

The Russell County Commission  
Meeting Minutes  
July 22, 2009  
9:30 A.M. EDT

A public comment was made by Mrs. Davis concerning the condition of Samuel Road.

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

A quorum was established.

Chairman Dudley welcomed elected officials, department heads, media and guests.

Chairman Dudley requested a motion to approve the July 22, 2009 agenda with the addition of a discussion item by C.C. Lamb. Commissioner Martin motioned to approve the agenda with the additional item. Seconded by Commissioner Reed. The vote was unanimous.

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

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Revenue Commissioner Naomi Elliott.

The Chairman requested a motion to approve the July 8th, 2009 meeting minutes. Commissioner Martin motioned to approve the minutes. Seconded by Commissioner Screws. The vote was unanimous.

Citizen C.C. Lamb brought forth concerns of speeding and maintenance issues on Wende Road to Mathew Court. He has had several fences damaged due to speeding and unsafe conditions. Several drivers involved in the accidents were not insured. Mr. Lamb feels those drivers should be kept off the road, until they have acquired proper insurance. Mr. Lamb feels the speed limited should be lowered to 25 mph and signs posted in the areas that contain several dangerous curves. This area also has been black-topped, but not striped, which also presents a problem.

Barbara Scott, Lee/Russell Council of Government, updated the Commission on available grants that Russell County is qualifies for. Six full applications and a pre-application have been submitted for Russell County.

Chairman Dudley requested to form a search committee to establish criteria, interview candidates and present recommendations for a recreational director. The final hiring decision for that position will be the Commission's. Chairman Dudley recommended Bill Starke, Max Wilkes and LeAnn Horne as the search committee. Commissioner Pugh motioned to allow the Chairman to make the three appointments and to ask this committee to report back to this Commission by the end of August, no later than the end of August, with the recommendations as to full time/part time, salary ranges, job descriptions and duties. This can be reviewed at 2009-2010 budget meetings for funding and to proceed at that time, if the budget allows. Seconded by Commissioner Martin.

Commissioner Lee stated he would like to see this position be filled by a retired person, such as a coach, military or a similar individual.

Commissioner Epps: I thought it was stated and agreed, when appointing committees, elected officials would not be used. I understand that this appointment is not an elected official from the county. I believe Commissioner Martin stated it very well, when appointments were being discussed at a previous meeting. If we put an elected official on this committee the Commission will look as if we have double standards for committees. We did not state whether it would be a county or city officials, only an elected official. So I believe we should look at that one person's appointment.

Commissioner Lee: I did vote for it, but I thought it was stated, if it was a county committee, there would not be county elected officials on it. I do not think it was to be interpreted as elected officials from anywhere.

Commissioner Epps: It was elected officials. When I think of elected, I think of anyone who is an elected official and should not serve on a committee as it was discussed.

Commissioner Lee: At this time I would like to offer an amendment to this motion that would allow anyone to serve on this committee that is not a county elected official.

Commissioner Pugh: Mr. Chairman my motion was to allow you to pick the committee, so I don't know if whether there is a need for an amendment.

Commissioner Reed: I agree with Mrs. Epps. As Mrs. Martin had stated, it should be a citizen from the community.

Chairman Dudley: One of the key factors to everything we do is getting people who have credentials to be a part of what is going on. That is the basis of good government. The selection of these three people was to have Commission and community representation. We are in the process of negotiations with the City of Phenix City for the purpose of achieving additional revenue, in the form of taxation. We are seeking to share in the tax base, funds the county has not received in the past. We want to establish and continue to build relations with the city to move forward for the betterment of our communities. Taking steps to let people who have the expertise to participate, does not hinder (this). The final decision is the Commission's.

Commissioner Lee: I did offer an amendment and if there is not a second it will die. My amendment was to allow you to appoint anyone to this committee, who is not a county elected official.

Commissioner Epps: I'm not saying that this person you wanted on the committee is not qualified. Because of actions taken in the past, we may want to carry the amendment for clarification in the future.

District 1 ( Lee) voted, yes; District 2 (Pugh) yes; District 3 (Martin) voted, yes; District 4 (Reed) voted, no; District 5 (Epps) voted, no; District 6 (Dudley) voted, yes; District 7 (Screws) no. Four yes votes and three no votes; the motion passes.

Barbara Scott, a Lee/Russell Council of Governments representative, gave an update on the Recreational Trail Grant. Commissioner Screws, County Administrator Horne, County Engineer Kite and Lisa Sandt have worked together on a possible trail program for submittal this year. The Recreation Trail program has 1.4 million dollars and is state-wide. The maximum grant amount is \$50,000 for a single-use trail and \$100,000 for a multi-use trail. Eighty percent of the project can be paid with money from the recreation trail project, but the county must provide a match of 20 percent. The match can be cash or donations. The application deadline is September 1, 2009. The actual proposed project is a multi-use pedestrian/bicycle trail behind the Russell County Elementary School in the Town of Hurtsboro. The trail is approximately ½ mile in length and 12 feet wide to accommodate the multi-use. The total estimated cost is \$114,302.50. The Grant portion will be \$91,442 the county match will be \$22,860.50, the match can be in-kind. The proposed land donation is from the Russell County School Board. A requirement of the recreation trail grant is land donations can not occur before the grant award. With the donation forth coming, the county is allowed to add the School Board letter promising the land and will be looked upon favorably. Commissioner Screws motioned to allow the grant application. Seconded by Commissioner Reed.

Commissioner Lee asked if the grant was approved; due to unforeseen changes would the Commission have the option to refuse the grant? Mrs. Scott stated it could be refused. Commissioner Pugh asked who would be responsible for the property donated, for maintenance and security. Commissioner Screws said the school board would be responsible because they probably would be the largest user of the trail. The vote to approve application for the recreational grant was unanimous.

County Attorney Kenneth Funderburk recommended going into executive session to discuss a personnel matter and a nuisance issue. Commissioner Reed motioned to move into executive session. Seconded by Commissioner Martin. The vote was unanimous.

Chairman Dudley requested for the announcements to be made before the going into executive session:

Lt. Heath Taylor announced the Sheriff's Department had applied and were awarded a \$23,000 Law Enforcement grant. Money obtained from will be earmarked for four (4) in-car cameras systems.

Commissioner Pugh reported he had received a reply from Vance Beck of the State Highway Department concerning safety and water drainage issues on Hwy 80. They are in agreement with us, but do not have funding in their maintenance budget to correct these problems. Commissioner Pugh states he will continue to pursue and to involve others. They suggest alternate sources of funding corrections to Hwy 80, which are unacceptable since this is a state highway and they should be responsible.

After announcements the Commission went into executive session.

Chairman Dudley requested a motion to reconvene the Commission meeting.

Commissioner Martin motioned to reconvene and was seconded by Commissioner Reed. The vote was unanimous.

County Attorney Funderburk stated he did not have recommendations from the executive session.

Commissioner Lee motioned to adjourn the meeting.

Meeting adjourned.