

MINUTES OF THE HOUSTON COUNTY COMMISSION

MARCH 25, 2013

PRESENT: Chairman Mark S. Culver, Commissioner Doug Siquefield, Commissioner Jackie Battles, Commissioner Melinda S. McClendon, Pat Jones, Acting County Attorney, Barkley Kirkland, Acting County Engineer, and William J. Dempsey, Chief Administrative Officer

ABSENT: Commissioner Curtis Harvey and Gary Sherrer, County Attorney

Chairman Mark Culver called the 10:00 A.M. meeting to order, declared a quorum present and welcomed everyone. Chairman Culver reported Commissioner Harvey was unable to make it due to being under the weather. He stated County Attorney Sherrer had an unfortunate death in his family and he asked that everyone keep Mr. Sherrer and his family in their thoughts and prayers. He stated Patrick Jones was in attendance in his stead and he was certain he would do a fine job. Mr. Rev. John Rogers, Pastor, Westgate Baptist Church, gave the invocation. Commissioner Jackie Battles led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

Announcements and Public Comments from Chairman and Commissioners

Chairman Culver reported we were entering Holy Week, a very special week, and he urged people who might not have any Holy Week services at their church to check out some of the other churches in the community, and participate in their activities as the week builds to Easter when the Risen Christ is celebrated.

He also stated the city and county schools were out for Spring Break and he urged everyone to be careful and to have a safe week.

He reminded everyone of the Toadlick Festival scheduled for April 11th-13th at the National Peanut Festival. He stated a lot of good talent would be there with great entertainment. He encouraged everyone to be part of the event.

Chairman Culver reported he would be having some surgery on Thursday and he would be out of pocket. He asked everyone to keep his wife in their prayers because he was not a very good patient.

Chairman Culver stated since there was no Admin meeting, the commissioners would be operating a little differently with a little more discussion in advance of motions as necessary.

Awards and Presentations

1. Proclamation – “Child Abuse Prevention Month” – Mrs. Sherryl Walker, Executive Director, SE Alabama Child Advocacy Center

Chairman Culver reported Mrs. Sherryl Walker, Executive Director of the SE Alabama Child Advocacy Center, was unable to attend, and he asked Mrs. Sherry Davis to come forward. Commissioner Battles made a motion to approve the Proclamation declaring April as “Child Abuse Prevention Month.” Commissioner McClendon seconded the motion. Chairman Culver called for the question; and it carried unanimously. The chairman reported this is normally done at the site, but this year they would not be able to, and he stated he appreciated them coming to the meeting. He then read the Proclamation and presented it to Mrs. Davis. He thanked Mrs. Davis and he stated the Child Advocacy Center is one of the greatest non-profit centers in the community. The chairman pointed out it is such a tragic reason to have the need for their agency but the fact is the need is there and their agency does a wonderful job in the community. He stated the commission and other groups help to fund that agency and he stated Mrs. Walker and her staff just do a fantastic job.

Mrs. Davis thanked the commission and she stated they could not do their job without the community’s support. She reported last year they had 329 children with new allegations of sexual abuse come through their doors. She pointed out those are just the ones that are reported. Mrs. Davis stated it is

the public's responsibility to teach our children how to protect themselves at a much younger age than what it used to be. She thanked the commission for all of their support.

Regular Agenda

1. Request to re-appoint Mr. Alan Livingston and Mrs. Aleda Holmes to the Dothan-Houston County Intellectual Disabilities Board, Inc.

Commissioner Siquefield made a motion to re-appoint Mr. Alan Livingston and Mrs. Aleda Holmes to the Dothan-Houston County Intellectual Disabilities Board, Inc. Commissioner McClendon seconded the motion. Chairman Culver called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously.

