

The Russell County Commission
Meeting Minutes
March 11th, 2009
9:30 A.M. EST.

An adjourned meeting of the Russell County Commission was called to order. Commissioners present were Gentry Lee, Tillman Pugh, Peggy Martin, Ronnie Reed, Mervin Dudley and Larry Screws; Cattie Epps was absent. Also present were Attorney Kenneth Funderburk and the County Administrator LeAnn Horne who kept the minutes.

A quorum was established.

Chairman Dudley requested an approval of the agenda. Commissioner Lee motioned to approve the agenda and was seconded by Commissioner Martin. The vote was unanimous.

The invocation was given by Wesley Price, Pastor of Cottonton Baptist Church.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chairman Dudley.

Chairman Dudley welcomed elected officials, department heads, media and guests.

Chairman Dudley requested a motion for the approval of the February 25, 2009 meeting minutes. Commissioner Pugh stated the minutes are to be corrected as the Election Custodian Committee is an ad hoc committee; Not that I am an ad hoc member; I was appointed chairman of the committee. Commissioner Martin motioned to approve the meeting minutes and was seconded by Commissioner Lee. The vote was unanimous.

Chairman Dudley gave a grant update and explained how the process of obtaining them.

Micheil Cole discussed the need to build field # 4 for the Russell County Sports Complex, which will cost approximately \$30,000. We have someone who has donated \$30,000 in materials for the irrigation system. Commissioner Lee motioned for \$30,000 taken out of the recreation appropriation fund and committed for the installation of the donated equipment and supplies. Seconded by Commissioner Reed. The vote was unanimous.

Commissioner Reed presented Paulette Colbert the Russell County Tag /License Commissioner, requested who on-line tag renewals to reduce the long lines at the Tag Office. Mrs. Colbert: Many vendors offer this service, but I recommended the use of IMS Enterprise of Florence, Alabama. There are 18 other counties in Alabama that use this vendor and speak highly of the company. Five of these counties use our existing S & W Software and this software company also recommends this vendor. The customer would go to WWW.renewyourtag.com: find Russell County, enter the tag to be renewed and use a Visa, MasterCard, Discover Card or pay with e-check. The fee associated with this will be \$3.50 for the first tag, \$2.00 per each additional tag or 3% of the total transaction, whichever is greater. The existing \$2.00 mail fee will still be charged to cover charges processed through the mail. A contract is not required by this company, but the Commission Chairman must sign an application. We should be able to process these renewals by April 1, 2009. There are no charges from the IMS Enterprises, but S & W Mini Computers does charge a one-time set-up fee of \$1,500. I had budgeted for the set-up fee prior, but due an unexpected expenditure those funds were needed to purchase a new modem to attach to the T-1 Line in the new building. It will be necessary to request a budget transfer within my department budget.

Decrease Minor Equipment	Line Item 222	\$1,500
Increase Data Processing	Line item 214	\$1,500

Commissioner Reed motioned to approve the request of Paulette Colbert and was seconded by Commissioner Lee. Commissioner Pugh requested the Commission receive a certificate of insurance from the vendor to be on file with the County in case an issue should arise. The vote was unanimous.

Heath Taylor, Investigator with the Russell County Sheriff's Department, requested to send out the annual jail food and supplies bid and to open those bids the first work session in April at 3 p.m.; and to report the results to the Commission at the regular Wednesday meeting. Commissioner Lee motioned to approve the request and was seconded by Commissioner Reed and Martin. The vote was unanimous.

Mr. Taylor also reported his findings for the Backroads Bar and Grill application for a restaurant/liquor license. This establishment was formally, A.J.'s. It is located at 12 Cottonton Road, Cottonton, Alabama. It has only changed owners, but because it has been closed for a short time, it was necessary to treat this application as if it were a new establishment. We have polled the neighbors and at this time do not see any reason not to approve their application. Commissioner Screws motioned to approve the license. Seconded by Commissioner Reed. The vote was unanimous.

Mike Suber requested, on the behalf of Judge Bellamy, the Juvenile Court Judge, to collect supervision fees for children who come through the courts and are placed on some type of supervision with the court. This revenue will be collected through the Clerk's Office and deposited into the County's treasury. The Judge is asking for this fund to be known as the Russell County Juvenile Services Fund. This money will be used for programs, services, training and will be available for any child who is a resident of the county, not just for juveniles who are on probation. Commissioner Reed motioned to approve the request and was seconded by Commissioner Screws. The vote was unanimous. The County Administrator, LeAnn Horne, recommended the fund be established at Regions Bank. Commissioner Reed amended his motion to include the recommendation of the Administrator. Seconded By Commissioner Screws. The vote was unanimous.

The County Engineer Larry Kite presented the \$3.00 Rule for Paving Roads. This 20-year-old policy was created for property owners who desire to participate in the cost of paving dirt roads and as means to supplement the county's budget and to give those roads priority in paving. The cost is \$3.00 per linear foot, which is \$1.50 per side. Due to price increases and inflation this is no longer practical. The County has more needs than funds to pave roads which have been prioritized based on houses and traffic count. The cost has been analyzed; based on the \$3-and would go to \$5.42. Using the actual cost for materials it would be \$5.71, this month, but that changes each month based on the asphalt index each month. We can do smaller quantities in-house with \$5.71 for materials, which doesn't include labor and equipment. Contractor cost at this time is \$7.68 per-foot. We are proposing to increase the \$3 amount to \$5 or \$6 per foot (set cost policy) which is lower than actual cost but will require additional funding to be budgeted for the project resulting in a longer time to start the project. It would give the project a high priority. We also have a second option (actual cost) for property owners, if they desire to pay the total cost, which will get the road the highest priority. Commissioner Lee motioned to modify the \$3.00 rule to the \$6.00 rule and to add option 2, which would be the actual the cost method if a citizen, or anyone who is interested in paving a road; agrees to pay the actual cost at the time of the process. Seconded by Commissioner Reed. The vote was unanimous.

HRRR Stripping Project resolution is to approve traffic stripping for 3 roads in the county, Bayview Drive, Greenburt Road and Oswichee Road. This is a grant received for high risk rural road program, where the county only has to pay for 10% for the cost of the project. The remainder of the project cost will be paid by State and Federal funds. Commissioner Reed motioned to approve the resolution, and was seconded by Commissioner Martin. The vote to approve was unanimous.

Commissioner Lee stated in the previous meeting we adopted a purchasing policy: if an expenditure amount is \$7,500 or greater, it must have prior Commission approval. To clarify this, approval by Commission is to be obtained in a regular meeting before a purchase order is executed, which was not stated at the last meeting. Once a purchase order is signed, the county is under contract. Before a purchase order is executed, it must come before the Commission. Items that have been previously approved by the Commission, such as a bulk bid on an annual bid basis are already approved. Those purchases are made at a later date; those do not have to come back before the Commission. Utilities and fuel are exempt. Fuel is purchased under an authority and we can not anticipate utilities. The other question that needs to be cleared up, and I'm sure there will be others as we go forward: Any expenditure, grants or any other funds that are deposited into any other fund of the County and as expenditures are extended from those funds and of those funds come under this policy. If it is a grant, one hundred thousand-dollar grant, and in that grant you must purchase ten thousand dollars of something, the Commission must approve. Commissioner Lee states that is in the form of a motion. Commissioner Martin seconded.

Judge Harden asked if this applies to the discretionary funds (special funds).

Commissioner Lee stated if it is deposited into a County Commission account and we have to issue a county commission purchase order. My thinking is yes. Not necessarily, we won't approve it, its just we want to know about the expenditures.

Judge Harden remarked: The Index Fund is at the Probate Judge's desecration, not this body's desecration. From time to time I would have to have a purchase order, because that is what is required by some companies.

In replay Commissioner Lee said: In that particular case since it is set up by law as a discretionary fund, you can extend it without us approving it, but according to this policy before we are going to issue a purchase order, you are to bring it before us and let us know about it. We do not have to approve it, because that is up to you. We can not deny you from extending the fund, but we can not write a purchase order, if you haven't previously informed the Commission that you were going to make that expenditure.

Judge Harden asked the Commission if they would consider, on discretionary funds: that you are informed, but doesn't have to become you in a public forum, because of it being discretionary funds.

Commissioner Lee said: We still want it in a public forum. All that money is paid for by citizens, in one form or another, and we want to know how money is being spent.

Chairman Dudley asked the Administrator to poll the Commission. The vote to approve was unanimous.

Reverend Robinson, The Director of the House of Restoration presented a request for the Commission to assist in applying for the two hundred thousand dollar grant, 2010 ESG Grant, from ADECA. We take care of homeless people in Russell County and we have a high success rate. We have over matched every year and have not had to request additional funding from the county.

Commissioner Lee motioned to approve the request for application for the 2010 ESG Grant. Seconded by Commissioner Reed. The vote was unanimous.

The County Administrator LeAnn Horne stated the City of Phenix City took action to establish a committee to work with the County on joint projects. I brought this to your attention because it has been discussed by City Council Members and Commissioners outside. I brought it to the Chairman's attention and he agreed we should establish the same type of committee to work with the City. Commissioner Dudley: City / County shared Project Committee will have 3 people to serve on the committee. Chairman Dudley requested members to be Commissioners Screws, Pugh and Lee.

Commissioner Lee stated for the record, this committee has no authority or power. This is just for a meeting of the minds between the city and the county, which we know we have had problems in the past. Members are trying to work through those and deal with it. It would be nice if all City Council and Commissioners would meet, but state law does not allow for that. We cannot have a majority. We are limited to three and they are limited to two. This committee has no binding authority; we can meet and talk about common problems. If this committee comes to an agreement, then they will present it to their council and to our Commission.

Chairman Dudley: The purpose is to come back with ideas for our behalf as well as the City's, so we can accomplish goals. There was no vote.

Ms. Horne: We have received an invoice from the Valley Partnership requesting approval of membership funding. However, for those who are new to the Commission, I'll give a brief review. I have reviewed the minutes of September 16, 2008 and the Valley Partnership gave a presentation during our budget meeting to the County Commission. At that time, there was some apprehension about joining because it was not certain how they would bring something to the table for Russell County. On October 14, 2009 they presented more information for this Commission. The Commissioners were still hesitant. So the Commission did not vote to put the funds in the 08-09 Budget. The Commission approved to join the Valley Partnership in December 2008. In order to pay the invoice, a budget amendment will be required and if approved, they are requesting 2 officials to serve on the partnership Board. This is an economic development partnership. The City of Phenix City is a member.

Chairman Dudley: If we approve the funding, at this time I would like to withhold the appointing of the 2 people to serve on the board.

Commissioner Lee asked Ms. Horne what her recommendation would be for the budget amendment.

Ms. Horne: We would have transfer funds into contract services, since we are entering into a contract. If you recall, the Commission submitted a letter of application. The Board did approve the County's application and sent a letter of acceptance with a contract. The amount to be paid is based on the census \$1.00 per person. The City of Phenix City pays \$14,132.00. Our portion is \$11,735.50. Commissioner Lee motioned reluctantly to approve the County Administrator's recommendation for the budget amendment and was seconded by Commissioner Martin.

Ms. Horne: I wanted to note in December, Commissioner Lee motioned to endorse the Valley Partnership and the amount not to exceed \$30,000. We will receive another invoice prior to the closing of this budget year. I want to establish: is your motion to continue with the December motion or is your motion to pay this invoice and bring the other back later?

Commissioner Lee: I don't think we have a choice. We will have to pay the yearly amount.

The Commission was polled the vote was unanimous to approve.

Commissioner Screws: As you know, I work for the Russell Board of Education, and would like to discuss the movement of additional space. I would like to know if I can participate in the discussions for requested space. If needed, we can request a ruling from the Ethics Commission on whether or not I can participate.

Commissioner Lee: I have been in that position before and did get a ruling- stating that I could be included in the discussion, but when it comes to voting you may not be able to vote.

Commissioner Screws: The Russell County Democratic Conference is having a spring festival at Mount Olive School, March 28th, 2009 from 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. every child will receive a free kite. They are asking everyone to come out in support.

Commissioner Pugh: Previously we had talked about decaling vehicles and we had discussed permanent type decals and not magnetic type. That being said, I am asking at the next work session that the Department Heads that have the magnetic type, bring those for us to look at. Then we will look at it again as to whether we will ask for permanent decals as we voted to do and decided. I would like to see what types are being used. Some are so small. The other thing, when this came up, there was an absence of decals and personnel tags as a Russell County tag. I requested a list of each person who did not have a proper county tag or decal, and if they had a reason for not having one on the vehicle to note it and return back to the Commission. I still have not received that. I would like that at the next work session. Besides decals, I asked for copies of contracts and I still have not received some contracts. I ask the Administrator to also give me a list of all contracts of services, personnel, whether it deals with contracts of labor; anything. I wanted a list of those contracts, by the department, such as Probate Judge, and a master sheet with those listed on them, so I can check-off the contracts I currently have to see if I have any gaps. I still have not received that. That being said, I would like to have those if possible at the next work session for any Commissioner to look at.

Ms. Horne: I have provided the letters the Department Heads have turned in to me with the vehicle information and copies were provided to each County Commissioner. I also have given copies of the contracts for each Commissioner, which I recall was several hundred pages from each Department Head. If there is something in particular you need, please let me know. Also as far as decals, it was not stated whether to use permanent or magnetic. Again I did provide those documents to the best of my knowledge. If you are missing something specific, please let me know.

Commissioner Pugh: I did receive contracts, but I asked for a master copy listing example: Administrators Office and list all current contracts and I can take the contracts I have to look on that list to see if I have a gap. If other Commissioners received it, I'm not aware of it.

Ms. Horne: I did not know you asked for a master listing.

Chairman Dudley: Please have all agenda request in the Commission Office by noon on Thursday, prior to the Commission Meeting.

Commissioner Lee Motioned to adjourn the meeting.

Meeting adjourned.