

The Russell County Commission
Meeting Minutes
November 26th, 2014
9:30 A.M. EST

Chair Martin called an adjourned meeting of the Russell County Commission to order.

The invocation was given by Keith Badowski, Associate Pastor of Epworth United Methodist Church.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chair Martin.

Chair Martin welcomed elected officials, department heads, media and guests. She also thanked Cable T.V. of East Alabama and the Citizens News for coverage of the Commission meeting.

The Commission roll was called, members present were: Chair Peggy Martin, Vice Chair Cattie Epps, Gentry Lee, Tillman Pugh, Ronnie Reed, Chance Corbett and Larry Screws. Also present were Attorney Robert Lane and County Administrator LeAnn Horne, who kept the minutes.

A quorum was established.

Chair Martin requested a motion to approve the November 12th, 2014 Commission Meeting minutes. Commissioner Lee motioned to approve the minutes and was seconded by Commissioner Pugh. The vote was unanimous.

Commissioner Epps discussed a possible County Commission Storm Shelter for Russell County residents.

7:28 Commissioner Corbett presented the Parks & Recreational Personnel Issue and asked to turn it over to the County Administrator who received a letter the day before the meeting.

Commissioner Epps: At Monday's work session it was agreed that the person being discussed would be given the opportunity to speak at today's meeting. I would now like to them the chance to speak.

Commissioner Corbett: Before anyone speaks, I placed this item on the agenda. If the Commission would prefer I am prepared to go over exactly, what I did on Monday night again, I am prepared to do so. This may take 30 to 40 minutes to do so; I am prepared to do it. I will ask at this time to go through most of my comments, even some that I was not able to get on Monday night due to time. At this time the Commission has received a

letter of resignation from a lawyer's office and do not see the need to go through this again since we do have a letter of resignation. I again at this time ask the Administrator to take the floor again, read the letter so I can make a motion to accept the resignation.

Administrator Horne: Last Wednesday we received a verbal resignation from Mr. Mike Parker and yesterday we received a faxed resignation from a lawyer's office addressed to myself. Reading:

Re: Employment

Dear LeAnn:

I hereby offer my resignation, effective February 28, 2015.

Very Truly Yours,

Robert "Mike" Parker

Along with his verbal and written resignation, I would like to recommend an acceptance of Mr. Parker's resignation, based on our policy, The Commission will have to vote to accept the resignation. It requires a twenty eight day notice to the Commission when a department head chooses to resign, and with that allow him to begin today to leave with pay until February 28th as he has requested. That way he can do what he needs to do.

Commissioner Pugh: Madam Chair, at this time I offer a motion to accept the resignation from the department head, and that his pay continue until February 28th, 2015. He must turn in all keys, his personal property be removed from the premises today and the County vehicle returned by 5:00 p.m. today.

Commissioner Corbett: I would like for Commissioner Pugh to amend his motion to also state that all his duties be relieved at this point.

Commissioner Pugh: I will do that. All duties are suspended at this time with pay.

Commissioner Corbett: I second that motion.

Commissioner Reed: Madam Chair, are we open for discussion? If we decide not to accept his resignation, he will continue to work?

Commissioner Corbett: Unless another motion comes to the floor and there will be another one to quickly follow it.

Commissioner Epps: I have a concern with this whole situation. I have listened to everything that has been said and everything that has not been said, but I think needs to be said. I'm wondering if the resignation was given because of pressure and why there has been so much pressure put on the Coach about one project. It seems we have to be fair, because we have to deal with the Savior above. We have to be fair with what we are doing. We haven't had any problems until we got to one project. That same project I was accused of not wanting to support it because I didn't want the children to have recreation. That was not true either. I accepted it, because when you speak sometime you do not know how people are going to receive what you are saying. I would like to hear and I haven't heard it and I understand we are Commissioners and we have that authority, but we still need to be fair with our employees. I still want to hear from the accused about what happened with this one county project that we are going to terminate him. There are other situations in this county that when something happened we replaced those employees and gave them another chance or another job. I haven't seen anything in writing that was put in his personnel file. It's only been hear-say. I'm wondering should we not give this employee the chance to defend himself.

Commissioner Lee: Madam Chair, I could be wrong but I have not heard any accusation or anything about termination in an official meeting.

Commissioner Epps: That is what I'm saying.

Commissioner Lee: All I see is a resignation.

Commissioner Epps: Why was the resignation given? The only person that can tell us that is the person that turned it in. It gives them the opportunity to speak for themselves. We said at Monday's work session that will be done.

Commissioner Lee: That was if we went another route.

Commissioner Corbett: Madam Chair, I placed this on the agenda, because we had a personnel issue and I was prepared this morning to recommend termination. If the resignation letter is being withdrawn, is that what is happening here? Because, I will stand with that and we will move on, but right now we have a motion on the floor to accept the letter of resignation that was sent in voluntarily with no stipulations attached to the letter. I would call for the vote.

Commissioner Epps: I still think before we call for the vote, we need to hear from the person we are voting against.

Commissioner Corbett: We are not voting against, we are voting for it; the resignation.

Commissioner Pugh: Madam Chair, a person has requested resignation and he has asked us to accept it. That is the only thing we need to move on. He is not asking us to do anything except allow him to resign. I think that is the fair thing to do.

Chair Marin: Mr. Parker would you like to speak?

Coach Parker: Madam, I would like to do that.

Commissioner Pugh: I would like the Attorney's opinion. Should we continue this process or do we vote.

Attorney Robert Lane: There is a motion, then call the question, that takes precedence or anything else.

Commissioner Lee: If a person resigning wants to make a statement in the letter of resignation, it should be in the letter, in my opinion. Administrator Horne, call the vote.

District 1(Lee) voted, yes; District 2 (Pugh) voted, yes; District 3 (Martin) voted, yes; District 4 (Reed) voted, no; District 5 (Epps) voted, no; District 6(Corbett) voted, yes; District 7(Screws) voted, no. Four (4) yes votes and three (3) no votes the motion to accept the resignation was passed.

Commissioner Corbett motioned to place historic marker on the State right-of-way in front of the Old Masonic Lodge and on Sandfort Road in front of the Original Caldwell Singers original home place which has been turned into a museum. He also would like the Chair to send a letter to the Alabama Department of Transportation to request permission to place the historic marker on Hwy 80. Seconded by Commissioner Lee. Commissioner Corbett stated that the markers will be paid for by the Chamber of Commerce, tourism funding as have been in the past. The vote was unanimous.

Sheriff Heath Taylor presented a 020 Restaurant Retail Liquor license application for Peaches Restaurant and Sports Bar. The facility located at 12 Cottonton Road, Pittsview, Alabama has been a bar and restaurant before. The owner, Lillian Robinson, resides at 6 Summer Grove Ct., Ft. Mitchell, Alabama. After canvassing the local area was completed; Sheriff Taylor did not see reasons not to approve the license. He did state his only concerns for the establishment would be possibility of loud music nuisance, which will be monitored. Commissioner Screws motioned to approve the license. Seconded by Commissioner Epps. The vote was unanimous.

County Engineer Larry Kite requested to place an order for three (3) tri-axle Mack dump trucks off the County Association Joint Bid. The price for each truck is \$134,903.00, which includes the body for a total of \$404,709. These are budgeted items, but the amounts budgeted are for loan payments, principal and interest. Mr. Kite proposes to finance the trucks through BanCorp South and after the ninety day delivery date, loan

documents and proposal will be brought back to the Commission for approval. Commissioner Pugh motioned to approve and was seconded by Commissioner Lee. The vote was unanimous.

Commissioner Pugh requested to table the Alabama Power Company's request for easement until their representative could be present to answer questions the Commission has about their request. Seconded by Commissioner Reed. The vote was unanimous.

Commissioner Reed stated that at the Monday night's work session discussion took place for placement of a district map at the Judicial Building along with individual pictures of each Commissioner. How this will be displayed will at the discretion of the County Administrator. Commissioner Reed made this statement into a motion.

Commissioner Lee questioned the motion that was made because at the last meeting a decision took place concerning the portrait policy. This idea was proposed and though it was not voted on, it was changed and passed to the present policy, to have the district map and the individual Commissioners pictures at the Courthouse. Commissioner Lee asked why this is being brought up again, since it was just passed.

Commissioner Screws seconded the motion.

