

The Russell County Commission
 Meeting Minutes
 March 12th, 2014
 9:30 A.M. EDT

Public Comments:

Phenix City –Russell County Chamber of Commerce Representative James McGill reported the success of the Archery Tournament held recently.

Macon- Russell Community Action Coordinator Lakiesha Dent announced a heating and cooling assistance program being offered to citizens who need financial assistance. Those needing assistance can apply twice, once for heating and once for cooling.

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. 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 Chair Martin.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Pugh.

Chair Martin requested a motion to approve the February 26th, 2014 Commission Meeting minutes.

Commissioner Lee motioned to approve the minutes and was seconded by Commissioner Screws. The vote was unanimous.

Sheriff Taylor recognized the Homeland Security/EMA office for stepping in at the last minute to conduct training for the Sheriff’s Department Annual CPR Class.

Sheriff Taylor requested an amendment to the Jail Budget as follows:

Jail Department -52200		
Decrease 52200 550	Motor Vehicles	\$8,114.00
Increase 52200 214	Minor Equipment	\$8,114.00
	Total	\$8,114.00

Commissioner Epps motioned to approve the budget amendment. Seconded by Commissioner Reed. The vote was unanimous.

Sheriff Taylor also gave the results of the second Jail Food Bid. The first bid was rejected due to clarification concerns and issues. He recommended awarding the new bid food portion of the bid to Boles Food and award the supplies to COPACO, who was the low bidder for paper and cleaning supplies. Commissioner Lee motioned to approve Sheriff Taylor's recommendation. Seconded by Commissioner Pugh. The vote was unanimous.

Commissioner Lee discussed a contribution request made by Troy University several months prior. They were promised an answer. He asked what the pleasure of the Commission was. Commissioner Screws motioned to offer \$50,000 as a one-time contribution. Seconded by Commissioner Epps. The vote was unanimous. Administrator Horne stated the donation will come out of the Reserve Fund.

Increase 001 35500 000	Fund Balance	\$50,000.00
Increase 001 59247 700	Troy University (One-Time Appropriation)	\$50,000.00

Special Enforcement Officer Bill Friend presented a request to declare property at 20 Magnolia Drive as a public nuisance. The property was purchased for back taxes but the present owner does not wish to keep the property and has not paid the 2013 property tax. Mr. Friend would like to set a public hearing date of April 9th prior to the Commission meeting to abate the property. Commissioner Pugh motioned to abate the property with public hearing set prior to the Commission Meeting on April 9th. Seconded by Commissioner Epps. The vote was unanimous.

Commissioner Lee appointed Michael Cox as his Personnel Review Board Appointment. Districts 2 and 6 have expired positions to be filled on the Personnel Review Board.

Administrator Horne gave a project report on funds spent and expense to date for restoration of the Crawford Masonic Lodge. Costs for projects completed at this time total \$6,390.00. Subtotal for the basic needs of the project is \$19,750.00, which exclude construction of restroom facilities at an estimated cost of \$30,000. That would bring the total estimated cost of the project to \$49,750, which estimated pricing may change.

Commissioner Corbett motioned to approve \$20,000 toward funding the Masonic Lodge Project and to get the remainder of the funding in donations. Seconded by Commissioner Pugh.

Commissioner Corbett stated: He received the first monetary donation for the project from Attorney Funderburk. He also discussed why the project is important to the county and to the community.

Commissioner Lee requested: That a board be formed and the Commission authorize the board to take care of the upkeep, maintenance and renting of the building. Also for the Board to get a tax exempt status so that donations for the project do not have to go through the County Commission books.

Commissioner Corbett stated: He agrees and there are 10 people presently working as a committee to keep the renovation project moving forward.

Commissioner Screws discussed his concerns about the renovation of the Masonic Lodge and that when the project was presented it was understood there would not be any cost to the County and renovation; it would be by volunteers and donations. Since then, it has changed. He would not object funding the cost for urgent repairs to keep the building from falling down. Then, keep the project going forward through volunteers and donations as it was presented.

Administrator Horne gave a figure of \$15,000 to not include the septic, fencing and possible the HVAC. If those are the items you want to exclude.

Commissioner Pugh stated: This is a County project not an individual district project and it is in the best interest of the County to preserve this historic building. The Masonic Order of Alabama may be glad to donate artifacts and to donate money toward the renovations. It is difficult to raise donations especially in the present economy and with a county project. People want to know what the commitment the county is going to put into the project. \$20,000 is a lot of money, but not for what we are doing for the community and for what it will repay the community. It is sitting on a prestigious highway with high traffic flow and is a good place to stop for a picnic. Let's move forward with the project and help the community. I'm ok with the amount.

Commissioner Reed stated: He is alright approving \$15,000.

District 1(Lee) voted, yes; District 2 (Pugh) voted, yes; District 3 (Martin) stated that this is a want and not a need. We need to construct an ambulance building. Therefore, I vote "no" on the \$20,000; District 4 (Reed) voted, no; District 5 (Epps) voted, no; District 6 (Corbett) voted, yes; District 7(Screws) voted, no. Four (4) no votes and three (3) yes votes; the motion failed.

Commissioner Screws motioned to contribute \$15,000 from county funds to the Masonic Lodge Project with the understanding that from this point on we have volunteers and donations and Commissioner Corbett will handle this from this point on. Seconded by Commissioner Reed. The vote was unanimous.

Maintenance Department -51970		
Increase 001 35500 000	Fund Balance	\$15,000.00
Increase 001 59247 700	Masonic Lodge	\$15,000.00

Administrator Horne presented the Alabama Recycling Fund Grant Application, which is submitted on behalf of the Russell County Utility Department. This is only a grant application. It is not binding the County to any match money. This is only authorizing the Chair to execute the documents. Commissioner Epps motioned to approve and was seconded by Commissioner Screws. The vote was unanimous.

Administrator Horne stated that Meadowbrook Insurance Group who handles the county's liability insurance has negotiated a settlement on behalf of the County Commission. Meadowbrook request that we pay the deductible of \$5,000 to go along with the claim that they resolved for the Commission. Commissioner Screws motioned to approve the payment. Seconded by Commissioner Epps.

Commissioner Lee asked the County Attorney if the County should pay this claim or not. Attorney Funderburk stated that the County is under contract and instructed the Commission to pay the deductible. Yes, the County can pay this.

Administrator Horne polled the Commission: 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 motion passed.

A 3 year contract for disposal of solid waste at the Waste Management Center in Salem was presented by Administrator Horne. She recommended approving the renewal contract which is \$22.04 per basic ton; and has remained the same rate for the last 3 years. There will not be a rate increase in this proposed renewal. Commissioner Screws motioned to approve the contract. Seconded by Commissioner Epps. The vote was unanimous.

Chair Martin announced:

- P.A.L.S. "Don't Drop it on Alabama Spring Clean-up" will be held the week of April 19-26. Contact Bill Friend or Gary Leeds at the Building Inspector's Office.
- The Phenix City Elementary School located at 901 South Railroad Street is now listed on the Alabama Register of Landmarks and Heritage.

Coach Parker announced the "Opening Night Under the Lights" at Russell County Sports Complex Friday, March 21 at 6:40 p.m. There will also be an opening day the next morning at the complex.

Chair Martin adjourned the meeting.