

MINUTES OF THE HOUSTON COUNTY COMMISSION  
REGULAR SESSION  
February 9, 2026

PRESENT: Chairman Brandon Shoupe, Commissioner Curtis Harvey, Commissioner Tracy Adams, Commissioner Ricky Herring, Commissioner James Ivey, County Engineer Barkley Kirkland, 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 February 9, 2026, Houston County Commission Regular Session. He declared a quorum as all commissioners were in attendance.

The invocation was given by Pastor Mike Grimes from Grandview Baptist Church and the pledge of allegiance was led by Commissioner Tracy Adams.

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

#### ANNOUNCEMENTS AND COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN AND COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Ivey reported that the Mardi Gras Parade will be held this Saturday in downtown Dothan. He added that this is always the happiest day in Dothan as thousands of people gather along the parade route to see the floats and catch the goodies being thrown. The parade begins at 3:00 p.m. in the garden district and there will also be numerous things going on around N. St. Andrews St. such as live music, food trucks and vendors of all sorts. They expect a great turnout for the event.

#### AWARDS AND PRESENTATIONS

1. Proclamation – “Career and Technical Education Month” – Chris Kennedy, Houston County Career and Technical Education Director and Ryan Richards, Dothan City Schools Career and Technical Education Administrator

Chairman Shoupe welcomed everyone here today for this proclamation and asked Commissioner Adams to step down to present this proclamation as he also works with the school system. Chairman Shoupe then asked for a motion to approve the proclamation and in doing so Commissioner Ivey made the motion to approve and Commissioner Harvey seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

At this time, Commissioner Adams began by stating that last year the county came for this proclamation and now this year they have added the city program. He noted that this is the future of Houston County and any one of the students in attendance here today could be sitting on the commission as a commissioner or chairman as their future is unlimited. Commissioner Adams said that he works for the city school system at Dothan Technologies as the Jr. ROTC Instructor and has for the last 14 years. He then proceeded to read the proclamation and presented it to the Dr. Kennedy and Mr. Richards.

Dr. Kennedy thanked the commission for this and began by saying that February is Career and Technical Education Appreciation Month, and the career center utilizes hands on learning to help students grow in technical skills and academics. He continued by reporting that this morning they are here to celebrate all the great accomplishments of the outstanding career and technical educators and students from Houston County as well as Dothan City. Dr. Kennedy pointed out that the students that are present today are mostly the presidents of their career tech student organizations such as FFA, DECA, FBLA, FCCLA as well as others. He thanked the career tech teachers for the extra time they spend preparing the students for competitions and leadership and he thanked the students for the dedication they show in their programs. Mr. Richards thanked the commission for the proclamation and stated that it was a great opportunity for the students to come and see how the governmental side of things work but also to honor them for the hard work they put into the various programs. He added that the educators spend every day working to make the programs better to have better opportunities for the students to go well beyond the classroom and that is their responsibility is to provide opportunities. Mr. Richards again thanked the commission for all they do.

Before the Regular Agenda begins, Chairman Shoupe said that he has a good announcement today on something that they have been working on. He is pleased to announce that J & M Industries, Inc., from Louisiana, will be opening a 70,000 square foot center at the county distribution park, which is just north of the Florida state line, and this will create 10-15 new jobs. Chairman Shoupe added that this is the first significant investment in the distribution park in many years. He also said that due to the investments that the commission has made and partnered with other entities in the state, this will be the first of many announcements for the distribution park. Commissioner Herring commented that this particular company makes custom tarps, agricultural covers, athletic field covers, industrial covers, greenhouse films and packaging supplies. He also added that it has been a long time coming for the industrial park. Commissioner Herring reported that he has been on the commission for almost eight years, and they have worked hard on the industrial park as it has been sitting wide open to create jobs but, the infrastructure has to be in place, such as water lines and sewage lines, in order to recruit. He said that once you have the infrastructure in place, you have more opportunities to get more industry in the distribution center. Commissioner Herring stated that he is very

pleased and this is just a start. He thanked Matt Parker and the Chamber of Commerce for working hard for the county to recruit industries to the area.

