

MINUTES OF THE HOUSTON COUNTY COMMISSION
JANUARY 23, 2012

PRESENT: Chairman Mark S. Culver, Commissioner Curtis Harvey, Commissioner Doug Siquefield, Commissioner Jackie Battles, Gary Sherrer, Attorney, Mark Pool, County Engineer, and William J. Dempsey, Chief Administrative Officer

ABSENT: Commissioner Phillip L. Forrester

Chairman Mark Culver called the 10:00 A.M. meeting to order, declared a quorum present, and welcomed everyone. He pointed out there were several guests, and he recognized his wife, Tami, and the staff of the Dothan Area Chamber of Commerce. The chairman stated the commission appreciated their attendance. Commissioner Jackie Battles gave the invocation and led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Commissioner Siquefield made a motion to approve the minutes of the last meeting. Commissioner Battles seconded; and the motion carried unanimously.

Announcements and Public Comments from Chairman and Commissioners

Chairman Culver reminded everyone January has five Mondays, and there would be three weeks before the commission meets again on February 13th.

He reported Mr. Matt Parker had asked him to remind everyone on February 13th, the Chamber would have their annual breakfast with Senator Richard Shelby. Chairman Culver reported Senator Shelby has been diligent over the years spending time in our community, and he encouraged everyone to call the Chamber to make their reservations for the breakfast.

Awards and Presentations

1. Presentation by the Houston County Foundation – Pat Thomas, Foundation Board Member

Chairman Culver called former Mayor, Pat Thomas, and a board member of the Houston County Foundation, and Mr. Tim Pitchford, Superintendent, Houston County Schools, to come forward. The chairman congratulated Mr. Pitchford on running unopposed for another four year term, and thanked him for the great job he does. Chairman Culver reported the Foundation had prepared Press Releases for the media.

He turned the meeting over to Mr. Thomas who reported as a Board Member of the Houston County Foundation, he was pleased to announce they had received their first contribution from the Houston Economic Development Association. He stated they had received \$20,000 which would be divided among the non-profits and school systems and he stated non-profits could apply through the Houston County website. Mr. Thomas pointed out he had attended a conference over the weekend on economic development and education. He stated the conference reinforced a lot he had learned through the years how they go hand in hand. He reported it was very important to the members of the Foundation that the first check is specifically for education. At that time, he presented a check in the amount of \$5,000 to Superintendent Tim Pitchford for the Houston County School System. Mr. Thomas stated he hoped the checks got bigger.

Mr. Pitchford stated they were grateful to the Foundation and the commission. He reported over the last three years they had lost \$7 million due to pro-ration and the economy. Mr. Pitchford assured them these funds would get into the hands of the teachers to use for the children.

Chairman Culver stated he hoped this would not be the last one of these presentations. He reported they thought this would be an ongoing event with monies presented to the Foundation and in turn to non-profits and schools in the community. The chairman commended everyone involved with the process.

2. Presentation – Joint Bid Program and Streamline Sales Tax – Mr. Sonny Brasfield, Executive Director, Association of County Commissions of Alabama

Chairman Culver reported it was his distinct honor and pleasure to call on Mr. Sonny Brasfield, Executive Director, Association of County Commissions of Alabama, for a presentation. He stated Mr. Brasfield had not been to one of the meetings since he became the Executive Director, and he welcomed him. The chairman reported Mr. Brasfield was doing an outstanding job as the Executive Director representing county government in the state and particularly in front of the Alabama Legislature, and he encouraged him to attend anytime. Chairman Culver then presented Mr. Brasfield with a county pin.

Mr. Brasfield reported he did not often get the opportunity to address the commission and it was his pleasure to be with some of his best friends in county government. Mr. Brasfield reported he was on the agenda to talk about the County's Joint Bid Program along with the Streamline Sales Tax. He stated he was going to get around to those subjects. Mr. Brasfield apologized to the members of the commission. He stated he had been with the ACCA for 24 years and it had been his pleasure to work all over the state. Mr. Brasfield reported as far as he knew, he had never deceived a member of the county commission in the state on purpose. He apologized for deceiving them with his attendance at the meeting. Mr. Brasfield reported he was not present to talk about the Joint Bid Program or the Streamline Sales Tax.

He reported he was present to talk about a morning back in 1987 when a 30 year old Mark Culver became a member of the Houston County Commission for the first time. Mr. Brasfield stated that day Mr. Culver did not know what would happen and like so many other people who got elected for the first time to serve on the county commission, he probably thought he was on his way to somewhere else and on his way to something else. He reported sometimes a position finds the person rather than the person finding that position. Mr. Brasfield pointed out in Mr. Culver's case there is no question that county government found him and when he was elected, he found out he was at home. He reported he felt one of the key elements in leading a county from where it is to where it should be is passion for the community and compassion for the people and the employees. He stated in 25 years, he had never had a single employee of Houston County ever say anything negative about Mr. Culver. He pointed out everything has been characterized with the compassion for the people in Houston County and for the people who come to the commission and the other county offices everyday who respond on Saturdays and Sundays when they are called out and much of that has to do with their recognition of the compassion Chairman Culver has. Mr. Brasfield reported there are two kinds of elected officials; some people hold office, and people who hold office do not stay in office very long most of the time. He stated people who hold office do not accomplish very much, and they generally find themselves on the way to something else. Mr. Brasfield reported there are people who serve in office. He stated Mark Culver has served for 25 years in office and from the ACCA's perspective he has served as a leader for the association and county government throughout the state on many occasions doing things that had nothing to do with Houston County but yet he was in Montgomery because it benefitted county government statewide. He stated that is the definition of serving for county government. Mr. Brasfield reported Mr. Culver was elected in 1987, re-elected in 1990 and in 1994, and appointed Chairman in 1997 by Governor Fob James. He was elected Chairman for the first time in 1998, and re-elected in 2002, 2006, and again in 2010. He was elected as President of ACCA in 2000. Mr. Brasfield stated Chairman Culver is his best friend in county government, and it was his pleasure to be able to make the presentation. Mr. Brasfield gave many highlights during Mr. Culver's tenure on the County Commission recognizing him for his 25 years of service to Houston County. He also presented him with a Resolution on behalf of the Association of County Commissions of Alabama for his 25 years of dedicated service to the citizens of Houston County and for his longstanding support of the association. Chairman Culver thanked Mr. Brasfield for recognizing a very important timeframe for him and he stated he wanted everyone to know as he pointed out on Thursday he loved them, and the accomplishments could not have been made without everyone working together. He stated he looked forward to many more years as long as the good citizens of Houston County will let him serve.

Mr. Brasfield reported in the 24 years he and the Chairman have worked together he has never told him no when he was asked to do something. He reported a few months ago, he asked him to serve on a statewide commission to try to clear the deck of the legal and practical impediments to collecting sales tax for internet sales in Alabama. Mr. Brasfield reported if the commission is able to put it together it would help fill the hole in Education. He stated Mr. Culver has chaired the Streamline Sales Tax Commission and they give their final recommendations to the Legislature on January 25th. Mr. Brasfield

reported he had told Mr. Culver it would be easy but it has not been easy. He stated although it will be a benefit to Houston County, it will really be a benefit to education statewide. Mr. Brasfield pointed out the chairman's leadership has been outstanding. Mr. Brasfield stated he was going to be leaving because he to be at a meeting in Town Creek, located on the Tennessee line at 6:00 P.M.

At that time, Mr. Brasfield, called on Mr. Matt Parker, President, Dothan Area Chamber of Commerce for comments. Mr. Parker thanked Mr. Brasfield for coming and making his presentation. He thanked Mr. Culver for his leadership and his innovative approach to do things. He pointed out there is not anything that Mr. Culver cannot do or try to figure out to move Houston County and the towns forward in their economic and community development endeavors. He stated he was glad that Mr. Culver never took the offers he had received so many times, and he thanked him for his leadership and the environment he has created through time on the commission to really bring together city and county relations and to build the business climate that is so important. He congratulated Chairman Culver for 25 years on behalf of the business community. Mr. Parker stated they looked forward to 25 more years and he thanked him for everything he does and the leadership he provides. Chairman Culver thanked Mr. Parker for his friendship, leadership and sharing this time.

3. Annual Financial Report – Bill Dempsey, CAO

Chairman Culver reported each year Mr. Dempsey presents the financial report. He stated this report contains the county's activities from a fiscal perspective for the prior fiscal year. The chairman reported even though the fiscal years ends on September 30th, it takes a while to get everything closed out and to this point.

Mr. Dempsey reported the original budget predicted \$34,535,477 in revenue and \$36,147,605 in expenditures. He pointed out the final numbers were \$35,265,007 in revenue, and \$35,463,265 in expenses not counting fiduciary funds. He reported sales tax collection was up 2.6% over last year which accounted for 15% of the revenue. Mr. Dempsey pointed out the county's largest source was property tax, which accounted for 37% of the total revenue, in the amount of \$13,204,038. He stated a total of \$11,449,590 was spent on the sheriff's office, jail, community corrections, and juvenile divisions. Mr. Dempsey reported that \$8,345,503 was spent on roads and bridges for the second largest amount. Mr. Dempsey reported capital expenditures have been hit pretty hard. He pointed out there are vehicles, buildings with air conditioning to be replaced and other expenditures. Mr. Dempsey stated the county borrowed at 40% of its legal debt limit which is the lowest percentage for the county in at least 8 years. Chairman Culver thanked Mr. Dempsey and Mrs. Joan Clark for her assistance in preparing the financial report. The chairman thanked the department heads for reducing spending in their respective departments. He pointed out in this year's budget, the commission was looking at the possibility of creating a capital improvement fund to be used for taking care of the buildings.

Consent Agenda

1. Re-appointment to the SE Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission's Revolving Loan Fund Board – Sid Timbie
2. Re-appointment to the Houston-Love Memorial Library Board – Theodore Fagan
3. Request to award bids for reflectorized thermoplastic pavement marking material and oil, grease & fluids.

Commissioner Harvey made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda to re-appoint Mr. Sid Timbie to the SE Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission's Revolving Loan Fund Board, to re-appoint Mr. Theodore Fagan to the Houston-Love Memorial Library Board, and to award bids on reflectorized thermoplastic pavement marking material to Crown Technology, low bidder meeting specs, for 44 tons at \$1,460.00 per ton, and a total bid price of \$64,240.00, and to award the bid on oil, grease & fluids to Davis Oil Co., low bidder meeting specs, for a total bid price of \$18,480.85. Commissioner Battles seconded the motion. The chairman called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously. (Please see attached Bid Summary Sheets in Minute Book)

Regular Agenda

1. Appointment to fill vacancy on the Houston County Department of Human Resources Board – Ms. Frances Cook

Commissioner Harvey made a motion to appoint Ms. Frances Cook to fill the vacancy on the Houston County Department of Human Resources Board. Commissioner Sinquefield seconded the motion. Chairman Culver called for the question; and the vote was: YEAS: Commissioners Harvey and Sinquefield NAYS: None Commissioner Battles abstained. The motion carried.

2. Request from EMA to approve grant in the amount of \$11,000 between Houston County EMA and the Alabama Department of Public Health for reimbursement of Strategic National Stockpile items Clark Matthews, EMA Director

Commissioner Sinquefield made a motion to grant EMA's request to approve a grant in the amount of \$11,000 between Houston County EMA and the Alabama Department of Public Health for reimbursement of National Stockpile items. Commissioner Harvey seconded the motion. Chairman Culver reported Houston County is the repository for the distribution of supplies if there is ever a critical incident in this area. He stated Houston County has been designated by Homeland Security and the funds help the county provide those services on behalf of Homeland Security. The chairman called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously.

3. Liquor License Request – 011 – Lounge Retail Liquor – Class II (Package) License – River Lounge of Clayhatchee, LLC d/b/a The River Lounge – 3042 W. Highway 92, Daleville, AL 36322 (Houston County)

Commissioner Battles made a motion to approve the request for a 011 Lounge Retail Liquor – Class II (Package) License for River Lounge of Clayhatchee, LLC d/b/a The River Lounge, 3042 W. Highway 92, Daleville, AL 36322 (Houston County). Commissioner Sinquefield seconded the motion. Chairman Culver asked if anyone was present with any opposition to the request? There being none, he called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously.

