

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

Marvin Allen Crowell performed two songs in recognition of Black History Month.

A public comment was made by Clifford Simpson concerning maintenance of the county portion of Wright Road. The County Engineer Larry Kite stated he would check out the road after the meeting.

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

A quorum was established.

Chair Martin welcomed elected officials, department heads, media and guests. She also thanked Cable T.V. of East Alabama for production of the Commission meeting for the public's view.

The invocation was given by Johnnie Robinson, Pastor of the Higher Power Outreach Church.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Lee.

Chair Martin requested a motion for approval of the February 12, 2014 meeting minutes. Commissioner Corbett motioned to approve the minutes and was seconded by Commissioner Screws. The vote was unanimous.

Commissioner Screws presented James C. Richardson a resolution commemorating his 110th birthday. Commissioner Lee motioned to approve the resolution by unanimous consent and was seconded by Commissioner Epps. Commissioner Screws stated that he is related to Mr. Richardson and wished him all the best. All Commissioners consented.

Marvin Allen Crowell was given a Certificate of Recognition by Commissioner Reed for his performance at the beginning of the Commission Meeting. Commissioner Lee motioned to approve by unanimous consent without objection. Seconded by Commissioner Screws. All Commissioners approved.

Commissioner Corbett gave a history of the "Original Caldwell Gospel Singers" and all the commendations they have received the last forty six years for their music. He submitted a proposal to dedicating a section of road from Hwy 169 South to Uchee

Road in the name of the "Original Caldwell Gospel Singers". Commissioner Epps motioned to approve. Seconded by Commissioner Lee. The vote was unanimous.

Commissioner Lee discussed a Troy University request placed earlier in the year for funding of building under construction beside the Chattahoochee River downtown Phenix City. He asked that this request be placed on the next meeting agenda under business items. This will give the Commission time to discuss their request.

Phenix City/Russell County American Legion Post #135 Post Commander Leroy Davis discussed plans of a new building for Post #135 at the old Cobb Hospital location. Several fundraisers are planned to help fund the new Post, one of which is the American Legion Birthday Ball to be held April 19. Commander Davis asked the Commission to support the project by the purchase of an advertisement in the Birthday Souvenir Book. Proceeds from ad and ticket sales for the Birthday Ball will go into the building fund. Commissioner Reed motioned to approve purchasing an ad in the amount of \$100.00 in support of the project. Seconded by Commissioner Lee. Administrator Horne stated the ad will be paid from the Contingent fund. The vote was unanimous.

Lee–Russell Council of Governments Representative Megan McCollough and House of Restoration Director Pastor Johnnie Robinson requested approval to close out the Emergency Shelter Grant and surrender all remaining funds. The Grant Administrator already reviewed financials and stated they are in order Commissioner Lee motioned to approve and was seconded by Commissioner Reed, The vote was unanimous. Pastor Robinson thanked the Commission for their support of the homeless shelter.

Special Enforcements Officer Bill Friend reported property located on county portion of Wright Road parcel # 57 05 04 17 4 003 009.00 is in violation of Sect: 35-12A-1 Code of Alabama 1975. Sylvester Gates is listed as the trustee of the parcel for the late Bill Gates. The trustee, who lives in Maryland, was contacted and did make attempts to have the land cleared but could not come to agreement with local vendors. Mr. Friend tried recently to contact Sylvester Gates with no response. He requested by resolution to declare this property as a public nuisance and set a public hearing date for property abatement for March 26th, 2014 prior to the Commission Meeting that day. Commissioner Screws motioned to approve Mr. Friend's recommendation. Seconded by Commissioner Corbett. The vote was unanimous.

County Engineer Larry Kite requested approval for transmission repairs to 2005 John Deer Tractor. The estimated amount by Sunsouth is \$10,000. The repair amount is within Engineer's budget. Commissioner Screws motioned to approve the repairs and was seconded by Commissioner Epps. The vote was unanimous.

Administrator Horne stated that at Monday's night's work session closing procedure for county buildings was discussed. The county has been operating an on old precedence set prior to her becoming Administrator. Due to the hazardous weather conditions being more frequent this year, she recommended adopting a formal policy as follows to keep in compliance with the Open Meetings Law.

Emergency County Building(s) Closing Procedure

When considered necessary for the safety of County employees, the Commission Chair or Vice Chair may authorize a late arrival time, early departure time or emergency closure. The Chair may consult with the Presiding Circuit Judge, Sheriff, Probate Judge, Administrator, and EMA Director.

Such time will be reported on departmental reports and considered the same as holiday pay for compensation purposes. When a situation occurs, employees who are required for essential County operations may be required to report to work. Your supervisor/appointing authority will notify you if your attendance for work is required. Chair and /or Administrator will disseminate information to officials, employees and media.

Much discussion took place about wording of the policy procedure and notification to Commission, elected officials, department heads prior to the media. Commissioner Reed motioned to approve the policy procedure as presented with the addition of "Emergency" added to County Building(s) Closing Procedure as recommended by the County Attorney. Seconded by Commissioner Screws. Commissioner Lee requested for the record that Attorney Funderburk should state whether this is allowed and can be approved by the Commission. Attorney Funderburk agreed that it is allowed and legal.

Administrator Horne polled the Commission: District 1(Lee) voted, yes; District 3 (Martin) voted, yes; District 4 (Reed) voted, yes; District 5 (Epps) voted, yes; District 6 (Corbett) voted, no; District 7(Screws) voted, yes. 5 yes votes and 1 no vote; the motion passed.

Administrator Horne presented The County Levies for alcohol license is an annual renewal for the ability to collect taxes by the State. Administrator Horne stated that the rates have remained the same. Commissioner Screws motioned to approve the ABC Levies. Seconded by Commissioner Epps. The vote was unanimous.

Administrator Horne announced there are Board appointments that have expired on the Personnel Review Board, which are individual Commission appointments. It was asked if the appointments are required to be District appointments as well as County residents. Commissioner Corbett motioned to table the appointments since the question was raised if the appointments are required to be District appointments. Commissioner Epps asked is it necessary to table if other Commissioners have appointments ready? The motion died due to lack of a second. Commissioner Screws motioned to go forward with the appointments with the exception of those who are not ready to appoint. Seconded by Commissioner Reed. The vote was unanimous.

Appointments are as follows:
District 1 – No appointment yet
District 2 – Absent

District 3 – appointment is still current
District 4 – Gloria Woods
District 5 – Willie James McCoy
District 6 –No appointment yet
District 7 – Jerome Battle

The East Alabama Mental Health Board needs one member due to a resignation. If the position is filled today the term is due to expire in 2015. Commissioner Reed appointed Cedric Darty to fill the open the position. Seconded by Commissioner Screws. The vote was unanimous.

Chair Martin announced that the Sabal Trail Project Public Hearing (Natural Gas Transmission Pipeline) will be held March 10 at 6:00 p.m. at the Russell County High School.

A clean-up day is scheduled for Saturday, March 1, at 9:00 a.m. at the Crawford Masonic Lodge. All volunteers are welcome.

P.A.L.S. Spring clean-up April 19 to 26th any group, organization or person who would like to volunteer to help with the clean-up can contact the Russell County Enforcement Office at 311 Prentiss Drive, Phenix City or call (334) 664-1443 and Bill Friend or Gary Leeds can be contacted for further information.

County Engineer Larry Kite announced a temporary road closure for Prudence Road from the intersection of U.S. Highway 431 to the junction of Rutherford Road, March 3 & 4 if the weather permits.

Commissioner Screws discussed obtaining local legislation concerning littering along the roads and highways.

Commissioner Lee motioned to adjourn.

The meeting was adjourned.