

The Russell County Commission
Meeting Minutes
January 9, 2013
9:30 A.M. EST.

A public comment: Cynthia McKinney from Beyond Expectations Community Outreach announced a special event that will be held in February at the Olive Elementary Gym for high school girls who cannot afford prom dresses. She is also requested donations of formals for the event.

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

A quorum was established.

Chair Martin requested a motion to approve the meeting agenda. Commissioner Epps motioned to approve the agenda and was 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 Epps.

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

A motion was requested by Chair Martin for approval of the December 12, 2012 meeting minutes. Commissioner Corbett motioned to approve the minutes. Seconded by Commissioner Reed. The vote was unanimous.

Chief Deputy William Alexander discussed ankle bracelet monitoring program and requested if the Commission would like to proceed with the program, and if so, what would the monetary cap be? Commissioner Lee motioned to appropriate \$50,000 toward this program and to monitor it closely for a year to see if it will save the anticipated amount expected in jail cost. Seconded by Commissioner Reed. Administrator Horne added: Based on the Sheriff's discussion at the Monday night work session; she would like to place that money into the Commission Office Contract Services, so the expenses can be tracked and paid, as well as allow the Attorney to review the information, contracts and have the Chair to sign once that review is done. The vote was unanimous.

Coroner Sumbry presented a court ordered cremation for Terry Evans by Taylor Funeral Home not to exceed the amount of \$400. Commissioner Corbett motioned to approve the cremation and was seconded by Commissioner Reed. The vote was unanimous.

Commissioner Screws stated the District 7 appointment for the Department of Human Resources has asked to be replaced. He has contacted Cynthia Leonard, who is willing to serve on the Board. District appointments do not require a Commission vote.

Administrator Horne requested authorization for the execution of a purchase order for 2 Grounds and Buildings Maintenance trucks that were budgeted and approved by the Commission. Specifications for the trucks were presented at the work session and do not exceed the approved budgeted amount. Commissioner Lee motioned to approve the truck purchase and was seconded by Commissioner Pugh. The vote was unanimous.

Chief Appraiser Heath Crowe requested approval to purchase 2 vehicles for use by the Mapper/Appraiser Department. These vehicles, which total \$39,000, were included and approved in this year's budget. At the current time his office is using their personal vehicles for field maintenance and annual reviews. He feels it would benefit them to purchase the vehicles for easy identification to residents as they move through neighborhoods assessing homes and properties. It will also be a cost savings to the County. Commissioner Pugh motioned to approve the purchase and was seconded by Commissioner Lee. The vote was unanimous.

County Engineer Larry Kite presented the next 4 business items. The first was a requested to declare a 1996 Caterpillar backhoe as surplus to be sold at auction through J.M. Woods Company. The sale of the backhoe was in the 2012-2013 budget with a guaranteed minimum price of \$231,500 by J.M. Wood. Commissioner Pugh motioned to approve the request. Seconded by Commissioner Epps. The vote was unanimous.

The Briar Creek Park Lease is a supplemental agreement to a lease that was originally approved in 2003 by the County Commission. The park is located in the Cottonton/Pittsview area and is basically a boat ramp. The County mows the grass, maintains the parking lot as well as keeps trash picked up, and dredges the creek as needed, which allows the park to remain open. The supplemental lease is for 5 years and will extend the lease through December 31, 2017. Commissioner Lee motioned to approve the lease. Seconded by Commissioner Screws. The vote was unanimous.

Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) Funding Agreement which is required for Federal Aid projects administered through ALDOT and was approved by the Commission to proceed with Federal aid funding. The project is ready for bid. The agreement executes the required 20% county match for funding. The estimated total cost of the project is \$664,439.32; therefore, the county share is \$132,887.86. The estimate may change according to the actual bids and the match was included in this year's budget.

Project # STPPC-5706 (202) RCP 57-001-11 is for the widening and resurfacing of CR-39 (Nuckols Road) from CR-18, (Oswichee Road) to CR-24 (Bradley Road) approximately 3.857 miles. The letting date is schedule for January 25, 2013. Commissioner Pugh motioned to approve. Seconded by Commissioner Epps. The vote was unanimous.

County Engineer Larry Kite presented ATRIP and RAMP programs, which he discussed the differences and benefits to county road projects. The Governor of Alabama announced a program called the Alabama Transportation Rehabilitation and Improvement Program (ATRIP). This is a bond program to advance Federal fund to counties and cities up to \$1million spread over a three year program. The program does require the usual 20% county match for Federal funds and is set up for application in three phases. Russell County's Phase 1 application was for \$5,000,000 in projects and was awarded one project which was Oswichee Road in Seale. Phase 2 rolled over projects that were not awarded in the first phase. Russell County applied for \$12,365,000 in projects requiring a match of \$2,473,000.

In November 2012 due to counties having difficulties obtaining matching funds, the Governor announced a RAMP program which is in conjunction with ATRIP. RAMP will provide \$1 million in matching assistance to all counties who chose to opt into the program. This program will allow counties up to \$5 million without a match, but are limited to the \$5 million, therefore will not be able to do other projects. After the RAMP program was released, a decision was made to seek assistance from the State for the old U.S. Hwy 431, which was turned over to the county. A request was sent to Senator Beasley for \$600,000 in assistance. An answer has not been received yet, but Mr. Kite felt the county would receive some assistance based on the age of the road. Assistance was also request from the City of Phenix City due to the combining of municipalities in the RAMP program. Mr. Kite recommended if the Commission could get assistance through ALDOT and/or Phenix City to help with the county match of the \$12.4 million in ATRIP projects then the county should stay in the ATRIP program. If the county is not able to obtain assistance for the required 20% county match of the ATRIP, application should be made for the RAMP program. The deadline for the RAMP program is today, January 9th.

Commissioner Corbett discussed the meeting that took place between the County Commission and The City Council. and an offer the City has made to the County. Commissioner Corbett motioned: If the County does not opt into RAMP and continue to pursue ATRIP funding. Sell the County building located at 1206 7th Avenue to the City of Phenix City for \$700,000 contingent upon a resolution from the City of Phenix City to refund a mutually agreeable amount of their 10% gasoline tax, along with the purchase price of the building. That gas tax refund / payment to the County will be used to fund the matching funds for the ATRIP projects that are approved by ALDOT. Also the first \$100,000 of the purchase price will be set aside, as needed, to help fund the construction of the additional building at the Sheriff's Office for the Investigation's portion. The remainder of that will be dedicated to the matching money for ATRIP. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Lee.

Commissioner Corbett announced the 7th Avenue building is unoccupied and it has been discussed but there are no plans for occupancy in the future. He also declared that he did still want to work with the School Board if later they feel that they require a different location. This motion is also contingent upon the Auditors opinion concerning a fair price for the building and the Attorney's opinion whether or not we are in line with this motion. He feels this is a great opportunity for this county. If the County enters the RAMP program the number of projects for the county will be cut in half.

Reed stated for the record he is not in favor of selling the building. There has to be other ways to get revenue and there may come a time we need more space and he would not vote to buy more land.

Commissioner Screws conferred ATRIP will be beneficial to his district, but he did not want to sell the building.

Commissioner Corbett stated it should be noted today is the deadline for RAMP; therefore a decision has to be made. RAMP would greatly limit projects applied for by the county and the city. Constructing the Investigative Building next to the Sheriff's Office is a better option than moving the investigators into the 7th Avenue building.

Commissioner Epps discussed the appraisal of the 7th Avenue building and the cost of upkeep on an empty building. She also discussed the amount that the School Board had offered for the building as opposed to what the building is worth. She stated her decision reflects what is best for the county and the city.

Chair Martin stated the two governments should work together and this is an opportunity for that. She also summarized a letter Mayor Eddie Lowe sent to the Commission this morning concerning the city forgoing \$75,000 of Gas Tax for 10 years to the county with the understanding the City will also purchase the 7th Avenue building for \$700,000 to be done within 90 days.

Commissioner Pugh asked for the Attorney's opinion.

Attorney Robert Lane stated he did not think the Mayor would offer this option to the county if he was not certain he had the votes to back his offer.

Chair Martin asked the County Administrator to poll the Commission. District 1 (Lee) voted, yes; District 2 (Pugh) voted, yes; District 3 (Martin) voted, yes; District 4 (Reed) voted, no; District 5 (Epps) voted, yes; District 6 (Corbett) voted, yes; District 7 (Screws) voted, yes. 6 yes votes and 1 no vote; the motion was approved.

Several Commissioners thanked Commissioner Corbett for his work with this project.

Administrator Horne thanked the City Manager Wallace Hunter, Mayor Lowe and the City Council for working with the County Commission.

Commissioner Epps stated this is a big step in proving the elected officials of Russell County are willing to work with City officials. She thanked the City for the opportunity.

Chair Martin announced her district appointment, Jim Cannon, for the Personnel Review Board resigned due to his election to the City Council. She appointed Johnny Barfield to take Mr. Cannon's place on the Board. A vote was not required for the district appointment.

County Administrator Horne stated the Association of County Commissioners has requested the approval of the Safety Coordinator Resolution. Approval of this resolution will increase the County's insurance rating and hopefully decrease the insurance premiums. Commissioner Pugh motioned to approve and was seconded by Commissioner Epps. The vote was unanimous.

Administrator Horne announced that the Commission seeks interested citizens who are willing to serve as Board appointments for the following: Russell County Utility(garbage), Russell County Water and Russell County Sewer Boards. This information has been placed on the East Alabama Cable, the Phenix Citizen and the Russell County Commission Website and those who are interested in serving please send a Bio/ Resume type with information about yourself. The committee who has been appointed will review this information and bring to the Commission the top recommendations for nominations. The Committee will meet January 17, 2013 at 10:00 a.m.

Chair Martin made announcements:

- The Courthouse will be closed January 21st for a state holiday. A work session is scheduled for this day. Commissioner Lee motioned to cancel the work session. Seconded by Commissioner Corbett. The vote was unanimous.
- The Annual Chamber of Commerce Dinner will be held January 31st, 2013 at 6:30 p.m. at the Central High Cafeteria.
- The Probate Office and the Revenue Commission will be closed at 3:00 p.m. on February 13th for training.

Commissioner Lee motioned to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned.