

The Russell County Commission
 Russell County Commission Chambers
 Meeting Minutes September 9, 2020
 9:30 A.M. EDT

An adjourned meeting of the Russell County Commission was called to order by Chairman Lee.

Chairman Lee welcomed everyone for their attendance.

The invocation was given by Commissioners.

Commissioner Ronnie Reed led the Pledge of Allegiance.

County Administrator LeAnn Horne called roll. Members present were Chairman Gentry Lee, Commissioner Martin, Commissioner Ronnie Reed, Commissioner Cattie Epps, Commissioner Chance Corbett, and Commissioner Larry Screws. Also, present was the County Attorney Kenneth Funderburk. Commissioner Carl Currington was absent. A quorum was established.

Chairman Lee stated: I have one item coming from the Sanitation Board Meeting that took place on September 8, 2020, I request to add to business on the agenda. Commissioner Corbett stated: I am requesting to add to business on the agenda. I want to appropriate money to Hurricane Relief for the American Legion. Ron Jones is here to speak on that. The other thing I would like to add to business is a project I am working on with Dixie School. Commissioner Epps stated: I would like to add to the agenda a project for the Volunteer Fire Department under business too. Commissioner Corbett motioned to approve the agenda with the items stated. Seconded by Commissioner Martin. The vote was unanimous.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Chairman Lee stated: We will postpone the approval of the August 26, 2020 minutes until the next Commission Meeting. Commissioner Corbett motioned to approved. Seconded by Commissioner Martin. The vote was unanimous.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

Commissioner Corbett stated: If you recall, I said I would attend the one day, one representative per County, ACCA Conference which was in Prattville this year. During that meeting we were handed several awards. I wanted to make sure that they are recognized in the Commissioner Meeting. The first one is for Vice Chair Peggy Martin for 16 years of outstanding service and dedication to the ACCA. The second one is for Commissioner Cattie Epps for outstanding service and dedication to the ACCA. The last one is for Chairman Gentry Lee for 28 years of dedicated service to the ACCA. In the Engineering Department, Assistant Engineer Ray Martin received his certificate in County Engineering Administration.

Commissioner Corbett stated: I wanted to have a discussion and this time at budget time would be a good time. It has never been apparent to me as this morning when I woke up and started receiving phone calls and Facebook comments. I think this Commission needs to put some thought and movement toward hiring an Information Technology person for this County. It is 2020. We are using contractors that we find to different aspects for the County. The Facebook comment I received this morning was Russell spelled wrong in eight (8) places. We need to look at this as a Commission and find it in the upcoming budget and move that direction.

Commissioner Corbett stated: I wanted to give the Commissioners an update on the Coulter Building Project Update. We had a meeting last week. There are some very good things going on towards project proposals for the Coulter Building. I asked for the next step be set-up a presentation to the Commissioners and the City Council as well to talk about these projects, how they will be funded and how they would look. I just do not want anyone to prejudge it. I think you will be blown away of the work that has been done that has been paid for by some of our local business owners. I wanted to give you a heads-up about the Old Post Office and where we were with that project. There may be an opportunity to tie some of that together and work those together a little bit. That will be coming in the next week that is why it is under discussion and not business. As soon as they get the date set, I will make sure they give each one of the Commissioners and the public and invitation to that as well.

Commissioner Corbett stated: I really want to thank the Commissioners for stepping up and giving some of their funding to help pay for the mural on the side of the Annex Building. I have talked to the artist, he said he is scheduled to begin at the end of the month. It is the Broad Street side of the Annex Building that you would view. The City Manager had very positive comments about the street scape projects in front of the Annex Building, the Post Office Building and they have already made the turn and they are going in front of the Elite and some other business' down there. They skipped in front of the Coulter Building because we do not want to do anything until we find out what the County is going to do with the Coulter Building. We want to work together with the County on that.

Commissioner Corbett stated: At this time, he did not want to discuss the budget meeting process discussion item on Agenda.

BUSINESS ITEMS:

Sheriff Heath Taylor stated: The Sheriff's Department has a 2004 Crown Vic that has 270,000 miles on it that I would like to surplus. Commissioner Corbett motioned to approve. Seconded by Commissioner Reed. County Administrator Horne polled the Commission. The vote was unanimous.

Chairman Lee stated: We had our Sanitation Board meeting September 8, 2020. One of the things we did is approve the budget that the Commission will be looking at today. The other thing is the Board voted to approve keeping the way the way the Sanitation Department is working today which is currently with the Engineer spear heading management. It was agreed that until further notice and if everything is running well. With the COVID-19, they just did not feel it was a good time to move forward on deciding and changes with adding a new Director. Yesterday, the meeting was short. It was the first one that the Sanitation Board held since the COVID-19 virus. I need a motion to approve the continued operation and management of the Sanitation Department by the County Engineer running the Sanitation Department. Commissioner Martin motioned to approve. Seconded by Commissioner Corbett. Motion was approved.

Commissioner Corbett stated: Ron Jones with the American Legion approached a meeting "Biscuits and Business" with the Chamber this morning with the issue with the hurricane. Ron Jones stated: Hurricane Laura was the most powerful that has hit the United States since hurricane Katrina 15 years ago. It caused an estimated \$25,000,000 to \$30,000,000 in damage in the lower parts of Louisiana, Eastern part of Texas and that number continued to climb. Over 20,000,000 Americans have been affected, 220,000 without power or water. The American Legion along with the Department of Alabama American Legion is raising funds and supplies to transport down to Lake Charles, Louisiana area. The timeline is by closing of local business' tomorrow. The reason is we are transporting supplies and any contributions that we have raised to the Department Headquarters in Montgomery Friday Morning. We are going to hopefully fill a 53 ft. trailer that will then get transported by Department Representatives and State Officer's Saturday morning to Louisiana. Commissioner Corbett stated: We are in the end of a budget year and I do have some appropriation money left from my District. I talked with Shawn about some projects we put-off due to COVID-19. I would like to give \$500 towards American Legion to help with this project. He said that would go well beyond what they were considering what we would do. Commissioner Lee asked if that is a motion. Commissioner Corbett stated: yes. Seconded by Commissioner Martin. The vote was unanimous.

Commissioner Corbett stated: Dixie School has a long history with Russell County. One of the things we noticed is the sign outside of the school needs some repair. I challenged the Superintendent to match any funds that I would be able to come up with. At this time, I would like to make a motion to give \$5,500 remaining in my District to the Russell County Board of Education for sole use for the Dixie School for the sign repair/replacement with the school matching funds. Seconded by Commissioner Martin. The vote was unanimous.

Commissioner Epps stated: I will have appropriation money left from my budget this year. After contributing to the mural program, I have learned the Mt. Olive Fire Department is in distress. I want to take the remainder I have in the budget to support their project building of a new fire station. That will leave about \$7,500 left in my budget I believe. I want those funds to be contributed to that department at this time. Seconded by Commissioner Reed. The vote was unanimous.

Chairman Lee stated we will recess for 10 minutes and come back to start the 2020-2021 Budget Meeting.

Russell County Official 2020-2021 Budget Meeting
Meeting Minutes
September 9, 2020

An adjourned meeting of the Russell County Commission was called to order for the September 9, 2020 county proposed budget review. Members present were: District 1, Gentry Lee; District 3 Peggy Martin; District 4, Ronnie Reed; District 5, Cattie Epps; District 6, Chance Corbett; District 7, Larry Screws. Members absent: District 2, Commissioner Currington. The minutes were kept by County Administrator, LeAnn Horne.

County Administrator LeAnn Horne stated: I appreciate everyone coming out for the Russell County Budget review. I have provided a budget agenda and a draft of budgetary items to include departmental information for the Commission's review. This will be the first review. I am not anticipating budget approval today; however, this does give an opportunity for the Commission to review with the elected official(s) or department head's their budget requests and ask any questions they may have before we in into the final presentation for approval. I have met with all the Department Heads who requested a meeting, some several times. There are a couple of new items and those will have an opportunity to hear and learn about as we review today. For example, the Sheriff's Department needs newer technology and body cam equipment.

In my opinion, this budget is lean. By that I mean as compared to previous years there are not a lot of major special capital projects or many departments requesting for new vehicles over and above what the Commission typically approves for say the Sheriff, Jail and a couple for Engineering. Basically you will see as you move through each department's budget what is being presented and what was submitted to you is for standard operating needs / requirements that will help them continue providing the services to the citizens that their respective departments are charged with providing to the public. I do want to mention, that in an effort to save time and hopefully more efficient this year due to being short staffed, closing out the fiscal year and state examiners are here which requires a large amount of time most days working with the, rather than providing a completed balanced budget; what is presented to you today is what the departments have presented for your consideration, a copy of their expense vs budget which shows you their expenditure status of budgeted funds, other information that they felt supports their requests or just additional. Revenue and financial reports on county funds. As you go through each department, me or Tina will make a note. If there are changes, we will note those and at the next meeting if all goes well today, I can present the balanced budget. I have run the preliminary numbers as to what is before you today and from what it indicates we are just about level as I mentioned. Depends on today.

