

MINUTES OF THE HOUSTON COUNTY COMMISSION
REGULAR SESSION
September 14, 2026

PRESENT: Chairman Brandon Shoupe, Commissioner Tracy Adams, 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 September 14, 2026, Houston County Commission Regular Session. He declared a quorum as all commissioners were in attendance.

The invocation was given by Rev. Matthew Langford from First United Methodist Church, and the pledge of allegiance was led by Commissioner Adams.

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN AND COMMISSIONERS

Chairman Shoupe announced that cooler weather should be coming in later this week and it is welcomed as we should be getting down in the 60's.

AWARDS & PRESENTATIONS

1. Third Quarter Service Anniversaries – Sheri Garner, Personnel Director

At this time, Anisa McKenzie from the Personnel Department came forward and asked all in attendance for the Service Anniversaries recognition to come and join her. She then proceeded to announce all anniversaries as follows:

5 years:	Rebecca Smith, Revenue Jarrett Dever, Jail Michael Deacon, County Buildings Braxton Arnold, Sheriff's Dept. Candace Gilley, Probate Caitlyn Wallace, Sheriff's Dept.
10 years:	Brian Skelton, County Buildings
15 years	Mindy Van Ackern, Jail Evelyn McGhee, Jail Mekki Klein, County Corrections

20 years: Timmy Heinrich, Road & Bridge

25 years: Tracy Hunter, Jail
Stacy Mercer, Road & Bridge
Henry Trujillo, Sheriff's Dept.

Applause was given by all as Ms. McKenzie announced that this group represents 180 combined years of service.

2. Proclamation – “Hunger Action Month” – Julie Gonzalez, Wiregrass Food Bank

Commissioner Ivey made a motion to approve the proclamation for Hunger Action Month and Commissioner Adams seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

At this time Chairman Shoupe asked Ms. Gonzalez to join him up front and he began to read the proclamation in its entirety. Upon completion Mr. Shoupe asked Ms. Gonzalez for comments and she began by thank you to the commission for their continued support of the Wiregrass Area Food Bank as it is not a fight against hunger that can be done alone as it takes all the citizens of Houston County and all of the six counties that the Food Bank serves. She continued by reporting that last year they distributed 4.1 million pounds of food and that was the amount that they distribute during COVID in 2020. Ms. Gonzalez said the numbers dipped down, but it has risen again and they are struggling to find food but the good news is they are still in the business of hauling hope in the Wiregrass and by that she means they continue to take food out to the needy as much as they can and for as many as they can and they hope that the citizens continue to support the Food Bank.

REGULAR AGENDA

1. Request to award ACCA Joint County Bids for the following categories: 3D Steel Grids, Flex Concrete Mats, Herbicides, Road Signs, Traffic Marking Materials, Liquid Asphalt, Bulk Cement

Commissioner Adams made a motion to approve the request to award the ACCA Joint County Bids as stated. Commissioner Ivey seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

2. Request from the Personnel Board to concur in the 2027 County Holiday Schedule – Sheri Garner, Personnel Director

Commissioner Adams made the motion to approve the request from the Personnel Board to concur with the 2027 County Holiday Schedule. Commissioner Ivey seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

3. Request to adopt resolution authorizing participation in the ACCA Worker's Compensation Self-Insurers Fund Through September 30, 2030 – Stacey Holland, CAO

Commissioner Ivey made a motion to approve adopting the resolution and Commissioner Adams seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Request to contract with Brandy Bass Dempsey for management of the Houston County Farm Center for \$60,000/year and allow Chairman to negotiate and execute contract.

Commissioner Adams made a motion to approve the contract with Brandy Bass Dempsey for management of the Houston County Farm Center and Commissioner Ivey seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

5. Request to approve Interlocal Agreement and MOU between the City of Dothan and Houston County for the FY2026 Byrne Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Program Award – Sheriff's Dept.

Commissioner Ivey made a motion to approve the agreement and MOU for the JAG agreement. Commissioner Adams seconded and it passed unanimously.

6. Request to approve purchase of a 2026 Chevrolet Silverado in the amount of \$56,748.92 for the Sheriff's Dept., using existing budgeted funds – Sheriff's Dept.

Commissioner Ivey made a motion to approve the purchase of a 2026 Chevrolet Silverado in the amount of \$56,748.92 for the Sheriff's Dept. Commissioner Adams seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

7. Request to award bid for Inmate phone services to the responsible bidder meeting specs – Captain David Asbill

Commissioner Ivey made a motion to approve awarding the bid for inmate phone services to the responsible bidder meeting specs. Commissioner Adams seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

8. Request to award bid for Bulk Cement (Silo) to lowest bidder meeting specs – Road & Bridge

Commissioner Adams made a motion to award bid for Bulk Cement to lowest bidder meeting specs. Commissioner Ivey seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

9. Request to approve budget amendment in the amount of \$170,000 for contract services and revenue used to assist the Town of Columbia with a paving project – Road & Bridge

Commissioner Ivey made a motion to approve the budget amendment in the amount of \$170,000 for contract services and revenue used to assist the Town of Columbia with a paving project. Commissioner Adams seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

10. Request to purchase new road widener in the amount of \$330,000 using existing budgeted funds – Road & Bridge

Commissioner Ivey made a motion to approve the purchase of a new road widener in the amount of \$330,000 using existing budgeted funds. Commissioner Adams seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

11. Request to approve the 2026-2027 Budget – Stacey Holland, CAO

Chief Administrative Office Stacey Holland began with the Revenue side of the budget and stated that the property tax represents the majority of the county's revenue, and she is happy to announce that SSUT Tax is going up in the coming year with an increase of \$550,000.00. She hopes that this will continue to climb each year. Mrs. Holland then went into the expense side of the budget, and it is broken down into the ten largest expenditures of the budget. She reported that Road & Bridge is at the top of expenses with 24.5% and the Sheriff's Dept. and the Jail combined take up 31%. She then showed a graph which showed revenues slacked for the last few years and expenses have gone up. Mrs. Holland then went into the Labor side of the budget which will include a COLA increase of 2%, which she feels that this is important to take care of the employees and making sure that we can keep up with inflation instead of doing a wage study and having to come up with a larger increase. She did announce that health care costs will have an increase of 3.1%, which is lower than the last few years. Mrs. Holland also reported that the county pension program contribution, which is a great benefit for our employees, Tier I will be 11.38% and Tier II will be 11.82% for the coming year for the county part of contributions. She added that six positions will be reduced for the coming year. Four of those will include Probate part-time positions, one will be from County Buildings Department, and one is from Rabies Control, as one of the employees decided that he wanted to go to another career so that position will not be filled. Mrs. Holland pointed out that budgeted labor and expenses account for 54.2% of the total budget requested and that is for salaries and benefits. Regarding the number of employees, Mrs. Holland went back to 2014-2015 and as you see there was a decrease in 2015-2016 and 2016-2017, but it has steadily gone up for the past several years. She stated that in 2026-2027, the 441 total employees does not include the six positions that will be reduced, which will put the number at 435 going into the new year.

Mrs. Holland then went into the Agency Allocations side of the budget. She reported that some of the agency allocations are law mandated and some are MOU agreements with the commission that must be honored. The total will be down this year to \$2.4 million from almost \$3.1 million. The Debt Listing portion of the budget shows the total debt includes 2 loans that will be going off in 2029 and one bond that will be paid off in 2028. Also, the 2020B Rebuild Bond will be paid in 2030, but she reminded everyone that the \$657,000.00 cannot be used for other debt as it is only for Rebuild Alabama projects for Road & Bridge paving and road work. The Fund Balance projection shows that at the end of last year the balance was \$24 million and this is strictly a projection of what she projects for the end of the year that the fund balance will be \$16.9 million. This balance could go up or down depending on whether the department's underspend and or if excess revenue comes in, but as of now revenue is flat. She does not look for the revenue to come up anymore than budgeted but expenses could come in lower than anticipated, which would increase the fund balance.

Mrs. Holland ended with the Budget Summary and stated that this shows the current year and the proposed year. The total revenue increase does include property tax, and the total expenses went from \$72 million down to \$67.5 million due to cost savings being identified. She stated that last year the commission voted on a deficit of \$10.5 million and this year they will be voting on a deficit of \$2.9 million.

Chairman Shoupe stated that he does not have questions, but he has a couple of comments. He reported that if you look at the labor and the percentages of the revenue, it is still too high. Chairman Shoupe also stated that the commission will meet in December and they may look at a

reduction of head count that would bring that down even more. He added that they went into this budget knowing that they were not going to get it where it needs to be, but hopefully over the course of the next year, they can get it to that 47 to 48 percent target number. Chairman Shoupe said that one thing he would like to urge the commission to do is allocate positions based on the revenue. For instance, if the revenue does not allow us to create a position, no position is created. If the revenue allows it, then they can do so and also create the most critical positions. Chairman Shoupe stated that his goal for next year is to have a completely balanced budget but obviously they still need to figure out the jail expansion funding and it will be figured out because the commission does not have a choice in the matter. Because of this massive project, the cuts in the agency allocations were vital to the budget as were the reductions in staffing and the commission will have to stay on top of spending requests more than in the past.

Chairman Shoupe ended by saying that he greatly appreciates Mrs. Holland and her leadership in this process and she has done an outstanding job presenting information that allowed the commission to make some tough, but necessary calls. Commissioner Adams thanked the department heads for their commitment to the budget. Commissioner Ivey thanked Mrs. Holland and the department heads as well for working diligently on this budget. He added that unfortunately, the times that the economy is in at this time, expenses and revenue are not a good offset for the county. Chairman Shoupe added to this comment that flattening the revenue is not something that is unique to Houston County as it is going on everywhere from local to the state and federal level. He stated that the County will have to continue to pinch pennies and make things work. He thanked everyone again for their hard work.

Upon the vote, the 2026-2027 budget was unanimously approved.

12. Request to amend budget in the amount of \$74,863.00 for inmate medical expenses

Commissioner Ivey made a motion to approve the budget amendment in the amount of \$74,863.00 for inmate medical expenses. Commissioner Adams seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

13. Request to approve budget amendment in the amount of \$85,137.00 for a settlement of claim
Commissioner Ivey made a motion to approve the budget amendment in the amount of \$85,137.00 for a settlement of claim. Commissioner Adams seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

STAFF REPORTS

Chief Administrative Officer – No report

County Engineer -3 closed roads: Patterson, Decatur, Cty. Rd. 55N

County Attorney

Adjourn