4. Request to approve sidewalk project on Prevatt Road in conjunction with the City of Dothan.

Commissioner Sinquefield made a motion to approve the sidewalk project on Prevatt Road in conjunction with the City of Dothan. Commissioner Battles seconded the motion. Chairman Culver reported this was discussed on Thursday, and for the record wanted to be sure what is included in the agreement. The chairman reported the City of Dothan has agreed the construction of the sidewalk will meet the state specifications, the county specifications, and the county will do some of the inspections since the county will be doing the maintaining. He stated the project is imminent and should start either this week or next week. The chairman pointed out this is a good project and it is hoped it will add to the safety factor for children coming from Hidden Lakes and other living areas to the east of Hidden Lake School. Chairman Culver reported the agreement with the city is that the county is doing this sidewalk but the county does not intend to get into the sidewalk business and the county does not intend to maintain any other sidewalks. He stated they have expressed to the city that when they are doing their planning on their big city-wide sidewalk project, that they include in the plan to maintain the sidewalk. Mr. Pool asked that the following be placed in the minutes: The city will pay for the project, and that the county will be maintaining the sidewalks on the county's right-of-way. Chairman Culver reported the county would be maintaining all of the sidewalks including those located on other property. Mr. Pool reported that was not what he had been told. Mr. Culver asked Mr. Pool to let him know if he was wrong, because the City Manager and the elected officials talked about the county maintaining all of the sidewalks. Commissioner Sinquefield stated he appreciated Mr. Pool and the city partnering on this project for the safety of the children at Hidden Lake. Mr. Sinquefield reported he was under the opinion as Chairman Culver. Chairman Culver reported he would check on that and if Mr. Pool is correct and if the commission is wrong, then that is what will be done. The chairman stated his understanding is that the county is to maintain the sidewalks that are put in place. Commissioner Battles asked if they would need permits to go on school board property? Mr. Culver stated it was public property. He reported the county would look into all of that in order to make sure everything is done properly. The chairman called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously.

Staff Reports:

Chief Administrative Officer – there was none

County Engineer –

Mr. Pool reported although the weather pattern has changed, the crews can still work on the Fortner Street project. He stated the project in Madrid is dead until the weather changes. Mr. Pool pointed out in a normal winter they can't do a parking lot or any major dirt construction after December 15th. He reported he could not give any deadline on the project because there has been a lot of rain lately. Mr. Pool reported they would be starting their guardrail project.

Chairman Culver reported the crews are to the Madrid project because the road and bridge department has done an outstanding job on other projects. He stated the commission committed to the following projects and they have been completed: Rehobeth, site work at Vaughn-Blumberg for their new building, Troy University to do a site for their building, and Rowland Road. He reported Mr. Pool's department has done a lot of work over the last three months and he stated the commission appreciated Mr. Pool and his staff for all they have done. The chairman reported the crews have until March 1st to get the Madrid project completed because the Primary Election is March 13th, and the people will be voting there.

County Attorney – there was none

Chairman Culver reported earlier in the day there was some bad weather north of Houston County with at least 2 deaths and 100 or so people injured. He asked Mr. Clark Matthews, EMA Director, if he knew anything about it? Mr. Matthews reported they were still evaluating what areas were impacted, but he knew areas around Birmingham, the Trussville area, some in Tuscaloosa County, and further. Mr. Matthews reported he anticipated some resource requests later in the day involving law enforcement. He pointed out Dothan Fire was on standby to go to North Alabama. Mr. Matthews reported they are still in the rescue phase. Mr. Matthews reported there is a low end event coming in later in the afternoon, probably around 6:00 P.M., and the impact would be limited to localized areas of trees down, powerlines, minor mobile home and shed damage. Chairman Culver urged everyone getting off at 5:00 P.M. to go straight home. He encouraged everyone to continue to monitor their radios, tvs, and keep abreast of the weather conditions in order to stay safe. He asked people to stay off the roads if at all possible.

Chairman Culver thanked everyone again for the recognition.

Adjourn

Commissioner Harvey made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Sinuefield seconded; and the motion carried unanimously.