Chairman Lee opened meeting and requested for those who are present requesting an appropriation to be considered to come forward. If you one of the appropriations, you are welcome to be recognized. I you want anything however you ko not have to say anything. Commissioner Corbett stated: I would like to know if they are here or not myself. Chairman Lee stated: I am going down the appropriation list I have. Commissioner Epps stated: The Administrator said all the Department Heads have met with her and gone over their budgets.

So, I guess my question is do we have to hear from the Department Heads again? If they have already met with her and the budget is in standard, can we just accept them?

Chairman Lee stated: There may be some changes. I do not know whether the Department Heads have seen the final proposed budget. County Administrator Horne stated: The Departments who either requested changes of I suggested changes have been notified in person. However, they received a printed copy today just as you have. Commissioner Epps stated: If there have not been any changes since they turned their budget in at this time my question is do, we must go over each Department Head's budget.

Chairman Lee stated: that would be up to the Commission. I have not seen their budget yet. I am not ready to approve something that I have not seen. Commissioner Corbett stated: I would like to hear from the Department Heads. I do not care if it takes two weeks to go over it. Commissioner Epps stated: I just want to know if we are going to nit-pick their budget. That is all I am trying to say since what the Administrator stated.

County Administrator Horne stated: Before you begin just to note and provide you with a location information which too this is a slight change from years past; the District Attorney, Juvenile and Adult Drug Court and Detention Contract for Juveniles are in the front of your budget books this year. Due to the Judges and District Attorney's busy court schedules and time constraints, we felt it was better to allow them to do toward the presentations. They are listed by the Appropriations tab.

Chairman Lee stated: I will call on the Juvenile Court first.

Tommy Powell stated: I would like to thank the Commission for all they do to help us to rehabilitate our juveniles. We have the same issues we have always had previously with detention space. We have two beds that served a County that has over 65,000 people. You can only imagine how difficult it is as to who we are going to put in detention and who we are going to let out. We pretty much ask for level funding this year. One thing we did ask in addition is we have a new program a Second Chance Program which will work with juveniles to keep them out of detention. As you know, a lot of kids get expelled from school and when they are out of school that is why they are breaking in houses and everything else. This program we are asking for additional funding is to work with these kids that have been suspended or expelled from school to attempt to try to keep them committing delinquent acts. It has been exceedingly difficult to try to work with two beds. I must look at a victim's mother the other day and tell her we could not detain her child that was charged with a sex crime. That is an extremely hard thing to do. We do not have our own detention center in Russell County, as we are paying \$33,000 per bed to Lee County. It gets kind of difficult trying to juggle at times with these kids. Chairman Lee stated: What additional are you asking for? Tommy Powell stated: We are asking for an additional \$11,000 to open a new program here to work with juveniles particularly the ones that have been expelled or suspended from school. Chairman Lee stated: Ms. Horne the request appears to be included if you will note under the appropriations section. Unless the Commission decides not to provide funding, we can include the request in the final draft.

Chairman Lee stated: Commissioners please make a note of that additional request for court services. It will be new request.

Commissioner Martin stated: How are you getting the parents, or the guardians brought in to be helped? Tommy Powell stated: That is a plus of this program. They do work with the parents. They go to the school and the parents are required to come to the school during certain times to find out what are the underlying issues as to why the kid is having problems. Vice Chair Martin stated: Good, I am glad to see the parents involved as well.

Tommy Powell with the Drug Court Program stated: Currently we are looking at about 32 in our adult drug court program. Four of those have graduated in the last year. The program itself is 18 months, it includes everything from community service treatment to a list of things we require before they can complete the program. They have GED classes if they do not have a diploma so they can get a job after the program so they can be self-sufficient. This past year has been particularly challenging with the COVID-19 situation. We are asking for the same amount of funding as in the past. We did have one issue where we had to shut down for two months at the courthouse. We could not drug screen and one of the costs we did incur because of COVID-19 this year was \$33,000 for hair follicles on every one of our folds that was in our drug courts. This tracked what they were doing in that three-month period we were shut down. This allowed us to see where they were. This past year we have started a mental health court. We now have nine individuals that are in our Mental Health Court. We have Veterans Court with 21 individuals. We have five courts and probably are the only County in Alabama that has all five of those courts serving our community. Over a 120 people we are dealing with on a day to day basis. It is making a difference. Like I said, we are just asking for the same thing the Commission has given in the past.

District Attorney Kenneth Davis stated: The pandemic has been catastrophic to what the state general fund has generated and will generate next year. The District Attorneys in Alabama are the only State Agency that are not 100 percent funded from the General Fund. In fact, we only get about 27 percent of what it cost to run our offices from the State General Fund. To put that in perspective we received last year about 28,000,000 from the State to prosecute all criminal cases in this State. The defense lawyers who represent criminal defendants got \$85,000,000 from the State of Alabama. It cost us just in salaries for the entire State of Alabama \$78,000,000. Between what we get from the General Fund is a difference between \$27,000,000 and \$78,000,000. We must generate that money from various fees and programs we run in our

offices such as child support, diversion bail bond fee. There is no requirement anymore for bail in many cases. That has gone to practically nothing. If the courthouse shuts down, there are not any fees generated because we cannot do our work. We had only one grand jury since March. We have not had a trial term since March and will not have one until November. I need this money to keep my office going and to keep my people employed. Unfortunately, this County like probably every County in Alabama and most places in the United States has seen a big outbreak in violent crimes. As I stand here today, we have 33 pending murder cases in Russell County Alabama. A quarter of those cases involve people who have come to our jurisdiction from across the river to commit their murders. There is a huge gang problem across the river, and it continues to spill over here. We see some of that in this County. I am grateful for whatever the Commission can do for us. Commissioner Martin stated: He is asking level funding? Chairman Lee stated: Yes. Next.

Chairman Lee stated: We will be receiving appropriations. If they are here and they want to say something they can. Chairman Lee called on Hurtsboro Library. Commissioner Corbett stated: It looks like due to the COVID-19 they are asking for 50% less than last year. Commissioner typically they do ask for additional funding; however, for the majority I level funded appropriations unless you instruct me otherwise today.

Lisa Sandt with the Lee/Russell County Government stated: We serve Lee/Russell County Government and provide services to the citizens to Lee & Russell County in the areas of aging, public transit and planning economic development. We are asking for a 3% increase over the last year's appropriation due to the cost of Sr. meals. We provide home delivered meals as well as meals four Senior Center's. We are also requesting a salary for a Russell County Senior Center Manager. Commissioner Corbett stated: Can I ask what your total appropriation is? Lisa Sandt stated: For 2020/2021, we are asking for a total appropriation for \$175,065.00. Commissioner Corbett stated: What we have on our budget tabulation for 2020 is \$185,000 so that is \$10,000 less. Lisa Sandt stated: Last year we ask for a match for vehicles. This year we are not asking for that. The 3% is our general appropriation and that is \$157,900 and then for Senior Center Manager salary is a little over \$17,000.

Commissioner Epps stated: How have you been operating the Senior Center due to COVID-19. Lisa Sandt stated: According to an order we are not allowed to open the Senior Centers. We have been providing meals since we have closed. We are delivering meals to those that rode the bus. We are going out and delivering those meals to their homes and making sure they are getting those services. We are providing home kits which have PPE in them. Even though the Senior Centers are closed we are providing services. We are about to start a farmer's market where they could get fresh food. This will be at the centers and/or delivered to our seniors. We are also doing a telephone program where people are calling seniors to check on them and provide information.

Commissioner Screws stated: If there is not a page in the book where we received a request are, we level funding it? Chairman Lee stated: Our policy is if we do not receive a request, we do not give one generally.

Commissioner Corbett stated: I think we should take it one by one. If we find one that is vital to our area, I think we should look at it and maybe allow the Administrator to try and reach out to them. That would be my opinion. If you want to say if there is no request in the packet, then it must be done. Chairman Lee stated: That already is a policy, but we can change that.

County Administrator stated: If you remember in the past the Commission indicated to me that if the agency requested additional funding over and above years previous, that the Commission should make that call and for me not to include the increased funding request if you recall. Well unless it was dues or a one-time critical project for example Fort Mitchell Visitors complex. You indicated that is a Commission decision to increase the funding. Chairman Lee stated: I understand but not having a list of a budget request or what is being proposed makes it difficult to thumb through this. County Administrator Horne stated: There should be a list at the beginning of the section. If your book was missed for some reason let me know and I will make you a copy. Also,

East Alabama Mental Health – no request

East Alabama Service for Elderly – no request

Department of Human Resources – no request; but we contribute annually

Phenix City Russell County Library – no request. County Administrator stated that is per agreement with the City of Phenix City so that County residents receive a free card and access to library if I recall correctly.