## REGULAR AGENDA

1. Request to re-appoint Donna West, Glenn Maloy and Brandon Shoupe to the Southern Alabama Regional Council on Aging

Commissioner Herring made a motion to approve the re-appointment of Donna West, Glenn Maloy and Brandon Shoupe to the Southern Alabama Regional Council on Aging. Commissioner Adams seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

2. Request to adopt Resolution for the Brownfield Tax Abatement Project for Southeast Alabama Community Players, Inc. – Matt Parker, President Economic Development - Dothan Area Chamber of Commerce

Commissioner Harvey made a motion to adopt the Resolution for the Brownfield Tax Abatement Project for Southeast Alabama Community Players, Inc. and Commissioner Adams seconded. Commissioner Harvey asked if Matt Parker could come forward and explain this tax abatement. Mr. Parker began by announcing that SEACT is upgrading their facilities by making some renovations and they qualified for the Brownfield Tax Abatement Program. The application with ADEM was approved as they are reinvesting in redeveloping. Mr. Parker reminded everyone that this does not abate education taxes as this just abates local sales tax and property tax. Mr. Parker stated that this is a great project for the downtown area, and they appreciate the city and the county for supporting this project. He also said that the Brownfield Tax Abatement program has been a great program as it rejuvenates property that would otherwise go dormant and the commission has done a great job partnering with various projects. Mr. Parker thanked the commission for the vision and addressing long term issues.

With there being no further comments or questions, the motion passed unanimously to adopt the Resolution for the Brownfield Tax Abatement.

3. Request to approve resolution to extend temporary change of polling place for voters of Cottonwood Community Room – Patrick Davenport, Judge of Probate

Commissioner Adams made the motion to approve the resolution to extend the temporary change of polling place for voters of Cottonwood Community Room. Commissioner Ivey seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

4. Request to approve \$28,440.00 from the Jail Pods Addition Fund to perform Boundary and Topographic Survey for the jail property – Stacey Holland, CAO

Commissioner Herring made a motion to approve \$28,440.00 from the Jail Pods Addition Fund to perform Boundary Topographic Survey for the jail property and Commissioner Harvey seconded. Commissioner Adams asked if the \$28,440.00 was for a survey and Chairman Shoupe answered that this is a topographic survey. This type of survey does not survey boundaries but survey's the dirt and moving of the dirt at the location. He added that Northstar Engineering is doing the survey and the county has used them often in the past. Chairman Shoupe added that an architect has not been selected and they are not sure what the design is going to look like, but they do know where it will be located. He also said that we need to get this started as we are already over capacity and this needs to be done as soon as possible. The survey involves boundaries and topographic, survey road right-of-way, and railroad right-of-way. Chairman Shoupe also reminded everyone that this is step one of the project and the funds for this project are not coming out of the general fund but is coming out of a separate fund which has been set aside especially for this project.

With there being no additional comments or questions, the motion carried unanimously.

5. Request to approve budget amendment in the amount of \$25,000 for renovation and improvements to the Sanitation Billing Department building – Tommy Dixon, Maintenance Manager

Commissioner Ivey made the motion to approve the budget amendment in the amount of \$25,000 for renovation and improvements to the Sanitation Billing Department Building and Commissioner Adams seconded. Chairman Shoupe pointed out that in the commission packages there are pictures of what the facade will look like at the building. With there being no further questions or comments, the motion carried unanimously.

At this time, Chairman Shoupe brought up a discussion item and began by stating they have been working on a lot of the lodging tax/recreation funds for the last couple of years. He added that Wicksburg has begun work on their projects as well as Rehobeth and Ashford. Chairman Shoupe did report that Cottonwood has not started work on their project, which is no one's fault as they cannot do the work since the land is currently owned by the school system and doing the work by being owned by the school system creates its' own set of challenges and that inflates the cost. The original plan was to wait until the school could deed the property to the town, but they have since learned that deeding the property to the town will cause problems to the town because the bathrooms and concession stand are so dilapidated that the town's insurance carrier will drop them if they accept the property. So, what has been proposed and

what he would like to get feedback from the commission on, is that the county accept ownership of that property on a temporary basis. Chairman Shoupe said he has met with the town and received commitments from them. He and Commissioner Adams will now go to the Town Council meeting and get a commitment from the full council. Chairman Shoupe added that once the improvements are done, they will then deed the property back to the town of Cottonwood. This would only be on a temporary basis and it gets the county more involved in the project, which if more than they all would want to be but those children in Cottonwood deserve to see some progress and this is probably the only viable pact that they have. He is asking the Commission to step up to the plate for this as it's for the kids of Cottonwood. Chairman Shoupe stated that he is not asking the commission to vote on this, but he wants some feed back before he goes to the council meeting with this, and he would like the blessing of the commission. He asked if anyone had any questions or concerns, and Commissioner Harvey asked about the timeline. Chairman Shoupe said it would be about another month before the property would be deeded to the county. He did state that the county would not be involved in the decisions of what improvements would be made as the town would be keeping up the property, so the town needs to be on board with whatever improvements are made. Chairman Shoupe said the town and the youth sports people need to get together and tell the county what they want and then the county will pay the bill for the work from the lodging tax money that is set aside for this purpose. He also stated that are not committing anything else other than the money that has been put aside for the Town of Cottonwood. Chairman Shoupe reported that those improvements will take a while, at least 6+ months.

Commissioner Ivey asked County Attorney Pres Register to explain on a legal perspective. Mr. Register stated that on a legal perspective, the transfer and the improvements and the transferring back can be done very smoothly and efficiently. He did state that the bond that was issued was a tax exempt obligation bond, so they are very limited on who can have the funds received so that left either the Town of Cottonwood or the county or the school board. Mr. Register added that there is an option for a 501(c) 3 but they would have actually had to of been approved at the IRS level for 501(c) 3 status and there is not an entity that is capable of taking this and running with it and that could also receive the funds and expend them under the terms of the tax exempt bond. Mr. Register stated that once the improvements are done, then the transfer can be made back to the town. Commissioner Adams commented that the recreation department does not have 501(c) 3 status but they are beginning the process and that will take a while. Mr. Register reiterated that the bond requires the company to already have received that status and it is a year minimum once you send the documents to the IRS before you get that and the obligation of the bond requires that the funds be expended before they can get the status.

Chairman Shoupe asked if there was any strong concern or aversion from the commission in order to go forward and to agree to this subject to a formal vote by the county commission. Commissioner Ricky Herring commented that he grew up playing sports in Cottonwood and that is where he went to school. He said that the last thing you want to do is to keep kids from playing sports and having fun and he believes that as a county, if we can jump in and help to get this process moving forward, then that is what needs to be done. But, the county does not need to take on responsibilities financially on this project. Commissioner Herring added that when he was growing up, the parents raised money for the parks and he feels that the parents should take some responsibility to help their kids have the facilities. He does not want the parents to expect the county to fund this and keep it up. Commissioner Adams stated that they had this exact conversation last week in Cottonwood at a meeting with the recreation board and they are in agreement that everything will be handled the right way for this project. Chairman Shoupe did state that when this project is over, the property will be transferred to the Town of Cottonwood or to the school system, but the commission will not be keeping it.

Chairman Shoupe apologized that an item was left off the agenda that needs to be added and voted on today that they spoke about on Thursday. At this time he needs a unanimous vote to add the time to the agenda and it should be item number six. The item would read:

“Request from the Houston County Water Authority to assist in clearing along State Line Road for installation of a 16” water line – Road & Bridge”

Commissioner Harvey made a motion to add the item as stated above for the #6 agenda item. Commissioner Ricky Herring seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

6. Request from the Houston County Water Authority to assist in clearing along State Line Road for installation of a 16” water line – Road & Bridge

Commissioner Harvey made a motion to approve the request from the Houston County Water Authority and Commissioner Adams seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

#### STAFF REPORTS

Chief Administrative Officer – No report

County Engineer – Furnie Folks and Rice road are complete and next few weeks they will be starting on Judge Logue, E. Cook and Old Webb. Closed roads are Cedar Springs, Sweetie Smith and Old Webb. Chairman Shoupe stated they appreciate the efforts of the entire Road & Bridge Dept.

County Attorney – No report

Adjourned