

The Russell County Commission
Meeting Minutes
December 9th, 2008
10:00 A.M., EST.

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

A quorum was established.

Chairman Mervin Dudley welcomed elected officials, department heads, media and visitors.

Chairman Dudley requested an approval of the December 9th, 2008 agenda. Commissioner Martin motioned to approve the agenda. Seconded by Commissioner Epps. The vote was unanimous.

The invocation was given by Reverend Wayne Burns, Director of Missions for the Russell County Baptist Association.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Pugh.

Mrs. Dee Braun was thanked by the Commission for providing refreshments for today's meeting.

Chairman Dudley requested a motion to approve the November 25th, 2008 meeting minutes. Commissioner Martin motioned to approve the minutes and was seconded by Commissioner Reed. The vote to approve the minutes was unanimous.

The County Administrator, LeAnn Horne, provided a status report on the renovations at the new County Government Center.

Bill Friend, the Business License Inspector, reported from November 1st, 2008 to December 5th, there have been 1,209 (one thousand two hundred nine) business licenses purchased; total revenue \$657,442.70 (six hundred fifty seven thousand four hundred forty-two dollars and seventy cent).

Mr. Friend requested an amendment to Act 98-596. This act covers the accumulation of scrape metal, junk and debris. Due to the new licensing system, control over junkyards, tires and household appliances has been lost. We suggest the wording be changed from license to permit and also a portion that covers planting trees and scrub instead of a privacy fence. Commissioner Lee motioned, due to the short time frame, Mr. Friend take his request to the Legislative Delegation and return to the Commission thereafter for our approval. Seconded by Commissioner Reed. Approval for Mr. Friend to contact the Legislative Delegation requesting an amendment to Act 98-596 was unanimously approved.

Commissioner Pugh stated, when discussing this with the Legislative Delegation to be mindful of those who had followed the current guidelines, those people should be grandfathered in.

Commissioner Epps requested that those who were approved to replace fencing with plants and trees, are to maintain the plantings.

The County Administrator, LeAnn Horne presented the 2009 proposed holiday schedule for Russell County. Commissioner Martin motioned to approve the holiday schedule and was seconded by Commissioner Reed. The vote was unanimous.

Jimmy Adams, Board of Registrars, presented an agency agreement authorizing the Alabama Secretary of State to act as Russell County's agent for the purposes of paying postage necessary for the mailing of certain notices to voters as required by Act 95-769 and collecting reimbursements from the State Elections Fund associated with compliance with Act 95-769. Commissioner Lee motioned to designate the Board of Registrars as the voter file maintenance agent and approve the Commission Chairman to sign the agreement and resolution. Seconded by Commissioner Martin. The vote was unanimous.

Commissioner Pugh reported there were funds still left in the Lee / Russell Council Funds to do a sewer study. A sewer study needs to be done in the Hwy 165 and Cocogalechee Creek area in preparation of BRAC. The Lee/Russell Council will have a Comprehensive Plan which will be completed in February.

Their Comprehensive plan will have more studies other than a sewer study, but I am interested in the sewer. The Commission needs to look at that study closer to prepare for BRAC.

The Russell County Engineer, Larry Kite, presented a final settlement statement provide by the ALDOT for the amount due from the County is \$4,943.37 for the Ladonia Walking Trail project. This project was completed 8 years ago, but it has taken time for them to get their final review. The total cost of the project was \$162,500.00 the County received credit for \$32,500.00. This amount was considered

nonparticipating by the Department of Transportation. Our department has reviewed this statement. The County Administrator presented the budget amendment for Mr. Kite.

Budget Amendment		
Increase fund balance	County Commission Budget	\$4,943.37
Increase 51100 304	Contract services	\$4,943.37
	Total	\$4,943.37

Commissioner Lee motioned to approve the final payment to the ALDOT. Seconded by Commissioner Martin. The vote was unanimous.

The County Administrator reported August 2008 the Commission approved to send out an RFP on a county-wide comprehensive plan. It was advertised in two newspapers as well as publicly posted in the courthouse and discussed at several Commission meetings. At the request of one of the firms wishing to participate, the County Commission extended the submittal date by two weeks. The committee that was appointed by the Commission met and reviewed the RFPs.

Ms. Horne stated this plan is \$199,000.00. Based on other plan information/studies coming available and discussed earlier in meeting. I request the right to continue to negotiate, along with the Attorney, the final price. Those plans are targeted for the Ft. Benning area; covering a five mile radius. This plan will encompass the entire county. The consulting group, Serco, if so approved, will set up several community meetings to discuss growth in the areas and report to the Commission on a regular basis. Our current plan is from the year 1985, more than 20 years old.

J.W. Brannen, on the behalf of the Planning Commission, asked the Commission to please approve this proposal. We need this comprehensive plan for Russell County.

Mr. Funderburk added this company is well qualified and the bid is solid and a set price. They are also the only ones that complied with the bid requirements. Though they are qualified and this is a set price; it is still possible to negotiate.

Commissioner Dudley, this is a plan that will allow the county more funding on grants. The present plan is so far out of date it does not help us much at all. It is very important to have a current county-wide comprehensive plan.

Commissioner Lee asked if this was in the budget.

Ms. Horne stated it was not due to not knowing the cost of a comprehensive plan during budget discussions.

Commissioner Pugh motioned to table the Comprehensive Plan until we can find a way to budget this and then bring it back to the Commission.

After budget and funding discussions, Commissioner Pugh stated, he would like to stand by my motion to table this item for two weeks. Seconded by Commissioner Lee. The vote was unanimous.

Chairman Dudley stated, periodically I would like the Commissioners to report on their districts.

Commissioner Lee

- I have a few questions and observations. I have seen vehicles I thought were County owned, but was uncertain. I believe our policy was all county vehicles except undercover law enforcement are required to have a decal and a county tag. I have noticed a lot that have regular tags and I am not certain they are county owned. We have new Commissioners that maybe unaware we have a policy concerning the use of County Vehicles. Commissioners are not allowed to use these vehicles unless it is outside Russell County not inside the county. That can be changed but that is the current policy.

Commissioner Pugh

- I would like for the County Administrator to get a list of County employees that do not have proper decals and tags and make a report back to the Commission along with an explanation of why they do not have them. This report will not be made public.
- Mr. Friend had discussed limb and debris removal for the county at last night's work session. Because of the no burn ban which is an important issue in the Ladonia area, I am asking for the Board to look for ways to fund this service not only for the Ladonia area, but for the rest of the County as well.
- The County Engineer and I have looked at the Ladonia Walking Trail. There are some lighting issues; the Engineer is looking into having those that are damaged or burned out replaced. We are discussing placing markers out so people will know how far they have walked. We are going to try to secure the trail more.
- Also we need to check with the school board on the maintenance of grass at the Sports Complex. There were some earlier conversations regarding this and we need to follow up to make sure the area is maintained to protect the County's investment.

Commissioner Reed

- I live in District 4 which also covers Phenix City; Broad Street is in my District. I have concerns about the Broad Street project and would like our Commission to offer assistance to the new City Council in completing the project.

Commissioner Martin

- I would like at this time to thank the citizens of District 3 for allowing me to maintain my seat on the Commission.
- The biggest complaints I hear in my District are the ditches. We are also concerned about the weed, trash and debris in them. We are hoping Mr. Friend will be able to put in place a program called PALS. It takes all of us, so I encourage when you are out walking to take a bag of some type and pick up litter. This is our County and we need to protect our investment.

Commissioner Epps

- I represent District 5 and I believe it is the best District to live in Russell County, I would like to thank everyone for re-electing me to serve for another four years.
- District 5 is one of the fastest growing areas and I want to thank the County Administrator for having the walking trail at the Senior Activity Center cleaned up, lights installed and the building maintained. This is a positive for District 5 and our citizens. With the growth in the county, there are more animals found dead along the highways. The City's animal control does not extend beyond the city limits; this becomes a problem for the county. The County Administrator is looking for a solution to this problem and working with our Sheriff's Department.
- I am asking Church groups and different organizations to come in to help keep our highways clean by adopting a mile. We want visitors and newcomers to see a beautiful county and the only way to do that is for we, ourselves to keep it clean.

Commissioner Dudley

- We are proud to represent the citizens and strive to improve the quality of and maximize our tax money for the County and see that we give the biggest benefit back to the people who are part of our community.

Commissioner Lee motioned to adjourn the meeting.

Meeting adjourned.

Attest: _____
LeAnn Horne, County Administrator

Sign: _____
Mervin Dudley, Chairman