Extension Service – Commissioner Corbett stated: They ask for an increase of \$7,500

Chamber of Commerce – Commissioner Corbett stated: With the Chamber we had agreed to be a platinum member and I would just like to make a note to level fund that.

Soil/Water Conservation – funded \$2,500; they are requesting \$5,000

Tri-Rivers Development Association – Commissioner Corbett stated: We did not receive a letter on Tri-Rivers but all that is dues. \$375 level fund

Wiregrass RC&D Development – Commissioner Corbett stated: That is dues \$1,000 level fund.

Sport League – Commissioner Corbett stated: That is dues \$1,000 level fund.

Project Greene Light – Commissioner Corbett stated: They requested \$10,000 last year it was \$2,500. We need to talk about that one later.

Crisis Center – Closed

Historical Commission/Tourism – Dr. George Martin with the Historical Commission/Tourism stated our request is the same as the last year which is \$60,000.

We are experiencing some difficulty because of COVID-19. We cannot take care of the people we would have visiting but our expense is staying the same. Level funding.

Tears – Level Fund

United to Save Ourselves – Commissioner Corbett stated: They are requesting \$7,000.

Commissioner Reed stated: Every year they have a lot of things going on and the church has fund raisers. The church is shut down now, so it is going to be difficult for the church to raise money. Sheriff Taylor asked if he could make a comment on that? The United to Save Ourselves is a good charity that provides young people around the County to assist. They send people to my office every summer. They do a really good job trying to get them in the work force. I would like to see them get what they ask for if possible.

Chairman Lee stated: I agree, and we will talk about after, it just depends on how much money we have.

Lazarus Society – no request

New Life Teen University – Commissioner Corbett stated: New Life requested \$7,000 and last year it was \$5,000.

Planting Seeds – no request. County Administrator stated I have not heard from Dorothy and normally she drops her request off in person.

Animal Shelter – no request. Commissioner Martin asked do we know how much the City contributes to the Animal Shelter. Chairman Lee stated: I do not have a request. Commissioner Corbett stated: I would like to talk about this one when the Administrator gets back.

Macon/Russell Community Action – no request, Commissioner Epps stated: Could I address this. I reminded Macon/Russell at the last meeting. They just hired a new Director that came in on Monday. The previous Director was transferred to another agency in Florida. I will discuss this with them next Wednesday whether they can get a letter in to the Commissioners.

American Legion – Chairman Lee stated: They are asking for double of what was appropriated. I thought this was a one-time donation. Now look, they have gotten added to the list.

Commissioner Reed stated: Your right it was a one-time donation.

Beyond Expectation – Commissioner Screws stated: We increased the appropriation to \$2,000 last year. Level funded.

Commissioner Corbett stated: Going back to American Legion. I would like to go back to what we did last year. I do not think we could afford the \$10,000 but I think we could level fund at \$5,000. They are our veterans, and we need to take care of them.

Volunteer Fire Department – Emergency Management Director Bob Franklin stated: They are requesting \$95,000. That helps cover the expense of their insurance.

Joy Behind Bars – Commissioner Corbett stated: Joy Behind Bars is requesting \$1,000 and they received \$750 last year. Commissioner Screws stated: I would like to say I would like to give them the increase. We were giving them \$500 and we increased last year \$750. Commissioner Corbett stated: We will go back and talk about these increases at the of our review.

Child Advocacy Center – The representative stated: I would like to ask for \$7,500 the same as we asked for last year. No increase this year despite our budget has already been cut this year by approximately \$30,000.

Stewart House – Commissioner Corbett stated: Las year they requested \$1,000 this year they are requesting \$5,000. We did tell them last year we would try to increase it when we could.

Commissioner Martin stated: Do they take in people from Alabama. Commissioner Corbett stated: Yes. They did last year. A veteran from our area and others.

Ft. Mitchell Cemetery – The representative stated we are asking for the same amount we requested last year. He thanked the Administrator for contacting him and talking with him.

Chairman Lee stated: Level Fund.

Chairman Lee stated: That completes my list. I have several things that are new. One is Liberty Learning Foundation. They are requesting \$5,000. Commissioner Martin stated: I have heard from them and that is the program where they go to schools and teach patriotism. Chairman Lee stated: I am familiar with it we just cannot fund everybody Mrs. Martin.

