

The Russell County Commission
Meeting Minutes
July 23rd, 2014
9:30 A.M. EDT.

Chair Martin welcomed elected officials, department heads, media and guests. She also thanked Cable T.V. of East Alabama and the Citizens News for coverage of the Commission meeting.

A public comment was made by Vivian Covington, who announced that she was recently appointed the mayor of Hurtsboro.

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

A quorum was established.

The invocation was given by Chair Martin.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Lee.

Chair Martin requested a motion to approve the July 9th, 2014 meeting minutes. Commissioner Screws motioned to approve and was second by Commissioner Pugh. The vote was unanimous.

Commissioner Pugh motioned to approve a proclamation to be given to the late Ben Thornhill's family. Mr. Thornhill was the County Administrator for 22 years. He held that position until his retirement in 1998. Mrs. Thornhill was unable to attend today's meeting to receive the proclamation. Therefore, the proclamation will be given to her at a later date. Commissioner Lee seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

Valley Partnership Director Gary Jones gave an update for the acceleration lane at the intersection of Alabama Hwy 165 and 101 St. Airborne Division Road. The project cost will be approximately \$300,000 and paid by Fort Benning. Completion of the project is expected by spring of 2015.

Mr. Jones also discussed a sequester driven study that will eliminate 14,000 jobs in this area. Impact in this region will be 5.5 billion dollars. He suggested that civilians to fight the sequestration by signing and sending letters to appropriate federal officials.

Probate Judge Alford Harden Jr. distributed a resolution the proposed referendum for the November election of 2014. The resolution reads as follows:

Resolution Authorizing Probate Judge to Place Alabama

Limited Self-Governance Act on Ballot

Whereas, The Russell County Commission approved for the Alabama Limited Self-Governance Act (11-3A-2) – Powers for Public welfare, health, and safety; authorization; scope, to be placed on the November 2014 ballot, and

Whereas, the Russell County Commission in an official meeting approves the Following proposed question and wording be placed on the November 2014 ballot, and

“Should the provisions of Act No. 2005-200, 2005 Regular Session, which would allow the Russell County Commission authority to exercise certain health and safety powers including the abatement of weeds, the control of animals, the control of litter, and the abatement of noise nuisances, unsanitary sewage or pollution apply in the unincorporated portions of Russell County, Alabama? Yes No”

Now Therefore Let It Be Known, the Russell County Commission in an official meeting passed and approved this Authorizing Resolution on July 23, 2014.

Commissioner Corbett motioned to approve the resolution and was seconded by Commissioner Lee. The vote was unanimous.

Administrator Horne gave an update on the ambulance site. The project will be moving forward during budget time as well as the Engineering department plan is to schedule land clearing for the site in October.

AT&T Representative Ty Fondren gave a presentation for AT&T’s plan to deploy its U-Verse Service in the Columbus, West Georgia and areas of East Alabama. He requested that the Commission approve a ten (10) year agreement. After much discussion Commissioner Pugh motioned to approve the contract. Seconded by Commissioner Screws. District 1(Lee) voted, no; District 2 (Pugh) voted, yes; District 3 (Martin) voted, yes; District 4 (Reed) voted, no; District 6 (Corbett) voted, no; District 7(Screws) voted, yes. Three (3) yes votes and three (3) no votes the motion was tied and can be brought back at a later date.

Chief Ray Smith requested to install a radio tower for the City on county property located on Poor House Road. The large tower will allow taking in some of the county infrastructure to give better coverage as well. The City’s system is different, but other types of antenna can be installed on the tower. He requested the Commission approve an MOU. Sheriff Taylor was asked what he thought of the project, he agreed that it would be a benefit to the county, without any investment from the county. Chief Smith stated if the Commission is in agreement with the project; the county attorney can make necessary changes to the MOU and return to the City Council for their review. Commissioner Lee motioned to approve the MOU pending the additional verbage allowing the county to have access to the tower and use their own vendors for installation or repairs to equipment that are installed by the county. After discussion Commissioner Lee withdrew his motion. Commissioner Corbett motioned for the County

Engineer, County Administrator, County Attorney, the Sheriff or any other department head work with the City in favor of moving this project forward. Seconded by Commissioner Pugh. The vote was unanimous.

The E-911 Board appointment for District 2 is due to expire in August. Commissioner Pugh reappointed Travis Pugh, who is willing to serve another 4 year term.

