal is to have it open by Wednesday so there will be no closed roads during the Thanksgiving Holiday.

County Attorney – No Report

Adjourned