

MINUTES OF HOUSTON COUNTY COMMISSION
JANUARY 28, 2008

PRESENT: Chairman Mark S. Culver, Commissioner Curtis Harvey, Commissioner Bobby R. Snellgrove, Commissioner Frances M. Cook, Commissioner Phillip L. Forrester, Gary Sherrer, Attorney, Mark Pool, Engineer, and Roy J. Roberts, Chief Administrative Officer

ABSENT: None

Chairman Mark Culver called the 10:00 a.m. meeting to order, established that a quorum was present, and welcomed everyone. Dr. Jim Sanders, Pastor, First United Methodist Church, gave the invocation. Commissioner Curtis Harvey led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

Announcements and Public Comments from Chairman and Commissioners

Chairman Culver reported part of the county's agreement with the state was to allow the disabled/handicapped hunters to use the Chattahoochee State Park. He pointed out 5 deer had been killed this year at the park. The chairman stated the water continues to come back into the lake where the county has done some work. He reported everything was going well at the park.

The chairman also thanked everyone who participated in Friday's Retirement Reception for Roy Roberts. He reported this would be Mr. Robert's last meeting. The chairman thanked Mr. Roberts for his service to the citizens of Houston County, and stated the commission hated to see him go. Chairman Culver stated they looked forward to Mr. Dempsey's reign.

Chairman Culver reported Circuit Judge Denny Holloway would also be retiring at the end of this month, and he wished him well on behalf of the commission. He stated Judge Holloway has been the Juvenile Judge for several years and the county has made substantial in-roads into their costs under Judge Holloway's partnership with the commission in those areas. He stated he thought the judge was going into the mediation business and the commission wanted to also wish him the best.

Awards and Presentations

1. Annual Financial Report – Roy J. Roberts, Chief Administrative Officer

Mr. Roberts gave the annual financial report. He covered some of the significant financial occurrences in the Fiscal Year 2007.

1. Sales tax revenues increased by \$442,484 in 2007, a slower pace than the previous few years. This represented an increase of 2.76% over the prior year.
2. Total Revenues exceeded budget by \$1.1 million for fiscal year ended September 30, 2007. Total Expenditures were higher than budget by \$1.1 million. The General Fund Reserve level ended \$1.9 million higher than budget and the Road and Bridge Fund Reserve balance ended higher than budget by \$.6 million. The Debt Service Fund ended \$.7 million under budget. Other fund sources from the sale of fixed assets contributed to the improved fund reserve balances.
3. The County Commission approved Ameris Bank as the Depository of County funds for the next three years.
4. A wrought iron fence was added at the Courthouse parking lot to direct pedestrians to the crosswalks to improve safety.
5. The commission approved a rate increase for Sanitation from \$12 to \$15 per month. This additional revenue of approximately \$300,000 will bring Sanitation back into a self supporting position. Cost of fuel and capital equipment necessitated this increase.
6. Houston County took over the Rabies Control Program at the beginning of 2007 from the State Health Department and had a very successful first year. David Evans was named Environmental Services Supervisor overseeing both the Water Lab and the Rabies Control functions.
7. The commission approved a 2.7% cost of living increase for all classified employees effective October 1, 2007.
8. The commission approved a new logo.
9. A new long term plan, the "Houston County Quadrennium Plan," was adopted by the commission which outlined projects the commission wanted to address in the next four years. The plan will be updated annually.
10. The newly elected Sheriff, Andy Hughes, took office in 2007. Clark Matthews was selected as EMA Director upon the retirement of Shelby Womack. Sheri Stephenson was hired as the new Personnel Director.
11. The "Old Courthouse Bell" was located and received on loan from the Dewey Emfinger family and in a dedication service was placed outside of the County Courthouse Building.

12. The county obtained a credit card and adopted a Credit Card Policy in 2007.
13. The county constructed a parking area for the Veterans Memorial Park.

Mr. Roberts reported the county was in sound financial shape, and he stated it spoke well of the Commission. He also thanked the department heads who finished the year under budget. Mr. Roberts reported the commission continues to do the necessary work to keep Houston County in the forefront of county government in the state. Mr. Roberts stated he felt Houston County is one of the best run counties in the state and that it had been a pleasure for him to work with the commission. He pointed out he really thought it had been more than an employer/employee relationship and he expressed his appreciation for the support the commission had given him. He thanked the commission for the work they had done with the citizens of the county. Mr. Roberts stated he thought it was obvious they all loved the county, and it shows in the efforts that have been made to make Houston County such a strong county. The Chief Administrative Officer stated he looked forward to Mr. Dempsey continuing to do the job in a way that everyone can be proud and that the county can only get better.

Chairman Culver thanked Mr. Roberts and stated the Annual Financial Report was started by Mr. Roberts. The chairman reported the commission will always be indebted to his service. He pointed out the citizens of Houston County are very blessed to live in a county with the revenue the county has to operate on. The chairman also pointed out when Mr. Roberts came on board in 1995, Houston County had \$700,000 in reserve funds and today, the county has \$8 million in reserve.

2. Advantage Site Program – Matt Parker, President, Dothan Area Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. Parker gave a brief presentation on the Advantage Site Program. Mr. Parker reported the program is a new certification process that is for industrial sites that has been developed by the Economic Development Partnership of Alabama, Alabama Power Company, Alabama Development Office, ALAGASCO, Alabama Electric Cooperative, and NADA of North Alabama. He stated in the industrial site process things are on a much shorter time frame and states around the country are trying to create a new certification process to show that they are ready, and that they can put things in the ground faster because the construction time period is much shorter. Mr. Parker reported they learned from McLane how short the time frame is from the traditional two year period to nine months. He stated they have been trying to develop a certification process to highlight those sites that are really kind of fast track. He pointed out the Advantage Site Program has a logo that can be placed on the Houston County site areas that meet the certification. He reported it is a volunteer program with a lot of strong documentation and strict minimum criteria for a particular site to qualify for and a lot of it is tied to soil compaction, infrastructure, power redundancy, gas, water,

etc. He stated this is a full documented process and all of the data will be on line coordinated by the Economic Development Partnership to make sure the site gets the best look. Mr. Parker reported getting this certification will be an advantage for Houston County. He stated currently in Alabama, there are 390 industrial sites and they feel about 10% of the sites will meet the certification. Mr. Parker pointed out the program will give Houston County the competitive edge. He reported Houston County was selected as one of the seven pilot areas to undergo this process. Mr. Parker stated in the next 5 months, they would be going through an intense process with documentation, and there could possibly be some additional environmental studies that may be needed on the Houston County Industrial Development site to meet the certification. He stated they would be visiting the site in March and the designation should be received by the end of May. Mr. Parker reported it will be showcased on the state wide data base identifying sites. He reported a lot of companies want to get in the ground fast and those with that designation will probably be the only sites looked at. Mr. Parker reported they are excited that Houston County was selected as a pilot program. He stated Advantage Alabama's database received about 2.6 million hits during the first half of the year, January, 2007, and an average of 12,000 hits a day from 56 countries. He reported when it is broken down into the building and site database, Alabama is receiving about 500 hits a day. Mr. Parker pointed out to date, there are 393 buildings listed and 390 sites. He reported not only is the designation linked to Advantage Alabama's website but it is linked also to the chamber's database. He reported about 90% of their proposals are done through electronic submission and they will be able to move faster to submit data on the project sites. Mr. Parker stated many times they get calls from a company wanting data in two days and this will help in the whole process. He reported he would keep the commission posted on this program. Mr. Parker stated they would be down in March and there would be a meeting with Chairman Culver in addition with the Partnership of Alabama and the other supporters to take care of things. He thanked the commission for the opportunity to work closely with the county. Chairman Culver asked Mr. Parker if he would let the commission know what would be needed for the meeting in March? Mr. Parker stated he would and he reported at this time, the chamber is providing a lot of information on an Excel database spreadsheet. He pointed out they would review the information and refine it. Mr. Parker reported they may want another soil bore in another section of the Houston County Industrial Park. He stated he felt they were in pretty good shape. Chairman Culver thanked Mr. Parker for his good work on the program and asked him to let the commission know what they could do to assist. The chairman stated one of the most important things the commission does is to work diligently to provide good jobs for the citizens of Houston County. Commissioner Forrester asked Mr. Parker to elaborate on one of 7 sites? Mr. Parker stated one of 7 sites in Alabama have been selected, and Houston County is the one in SE Alabama. He pointed out there are a couple in central Alabama and a couple in north Alabama. Mr. Parker stated they would be blazing the trail in this part of the state and he hoped it would help the whole

area. Chairman Culver reported there has been some good activity in the park and they hoped to have an announcement soon.

Mr. Parker thanked Mr. Roberts for the great job he has done for Houston County and wished him well.

Consent Agenda

1. Request to adopt Resolution to reconfirm Frances Cook as appointment to the MPO.
2. Request to award bid on elevator maintenance.

Commissioner Snellgrove made a motion to approve the consent agenda to adopt the Resolution to reconfirm Frances Cook as the Commission's appointment to the MPO, and to award the bid on elevator maintenance to Montgomery Kone, Inc., low bidder meeting specs, in the amount of \$27,144.00 (\$2,262.00 per month) total annual cost. (Please see in Resolution book and attached bid summary sheet in Minute Book)

Regular Agenda

1. Request to adopt new Flood Damage Prevention Resolution.

Chairman Culver reported before a motion is made, Mr. Justin Barfield, who is overseeing the program might want to make comments or answer questions. The chairman reported they have discovered that there are more changes to the agreement that the county needs to make because of more changes the federal authorities have made. He pointed out the recommendation is to table this for two weeks until Mr. Sherrer and Mr. Barfield can get together and make the changes. Commissioner Snellgrove made a motion to table the item for two weeks. Commissioner Cook seconded the motion; and it carried unanimously. Commissioner Snellgrove asked Mr. Barfield to explain why this is being done? Mr. Barfield reported he talked with Mr. Meredith, of ADECA, who handles all of the flood plain issues. Mr. Barfield stated Mr. Meredith informed him Houston County's policy is outdated, and there are some new terminology and definitions that need to be added. He reported he just received it around noon on Friday. He stated he had sent it to Mr. Sherrer's office, and they plan to go over it and will have it ready for the commission in two weeks.

2. Request from the Dothan Area Botanical Gardens to provide one load of dirt for the daylily garden.

Commissioner Harvey made a motion to approve the request from the Dothan Area Botanical Gardens to provide one load of dirt for the daylily garden.

Commissioner Cook seconded the motion.

Chairman Culver reported Mr. Paul Angeloff of the Botanical Gardens was present and he asked him to come forward. Mr. Angeloff reported they had just completed the koi ponds and they had made a request from the Alabama Cooperative Extension to help retrieve the koi out of the big ponds and place them in the koi ponds which are much shallower. He stated they hoped to begin on the pavers for the daylily garden in the next few days. Mr. Angeloff stated Mr. Larry Dykes had met with representatives of the Alabama Power Services Organization and an observation platform in a wetlands area will be built as the result of a grant from Wachovia. He reported they will be getting assistance from Auburn University with regard to identifying plants and bringing plants in that are indigenous to this area. He reported they had a successful camellia show on Saturday, and the first judged camellia show in Dothan will be held in February. Mr. Angeloff reported the rose society will be hosting a rose gardening seminar in March, and seminars are planned on hostas, hydrangeas, and butterflies. He reported a Junior Master Gardeners program has been formed and is going on. Mr. Angeloff stated the Senior Master Gardeners were out at the gardens last week. He reported they have a lot going on at the Botanical Gardens. Chairman Culver reported a lot of work has been done out there, and he stated Commissioner Harvey is the county's representative on the board.

Mr. Pool reported they do not have any topsoil for the flower beds and they actually turn down all of the towns and cities, and the school board because they do not have enough for the shoulders on the dirt roads they are paving. He stated the type topsoil they have will be full of bermuda grass clippings. Mr. Angeloff stated they would take a load of dirt. Mr. Pool asked Mr. Angeloff if he wanted red dirt? Mr. Angeloff stated yes they could use it. Chairman Culver asked Mr. Pool to get them the best dirt they can get. The chairman called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously.

3. Request from the Chief Administrative Officer to fence the Administration parking area.

Commissioner Cook made a motion to approve the request from the new Chief Administrative Officer to fence the Administration parking area. Commissioner Harvey seconded the motion. Chairman Culver reported they had heard from department heads and citizens alike that this needed to be done. He stated he assumed everyone had seen the drawing. The chairman stated the commission was approving to move forward and for Mr. Curtis to take bids. He reported at some point, the commission would approve the bid. Commissioner Snellgrove asked the height of the fence? Mr. Curtis stated it would be a black chain link and he thought it was 7 or 8 feet. He reported the specs had not been written but they had gotten budget numbers together last year. Chairman Culver stated the county wanted to do its part to have an attractive fence and landscaping since the county is part of downtown. Mr. Pool stated the plans would have to be

approved by the City of Dothan, and they would need to get together on the landscaping so that the flowerbeds would be in before the fence is put up. The chairman called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously.

4. Request from the Forestry Commission to issue purchase order for 2008 Ford F-250 pickup truck.

Commissioner Harvey made a motion to approve the request from the Forestry Commission to issue a purchase order in the amount of \$23,031.00 to Woody Anderson Ford for a 2008 Ford F-250 pickup truck. Commissioner Snellgrove seconded the motion.

Chairman Culver asked Mr. Jerry Smith to come forward and explain the request. Mr. Smith reported this will replace an older model ½ ton truck with a ¾ ton truck in order for them to enhance their response to wildfires, which is one of their primary responsibilities. He stated they appreciated the commission's support over the years, and they have a long standing agreement of over 17 years for the services they provide which include wildfires, emergency response, landowner assistance in prescribed burning fire lanes, and homeowners with their shade trees. He stated they could not do what they do without the commission's support. Mr. Smith stated they have had a great working relationship with this commission and the previous commission for over 25 years. He reported they have one of the better forestry programs in the State, and if it were not for the commission he could not make that claim. Chairman Culver stated it would be the intent to transfer the older vehicle back to the county and the county would dispose of it. The chairman reported years ago, the Forestry Commission received flat funding in the amount of \$35,000.00, and then the forestry personnel were kind enough to state if the county would furnish them with a vehicle as part of the agreement they would assist. Chairman Culver stated about every 4 years or so the county budgets this, and in the off years the Forestry Commission receives between \$6,000 and \$8,000 from the county. He reported this has worked really well. Mr. Smith thanked the commission for all of their support. The chairman called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously.

5. Request from the Farm Center to begin dismantling aluminum bleachers from the Farm Center arena.

Commissioner Cook made a motion to approve the request from the Farm Center to begin dismantling aluminum bleachers from the Farm Center arena for use at other areas of the Farm Center. Commissioner Harvey seconded the motion. Chairman Culver called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously.

6. Request to approve budget amendment in the amount of \$350.00 for

William Jamerson, CCC Historian, to appear at Chattahoochee State Park on April 6, 2008, to present an hour long program of singing and storytelling for the 7th Annual CCC Tour.

Commissioner Cook made a motion to approve the budget amendment in the amount of \$350.00 for William Jamerson, CCC Historian, to appear at Chattahoochee State Park on April 6, 2008, to present an hour long program of singing and storytelling for the 7th Annual CCC Tour. Commissioner Snellgrove seconded the motion. The chairman stated this is a good opportunity for the park. He stated since the meeting on Thursday, Mr. Pool had advised him the gentleman does not do any promotions; therefore, the county will want to promote this. The chairman stated he thought a plan to promote this should be devised, and at some point make a budget amendment for a little money to promote it through advertising or check to see if it falls under the guise of public service announcements. Chairman Culver stated he did not know if they would come back to the commission for a budget amendment. The chairman asked Mr. Pool to get the flyer and get a link to it on the website? Mr. Pool stated they are starting a new piece on the website that has news for Chattahoochee State Park. Commissioner Snellgrove stated he felt sure the county could depend on the news media to help. Chairman Culver stated the commission would be asking them for assistance. The chairman called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously.

7. Request to approve F&W to build detour bridge for Brannon Stand Road (\$245,000). A credit will be issued to Houston County for \$10.00 per LF for h-piles that are able to be pulled after completion of the removal of detour bridge in full lengths.

Commissioner Cook made a motion to approve the request for F&W to build the detour bridge on Brannon Stand Road in the amount of \$245,000, and for the credit in the amount of \$10.00 per LF for any h-piles that are able to be pulled after the completion of the removal of the detour bridge in full lengths. Commissioner Harvey seconded the motion. Mr. Pool stated this is \$15,000 cheaper than the other bid and he stated he hoped the county would receive another \$10,000 to \$15,000 out of the h-piles. Chairman Culver stated it is a lot of money to spend for a detour and he had a map of the area that would have to be traveled without the detour, and it is certainly significant. Commissioner Snellgrove asked Mr. Pool if the county was going to get \$10.00 per LF for the piles? Mr. Pool stated it is for whole piles pulled out. Mr. Pool stated there is some limestone in there that is hard and it is questionable whether or not he can pull them out. Commissioner Cook asked if F&W would do the removal? Mr. Pool stated yes. He reported according to the specs, they will build the bridge, put it up, maintain it, and pull it out after the other bridge is completed. He pointed out there are time limits on each one of the steps. Mr. Pool stated they will be watching. The chairman called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously.

8. Request to dig four (4) holes for Houston County Soil & Water Conservation District.

Commissioner Harvey made a motion to approve the request to dig four holes for the Houston County Soil & Water Conservation District. Commissioner Snellgrove seconded the motion. Chairman Culver reported this is done annually for soil judging. Chairman Culver called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously.

Staff Reports:

a. Chief Administrative Officer

Mr. Roberts read a statement thanking the commission for the retirement reception and expressed his appreciation to Senator Harri Anne Smith for the Certificate of Appreciation from the Senate and bringing the Certificate of Appreciation from Governor Riley. He stated he really appreciated that and he wished Senator Smith success in her bid to become our Representative in Washington. He thanked his co-workers, Gary Sherrer, County Attorney, childhood friends, teachers, schoolmates, and fellow administrators, business friends, and family members who came to see him off. He also thanked the press. He stated the people of Houston County have always been supportive. Mr. Roberts stated Houston County is a special place in his heart and he will always be at home in Houston County. He stated he had a little plaque in his office that said "I was not born in Houston County but I got here as fast as I could." Mr. Roberts stated he would leave this week proud and satisfied in his heart that he did the best job he could to make this county proud of this commission. He reported he had worked and looked after the taxpayers funds as if they were his. He wished Bill Dempsey the best in the years of ahead. Mr. Roberts received a round of applause. Chairman Culver stated the county would miss him but they could get him if they needed him.

b. County Engineer – there was no report.

c. County Attorney – there was no report.

Adjourn.

Commissioner Harvey made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Cook and it carried unanimously.