Commissioner Corbett asked too. Have we ever given them anything? Chairman Lee stated: I do not recall them. They have given a presentation and I do not know if we ever gave them anything or not. Commissioner Martin stated: I personally gave to them because our children need to learn patriotism. They are our future. Commissioner Reed stated: I would be in favor if we just gave the \$500.

Safe Landing for Veterans – Requested \$5,000. No representative. Chairman Lee stated: The person who submitted the request is Modell McKenzie. Commissioner Reed stated: I know exactly who that is. This lady deals with the veterans. The amount of money they are requesting is to help with the supplies to clean due to COVID-19. I told them to put that request in and I would see what I could do.

Chairman Lee stated: We will talk about this one.

Commissioner Corbett stated: Can we just go through everyone and state if level funded or just not any changes maybe.

Chairman Lee stated: The motion is to approve the presentation we just reviewed and was presented. Seconded by Commissioner Martin. The vote was unanimous.

Chairman Lee stated: I declare a recess from 11:30-1:30.

Chairman Lee reconvened the meeting for lunch until 1:30 P.M.

County Administrator LeAnn Horne stated: I gather from this morning the change in approach to the budget review process hit some bumps. I apologize for having to run back and forth. As I stated, I am having to assist the auditor along with being short staffed. The information provided in your books today is what I will provide in final form and balanced but with the changes, if any, you make as we go through today. We are within our revenue margins on the calculations I have made thus far. Now, I am not certain what you did to me when I may have left the room.

Commissioner Lee stated: The salaries are not changing. County Administrator Horne stated: Yes, the salaries will change based on the Commissions approval or not of an increase for employees. A 2% and 3% increase has been discussed. That would be the only change in what you see before you unless you make specific ones during the review.

Chairman Lee stated: You do not recommend any changes other than what is in here now.

County Administrator Horne stated: After my meeting and review with the Department Heads, if there were changes, we talked about them at that time and they submitted another budget request for their department. The sheriff has an equipment purchase he is adding to his budget because that calls for a different line item and Engineering has the new funds we are setting up, but with the amounts the Engineer will report. Depending on the percentage increase other changes you will see in the final, yes salaries and benefits. As far as the numbers, we are within our revenue projections for next year.

What is presented is what the departments requested, any changes or additions the Commission made in appropriations and changes in salaries. Chairman Lee stated: You are not requesting any changes? County Administrator Horne stated: Other than the salaries as mentioned which will change benefit lines and the health insurance lines may change based on a projected 5% increase. Commissioner Corbett stated: The salary your basing that on what we do?

County Administrator stated: Yes sir, either a 2% or 3%. That is going to be the same in every budget that is presented to you today. I did not change those lines in the materials today. We did run the numbers in our office to obtain what each would cost.

Commissioner Screws stated: If there are no changes in any of the budgeted items for the department other than the salaries then we do not need to go through this we just need to look at the change in the salaries. County Administrator Horne stated: As you review, as the

Commission you may have questions come to mind. However, from what was reported to me there was not anything out of the ordinary budgetary items or over and above typical operating needs in my opinion. However, the review allows the Commission to hear about that department, their goals and needs too when reviewing for next year.

Chairman Lee stated: The Commission budget is the same as the year before except for the salaries and insurance? Tell us the percentage the insurance went up. County Administrator Horne stated: 5.5 percent. Under the County benefits in the back of your budget books, we did a summary with employee benefits and retiree benefits for you all.

Probate Judge Harden stated: We have a decrease in what we were asking for. I do not have access to the retirement, health insurance and FICA numbers so I could not calculate those. Mrs. Horne stated her office would provide those. The rest of my budget is level funded except some of the items I decreased and a couple that was increased. My salary is what it has been and what I did is I estimated a 3% increase for my employees. I am going from minor equipment \$5,000 to \$1,000. I am increasing cleaning supplies due to COVID-19 from \$300 to \$1,000, my equipment rental went down \$1,000, telephone went up \$1,500 and I cut data processing software from \$10,000 to \$2,500.

Commissioner Corbett stated: If we have an IT person on staff how much will we save you on your budget? Probate Judge Harden stated: It would only save me \$1,000 a year because that is what I pay for the IT person that does it for me now. Janita does all out IT work and it is over and above what she is supposed to do so we pay her an additional \$1,000 a year.

Revenue Commissioner Naomi Elliott stated: I increased my budget by \$3,000. With the new system that I am getting I am not sure about the IT person I am going to have. I am not sure how much I am going to have to spend on that. I do not have a line for it, but I put it under Contract Services. My salary has increased some, that is reflected in the salary schedule but not in the total that is proposed in the budget. My total is \$633,828. If you look at the 2019/2020 it was \$629,000. This is not including salaries. I proposed was \$433,828 before the salary adjustment.

Motor Vehicle License Commissioner Paulette Colbert stated: My overall budget is under from last year. I am mostly level funded. I have three different items that are different. Last year I purchased new computers so I decreased line item 214 minor equipment. My maintenance with S & W is going up \$22,040. My postage line item is increased by \$3,000 because I have used so much more due to COVID-19. We did more mail outs in one month than we did in six months.

Board of Registrars level funded it appears per Chairman.

Maintenance Director Leon Watson stated: The health insurance for the employees will be increased \$2,000. Additional funds requested in line item 211 (office supplies) and electricity. Everything else is the same but I also submitted 10 items for new projects. Commissioner Corbett stated: So, you do have your nine-project list. Leon stated: It is 10 project list. Commissioner Corbett stated: I only see nine projects. Are they included in the proposed budget? Leon stated: No, they are excluded. Commissioner Corbett stated: Do you know what project 10 is? Leon stated: Number 10 is a separate system for the Administrator's office so she can have independent control of her office. When you start a separate system up after 6:00 that separate system will be for her office so you do not start a 50-ton system up to cool the entire second floor. That is \$8,000. That is for material only. The Maintenance Department will do the labor. Commissioner Corbett stated: With my calculation the non-projects amount is \$275,657 and the 10 project is \$8,000. Chairman Lee stated: We will come back to the non-budgeted projects. Leon stated: Project 2 has a deadline on it for the upgrade on the elevator noted in my report. It is the only elevator we have throughout the County Buildings that does not meet the new State requirements. It must be completed by January 1, 2023. Chairman Lee stated: That has got to be done so it must be put in somewhere.

County Buildings Codes and Enforcements is level funded. Chief Inspector & Manager Bubba Roberts was absent due to a funeral.

Enforcement Officer Bill Friend stated: No changes in Special Enforcement (License, Nuisances), level funded.

Chief Mapper and Appraiser Heath Crowe stated: The proposed changes I have in my budget are line item 163 (data processing) \$5,500, line item 179 (aerial photography) \$59,000, line item

241 (DP software repairs and maintenance) \$93,000, line item 599 (miscellaneous capital outlay) \$2,400 and line item 235 (computer repairs and maintenance) \$8,000 (IT since we are no longer going to have S & W). Other than the changes there was a couple of decreases. Miscellaneous service provided by others. At this present time, we are not in any litigations so we were able to decrease that line and legal services. Chairman Lee stated: How much of this is paid for by the State? Heath stated: It is 8% out of General Fund.

Economic & Tourism Director Victor Cross proposed budget:

Income

Lodging Tax, \$124,500 Estimated 50% loss of revenue due to COVID-19

Columbus CVB \$1,000 ASA Tournament

Columbus Sports Council \$1,000 ASA Tournament

Expenses submitted to date:

Intersecure Tech \$12,000 Tourism App & Website/Web Pages

Wreaths Across America \$1,500

Miss Alabama \$650 Franchise Fee for Miss Phenix City Pageant

Joel Jones \$1,000 Hot Air Balloons, Crawford Market Days

EDAA \$350 Membership

Columbus C of C \$3,565 Chamber Quality of Life Magazine

Columbus CVB \$5,036

Columbus Airport Monitors \$1,300 Indoor Digital Advertising-Baggage Claim & Security Area

Tri-Rivers Waterway \$500 Organization Membership

Official Interstate Guide \$7,500, 9 States and DC 1.6 million multi state published and \$800,000 for Alabama

MWR 2020 Archery ASA \$19,615 Annual ASA Archery Tournament

Russell County SO \$2,783 Annual ASA Archery Tournament

Pioneer Day Fort Mitchell \$3,000 Support

Labor Day Fair \$3,000 Support

Commissioner Reed stated: Coroner Sumbry could not make the meeting and recommended level funding.

Sheriff Heath Taylor stated: The only increase in the Sheriffs budget is the 3% increase that is added to the salaries. Not everyone will get that. It is based on merit system and cost of living. I anticipate a little of that coming back to the Commission or leave it in salaries for other retirement if that is where it needs to go. I do not anticipate using the full 3% for all employees. I decreased line 211 by \$5,000, 214 we swapped into 219 because if inventory change of \$1,000 or less, we took \$167,000 and put in in 219 and left 214 with about \$15,000 in it. Line item 239 I decreased by \$1,000 and I increased my uniform line item by \$10,000 because we are changing companies. Most of my budget is level funded. We need a body camera system. The current one is failing. The proposed one is call Axon. We currently have body cameras that I applied for a grant out of Columbus, Georgia about 5 or 6 years ago. They gave us \$75,000. We bought the system we currently have. We have upgraded it with \$35,000 from the budget money I had over the years. That system is unreliable, and it is failing. We have to maintain all of the video currently on a server that we have purchased. The number one company in the Country is Axon. All the videos that you see on the media of any incident, 99.9% of those are Axon cameras. It is expensive but it is the best on the market. What we are currently doing is extremely dangerous to this community. We have worked out a system and County Administrator Horne has put in in the budget. I was able to negotiate with Axon for a ten-year option. We are getting ten years of the cameras and storage for a 2020 price (locked in).

They go up 3% every year. If we do not do that in five years, it will cost us an additional \$60,000. It is \$126,000 the first year and \$66,000 every year after that for the next nine years. That is everything involved. It is new cameras every three, five, seven and ten years. It will completely take care of our County and our deputies from a perspective of body cameras and what is going on in the community when something happens.

Sheriff Heath Taylor stated: The jail is basically the same as the Sheriffs Office. We added 3% to the salary. Line item 214 was moved to line 219 because of the change in inventory thresholds and the requirements for that line item. The uniform increase is in line 239. We are not doing any major projects to the jail this year to add to the budget. Hopefully, everything is in the budget we have and it is level funded.

Sheriff Heath Taylor stated: Myself and County Administrator Horne budgets their departmental vehicles in a different location/fund and she has done for the upcoming year. Also, she will add the body cam lines or funding if approved by Commission.

Sheriff Heath Taylor stated: The animal control budget is level funded.

Emergency Management Director Bob Franklin stated: For the most part I have level funded. I did adjust a couple of lines. In line item 231 I increased \$200 for copier machine. The lease is \$4,200 a year. The EMA dues went up \$5 a person line item 303. The contract services line item 304 which includes IT and siren repair technician. I need to increase it to \$6,000.

County Engineer Shawn Blakeney stated: I am proposing \$484,000 that is increased by \$34,000 in 2019/2020. I have all seven Commissioners \$20,000 in my budget. That increased by \$20,000.

County Engineer Shawn Blakeney stated: Proposed for the Sanitation Department's budget this year is \$3,131,000. This is an increase 2019/2020 of \$171,843. We are needing to purchase a MAC Lowboy for the transfer station. The ones we are using are a 1998/1999 models. That is going to be about \$140,000. I also added into the budget a used side arm truck because they are quicker, faster and take less people to operate. I am using \$202,000 fund balance for our next budget. We also paid off the garbage cans last year. Chairman Lee stated: The Sanitation Board met and approved the budget. Commissioner Corbett requested more trash pickup on the side of the roads. County Engineer stated: Mr. Barnes and Amanda Jenkins handles those duties; however, with COVID-19 having inmate labor has been extremely limited.

County Engineer Shawn Blakeney stated: My proposed budget for the Engineering Department is \$3,846,440. This is decreased from last year by \$83,880. The good news about this budget is this will be the last principal interest payment. We did purchase an excavator which was approved by Commission. I have budgeted \$35,000 for smaller grass patcher and a 10-foot rotary cutter for \$10,045. That is going to help us out in Ladonia. I will be purchasing two pickup trucks. We are trying to replace some of the old pickup trucks.

Commissioner Reed stated: If everyone is satisfied with the budget, we need to put the pay raise in it. Commissioner Lee stated: There are three things we need to talk about.

One is the \$11,000 request on appropriation for the court system. I did not understand if that was going to be a one time or every year appropriation. Commissioner Reed stated: We should just take it as a one time a year for now. My suggestion is we are already supporting a State function mor than we are supposed to. If the County keeps picking up the slack the State is going to keep giving the County more and more to do. We stay where we are. County Administrator Horne stated: Please keep in mind even though I agree, these services are very much needed. We need to make certain we have funds for general government and employees before you provide for State programs. That is my opinion based on statues.

Announcements were made.

Chairman Lee moved for the meeting to be adjourned.

Attest: _____ Signed: _____
County Administrator Chair