

RUSSELL COUNTY COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

September 12, 2006

10:00 A.M. EST

An adjourned meeting of the Russell County Commission was called to order in the County Commission Chambers at the Russell County Courthouse. The following Commissioners were present: Gentry Lee, Gordon Cox, Peggy Martin, Ronnie Reed, Cattie Epps, Mervin Dudley and J.D. Upshaw.

A quorum was established by the County Administrator.

Commissioner Martin motioned to approve the agenda business items. Commissioner Epps seconded the motion. The motion carried by unanimous vote of the Commission. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Dudley.

The invocation was given by Rev. Wayne Burns, Missions Director of Russell Baptist Association.

Chairperson Cox welcomed visitors, the news media, department heads, elected officials and citizens.

Commissioner Dudley motioned to approve the meeting minutes of August 29, 2006.

Commissioner Martin seconded the motion. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

The Administrator requested the Engineer to clarify reference made at the August 29th meeting dealing with a contract he suggested be stopped when the time frame expired.

The Administrator requested a copy of the contract be sent to the Commission office. Mr. Gohde stated: There is no contract. A loan of the dozer from Chambers County will be up in a couple of weeks but there is no contract.

The Administrator requested he obtain one.

The County Administrator read a Proclamation for Sister Cecelia Harrison of Mother Mary School for approval of the Commission.

PROCLAMATION
OF APPRECIATION TO
SISTER M. CECELIA HARRISON

WHEREAS, in 1940 Mother Mary Mission began to instruct children under the loving care and tutelage of the Vincentian Sisters of Charity and within one year Mother Mary Mission School was founded. The Salvatorian Fathers of the Society of the Divine Savior served as priests, pastors, religious ministers of the Word and with the Sisters as teachers, administrators and coaches to thousands of young people of Russell County, Alabama.

WHEREAS, Good Sister M. Cecelia Harrison of the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Perpetual Help entered the Convent in Jamaica and took her vows on the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, August 15, 1956. Sister Cecelia has served as a Franciscan Missionary Sister for a period spanning fifty years; and answering the call from the Cayman Islands came to the United States with her ministry to teach and administer to the children of Russell County during the last eighteen years at Mother Mary School in Phenix City, Alabama; and

WHEREAS, during her tenure as Sister, teacher and administrator, she has performed her tasks with distinction, efficiency and the highest level of integrity while providing service to individuals from all walks of life; and

WHEREAS, Sister M. Cecelia Harrison currently resides on the historical grounds of Mother Mary Mission, where she is the Principal of Mother Mary School and continues to provide spiritual encouragement, counseling and assistance for children on a daily basis, fulfilling her deepest conviction and mission in Christ, as she will often say: "We must never throw away a child;" and

WHEREAS, the Russell County Commission acknowledges that the professional dedication of Sister M. Cecelia Harrison has played a major role in the development and education of the children of Russell County, Alabama.

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved by the Russell County Commission in meeting duly assembled as follows:

I.

That it hereby congratulates and commends **Sister M. Cecelia Harrison** for her diligent and professional service to the citizens of Russell County, Alabama.

II.

That it hereby extends to Good **Sister Cecelia** its gratitude for her contribution and devotion to the betterment of Russell County, Alabama.

III.

That it wishes her happiness, prosperity and success in her future personal and professional life.

IV.

That this Resolution be spread upon the official minutes of the Russell County Commission, and that copies of the same be transmitted to **Sister M. Cecelia Harrison** and the news media.

PASSED, ADOPTED and APPROVED this the 12th day of September, 2006.

Commissioner Martin motioned to approve the Proclamation. Commissioner Reed seconded the motion. The Administrator polled the Commission. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

Homeland Security/Emergency Management Director Chance Corbett presented the Twin Gates Drive Resolution for implementing green space requirements for approval of the Commission.

(Resolution on file in Commission Office)

Commissioner Lee motioned to approve the resolution and authorize the Chairman to sign. Commissioner Epps seconded the motion. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

Chance Corbett presented a Hazard Mitigation Grant Program Resolution for approval of the Commission.

A RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the Russell County Commission wishes to pursue the option of contracting with an independent demolition contractor, therefore changing the scope of work in an effort to satisfy the grant provisions of DR-1549-050 (Twin Gates Drive, MHMP Grant) in Hurtsboro, Alabama,

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Russell County Commission hereby authorizes the pursuit of a satisfactory demolition contractor under the provisions of the State of Alabama Public Works law, dependent upon the direct affirmation from the Federal Emergency Management Agency in reference to this grant DR-1549-050, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Russell County Commission has hereby pledges not less than **\$37,000.00** of cash match towards the funding of this demolition and that these services will be made available and used as specified in the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program agreement.

PASSED, ADOPTED, AND APPROVED this 12th day of September 2006.

Commissioner Upshaw motioned to approve the Resolution. Commissioner Dudley seconded the motion. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

County Engineer, Rick Gohde stated” The Stafford and Opelika Roads intersection light poles were scheduled to arrive this morning but at the time I left the office they had not. I have a meeting scheduled with Mr. Kite with the City of Phenix City this Wednesday at 1:30 to discuss the installation so at the next meeting I should have more information. At the close of the work session meeting last evening, it was decided we would meet with Representative Vance to ask his assistance on aiding a cooperative agreement with the Alabama Department of Transportation on the County Road 4 bridge extension project. We started on the Evans Road project yesterday and hope to begin paving on Friday, weather permitting. On Lonesome Pine Road we started to acquire the right-of-way and immediately ran into a problem with a septic system that was installed on one of the lots right underneath where the road was going to go. We will have to shift the road south because it happens to be in a key area where Lonesome Pine will be joining Abercrombie Road.

Mr. Gohde stated: We started cutting grass about a week early. We are now down on County Road 12 heading in a westerly direction back to County Road 4 and continuing in clockwise direction.

Mr. Upshaw asked Mr. Gohde how long the process is taking this time.

Mr. Gohde stated: This time around we are basically on schedule. Last time it took us about eight weeks to cover the entire county. We should be finishing up in about six weeks.

Commissioner Dudley stated: Do we know where we stand on the Brown Road project?

Mr. Gohde stated: We could possibly look for completion by the end of September.

Mr. Upshaw stated: We have stated in the past that we cut grass three times a year, then we decided to go to two times. I guess I should put this in the form of a motion to go back to three times due to the height of the grass. Some of the grass on the right-of-ways is out of control. Citizens are calling me. I appreciate you trying to protect the mowers, but the grass is out of control, at least in the areas I have driven.

The County Administrator stated the Probate Judge submitted a letter which you will find in your packets. The Probate Judge requests a transfer of funds to cover the costs of book binding in the Probate office. The transfer from Line Item 541-(Equipment & Furniture) to Line Item 309-(Printing & Bookbinding) in the amount of \$910 is requested.

Commissioner Lee motioned to approve the request. Commissioner Martin seconded the motion. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

Commissioner Lee stated: This is a transfer of funds within his budget not a request for additional funds.

Commissioner Epps stated: Is the book binding a continuing project? We have been doing this bookbinding for three years now. Is the gentleman that was coming in after hours and on weekends still doing this?

The Administrator stated: It is the same person to my knowledge. I'm not sure what hours the work is being done. He works from home sometimes as well, I am told.

The Administrator polled the Commission. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

Homeland Security/EMA Director Chance Corbett stated: As we discussed last night, we have all but two of the ten homes we purchased in Twin Gates Subdivision closed. There are two that have requested an extension. These homeowners have purchased manufactured homes and have been given a delivery time of 60 days. They will have a 30 day period between moving out and having their new homes set up to move into. We have explained to them that we have a deadline to have the homes taken down and returned to green space. This is a one time extension if approved by the commission. At this time, I would like to request that homeowner's numbers 19 and 21 have an additional 30 day extension.

Commissioner Lee stated: Is there any reason we couldn't make this 35 days to cover any problems and delays?

Mr. Corbett stated: The additional 5 days wouldn't interfere with the deadline to be set for October 20, 2006.

Commissioner Lee motioned to offer an extension of 35 days to these homeowners.

Commissioner Epps seconded the motion.

Mr. Corbett stated: We will require these homeowners to sign a waiver of liability for the period of this extension. They will be delivered to them on Monday and will be signed on Monday.

The Administrator polled the Commission. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

The County Administrator recognized and thanked the County Attorney Kenneth Funderburk for his legal services assisting with the Twin Gates projects and property closings.

County Engineer Rick Gohde stated: At the last meeting, I requested an extension of time for bids for heavy equipment rental and bulk cement delivery. Since that time, I have had to readjust the budget significantly and while the projects are still in, the budget has not yet been approved. So, I am reluctant to send out these bids until it is approved. At this time, I am requesting a cancellation of these bids until the budget is approved.

Commissioner Dudley motioned to approve the request. Commissioner Martin seconded the motion. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

Rick Gohde stated: At the last meeting I requested approval to send out bids for 6th Place South sidewalk replacement with a bid opening date of September 21, 2006. The problem is the deadline for advertising for bids closed the same day and we missed the deadline by about one hour. I have had to change the dates for those bids to September 28, 2006 with the bid opening time still for 3:30 EST. This requires approval of the commission.

Commissioner Epps motioned to approve the request. Commissioner Dudley seconded the motion. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

Rick Gohde stated: Now that the Seale Recreation site earth work is all but complete, I have been asked to put together a package for two of the four Dixie Youth Ball Fields. We have been working with Goodwyn, Mills and Cawood design architects to get a package together to do that. This is without fencing and lighting but with irrigation, etc. They have sent over a packet of information for us to review with a final package expected in a week or two. What I am asking for at this time is to advertise for bids for the two Dixie Youth Ball Fields with a bid opening date of October 19, 2006. Bids will be opened in the Commission Chambers at 3:30 EST.

Commissioner Dudley motioned to approve the request. Commissioner Upshaw seconded the motion. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

The County Administrator asked the Commission if they would approve of the draft budget meeting agenda.

Commissioner Lee stated: We all know it's going to be a tight budget year. Wouldn't it be more pertinent to review the County Commission's projects toward the end of the budget review process? It is not a requirement of the budget process to do this and I would hate to approve several projects and later have to go back and change things due to not having the

funds. Since we are going to be in an official meeting when we do this, once it is motioned and a second is made and approved, it's in the budget.

The Administrator stated: I just need to know how to schedule the budget review process because I have department heads trying to schedule a time to plan on coming into the budget meetings.

Commissioner Epps stated: My suggestion is to put the Commission requests last, hear from the department heads and then we will know what we have left to work with.

Commissioner Dudley seconded the motion. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

James McGill of Phenix City/Russell County Chamber of Commerce stated: Ms. Horne and I have received a request for an extension on a project from Industrial Warehouse Services that was approved by the Commission in January of 2006. They had set the date of completion for November 1, 2006. They have requested a 90 day extension to March 1, 2007. I have spoken with Ms. Horne and she has no problem with this request. The company will send the request to the Department of Revenue and a copy will come to the Commission office. This doesn't require a vote. The other item I want to mention is the owner of Industrial Warehouse Services asked if the abatement waives the building permit. I told them that it does not and you will most likely not honor that.

Chairman Cox stated: It would require our building inspector and other county employees' time and there is a difference in abating a tax and providing services we would have to pay for.

Commissioner Lee motioned to recess until 1:30 p.m. today.

(Russell County Budget Meeting Minutes follow on the next page.)

Russell County Budget Meeting
September 12, 2006
1:30 p.m. EST

Commissioner Lee motioned to reconvene.
Commissioner Upshaw gave the invocation.

Probate Judge Albert Howard stated: So far as I understand it, the salaries for my department are increased by three percent. The biggest item I have a bone to pick with the Administrator about is I put in for budget request for printing and bookbinding of \$35,000 and she decided that I didn't need but \$15,000. I think most of you are old enough to remember that for many years the printing and bookbinding line item in the budget was for one or two thousand dollars. This did not do much to preserve or restore the books that are required to be kept permanently. During this time I have been in office, I have been fortunate enough to develop a resource for recovering those old books and replacing the binding and covers. I estimate it will take one to two more years to get the books finished downstairs and the most significant remaining are the books upstairs. If you take a look at the books upstairs, the bindings are beginning to get tattered and having a lot of deterioration. We have a developed resource in Stan Smith who can do that work. If you cut the funds down to \$15,000, the work will continue for six months and then disappear. As a resource, it will be another decade before you will find someone that can do that work. It is my estimate, that with him doing the work, it is allowing the county to recover those volumes in the nature of \$250 to \$350 each, instead of \$500 to \$700 each.

The County Administrator stated: I had some reservations due to, for instance, the Revenue Commissioner had budgeted around a thousand dollars for bookbinding. In 2004, your office spent around \$14,000. In 2005, so far you have spent about \$35,000 and the salary for this went from \$5.00 to \$7.00 and now I think you are paying \$15.00 an hour. Before we keep that at the same level, I felt the Commission should be informed of why this line item has increased, because I have received some inquiries about it.

Judge Howard stated: If you went back to 2003 it would have been even less because there wasn't anybody to do the work. Mr. Smith came on a little over a year ago.

Ms. Horne stated: I just had some questions and I know you requested it, so please explain it to the Commissioners. What about Microfilm? I have been asked about your Microfilm machines. I know at one point you were going to do the scanning of your documents through your new computer systems to help reduce the book binding expenses.

Judge Howard stated: Well, the statutory requirements of all those prior to 1900 have to be preserved. That is where the bulk of the effort has been to date. Those books are leather and the spines were falling off. Booklet seams were coming undone. Most of that restoration work has been done. Now the books upstairs, which are handled by numerous people, citizens coming in to look up genealogy and so forth, those are getting tattered. All these records are backed up on microfilm through about 2002.

The Administrator stated: Do we have a microfilm machine? Citizens are inquiring.

Judge Howard stated: The Archive in Birmingham does. You have to pay per copy here at the courthouse. If the courthouse gets hit by a tornado and those records are destroyed, the Archive microfilm would be used to regenerate that document.

Commissioner Upshaw stated: How many books are there?

Judge Howard stated: Do you mean how many books are there? Let's see, I think the latest deed volume is 1100. I think there are about a thousand volumes.

Commissioner Upshaw stated: How much would it cost to have them done?

Judge Howard stated: Not all of the volumes will have to be done though. Only about 500 will have to be redone.

Commissioner Lee stated: Let me ask the same question in a different way. At the current rate that we are restoring them, you said you expect to have them all done in one to two years. This is still an ongoing process so you're going to fall behind again. When we get caught up, it won't stop the bookbinding from having to be done. In other words we will generate more books to be preserved.

Judge Howard stated: We are not generating new books because we have gone to digital imaging, but you do have to maintain them. What has never been done in the past is to use materials that don't develop fungus and help prevent it from attacking. That has never been done previously. There will be some ongoing costs like that that would bring it back down into the thousands.

Commissioner Lee stated: So you say in about two years we will have done all the preservation that needs to be done to the existing books as long as Mr. Smith is willing to do it.

Judge Howard stated; He has a bad back so he may not be able to be with us forever. We are lucky to have had a person become available to do this work. His daughter taught him

what was taught to her and he improved on it dramatically. His work became industrious.

Chairman Cox stated: In the past haven't we used volunteer help with this?

Judge Howard stated: In the past when the gentleman from Beadle Bindery was coming over, he was training teenagers but we have never had volunteers. This is not work that is well known how to do. He estimated four or five years ago when I met him, that he was the only person between Atlanta and Tallahassee, or he may have said Orlando, who knew how to restore books. I had used one retired bookbinder who died on us, Mr. Paul Reckey. Then we had the gentleman come in that trained teenagers. He also died unexpectedly. The teenagers that I hoped would do the job turned out to be unreliable. Finally, I found Mr. Smith who was a student at Auburn, who agreed to come in and do some work. One of the mill layoffs caused him to be unemployed and he's been doing it ever since. I don't know if you have been down to look at his work, but it is obviously better than the work we had been having done. As far as I can tell, keeping those books and maintaining them is a County Commission issue. I don't think that we will be able to take the indexing fund and put it over for that without a challenge. I have used some of those funds this year to supplement that effort. I don't know what the new Judge is going to be willing to do.

Commissioner Lee stated: We could ask the Legislature to amend the indexing fee fund to include old records as well as new ones.

Judge Howard stated: We have certainly improved them by restoring them. The special indexing fund is flush at the moment. But if we go on to the next stages, to back scan these old books, that's an expense that deserved procurement. We should aim for 50 to 70 years of books for digital imaging.

Commissioner Epps stated: How long has this gentleman been doing this work for you?

Judge Howard stated: He is an independent contractor and I figure he has been here for about fifteen months.

Commissioner Epps stated: Looking at this dollar amount, did he start out at \$7.00 an hour?

Judge Howard stated: I really don't recall but it was more like \$8.00 or \$9.00 initially.

Commissioner Epps stated: Looking at these figures that's quite an increase from \$7.00 to \$15.00 an hour in just fifteen months.

Commissioner Lee stated: I am speaking for the Judge now, but he was learning how at \$7 an hour. Now as your skills improve, you should make more money for your work.

Commissioner Epps stated: I'm sure that the department heads have improved in their jobs since they first started. Mr. Brannen has improved, so has Paulette and the rest of them. I'm referring to the increase of money in the length of time since he started.

Judge Howard stated: We have a very short supply of labor to do this job. If you had several people walking around that could do this work that didn't have jobs, you could pay a lesser amount. This person is the only one in the State that I know of that can do this work.

Judge Howard stated: I had a staffing request. When the pay schedule was made up for the county about six years ago we had very little dependence on computers. Now we are highly dependent on them, as you know. I had asked for one of the job descriptions to be changed to database administrator. She has developed business license, marriage license, voter registration applications that our vendors are trying to integrate into systems that are currently installed. She is knowledgeable and skilled and has been a dedicated employee. She knows all the business rules for that office. She has a fairly unique blend of knowledge and skills and if you don't recognize those, her skills are transferable. She has asked for a pay increase. I think she deserves it and that's why I put that in there. Basically, it would cost another \$7,300 to implement this change. I am sure you all recall last year I was trying to get an ex-employee a raise. There was a long discussion about cross-training. Janita is the person who went from up front to the back. Back logs started disappearing and by December we were basically caught up. It showed me that I hadn't been understanding some of my employees very well or what they were doing. I prefer to think of it as a compliment to her and her skills. She has worked the front for several years and has, of course, run the recording area now for over a year. If the vendor has any questions about how his software is meeting our needs, Janita is the one that is going to be able to give them the answer. When I leave, I believe she is going to be about the only one that is competent in this area from the remaining ones in there. The Chief Clerk is not a computer wizard as much as Janita is. I won't claim that she is a computer scientist but she is familiar with our computer operations on the financial side and the license side and how to make systems support clerks in a way that they can understand. I certainly urge you to consider this for the long term benefit of the Probate Office.

Commissioner Epps stated: It seems like you had another young lady in that office that had completed her education on a higher level. She came to you and asked for an increase of almost the identical same figures as you have here. I think that lady was in the same position, I may be a little off there, but I think you are asking us now to give this lady the same thing that the other employee was asking for.

Judge Howard stated: I think you are talking about Akefa Dennis who was in charge in the recording room, who Janita replaced when Akefa left. The situation went where we were having constant troubles getting documents recorded to clearing up all those problems and all recordings as soon as they came in. I am not certain I want to be to public about attributing cause and effect. I'm not sure whether or not we have had a drop off in recordings or not, but there is a dramatic difference between the performance going on in the recording room now and a year ago.

Commissioner Epps stated: When we got the letter from Akefa, (she was) asking for the raise in the same position of almost the exact same amount of money. Now we come back and you are asking for this. The letter didn't state anything about the work but the qualifications for the job. You referred her to the commission.

Judge Howard stated: Obviously I can't award pay raises. What else could I do but refer her to the Commission? She did not have the skills that the current person who took over the job duties has. She could not be described as the current request is described.

Commissioner Epps stated: This is true, but you never came before the commission and requested the pay increase for the other employee the way you are coming before us now to request this raise. I'm in favor of giving what is deserved.

Judge Howard stated: Akefa asked for an immediate raise in the middle of the budget year. She quit by the end of July before we got into the budget process. There is no way you would have approved a mid-year pay raise. That has been your constant policy.

Commissioner Epps stated: Sshe was asking this when she did because it was coming up to the budget time. She wanted you to come before this Commission for her as you are for this employee now. Your response to her was what prompted her to write to the commissioners. You signed that letter. She wanted you to ask the Commission for her raise and you told her to go and talk to the black commissioners. That was in her letter and you signed it.

Judge Howard stated: I don't see what that has to do with the price of tea. I appointed a Chief Clerk and Mrs. Dennis is one of those who were disappointed she wasn't made the Chief Clerk. The backlog in the record room grew quite long after that. She asked for a raise in the middle of the budget year. I told her she had to talk to the Commission. She became impatient and quit. I don't know what else to say.

Chairman Cox stated: We will listen to everyone and then make our decision. We are not going to vote up or down at this time. Let's move on. Thank you for your input.

Revenue Commissioner Naomi Elliott stated: I had written each Commissioner a letter when I originally submitted my budget request to Ms. Horne. I am asking that you consider my request for additional staffing in the Revenue Office. I would like to do some cross training, but I don't have the people to do that. I had put the amount in the letter and had worked with Carolyn Robinson on the figures. Commissioner Lee stated the difference is one is with benefits included and the other is salary alone it appears.

Commissioner Upshaw stated: Last year, didn't you request part-time help?

Mrs. Elliott stated: They were seasonal part-time employees during collection months. They are here now as a matter of fact because we are getting a new computer system and they need training in order to be prepared for the collection months. The reason I am requesting a full time employee is with all the growth and development in the county. This is the assessing side of it. I only have one person doing that full time now. I would like to be able to send people out to be trained when there are courses available to them. I would like to ask that you consider my request.

Tag Commissioner Paulette Colbert stated: I am requesting one additional full time tag clerk position in the tag office.

Commissioner Lee stated: Would you be willing to have two part-time tag clerks?

Mrs. Colbert stated: I am willing to work with you any way I can. I am asking for a Grade 5 Step 7 position. The total I got from Carolyn Robinson with salary and benefits would be \$28,131.85. The reason I asked for this is because I thought we had done away with part-time employees.

Commissioner Lee stated: The benefit of having part-time employees is you don't have the additional expense of benefits.

Commissioner Epps stated: People are retiring at a younger age these days. As they retire younger, they already have a lot of the skills they would need in a job. This would save from having to send them out for training and save the county money in that way. If we approve this slot for either part-time or full-time, could we get a little spice in there?

Mrs. Colbert stated: The young lady that was working in our office that I had to let go; I have spoken with her and she is willing to come back. Her name is Dedra Lamb. I think that answers your question, if I read you right. She is African-American. She has called several times asking if her position will ever become available again. I would certainly hire her back because she is a good employee and already trained for the position. Currently, I know you are aware of Mrs. Long being in the hospital. I also have another employee who is seriously ill and going through a lot of treatments. She is out of work quite a bit.

Commissioner Reed stated: Mrs. Colbert, if we decide to approve this position, when would they start?

Mrs. Colbert stated: I need her right now. Like I said, I am short handed due to the illnesses in the office. We are in need of someone right now.

