

The Russell County Commission
Meeting Minutes
November 8th, 2017
9:30 A.M. E.S.T

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

The Invocation was given by Reverend Steve Pace, Associate Pastor of Summerville Baptist Church.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Gentry Lee.

Public comments:

Eddream Lawrence discussed Samuel Road and placed another requested to pave this road. She said she was told that the road had been placed on the paving list in previous years, but for some reason was taken off and replaced with other roads. She suggested using taxes paid by Westrock as funding for paving Samuel Road.

Reverend Pace announced the Housing Authority will hold ground breaking for construction of Riverview Redevelopment, Phase One, November 9th at 9:30 a.m.

Leroy Davis reminded that the Veteran's Banquet will be Friday night, November 10th; also, the Veterans parade will be held Saturday morning with the Veteran's Rally to follow.

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

Administrator Horne called the roll. Members present were: Chair Peggy Martin, Vice Chair Larry Screws, Commissioners Gentry Lee, Carl Currington, Ronnie Reed, and Chance Corbett. Commissioner Epps was absent. Also present was the County Attorney Kenneth Funderburk and County Administrator LeAnn Horne.

A quorum was established.

Chair Martin stated there have been changes to agenda since Monday's work session. Administrator Horne acknowledged there were request from Victor Cross to take, Economic Development off of the agenda until possibly the November 22nd meeting. Also several Commissioners have asked for more research to be conducted on the Retirement Policy Change Proposal and table this until the next meeting.

Commissioner Corbett requested to take off Agreement for Space Utilization, since he found that that was discussed and approved during another meeting. There were no objections noted by Commissioners to the agenda amendments.

Chair Martin requested a motion to approve the October 25h, 2017 Meeting minutes. Commissioner Corbett motioned to approve the minutes. Seconded by Commissioner Currington. The vote was unanimous.

Chair Martin stated Commissioner Currington had a couple of items that he wanted to discuss. He thanked David Ellis for agreeing to remain as District 2's appointment to the Planning Commission.

Commissioner Currington read a letter he received from the City of Phenix City after he requested the City of Phenix City and Lee County split the remaining expenses of the traffic signal that will be installed at the intersection of Evans Road and Highway 80. The State of Alabama has approved and agreed to fund \$25,000 of the \$50,000 for installation of the light.

The City's reply was:

Thank you for your letter of September 19th, 2017 inviting the City to participate in a traffic signal being installed at Evans Road. This matter was discussed by the Council at a regular scheduled work session of September 18th, 2017. Being advised the City does not maintain Evans Road or U.S. Highway 80. It was the consensus of the Council to decline participation.

Commissioner Currington discussed revenue that the City collects in the police jurisdiction, but refuses to help or provide services to citizens in that area. Commissioner Currington wanted to make people aware what is happening.

Commissioner Corbett also informed citizens; the City will now enforce traffic laws at the intersection of Evans Road and U.S. Hwy 80 and collect revenue from those who run the traffic light.

A proclamation for the Farm/City Week was presented to Jasponica Florence, Jennifer Davison and other Farm / City Committee members. Commissioner Corbett motioned to approve the proclamation and was seconded by Commissioner Lee. The vote was unanimous.

Commissioner Currington motioned for the County Administrator to research cost of the installation of a time clocks and cards for hourly employees. Requested her to bring this back to the Commission once she has the figures. Seconded by Commissioner Lee. The vote was unanimous.

Commissioner Corbett presented the Agreement for Space Utilization of the Old Post Office/ Library. The use of the bottom floor had been discussed and approved at the September 13th, 2017 Commission meeting by a vote of 5 yes votes and 1 no vote; but the main floor was not been addressed. He requested that the main floor commonly referred to as the Old Post Office/ Library building at 500 14th Street be utilized as a meeting center, which would be controlled by the Russell County Commission and coordinated through the Commission Office by Russell County Administrator. Also

authorize the Administrator to coordinate work on the inside of the building and outside as necessary to prepare for an architect to design the space and a construction company to be awarded a bid to finish the space. He also added that the County Attorney to continue to work on the agreement for the museum. That will also include request for proposals to take down the old Raiford Building next to the Board of Education Office. Seconded by Commissioner Lee. District 1 (Lee) voted, yes; District 2 (Currington) voted, yes; District 3 (Martin) voted, yes; District 4 (Reed) voted, no; District 6 (Corbett) voted, yes; District 7(Screws) voted, no. There were 4 yes votes and 2 no votes. The motioned passed.