County Engineer Larry Kite presented the results for the tractor bid held July 15th. Two bids were received for a John Deere tractor. One was for a used 2013 John Deere 5101E for the amount of \$40,400. The other bid came from SunSouth for a new 2014 John Deere 5100E for the amount of \$43,300. The \$2,900 difference will fall within the engineering's budgeted amount for the tractor. The new tractor has a two (2) year- two thousand (2,000) hour warranty, while the used tractor only has a warranty through February 21, 2015. Therefore, Mr. Kite recommended that the bid be awarded to SunSouth for the new tractor. Commissioner Corbett motioned to accept the recommendation and was seconded by Commissioner Screws. The vote was unanimous.

Special Enforcement Officer Bill Friend reported that a public nuisance exists at 1 Somerset Drive. The property is in foreclosure, utilities have been terminated and the owner has moved his belonging to the yard, along with several trash piles. The bank that holds the foreclosure has been contacted by several means, but has not responded. Attorney Funderburk states the owner's personal property is essentially maintained by the bank. We get everyone we need to authorize it against the person who lived at the address, including the Bank. Commissioner Pugh motioned to abate the property based on the complaints. Seconded by Commissioner Corbett. The vote was unanimous.

Commissioner Pugh discussed paintings that were displayed in the Commission Chambers for the public's viewing. The pictures, painted by artist Mike Howard, depicted the Coulter building during the time of Albert Patterson's assassination in 1954. Commissioner Pugh stated that the Coulter Building is where Albert Patterson's office was at the time of his assassination. The office looks the same as it was when Mr. Patterson occupied it. Commissioner Pugh would like to see the county-owned building become a productive piece of property and for Patterson's office restored as it was the day he was assassinated. Hecht-Burdeshaw Architect Scott Holmes gave a presentation of changes made to the Coulter Building since the 1950's and how the building is deteriorating. He suggests a study of suspicious materials in the building and the removal of those materials, then restoring portions of the building to the original 1950's state for historical value. Mike Howard has agreed that this could be a gallery for some of his paintings pertaining to this era of Phenix City. Mr. Holmes also discussed restoring other portions of the Coulter Building in the future. Commissioner Pugh motioned to appropriate \$4,750 to allow Hecht-Burdeshaw to test materials and report back to the Commission their findings. Then, based on their findings tell the Commission what can be done. At some point down the road, if we are not going to develop the building, maybe turn the building over to Troy University if they have a use

for it and let them develop it. Seconded by Commissioner Corbett. Administrator Horne stated that fund will come from the Recreational line, which was allocated earlier when the budget was approved but has not been utilized. District 1(Lee) voted, yes; District 2 (Pugh) voted, yes; District 3 (Martin) voted, yes; District 4 (Reed) voted, no; District 6(Corbett) voted, yes; District 7 (Screws) voted, yes. Five (5) yes votes and (1) no vote the motion passed.

County Administrator LeAnn Horne stated that she would like to work with Extension Office Director Ted Gilbert concerning a grant that was awarded through the Extension Office for a green house. She wanted to talk to him about the process and location. She will then bring back to the Commission once she under stands placement of the green house at the Fort Mitchell Senior Center. Commissioner Screws motioned to approve the Administrator's request and was seconded by Commissioner Pugh. The vote was unanimous.

Administrator Horne announced that the RDS contract has expired, but they have been honoring their contract, including the one mailing per year and collection on prior business licenses that have not paid, which is a small amount. This is a just in case service and their fees are only 35% of what they collect from business owners, the county receives the rest. Commissioner Lee motioned to approve the agreement and was seconded by Commissioner Pugh. The vote was unanimous.

Announcements were made by Chair Martin prior to the County Attorney's items.

County Attorney Kenneth Funderburk recommended moving into executive session for a discussion with legal counsel regarding a legal matter. Commissioner Corbett motioned to move into executive session and was seconded by Commissioner Pugh. The vote was unanimous.

Commissioner Screws motioned to reconvene the meeting. Seconded by Commissioner Reed. The vote was unanimous.

Attorney Funderburk stated that the public hearing for the nuisance complaint at 1 Somerset Drive will be held August 27th, 2014 prior to the regular Commission Meeting. Commissioner Pugh motioned to approve the public hearing. Seconded by Commissioner Corbett. The vote was unanimous.

Attorney Funderburk announced there is a pending resolution dealing with issues concerning Children and Family Services of Russell County. The terms of the resolution at this time have not been complied, therefore, he recommends not to make payment under that resolution since they have not been met. Commissioner Pugh motioned to approve the Attorney's recommendation. Seconded by Commissioner Corbett. The vote was unanimous.

The meeting was adjourned.