The Administrator stated: Is the traffic heavier towards the end of the month?

Mrs. Colbert stated: It is normally heaviest at the first and the end of the month. Usually we have a slight lull in the middle, but, we have not been seeing the lulls because of being short staffed.

The Administrator stated: Are there any other budget concerns at this time?

Mrs. Colbert stated: I am very pleased with everything else as far as I know. Thank you.

The Building Inspections department head reported to the County Administrator that he is satisfied with his departmental budget as submitted and was not present at the meeting.

The Maintenance department head reported to the County Administrator that he is satisfied with his departmental budget as submitted and was not present at the meeting.

The Administrator stated: I do want to go over a few things in the Maintenance budget, just to let you know what we have talked about. In this budget, we are assuming the old EMA utilities building. As you know, the Ambulance Service is going to be occupying that building. We are going to upgrade the bathrooms in the courthouse. That is badly needed. Also, we are considering replacement of some of the carpet. There are roof repairs that are ongoing. We are having incidents due to the humidity that is a constant battle due to this old building. There is a new substance used in paint to prevent that. Also, the Health Department has requested, for your consideration, help with landscaping and maintenance of the building. Their funding is being cut. We have helped them tremendously as you know throughout the years. Now they are asking for our maintenance to take over their grounds and maintenance. Eighty percent of the citizens they serve are City residents. Perhaps the City would share in some of the help for the Health Department.

Commissioner Lee stated: Could some of these renovations you have spoken about be placed in the Public Building Fund to take some of the strain off of the General Fund?

The Administrator stated: Actually, not this year. The increases and all the insurances consume the most part. I will get you a copy of that fund. Also, the Senior Center, there were repairs that had to be done there. If there is something you wish to change or add to this, I'll be glad to pass it on to Mr. McBride.

Commissioner Dudley stated: Something needs to be done for consideration coming from the City on some of these joint services. The Ambulance services provided to the City residents is worth something. Do we have any figures on a dollar amount we have invested in this service?

The Administrator stated: I have all those figures broken down and will get you a copy of them. There have been renovations to the building for the Ambulance Service including the additions of showers, heating and air conditioning as well as carpet and other improvements.

Commissioner Martin stated: The present Mayor said that they wanted to work with us. It seems that someone dropped the ball when the subject was approached.

Chief Mapper/Appraiser J.W. Brannen stated: We are satisfied with everything in our budget as submitted, although we do have a little house cleaning that needs to be done. We had two retirees that allowed us to do some promoting within our office. I want to promote Sharon Travick from Chief Clerk to Office Manager. That will require moving from Grade 9 Step 9 to Grade 10 Step 8. Sharon has been with us for 21 years. I would like to promote Sabrina Atkins from Administrative Assistant 3 to Chief Appraisal Clerk. This will require moving from Grade 7 Step 8 to Grade 9 Step 3. Sabrina has been with us for 18 years. I would like to promote Trellis Williams from Administrative Assistant 2 to Administrative Assistant 3. This will require moving from Grade 6 Step 6 to Grade 7 Step 5. Trellis has been with us for 13 years. Lisa Whitehorn was placed in the wrong grade. Administrative Assistant 1 is Grade 5 not Grade 6. This will require moving from Grade 6 Step 4 to Grade 5 Step 9. This correction was made when it was discovered that Ms. Whitehorn was placed at the wrong Grade. The budget of our department is otherwise satisfactory.

Homeland Security/EMA Director Chance Corbett stated: I would like to discuss some increases that are not mirrored in budget proposal. First of all, our department is continuing to grow as you know. I have been on the job for five years now. The workload for this department has increased tremendously. Last year over 1.1 million dollars were brought in through grant money for Homeland Security and Emergency Management. The projected amount for the upcoming year is well over that amount. I have asked for an increase beyond the 3 percent proposed increase. Kathy Russell is currently in the Planner/Coordinator position. The need for a Deputy Director in our department is great. If I am out of town or otherwise not available; someone needs to be able to take over control of the department. I feel we need to pay that position for what it deserves.

