

The Russell County Commission
Meeting Minutes
November 13th, 2013
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, Chance Corbett, and Larry Screws. Also present was the County Attorney Kenneth Funderburk and County Administrator LeAnn Horne, who kept the minutes.

A quorum was established.

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

Chair Martin announced the Sheriff's Salvaged Vehicles and Sheriff's Bids for Vehicles were not included on agenda; also, Child Abuse Prevention Month Proclamation and the Executive Session were stricken from meeting agenda. Chair Martin requested a motion to approve the agenda with the corrections. Commissioner Corbett motioned to approve the agenda and was seconded by Commissioner Reed. The vote was unanimous.

The Invocation was given by Tommy Poole, Pastor of Pine Grove Baptist Church.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Vice Chair Epps.

Commissioner Reed presented a Certificate of Recognition for the retiring Circuit Court Judge George Greene. Judge Greene was unable to attend the meeting but was represented by Barbara Lagrand. Commissioner Reed asked for the certificate to be read and entered into the minutes. *"For his dedication as a lifetime public servant, his devotion to the Code and constitution of the Great State of Alabama and the people of Russell County, as well as, his significant contributions to our county; it is with deep gratitude, we honor and salute Russell County Circuit Court Judge George Greene; upon his retirement from the Russell County Judiciary. You have made a difference in the quality of life for the citizens of Russell County, Alabama"*.

Chair Martin requested a motion to approve the October 23rd, 2013 meeting minutes. Commissioner Corbett asked that the grant request presented by The EMA/Homeland Security Director should be corrected to read Hazard Mitigation Plan. Commissioner Corbett motioned to approve the minutes with the change. Seconded by Commissioner Lee. The vote was unanimous.

Commissioner Corbett gave a presentation concerning the creation of a recycling program for the County. Sanitation Director Carl Currington gave an update on the six month trial recycling program he implemented several weeks ago. He also has applied

for a grant in the amount of \$200,000 to help offset the cost of implementing this program on a permanent basis if the trial proves feasible for the county.

Commissioner Corbett updated the Commission and guests about the first Citizen's Academy session that was held November 5th. The next session will be December 3rd.

Judge Michael Bellamy discussed the success of the Russell County Drug Court Program and the grant award of \$36,000 from the State for the program. Judge Bellamy also requested an appropriation of \$40,000 for funding of the program. Commissioner Corbett motioned to ask the County Administrator to find funds and to approve the \$40,000 for the program. Seconded by Commissioner Screws.

Commissioner Lee: There is no doubt this is a worthy project, my only question is, this was brought before the Commission during budget hearing and for some reason we did not fund the program.

Judge Bellamy: I did not realize I needed to make an appearance.

Commissioner Lee: We had your letter in our budget books, but it probably would have helped if you had been here. I wished we had considered this at budget, because Commission policy has always been, unless it is an emergency after the budget has been approved, we do not go back and try to adjust the budget. I do not want to set this as precedence, because this is not the only deserving program in the county. A lot of others did not get funding either.

Judge Bellamy and Tommy Powell discussed the success of the Russell County Drug Court and how other counties are sending officials to observe how the program works. The program is funded by a State grant as well as many other sources. The State did reduce the grant by \$19,000 this year due to budget constraints.

Commissioner Pugh: My only comment is I support the Drug Court and have before and will this time, but we did not raise appropriations for other departments so that gives me a little heartburn. I'd like to see it level funded as it was last year. The motion is that, but if we could at least find \$30,000 I would be supportive. I think it would be unfair to other people coming in late and we then giving them more than we did on other appropriations.

Commissioner Corbett: My motion is on the table. How do other Commissioners feel prior to if I amended it?

Commissioner Reed: I support \$40,000; Judge Bellamy is doing an outstanding job. If you talk to the Sheriff, there are more people incarcerated because of drugs. We need to get behind Judge Bellamy and support the Drug Court program.

Commissioner Pugh: The motion is to see if we could find \$40,000. That did not mean we had to find that amount, if I understand the motion. If we could find \$40,000 that

would be great and I would support that, but I have to caution the other Commissioners that this would be setting a precedence that we are giving Judge Bellamy's Court an increase where we did not give the others. Another thing during budget time when we had recreation going on, there was a lot of talk that we could not afford that. So, we need to be cautious if we can't afford something like that now to be cautious of what we are doing now.

Commissioner Reed: If we don't give Judge Bellamy \$40,000 it will cause the Sheriff's expenses to go up.

Vice Chair Epps: I have attended Judge Bellamy's court and have stayed for the whole program. It is wonderful. What Judge Bellamy is asking for and with him working with the Sheriff; I see it is an off-set. What you are saving in the Sheriff's Department, you are helping with the Judge's program and citizens.

Commissioner Lee: It would be easier to support the \$30,000. So, as Commissioner Pugh said, if you increase one then you have all of the others say that you did not give me an increase, but you did everybody else.

Vice Chair Epps: But, he said if you find \$40,000, she may not find but \$30,000, so whatever we find is what the Commission will give. I say we call for the vote.

Chair Martin called for the vote. District 1(Lee) voted, yes; District 2 (Pugh) voted, yes but stated, based on the other Commissioner's comment, if it is off-setting we will take that money out of the other budget and give it to him and that will make it right. Yes. District 3 (Martin) voted, yes; District 4 (Reed) voted, yes; District 5 (Epps) voted, yes; District 6(Corbett) voted, yes; District 7(Screws) voted, yes; the vote was unanimous.

Sheriff Taylor stated six Sheriff's vehicles were previously approved by the Commission for sale. Sale of the vehicles via internet was unsuccessful; therefore, he is requesting to have those sold to a scrap yard.

Sheriff Taylor stated instead of buying the new vehicles that were approved at the 2013-2014 budget meeting from the State Bid List, he would like to send specs for their purchase trying to reduce cost more. Commissioner Lee motioned to allow the salvage of vehicles requested by the Sheriff and to seek bids for the vehicles that are to be purchased. Seconded by Commissioner Reed. The vote was unanimous.

The last item presented by Sheriff Taylor is a request to bid furniture for the Investigations Center. He would like to open the Furniture and the Vehicle Bids on November 22nd at 3:00 p.m. in the Commission Chamber and to have results ready for Commission approval at the November 27th, meeting. Commissioner Lee motioned to allow the Sheriff to seek bids for the furniture and if the bids come in more than the Commission can afford then they can be turned down. Seconded by Commissioner Corbett. The vote was unanimous.

County Administrator announced that Governor Bentley has sent an order restating the Holiday Schedule as follows:

- Thursday, November 28th and Friday, November 29th the Courthouse will be closed for Thanksgiving.
- Tuesday, December 24th and Wednesday, December 25th the Courthouse will be closed for Christmas.
- New Year's, Wednesday January 1, 2014, the Courthouse will be closed.

Administrator Horne wanted the public to be informed as well as the newspaper, so the holiday schedule could be published and adjustments for the utility pick-ups or other department's agendas could be made.

Chair Martin announced the FOP will hold a fund raiser Saturday, November 16th in the Walmart parking lot to help purchase the headstone for Lieutenant Frankie Deer.

December 14th, the Christmas Dance will be held at the Old Seale Courthouse from 8:00 p.m. until 12:00 a.m.

Vice Chair Epps asked James McGill to give an update at the next Commission Meeting concerning sewage in Russell County.

Commissioner Reed motioned to adjourn the meeting.

Chair Martin adjourned the meeting