

The Russell County Commission
Meeting Minutes
March 27, 2013
9:30 A.M. EDT

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 County Attorney Kenneth Funderburk and County Administrator LeAnn Horne who kept the minutes.

A quorum was established.

Chair Martin stated the addition of an executive session concerning the Business License Reform Act should be added to the agenda. She requested a motion to approve the agenda with the addition. Commissioner Corbett motioned to approve the agenda and was seconded by Commissioner Epps. District 1 (Lee) voted, no; District 2 (Pugh) voted, yes; District 3 (Martin) voted, yes; District 4 (Reed) voted, yes; District 5 (Epps) voted, yes; District 6 (Corbett) voted, yes; District 7 (Screws) voted, yes. 6 yes votes and 1 no vote; the motion passed.

The invocation was given by Jimmie Hobbs, Pastor of Bethany Baptist Church.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Reed.

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

Chair Martin requested a motion to approve the March 13th, 2013 meeting minutes. Commissioner Epps motioned to approve the minutes and was seconded by Commissioner Corbett. The vote was unanimous.

Commissioner Epps motioned to approve a proclamation for the Saint John's African Methodist Episcopal Church for a dedication service that will be held April 14th in Fort Mitchell. Seconded by Commissioner Reed. The vote was unanimous.

Chair Martin presented a Certificate of Recognition to the Russell County Senior Center Director, Patricia Johnson. Chair Martin also congratulated Mrs. Johnson for an award she received from the State for the Best Senior Center in Alabama.

Commissioner Screws discussed the John XXII Center in Hurtsboro who requested the County's help in repairing the Center's drive by delivering gravel for their volunteer workers to spread. After the Monday night work session Commissioner Screws found that the drive is on private property, therefore, their

requested could not be honored. He motioned to contact the City of Hurtsboro and request approval for gravel delivery to a city location and they assist with the transfer of gravel to the Center. Seconded by Commissioner Lee. The vote was unanimous.

Commissioner Epps stated that at the Monday night work session the Sewer and Water Board appointments were discussed in length. During that discussion it was discovered the Sewer Board only has one member at this time, due to the separation of the Water and Sewer Boards. She recommended that since these boards must work together concerning projects both boards should be combined with the addition of the Ft. Mitchell Water Manager David Ellis as an advisor to the board. Commissioner Epps motioned to approve the recommendation. Seconded by Commissioner Pugh.

Commissioner Pugh suggested that since the Ladonia area is the only area in the county with sewerage with prospects of other subdivisions being built in the near future; that Commissioner Epps amend her motion to allow for 2 advisers; one from the Ladonia Area also.

Commissioner Epps amended the motion to include an advisor from Ladonia. Seconded by Commissioner Lee. Commissioner Epps restated the motion with the amendment: The Russell County Water Authority would also serve as the Russell County Sewer Board, members being: David Smith, E.L. Tolbert and Robert Brundidge. Two advisers would also be added to the Sewer Board, one being Ft. Mitchell Water Manager David Ellis and one from the Ladonia to be named. The vote was unanimous.

County Engineer Larry Kite announced that after several requests from the County Commissioner and the City Council ALDOT has approved the installation of a traffic signal at the intersection of U.S. 431 and Alabama Highway 165. An agreement for maintenance of the light and a resolution must be approved and signed by the Commission Chair. The installation of the light will greatly reduce the accident rate at this intersection. A letter was received from the City stating they will pay half of the County's share for the traffic light and agree to take over maintenance of the signal if they should annex that area into the city. The total cost of installation of the signal is estimated to be \$60,000 to \$80,000, which is less than normal, because the State is doing the work and using some of the facilities that are already there saving the design cost. The State has asked the County to pay 25% of the total cost which is \$15,000 to \$20,000. The County will be responsible for paying the 25 % and will get a reimbursement from the City's for their agreed amount. Installation of the traffic light should begin in April.

Commissioner Screws motioned to approve the agreement and the resolution. Seconded by Commissioner Epps. The vote was unanimous.

Mr. Kite was to present a salary adjustment for the Assistant Engineering position, but Commissioner Screws motioned to table the item for a future meeting and was seconded by Commissioner Pugh. Commissioner Screws stated, at the beginning of the budget year the Commission gave the Assistant Engineer a \$5,700 raise during the budget meetings. If he is given this raise he will receive over \$10,000. He thought it would be unfair to others who did not get that much. He went on to state that the assistant engineer does an excellent job, but the timing is bad and he could support a raise at budget time, but he could not support a raise at this time. This will put the Commission in a bad light when the other directors did not receive that. The commission was polled: District 1 (Lee) voted, no; District 2 (Pugh) voted, yes; District 3 (Martin) voted, yes; District 4 (Reed) voted, yes; District 5 (Epps) abstained; District 6 (Corbett) voted, no; District 7 (Screws) voted, yes. 4 yes votes, 2 no votes and 1 abstention; the motioned passed.

After much discussion Commissioner Lee motioned to reduce the vacant assistant engineer salary to \$52,663 and set as a cap. Seconded by Commissioner Corbett.

Commissioner Epps motioned to table the motion and seconded by Commissioner Reed. District 1 (Lee) voted, no; District 2 (Pugh) 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 2 no votes the motion carried.

Probate Judge Harden requested to move into executive session to discuss the Business License Reform Act. Commissioner Screws motioned to go into executive session. Seconded by Commissioner Corbett. District 1 (Lee) abstained; District 2 (Pugh) voted, yes; District 3 (Martin) voted, yes; District 4 (Reed) voted, yes; District 5 (Epps) voted, yes; District 6 (Corbett) voted, yes; District 7 (Screws) voted, yes. 6 yes votes and 1 abstention; the motion carried. The Commission moved into executive session.

Chair Martin requested a motion to reconvene the meeting. Commissioner Epps motioned to reconvene. Seconded by Commissioner Reed. The vote was unanimous.

Judge Harden stated there are two house bills that the Commission needs to address:

- HB 332— Concerns court cost, if passed it would be severely detrimental to the Russell County Court System. Court cost fees collected in this county fund the jail and the new addition. The State will take money from our funds to place in theirs.
- 2nd draft of a Business License Reform, based on this draft this could take as much as \$900,000 out of the County Business License Fund and give it to the State, should Russell County not be exempted from the bill.

Judge Harden strongly recommended the Commission and anyone else to notify the ACCA, the Legislative Delegation and others you feel could help exempt Russell County from these bills as they currently written. Commissioner Screws motioned to approve Judge Harden's recommendation. Seconded by Commissioner Reed. The vote was unanimous.

Chair Martin adjourned the meeting.