

MINUTES OF THE HOUSTON COUNTY COMMISSION
JANUARY 8, 2018

PRESENT: Chairman Mark S. Culver, Commissioner Curtis Harvey, Commissioner Doug Siquefield, Commissioner Jackie Battles, Commissioner Brandon Shoupe, County Attorney Pres Register, County Engineer Barkley Kirkland, and Chief Administrative Officer William J. Dempsey.

Chairman Culver welcomed everyone to the January 8th Houston County Commission meeting and called the 10:00 a.m. meeting to order. He declared a quorum as all commissioners were present.

Pastor Larry Flowers, of The Harbor, gave the invocation and Commissioner Curtis Harvey 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 COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN AND COMMISSIONERS:

Chairman Culver announced that the County has received a notice from the ACCA, along with a resolution that was adopted by the association membership at the annual convention, commending the Houston County Commission and most importantly its' employees for the county's recent excellent liability claims experience. The County is to be commended for working diligently towards this goal. Chairman Culver thanked the Safety Director, Departments Heads and all the employees for working to make this happen. This has been something that the County has really been focused on and everyone has stepped up and it is acknowledged.

REGULAR AGENDA:

1. Request to present the 2016/2017 Year End Financial Report – William J. Dempsey, Chief Administrative Officer

Mr. Dempsey came forward and stated that each commissioner had been given a detailed copy of the Year End Financial Report and at this time he would go over some brief highlights of the main activities that occurred last year. He began by reporting that the County's one cent sales tax collection had an increase of 3.4%; the EMA offices relocated from the Courthouse Basement to the new Communication Center; a resolution was adopted approving engineering services for Folklore Brewery; roof was replaced on the Administration Building; refurbished the water tank at Industrial Park; adopted a new policy regarding open records requests; approved contracts with local municipalities for the use of towers and structures associated with the county tower project; adopted a resolution for tax abatement for the expansion of Wayne Farms and for the expansion of Next Level Apparel.

Mr. Dempsey continued by reporting on the Major Projects for the Road and Bridge Department for the fiscal year 2016-2017. There were 10.6 miles of resurfacing on five county roads including 21.2 miles of shoulder work. They completed 45 cross drain replacements, 1106 work orders, 650 miles of dirt road grading, 42 miles of road stripping, 60K feet of ditch cleaning, 3,584 miles of herbicide spraying, 896 miles of right of way mowed, and issued 133 building permits. Also completed was an additional building pad for the industrial site at Next Level Apparel in Ashford; tore down and hauled away debris at Harmon School for the Houston County School Board; completed site work at the City of Dothan First Responders Training Facility; completed site work at the tower site near Chattahoochee Park; completed major bridge repair on Quail Drive, Fortson Road and Willie Raley Road; replaced bridge bearing pads on 19 bridges; completed work on the Emergency Watershed Protection Project on Drewberry Road; completed work at the Houston County Airport including the installation of 3,400 feet of reinforced concrete pipe; completed storm and debris cleanup from the January 2017 storm plus tornado clean-up in Henry County and additional clean up from Tropical Storm Irma.

Mr. Dempsey went on to report that the Fund Balance was at \$9,208,650 as of October 1, 2017. This amount is almost entirely in the general fund. The County was just recently rated and given an AA- credit rating, which is considered an excellent credit rating. He stated that 41% of the County revenue was generated from the Revenue Commissioner's office and 17% comes from the County sales tax, lodging tax and simplified sellers use tax. The Probate office contributes about 10% of the revenue for the County with state gasoline tax at 9%, sanitation fees with 6%, local revenues bringing in 3%, work release and pre-trial at 2%, and all other at 12%. Total revenue for the year was just over \$39,000,000.

Total expenses for the year were at \$40,440,253, \$1.5 million more than revenue, which was expected. Labor is about 50% of the expenditure with operations being 48% and 2% for capital. In terms of where the money is going, the Sheriff and the Jail received the most at 28% of total expenses, Road and Bridge 24%, Bond Debt is 8%, agencies receive 7%, Community Corrections 2%, juvenile services 1%, Maintenance 7%, Sanitation 5%, Grants 1%, Probate 4% and Revenue and Reappraisal receive 3%. He continued by stating that the total long term debt at the end of last year was \$20,849,000 with 3.5% of that total being lease debt. The Long Term Debt Payment Schedule will be dropping significantly in 2019-2020 by at least a million dollars due to Bond payments decreasing. In addition, lease payments will also decrease during that time by over a million as well. The debt level is at the lowest point that it has been in a long time therefore the County is in great shape.

In regards to Worker's Compensation Insurance and Liability Insurance, the County premium is the lowest it has been in ten years thanks to the efforts of the employees and the safety standards put in place. Mr. Dempsey concluded by stating that the State Unemployment Insurance has dropped to almost nothing as the County actually has no unemployment at this time.

Mr. Culver noted that this financial presentation does not have to be approved as it is just a presentation and no action is being taken.

2. Appointment to the Houston County Water Authority

Commissioner Jackie Battles made a motion to appoint Mr. Dale Phillipe to the Water Authority. Commissioner Harvey seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. Commissioner Harvey made a motion to appoint Mr. Aaron Rodgers to the Water Authority and Commissioner Battles seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

3. Appointments to the Southeast Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission – Scott Farmer, Executive Director

Two appointments have expired and need to be re-appointed, Matt Parker and Lori Wilcoxon. Commissioner Shoupe made a motion to approve the two appointees and it was seconded by Commissioner Sinquefield. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Request to reject bids and authorize County Building Department to complete Courthouse Basement Remodeling Project – Sean Curtis, Maint. Mgr.

Commissioner Sinquefield made a motion to approve the project and Commissioner Battles seconded the motion. Chairman Culver stated that by doing the project ourselves, this saves the county around \$100,000. The motion passed unanimously.

5. Request to approve expenses from Capital Replacement Fund – Sean Curtis, Maint. Mgr

Commissioner Sinquefield made a motion to approve the expenses and Commissioner Shoupe seconded the motion. It carried unanimously.

6. Request to approve Elections Budget Amendment for the Town of Gordon Special Election – Probate

Commissioner Battles made the motion to approve and it was seconded by Commissioner Harvey. The motion passed unanimously.

7. Request from Houston County Personnel Board to approve proposal from Johnson Consulting Group to complete the 2018 Wage Study – Sheri Garner, Personnel Director

Commissioner Sinquefield made a motion to approval the proposal. Commissioner Battles seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

8. Request to recognize and reward county employee Mark Watson for suggestion as part of the County's Spending Efficiency Program – Barkley Kirkland, County Engineer

Commissioner Shoupe made a motion to approve this request and Commissioner Sinquefield seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Commissioner Shoupe and County Engineer Barkley

Kirkland stepped forward along with County Employee Mark Watson. Commissioner Shoupe began by stating that the Spending Efficiency Program was put in place about two years ago and this is the first time that an employee has come forward with an idea to save the county money. The idea behind this program was that the blue collar workers are more likely to recognize day to day efficiency and how to save the county money. This idea that Mr. Watson has submitted will save the county over \$26,000 each year. Commissioner Shoupe thanked Mr. Watson for his suggestion. Mr. Watson thanked everyone for the opportunity and explained how he came up with his idea. County Engineer Barkley Kirkland thanked Mr. Watson and stated that the suggestion has been implemented and is being used today.

9. Request from Town of Cottonwood to resurface parking lot at 12729 Cottonwood Road – Barkley Kirkland, County Engineer

Commissioner Sinquefield made a motion to approve the request and Commissioner Harvey seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

10. Request from Town of Cottonwood to tear down building at 10189 South County Road 55 – Barkley Kirkland, County Engineer

Commissioner Sinquefield made a motion to approve and Commissioner Shoupe seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

11. Request to award bid for Southeast Region Annual Joint Bid for Motorgrader Blades to lowest bidder meeting specifications – Barkley Kirkland, County Engineer

Commissioner Sinquefield made the motion to award the bid. Commissioner Harvey seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

12. Request to sell the following items on GovDeals.Com: Assorted office and computer equipment – Road and Bridge

Commissioner Shoupe made the motion to approve the request and Commissioner Battles seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Staff Reports:

Chief Administrative Officer William J. Dempsey:

Mr. Dempsey mentioned that the Spending Efficiency Program is posted on the County Website under Policies and Procedures, item #52. This is also on the Personnel website.

County Engineer Barkley Kirkland:

Mr. Kirkland stated that we currently have two road closures; Hodgesville and Adkinson.

He also added that the parking lot located behind the Courthouse will be closed from January 12th through the 21st for construction.

Sean Curtis, Maintenance Mgr. stepped forward to discuss the closing of the parking lot located behind the county courthouse. Beginning Friday, January 12th, Road and Bridge will be tearing down the wall located behind the Courthouse so the parking lot will be shut down. Excavation will take place and then the Maintenance Dept. will begin construction to allow for more parking spaces. After January 21st, there will be partial closing of the parking lot until all work is completed. This will be communicated with the media and the Courthouse Staff.

County Attorney Pres Register - No Report

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