

The Russell County Commission  
Meeting Minutes  
October 10, 2012  
9:30 A.M. EDT.

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, Mervin Dudley, and Larry Screws. Also present was the County Attorney Kenneth Funderburk and LeAnn Horne who kept the minutes.

A quorum was established.

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

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

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Screws.

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

Chair Martin requested a motion to approve the September 26<sup>th</sup>, 2012 meeting minutes. Commissioner Lee motioned to approve and was seconded by Commissioner Reed. The vote was unanimous.

The E-911 report was distributed by Commissioner Reed.

Commissioner Screws presented the recommendation from the Hiring Committee for the position of the Homeland Security/EMA Director. The Alabama State EMA Representative Brett Howard, Chair Martin and Commissioner Screws were the committee members. Mr. Howard provided the questions and a rating scale was used to rate each applicant. Based on the rating scale, the applicants response and qualifications, he motioned to make Kathy Raines the next EMA Director. Seconded by Commissioner Lee.

Chair Martin: Ms. Raines was Interim Director before and did a fine job.

Commissioner Reed: I was told she had withdrawn.

Chair Martin: I was not aware that had happened; I was out of town last week.

Commissioner Pugh: Commissioner Screws, normally when a recommendation is brought back to the Commission, we are given the two top candidates and allow the Commission to choose from those.

Commissioner Screws: the two top candidates were: Bob Franklin and Kathy Raines.

Commissioner Epps: We have the opportunity to vote on the two top candidates. I know the recommendation came from the committee for one person. I think the Commission should be given the opportunity and have the right to vote on who we want to represent Russell County.

Commissioner Lee: The way that is normally handle is the Committee has its recommendation. The recommendation was made; a motion was made and seconded. Then the Commission votes on it. If the recommendation doesn't get a majority then we go to the second recommendation. You usually always go with the first recommendation.

Commissioner Epps: Last time we hired someone we had a choice in candidates. All of the candidates were written on a piece of paper and we continued to vote until there was a majority.

Commissioner Screws: Last time we hired it was for the Mapper/Appraisal position and one candidate was brought for recommendation not the entire list of candidates.

Commissioner Pugh: I have headed a couple of committees and I brought back a couple of recommendations back to the Commission and I always brought the top two. Then let the Commission chose from those.

Commissioner Screws: I have no problem with that. The Committee selected this person and you vote the way you feel.

Chair Martin: Are you ready to vote?

Commissioner Pugh: What are we voting for?

Chair Martin: The recommendation of the Committee.

Commissioner Pugh: If I understood him, he changed the recommendation.

Commissioner Screws: No.

Commissioner Pugh: You are saying those are the two top candidates?

Commissioner Screws: Yes.

The Commission was polled. District 1 ( Lee) voted, yes; District 2 (Pugh) voted, no; District 3 (Martin) voted, yes; District 4 (Reed) voted, no; District 5 (Epps) voted, no District 6 (Dudley) voted, no; District 7 (Screws) voted, yes. 4 no votes and 3 yes votes the motioned did not pass.

Commissioner Reed: At this time I motion to offer the position to Bob Franklin.

Chair Martin: Will the whole Commission be able to vote on this candidate?

Commissioner Lee: Yes. I don't have a problem with any of the candidates that applied, but we have a committee, who researches, did the interviews and asked questions and came back with a recommendation. I can vote for someone other than their recommendation. We are going to have to do it another way, with a public interview and get all the Commissioner's involved.

Commissioner Pugh: I don't have a problem with the process or the way Commissioner Screws presented it to this Commission. I think that a person who has been employed and holding that job has some weight, and I'm basing that on my decision. I don't think it is fair to pass over an employee for someone who is not an employee or someone who has been here and left. I have no problem with any of the candidates that went through the process, but I feel like Mr. Franklin is the best choice in the long run.

Chair Martin: We were led by the State EMA Representative. We had five applicants and all were interviewed, they all had fine records. When the scoring was complete, Ms. Raines scored the highest. Mr. Franklin was second. He has been a good interim director. We have a motion on the floor to make Mr. Franklin the EMA Director. Commissioner Epps seconded the motioned.

Commissioner Epps: I have to agree with Commissioner Pugh. To recall the personnel manual it states if there is an employee, who is qualified then that person should have preference. Mr. Franklin has been in the position about 7 to 8 months. He has done great things for the county; he has been able to work with the Commissioners. I have not had any complaints about the service he has given to the public. I feel strongly that if you have a person trained already in the position doing a good job and we are going to overlook that person. In my opinion that is not fair. We have to be fair to our employees and fair to the residents to this county. A lot of things have gone on as far as hiring and I feel was not right. All of us have been there. I think it is fair to give the position to someone that is already there doing a good job.

Commissioner Screws: The Committee met and it was very fair. We rated each applicant based on their performance, education and based on what was said, it has nothing to do with like or dislike. It's nothing to do with anything but when we added up the scores this person had the highest score based on credentials and experience.

Commissioner Epps: I'm not saying the Committee wasn't fair; I'm saying this Commission has to be fair too?

Commissioner Screws: I understand what you are saying, but if you are indicating because someone is in the position, they should be given preference. I have no problem with that. But, at the same time if you score an applicant based on the information that they give; it is unfair to the person who outscored the others applicants that we don't recommend them. We brought the recommendation and you made a decision. That is what was said at the last meeting, we will bring our recommendation of the qualified applicant and you vote it up or down. The process was fair.

Commissioner Reed asked for the vote.

Chair Martin: I want to reiterate we went by qualifications and education for those five applications and it is hard to make that decision. The Commission body made a decision. Therefore; we will go for the vote.

District 1 ( Lee) abstained; District 2 (Pugh) voted, yes; District 3 (Martin) abstained; District 4 (Reed) voted, yes; District 5 (Epps) voted, yes; District 6 (Dudley) voted, yes; District 7 (Screws) abstained. 4 yes votes and 3 abstentions the motion passed.

The Special Enforcement Officer stated that the nuisance complaint was resolved before the meeting and was not discussed.

Probate Judge Harden presented a request by the Middleton family for a family cemetery. This is a small cemetery that has met all the guide lines. Commissioner Epps motioned to approve the Middleton Family Cemetery and was seconded by Commissioner Reed. Commissioner Pugh asked Judge Harden if this is approved as a private cemetery does this come off the tax role. He agreed it would come off. The vote was unanimous.

Announcements:

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Stampede Rodeo will be held October 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> at the Exchange Club Arena on Hwy 431 South. Half of the proceeds from the Rodeo will go toward an employee appreciation week and the other half will go to the Russell County Athletic Club.

The Commissioners have an invitation from the Reaves Company for a Customer Appreciation Bar-B-Que October 12<sup>th</sup>, at their business address.

Chair Martin adjourned the meeting.