2. Request to adopt Houston County Water Authority Bond Issue Resolution.

Chairman Culver reported about a month ago, the Commission approved partnering with the Houston County Water Authority and a guarantee of a bond issue they are doing. He stated the Water Authority has moved forward with the bond issue, and today they are finalizing the paperwork. The chairman reported Mr. Scott Pierce, their representative from Capell & Howard, Bond Counsel, was present and he or Mr. Dempsey would answer any questions. He stated this is a resolution finalizing the final documents. Commissioner Siquefield asked how the interest rate would be figured? Mr. Pierce reported the final maturity and the single maturity is 2043. He stated it is a 30 year bond issue, the interest is only for the first 26 years. Mr. Pierce pointed out the county's only obligation is to make up any shortfall that may occur in the case where the Water Authority is unable to make the payment. He reported those are basically going to be \$10,000 to \$15,000 for the next 26 years. Mr. Pierce reported hopefully by the time they get down to 15 years, there can be some type of restructuring. He pointed out the interest rate is 4.01 percent. Commissioner Siquefield asked if the payment schedule that is set up will be the county's payment? Mr. Pierce reported it is the maximum payment due on those dates. He stated the Water Authority is required to make monthly payments toward that amount. He reported at Mr. Dempsey's request, in order to get a little better structure and more knowledge to the county before they are due, the trustee for the bond will give a notice as to how much the authority has paid and 10 days before the payment date the county will be notified if there is any shortfall. He reported the county would make a payment if a shortfall occurred. Chairman Culver reported the anticipation in the discussion was that there would not be a shortfall. He stated through the county's budget, they have been annually appropriating funds because of the shortfall that they have had in expenses versus the way the issue was set up. The chairman reported the contemplated result of this is that it lowers those payments down so that they can take care of them. He stated if there is some shortage, then the county would make it up but it would be nowhere near what the county has budgeted and provided for the last year or so. The chairman reported the anticipation in doing this was for the Water Authority to be able to make these payments, and that is why it is interest only to get them through this difficult time that they are having, and make some rate adjustments if necessary. Mr. Pierce reported the great benefit the county has provided is its credit rating, which means that rate is much lower than it could have been providing them with lower manageable payments. Chairman Culver reported in this process that the county was able to go to an AA- rating from a B+ rating with Standard & Poors. Mr. Dempsey pointed out there are several type rankings from an AAA rating and it goes down from there. Mr. Pierce reported it is a fantastic rating. Chairman Culver commended Mr. Dempsey on the great job he did along with the people from the Water Authority. Chairman Culver reported it was great that they saw enough confidence in Houston County to improve the credit rating. He stated it is always a good thing and says a lot about the county's financial capability and the way that the finances are handled. Chairman Culver thanked everyone that has been involved in this along with the commission for their oversight in making this happen. Mr. Pierce reported most counties' credit ratings are going the other way, and this is really great news for Houston County. Chairman Culver reported in addition to guaranteeing the bond issue the county also has a refunding, and will be doing an issue later in the year that the lower rate will hopefully effect terms of the county getting a better rate and lower payments. Mr. Dempsey stated as a bottom line of this, the Water Authority's payment goes from \$11,624.00 a month to \$7,624.00 per month. Commissioner Siquefield made a motion to adopt the Houston County Water Authority's Bond Issue Resolution. Commissioner Battles

seconded the motion. Chairman Culver called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously. (Please see in Resolution Book)

3. Request to approve preliminary plan for North Parking lot property.

Chairman Culver reported the commission recently entered into a joint agreement with the Downtown Redevelopment Authority and the Five Star Credit Union next door to purchase the property known as the Saints Apartments. He stated there are things ongoing that the DDRA is handling to ultimately get the buildings removed and turned over to the county. Chairman Culver reported the county has a lot of things ongoing with properties and he thought the commission should have a work session in the next few weeks and talk about all of the county's properties and other things that need guidance from the commission. The chairman stated today, the commission is asking to make sure there is no objection to move forward with gathering the information that is needed to develop this property into what would be parking, some green space as required by the city, and potentially moving the small building the county has on Crawford Street over to this property. He stated the plan would be to make it the Maintenance Department, and then hopefully sell the property on Crawford Street. He stated it is a piece of property that the county does not use or need. He reported it could possibly be used by someone else and maybe get it back on the tax rolls. Chairman Culver reported then Sean Curtis' offices could be moved into the building. He reported Personnel would be moved into some if not all of the space vacated by the Maintenance Department. He stated he is asking for an approval to move forward in evaluating that option and make sure there is no objection on looking at that plan. Chairman Culver stated obviously the county could not do anything until the buildings are gone. Commissioner Battles made a motion to approve the preliminary plan for the North Parking lot property. Commissioner Sinquefield seconded the motion. Chairman Culver called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously.

4. Request to approve contract to hire Barkley Kirkland as Houston County Engineer.

Chairman Culver reported this contract to hire Mr. Kirkland would be effective May 1, 2013 and would be for one year. He pointed out it would be the commission's anticipation that Mr. Kirkland would enjoy his job and that the commission would be happy with him and at the end of that year he would be offered an extended term contract. The chairman reported this is a pretty simple contract. Mr. Kirkland's annual salary would be \$115,000 including all employee benefits as provided other employees, and there are a couple of other issues in the contract. Chairman Culver reported Mr. Kirkland worked under Mr. Pool for 8 years and he has learned all of the good things that Mr. Pool has taught him, and he has experience in the private sector as well. He stated Mr. Kirkland realizes that there is a lot more to being a county engineer than being an assistant engineer, and has committed to learning the things in Montgomery and the planning that is necessary from a county engineer for monies that are available. Chairman Culver stated the commission is in unanimity on hiring Mr. Kirkland as the County Engineer. Commissioner McClendon made a motion to approve the contract to hire Barkley Kirkland as the Houston County Engineer. Commissioner Sinquefield seconded the motion. Mr. Kirkland thanked the commission, and stated he looked forward to working as the county engineer. He reported when he came 8 years ago he knew that Houston County was where he wanted to be. Chairman Culver called for the question; and it carried unanimously. Chairman Culver congratulated Mr. Kirkland and stated he would be interim until May 1st.

5. Request to award bid for bituminous coated roadway drainage pipe.

Chairman Culver reported this is the annual or six month bid. Mr. Kirkland stated it was actually a bid for special pipe. Commissioner Sinquefield made a motion to award the bid for Bituminous Coated Roadway Drainage Pipe (Arched) to Hanson Pipe, low bidder meeting specs, in the amount of \$592.15. Commissioner Battles seconded the motion. The chairman called for the question; and it carried unanimously. (Please see attached Bid Summary Sheet in Minute Book)

6. Request to approve item to be sold on GovDeals.

Commissioner Battles made a motion to approve the H. P. Plotter to be sold on GovDeals as requested. Commissioner McClendon seconded the motion. Chairman Culver called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously.

Staff Reports:

Chief Administrative Officer – there was no report

Acting County Engineer -

Mr. Kirkland reported there were 4 roads closed from the storm damage, and he hoped to open up two of the roads this week. He also stated they hope to pave Drew Road and Prevatt Road weather permitting. He reported they are trying to bring the contractor in during this week's Spring Break.

County Attorney – the Acting County Attorney stated there was no report

Chairman Culver asked if there were any questions for the staff?

Commissioner Sinquefield asked Mr. Kirkland the name of the two storm damaged roads that he planned to open this week? Mr. Kirkland stated Fowler Road and County Road #81.

Chairman Culver asked for an update on the Courthouse Parking lot? Mr. Kirkland reported they installed the entrance and exit. He stated they were going to start undercutting the building and it is too wet to start. He reported the parking lot is open and they have been opening and closing it as needed. He stated if the weather stays pretty they will try to get the undercutting done. Chairman Culver asked them to be cognizant of when jury trials are in. Mr. Kirkland stated they were trying to do that because it has to be done in stages. He reported they should be able to complete it over the next week or two without a lot of hindrance to the public.

Commissioner Sinquefield asked Mr. Kirkland about Drew Road? Mr. Kirkland stated he hoped they could pave it this week.

Adjourn

Commissioner Sinquefield made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Battles seconded; and the motion carried unanimously.