Commissioner Corbett asked for the motion to be read for clarification.

Commissioner Reed stated that the motion was to place individual pictures along with a map with each commissioner's district, to be at Administrator Horne's discretion where to display the picture and map in the Judicial Building.

Commissioner Pugh asked for this to be explained.

Commissioner Reed explained that there is a group picture of the Commission hanging at the Judicial Building already and would rather see that picture taken down and replaced with individual pictures of the Commission with the district map.

Commissioner Pugh inquired what the purpose was.

Commissioner Reed said that since the districts change every 10 years when a census is taken, residents do not know who their representatives are. If they see a map on the wall they are able to identify their district and Commissioner. It will be in two locations, so residents will not have to travel to the Courthouse to look at the map.

Commission Corbett asked was his motion to duplicate what had been approved for the Courthouse to also be at the Judicial Building.

Commissioner Reed explained that his motion was to expand the policy to the Judicial Building.

Commissioner Corbett clarified that means to duplicate.

Commissioner Pugh understood the Attorney to say when they voted on the portrait policy at the last meeting that all seven would have to vote.

Commissioner Reed responded that the Attorney said all seven would have to be present. He asked the Administrator to call for the vote.

Commissioner Screws asked for the motion to be amended to those Commissioners who want to place their pictures be allowed and those that do not want their picture put up do not have to do so.

Commissioner Corbett and Lee explained that Commissioner Reed would be changing a policy already passed.

Commissioner Pugh asked why not put only the district map in the Judicial Building. Why do Commissioners pictures have to be involved?

Commissioner Reed replied because you will have your name and district under your picture and people could be able to identify you with the district you represent.

Commissioner Corbett stated there are too many questions about this request and motioned to table. Seconded by Commissioner Lee.

Tabling items takes precedence over motions on the floor. The Commission was polled by Administrator Horne to table the expanding the portrait policy to the Judicial Building. 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. Six (6) yes votes and one (1) no vote the portrait policy was tabled.

Board of Registrar Jimmy Adams requested support from the Commission to add 10 days to the Board of Registrar's work schedule. Currently they work 167 plus every day in January. There are approximately 30,000 active registered voters and another 1,500 inactive voters in Russell County. The poll list has greatly increased the past 20 years, which increases duties in their office. This rise in duties causes their office to work a lot of hours without pay since the State has set a maximum in hours registrars are allowed to work. The bill to increase the Board of Registrars work schedule will have to go through the Legislature. Mr. Adams asked for approval to send this request to Representative Vance to write a bill, which will be brought back to the Commission for their review and approval for this legislative session.

The yearly election of Chair and Vice Chair took place. The floor was opened for nominations for Chair. Commissioner Reed nominated Peggy Martin for the Chair position. Commissioner Epps motioned to close the nominations for Chair. The vote was unanimous.

The Commission voted for the Chair's position. The vote was unanimous for Peggy Martin to retain the Chair's position.

The Floor was opened for Vice Chair nominations.

Commissioner Pugh nominated Gentry Lee as Vice Chair.

Commissioner Reed nominated Cattie Epps as Vice Chair.

Commissioner Reed motioned to close the nominations and was seconded by Commissioner Epps. The vote was unanimous.

The Commission was polled for Cattie Epps as Vice Chair. There were 5 votes to approve Commissioner Epps as Vice Chair. The majority voted for Commissioner Epps to remain in the Commission's Vice Chair position.

Administrator Horne requested to send a resolution to the State approving the county's participation in the Severe Weather Preparedness Tax Holiday. This tax free holiday is scheduled for the week-end of February 20th – 22nd, 2015. The resolution must be received by the State before January 20th, 2015. Commissioner Epps motioned to approve the resolution and was seconded by Commissioner Reed. The vote was unanimous.

Administrator Horne reminded the Commission that a work session and Commission meeting were scheduled for December 22nd and 24th. She stated that for the minutes she needed the Commission to cancel those meetings due to the Christmas holidays. Commissioner Epps motioned to approve and was seconded by Commissioner Reed. The vote was unanimous.

Announcements made:

Phenix City Chamber Business After Hours Holiday Party will be held Wednesday, December 3rd from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. at the Phenix City Hampton Inn.

Commissioner Reed motioned to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned.