

The Russell County Commission
February 13th, 2013
Meeting Minutes
9:30 A.M. EST.

A public comment was made by Hurtsboro Mayor Michael Wells who thanked the Commission for allowing Commissioner Screws to meet with him. He discussed plans for improving the infrastructure of Hurtsboro.

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 were the Attorney Robert Lane and County Administrator LeAnn Horne who kept the minutes.

A quorum was established.

Chair Martin stated the business item concerning redistricting should be removed for further study. She also requested a motion to approve the meeting agenda with the amendment . Commissioner Epps motioned to approve the agenda and was seconded by Commissioner Reed. The vote was unanimous.

The invocation was given by Chair Martin.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Russell County High Jr. School ROTC.

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

A request was made by Chair Martin for a motion to approve the January 23rd, 2013 meeting minutes. Commissioner Epps motioned to approve the minutes. Seconded by Commissioner Reed. The vote was unanimous.

In honor of Black History Month Commissioner Reed gave awards to those individuals who have been instrumental in improving the quality of life in Russell County. Those names included: Kathy Mack Williams, Kerry Glenn, Shandra Goodwin, Tawana Camper, Rachael Lewis, Jamie Reeves, Joe Goodwin, Norman Pitts Jr., Marvin Johnson, Allison Copeland, Gwenda Alexander, Gale Alexander, James R. McKoon Jr., Alfonso Smith, Felton Brown, J.W. Brannen, Olivia Acoff, Douglas Conner, Julia Ford, Madie Parker, Stanley Harris, The Columbus Times Newspaper, Teen University, The Russell County High School Jr. ROTC and The Citizen News of East Alabama.

Commissioner Pugh discussed sales tax for the County. He clarified that the County does not collect a County-wide sales tax. Taxes are only collected for the unincorporated areas of the county. Commissioner Pugh also said if there is a county-wide sales tax then he did not understand how that law cannot make it collectible

county-wide. He requested to appoint a committee to talk with the City and begin meaningful negotiations to correct this wrong. He asked if the other Commissioners had suggestions on how they would like to approach this issue.

Commissioner Lee questioned if a committee would be the best course of action since a meeting had previously taken place and the City conveyed their answer. It may be better to have a committee to work with the Legislative Delegation to create a bill.

Commissioner Pugh did not want to exclude the City, because he felt that would be a step in the wrong direction even though they are unwilling to work for it, he felt they should be part of the solution. He also wanted to keep them informed instead of closing them off.

More discussions took place. Commissioner Screws suggested a called County/ City meeting to discuss the County's position concerning the sales tax issue, rather than proceeding ahead. The City may possibly agree with the County's plight. If an agreement cannot be reached then the Commission should go forward with other options. Commissioner Pugh motioned to schedule a called meeting with the City Council, Monday, February 25th, at 11:30 a.m. in the Commission Chambers, lunch will be provided. Seconded by Commissioner Screws. The vote was unanimous.

Special Enforcement Officer Bill Friend gave an updated Roadside Pick-up Report. His presentation included before and after pictures of areas the Solid Waste Department cleaned during the 30 day trial program. He discussed the garbage department's ability to clean those areas without additional cost to the county. Commissioner Lee motioned to continue the program and was seconded by Commissioner Corbett. The vote was unanimous.

Commissioner Pugh gave a brief summary of the Ft. Mitchell Historical Park and a request from the Historical Commission to increase their appropriation up to \$50,000 in order to keep the park open. He reminded the Commission of an agreement made at the budget meetings which would increase the appropriations from the County contingent on the City's willingness to match the increased one-time appropriation. If the City did not agree to increase their appropriation to the Historical Commission, it was agreed to bring the issue back for discussion.

Susan Graham who volunteers as secretary at the park discussed how the appropriations will aide in keeping the park open and answered questions Commissioners had concerning visitors, employees and finances.

Commissioner Pugh asked if the Historical Commission could assure the County Commission that if they are given a one-time \$50,000 appropriation that the Park could survive until budget time.

Mrs. Graham said they would be able to sustain park expenses with those funds.

Commissioner Pugh motioned to approve a one-time \$50,000 appropriation to the Russell County Historical Commission. Seconded by Commissioner Lee. More questions and discussion took place before the Commission was polled. The vote was unanimous.

Revenue Commissioner Naomi Elliott requested approval for the Ad Valorem Tax Resolution for the 2013 collection. This resolution is required by the state each year. Commissioner Epps motioned to approve the resolution and was seconded by Commissioner Reed. The vote was unanimous.

Attorney Robert Lane gave an update on the City/County Real Estate Agreement. His office is in the process of preparing the deeds for the transaction.

Chair Martin announced:

- The dedication ceremony for Mary R. “Dolly” Wilson Health Department will be held today at 11:00 a.m.
- “Don’t Drop it on Alabama” Statewide Spring Cleanup begins April 20th – 27th.
- The Courthouse will be closed February 18th for President’s Day.
- February 13th at 3:00 p.m. the Probate and Revenue Office will be closed for training.

Commissioner Epps announced St. Johns AME Church will celebrate Family and Friends Day February 17th at 11:00 a.m. All are invited to attend.

Chair Martin adjourned the meeting.