

The Russell County Commission
Meeting Minutes
January 27, 2010
9:30 A.M. EST

Public Comments were made by:

A citizen presented his inability to access his property due to washed out easements.

Dr. Loudon Alexander again asked the Commission to expedite actions on personnel matters regarding Jimmie Lee Long and Hovet Dixon.

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

A quorum was established.

Chair Martin requested a motion to approve the meeting agenda. Commissioner Epps motioned to approve the agenda. Seconded by Commissioner Reed. The vote was unanimous.

The invocation was given by Reverend Raymond Cochran, Pastor of Franchise Missionary Baptist Church.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Reed.

Chair Martin welcomed elected officials, department heads, media and visitors.

Chair Martin requested a motion to approve the January 13, 2010 meeting minutes. Commissioner Dudley motioned to approve the meeting minutes. Seconded by Commissioner Reed. The vote was unanimous.

County Attorney Kenneth Funderburk presented a resolution designating the "Old Mead Building" as the "Russell County Courthouse" and the old Courthouse as the "Judicial Center" which is the permanent courthouse for the trials of civil and criminal cases. Commissioner Epps motioned to approve the resolution. Seconded by Commissioner Reed. The vote was unanimous.

Probate Judge Alford Harden updated the Commission on the possible closure of the National Guard Armory due to asbestos testing by the State, which is a county voting location. Therefore, an alternate polling place should be available if reports of asbestos are found in the building. Judge Harden requested the Commission to grant, the County Attorney and himself emergency powers in the event the Armory is closed. Also, Golden Acres Baptist Church, which is located across the street, has offered their building as a polling place for the Special Election, Tuesday, February 2, if needed. Commissioner Lee motioned to approve Judge Harden's recommendation and was seconded by Commissioner Dudley. The vote was unanimous.

Scott Holmes, Architect for Hecht Burdeshaw, reported on the Judicial Center Renovations Project. Mr. Holmes stated their goal is to bring the Judicial Center up to code, improve energy efficiency, address mold issues, increase the number of bathrooms to include handicap facilities and insure handicap accessibility in the building. Russell County will purchase the materials which will save money. Updating the Judicial Center's interior and an additional security room at the back of the Center has also been included. Soil testing and surveying is needed for foundation soundness for the addition. Commissioner Lee motioned to allow the Architect to schedule necessary testing and surveying for the new addition.

Seconded by Commissioner Dudley. There were 6 votes approving the motion. Commissioner Epps asked to be excused during Mr. Holmes report to attend an out-of-town conference and was not present for the vote.

County Administrator LeAnn Horne stated the RFP for a County Wide Comprehensive Plan had been sent out and posted on the Russell County Web Site and advertised in local newspapers.

County Attorney Kenneth Funderburk recommended going into executive session for two items: Ala Tax and to review the Judicial Center renovations and problems that maybe related to that as well as budget items.

Announcements were made before the executive session.

Commissioner Martin announced a yard and bake sale to be held January 30th at the Russell County Sports Complex.

Commissioner Reed gave awards to Bill Friend, Emmett Stephens, Reverend Andrew Key, Fannie Mae Johnson, Reverend Hayward Hudson and Katherine James.

Commissioner Lee motioned to enter into to executive session. Seconded by Commissioner Dudley. The vote was unanimous.

Commissioner Lee motioned to reconvene and was seconded by Commissioner Pugh. The vote was unanimous.

County Attorney Funderburk stated: Based discussions during executive session and the report given by the Architect; I recommend we retain the firm Hecht Burdeshaw and their plans for all renovations and improvements to the Judicial Building that were outlined today in his presentation. I also recommend he let those out for bid to see what the bid is with a clear understanding that this is not an approval going forward with the construction of the project. The Commission will pay for the plans presented by the Architect and putting this work out for bid. Commissioner Lee motioned to allow the architect selected to proceed with the preparation of plans for the entire project presented today and have those, as soon as possible, for review and submittal for bids. In preparation for bid, we request to list as many alternates as possible in the bid, so the Commission will be able to pick and choose what projects can or cannot be done. Seconded By Commissioner Reed. The vote was unanimous.

Commissioner Pugh clarified that the Commission is just reviewing and a decision has not been made to spend this money at this point.

Commissioner Lee also clarified the Commission knows these projects are needed but, we need to know a firm accurate cost before we make those decisions, not just the Architect's estimated cost.

Kenneth Funderburk stated: This will delay work on the air conditioning system a few months, which will extend the time Judicial Offices will remain in temporary locations.

Commissioner Dudley motioned to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Commissioner Lee.

The meeting was adjourned.