Kathy has acquired further education and achieved certification through the State of Alabama for Advanced Emergency Management. This will require budgetary increase if you decide to do that. The salary would increase to \$32,843.20 and requires an Associates Degree. As most of you know, our Administrative Assistant, Yogi Rumsey, is leaving on September 30, 2006. This position is greatly needed. I would like to request a position of Planner to fill the duties that Yogi excelled at. This position would be at a Grade 9 Step 1 at a salary of \$28,142.20. In the requirements for this position, I would like to require 30 hours of college credit as I did when we hired the last Planner. Both of those positions require to the minimum requirement standards for the State of Alabama for Emergency Management Positions to be obtained within three years. I have one more proposal for that position and that is a vehicle to be used as an on call vehicle and not to exceed \$10,000.00. My last request is my salary. I have not come to you for the past two years requesting a salary increase. My position is an "on call" 24-hours a day position. I feel like it is very important to the county and the amount of money we have raised for the county well justifies the request that I am making. By comparison, neighboring Lee County just filled the position of EMA Director with no direct experience in Emergency Management at \$55,000.00 I have five years experience in Emergency Management, a Masters Degree and every Advanced Certification available and am requesting a salary of \$56,000.00. I appreciate your consideration for these requests.

The Administrator stated: The Coroner, John Morgan, and I met and reviewed where he is on expenditures. I would like to report where we are in his budget and then Mr. Morgan can take it from there. Looking at the office from a financial point of view, in looking at what we have paid contract services through the years; the gentleman that is now doing that now lives in Lee County. I have to concur with him that if we purchase something off of State Surplus for the Coroner, whoever it may be, that will save the County some money.

Mr. Morgan stated: We did reduce some items such as mileage, registration and planning, contact services and some others.

The Administrator stated: I did some checking with surrounding counties and most of them do have the means for the Coroner to transport bodies. If we use contract services for that the costs are very high. Year-to-date totals for Contract Services as of August 31 is \$5,792.00 and mileage to-date is \$4,842.00.

Commissioner Reed stated: I would be in favor of the Coroner getting an SUV.

Mr. Morgan stated: He is satisfied with the proposed budget.

The Juvenile Probation department head reported to the County Administrator that he is satisfied with his departmental budget as submitted.

Board of Registrars Jimmy Adams stated: We have stocked up on postage stamps in the amount of \$1,000. All we need in our budget is \$1,000 for postage, Office Supplies \$750 and Registration and Training doesn't need to be cut because of the cost of travel and dues have increased in price. The budget as proposed is otherwise suitable.

County Engineer Rick Gohde stated: To start off with I submitted a budget to Ms. Horne. She replied by sending me a proposed budget of "Here's what I think we can do." So, everything I gave you before can be thrown away and put this new budget in its place.

Commissioner Lee stated: Do you know how much General Fund money is transferred in the new budget you have just given to us?

Mr. Gohde stated: \$147,850.00. If you factor in the money we derive from the sale of equipment, anticipated to be replaced. This budget represents about a percent decrease from last year. In terms of the General Fund it is about a 75 percent reduction. Salaries and wages stayed about the same; even though it is recommended the 3 percent COLA (Cost of Living Adjustment) is built into that. Our overhead items have been reduced by about 16 percent. We had to cut a little from maintenance supplies in order to balance the budget. You can find all this information in the revised budget I have submitted to you today.

Sheriff Tommy Boswell stated: Our most important priority is our people. We are competing with Phenix City, Lee County Sheriff's Department and Opelika Police Department for quality employees. I want to show you some figures that compare the same jobs, doing the same duties that require the same expertise; so you will see that our employees are not being paid what they deserve.

After further discussion, Sheriff Boswell requested a 20 percent pay increase for the Sheriff's Department, Jail and Animal Control employees. The remaining budget proposal is satisfactory.

Chairman Cox stated: We will stand in recess until next Tuesday, September 19, 2006 at 3:00 p.m. EST. Commissioner Dudley seconded.