

Continued  
Russell County Commission  
Meeting Minutes  
Proposed 2011-2012  
September 20<sup>th</sup>, 2011  
9:30 A.M. EST

A recessed Russell County Meeting was reconvened. Members present were: Chair Peggy Martin, Vice Chair Gentry Lee, Tillman Pugh, Ronnie Reed, Cattie Epps, Mervin Dudley and Larry Screws. Also present was the County Administrator LeAnn Horne, who kept the minutes.

A quorum was established.

County Administrator LeAnn Horne distributed documents and reviewed changes that were made at the budget meeting on September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2011 meeting. Administrator Horne stated she did contact The Retirement Systems of Alabama to talk about the request the Commission received from the Russell County Chapter of the ARACA for a Christmas bonus. She was informed by their legal representative any increase would have to go through the Retirement Systems of Alabama; the County cannot give an increase to retirees outside of the retirement system and without legislative approval. She also talked to the State Examiner to reconfirm; at the county level cannot give Christmas bonuses or Christmas incentive or a pay adjustment of any kind cannot be provided to retirees. By Legislative and laws the County cannot grant the ARACA request.

County Engineer Larry Kite gave the Commission packets with budget options and spread sheets for comparisons. The original budget was revised to adjust for the \$170,000 decrease in revenues; he also handed out three (3) additional options for review. Mr. Kite reminded the Commission a large part of their budget relies on the cost of petroleum and petroleum products which have double in the last 8 years. In the past two to three years \$575,000 in revenue have decrease that must be offset by the General Fund in order to operate on the current level. Engineering has been able to do work that was done 8 years ago even with the high petroleum increases. The dirt road paving has dropped off some in the last several years; this year has been good with the limited resources, engineering has been able to get 5 miles of dirt roads paved. Considering the current funding it would be more practical to focus on maintenance of existing infrastructure than making new road improvements. It is a challenge to take on new projects while the work orders pour in every hour. Paving 5 to 6 miles of road a year requires a full time crew in addition to dump truck drivers, surveying staff, additional equipment that has to be pulled from other crews. The paving and patching crew are tied up for several weeks out of the year, when they could be working on important maintenance activities, if they were not dedicated to the dirt road paving. The point is, it should not be about whether or not to pave dirt roads; we have a serious funding problem. We have a crisis; we are receiving less than half

of the funding we need to adequately maintain our road and bridge infrastructure. Unless we get additional funding from General Fund or some other source of revenue, the result is we will have to sit and watch our roads and bridges deteriorate faster than we can do anything about it. We have to find additional funding and spend the resources we do have wisely. That is why there are four (4) options for the Commission to choose from.

Commissioner Lee motioned to accept option # 2 which will pave 4 miles of dirt road and 8 ½ miles of paved road. Seconded by Commissioner Pugh. The vote was unanimous.

The County Administrator: Every year around budget time amnesia sets in – so I want the record to reflect that last year I explained we had bond payments coming due. The bond payment will increase a little as years move forward. Mr. Kite kindly reminded everyone, this problem is not going away. We are using more and more of our reserves and I have to caution the Commission that is not good, so between now and next budget year, I hope we don't have to go into our reserves any further. Hopefully our revenue will improve to help prevent that. If it does not we can't continue using the amount of reserve that we are using now. The engineer needs to work to reduce expenses by next budget year.

Commissioner Pugh: Are we are over our projected budget for this fiscal year.

Administrator Horne: Our expenditures are under our revenues. We are expected to return from this years budgeted numbers about 1.4 million dollars as of this date.

Commissioner Lee: Let me rephrase the question. Is the revenue that we have actually taken in is it more or less?

Administrator Horne: The revenue is more than budget.

Commissioner Dudley: At this time I present a motion the funding from Pine Hollow go toward the road projects. Seconded by Commissioner Screws. District 1 ( Lee) voted, yes; District 2 (Pugh) left the room, District 3 (Martin) voted, yes; District 4 (Reed) voted, yes; District 5 (Epps) voted , yes; District 6 (Dudley) voted, yes; District 7 (Screws) voted, yes. The motioned passed with 6 yes votes.

There were no County Commission requests.

Commissioner Lee motioned to approve the 2011-2012 budget with the changes. Seconded by Commissioner Reed. District 1 ( Lee) voted, yes; District 2 (Pugh) abstained, District 3 (Martin) voted, yes; District 4 (Reed) voted, yes; District 5 (Epps) voted , yes; District 6 (Dudley) voted, yes; District 7 (Screws) voted, yes. The motioned passed with 6 yes votes and 1 abstention.

Administrator Horne: At this time, I recommend the Commission adopt the salary schedule and the changes that were discussed earlier in this meeting as well as last meeting. Commissioner Dudley motioned to approve the recommendation. Seconded by Commissioner Reed. The vote was unanimous. (The budget is located in the Commission Office)

Administrator Horne thanked the Commission for the 3% salary increase for the employees. They represent us well in the community and are not paid enough. The 3% is a small thank you for the hard work they do providing services.

Commissioner Lee: I want to give a thank you before we leave. Under the circumstances of the County Administrator's family issues at the same time during the budget process, she managed to present a good budget. I want to thank the staff who had to work extra hard and to Ms. Horne for holding it all together.

Chair Martin adjourned the meeting.