District Attorney Ken Davis gave a brief update of his department. He discussed funding cuts the State has made in the last 10 years which caused him to lose 5 employees. At the 2017 Legislative Session a statute was passed which provided an increase in alcohol sales and the Commission has been generous to give appropriations to his office. This money has enabled him to hire a few people and implement a program called "Helping Families".

There is a huge truancy and drop out problem in Russell County. The Helping Families program helps young teens who are at risk of becoming part of the criminal justice system. Montgomery, Birmingham, Huntsville, Mobile and Tuscaloosa have used this program which has proven to prevent teens from ever being a part of the criminal justice system. Mr. Davis stated that his office was awarded a grant that will fund the program; there will not be any County or State money involved.

He has hired two people: Florence Bellamy who will direct the program and Melinda Winters to assist her. They will need an office. He moved one of his Assistant District Attorneys to the Child Support Unit, which was the only available space to place him.

He has also hired a Victim Services Officer, who is the liaison between the court system and the victim. They provide help filling out forms for compensation from the Victims Compensation Commission in Montgomery, give updates on the case status and when the victim should appear in court. She will also need an office.

Mr. Davis has requested to provide office space for the new employees and suggested several spaces he thought would be suitable.

1. Witness room #2 on the 4th floor across from Courtroom 3
2. Witness room #1 on the 4th floor across from Courtroom 3
3. The conference room on the 4th floor outside of the Grand Jury room

Commissioner Reed motioned to allow the County Administrator find space for Mr. Davis' new employees. Seconded by Commissioner Corbett. The vote was unanimous.

The At-Large Position for the Planning Commission is still vacant. Commissioner Lee asked to table this appointment until the next meeting.

Chair Martin stated that Commissioner Epps had requested at Monday night's work session approval for Mik Cole to draft a proclamation to be presented at the next meeting. It is estimated the proclamation should take 1 hour to create at a rate of \$15.00. Commissioner Reed motioned to approve Mik Cole to draft a proclamation at the hourly salary agreed in Mrs. Cole's contract. Seconded by Commissioner Screws. District 1 (Lee) voted, no; District 2 (Currington) abstained ; District 3 (Martin) voted, yes; District 4 (Reed) voted, yes; District 6 (Corbett) abstained; District 7(Screws) voted, yes. 3 yes votes, 2 abstentions and 1 no vote. The motion carries.

Administrator Horne announced the Wiregrass RC&D awarded a grant to Commissioner Epps' playground project in the amount of \$3,600.06.

Administrator Horne stated as discussed Monday night's work session for regarding employees appointed to serve to serve on Boards she is requesting clarification if the Commission makes board appointments of hourly employees, her understanding was if the meeting is during the day the employee would receive their regular pay for attending the meeting and representing the Commission.

Commissioner Lee: I will make that into a form of a motion. If we just need to make a clarification. It has always been that way. If the Commission requests an employee to go to a board meeting, then they are to be paid to do that. Not getting paid by the meeting organization they are going to, but their regular job.

Commissioner Corbett: I'll second that.

Administrator Horne polled the Commission. The vote was unanimous. She also stated that the reason that she brought that forward was because it was not addressed in the current personnel policies. She preferred to have some written guidelines.

Administrator Horne stated the Commission is aware discussion during budget time and approved a position in this year's budget for an Economic and Tourism Director. She requested approval of the job description that was provided at Monday's work session. She requested approval to move forward and post the position and accept applications. Commissioner Lee motioned to approve Administrator Horne's request. Seconded by Commissioner Currington. The vote was unanimous.

DHR Manager Carolyn Robinson provided a new hire report in the Commission packets.

After announcements were made, Commissioner Lee motioned to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned.