

The Russell County Commission
Meeting Minutes
March 13, 2019
9:30 A.M. EST

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

Reverend Steve Pace with Summerville Baptist Church gave the invocation.

Commissioner Corbett led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chair Martin thanked Cable T.V. of East Alabama and the Citizen of East Alabama for their coverage of the Commission Meetings. She also welcomed Elected Officials, Department Heads, Media and Guests.

County Administrator LeAnn Horne established a quorum. Members present were; Chair Martin, Gentry Lee, Ronnie Reed, Vice Chair Cattie Epps, Chance Corbett and Larry Screws. Also, present was the County Attorney Kenneth Funderburk. Carl Currington was not present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

County Administrator Horne requested approval of the February 13, 2019 and February 27, 2019 Minutes. Chair Martin motioned to approve. Seconded by Commissioner Reed. The vote was unanimous.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

Commissioner Reed introduced Dana Murphy to discuss the Smart911 Program. Mrs. Murphy stated, the Russell County E911 Board pays for a free service which is available to all citizen's and is called the Smart911. Citizens can sign up at Smart911.com. The citizen creates their own profile with information for the first responders to be able to help. The information the citizen can provide is their full name, address, contact information, caregivers contact information, medical conditions or medicines they are on, any disabilities they may have, pets, service animals, livestock, power or utility information, access to vehicles at their house and any inability to evacuate their residents. You link your telephone to 911; when you call the information comes up. It has to be updated every six months.

Commissioner Screws stated he would like for the County Engineer Shawn Blakeney to reemphasize the importance of the bill that just passed so that a citizen will know that it is not for paving dirt roads. County Engineer Shawn Blakeney stated, as everyone has heard the gas tax bill did pass the Senate yesterday 28-6. The Governor signed it shortly after that. This is huge news for the Engineering Department, Russell County and all over the State of Alabama. Russell County alone within three years, from implementation of the .10 cent will receive an additional or a little over 1 million dollars a year for existing paved roads and bridges. This is for asphalt and concrete. This money can only be used for paved roads and bridges. It cannot be used for salaries or equipment.

The bill is to rebuild infrastructure that's existing and crumbling in Russell County and the state. It has been since 1992 since Russell County Engineering Department had an increase in their budget. Hopefully, the citizen's in Russell County will start seeing projects. The projects being completed with this money the county plans to erect advertising signs stating "this road was repaved or resurfaced using this new Act. The citizens will see this money at work. This bill Act begins in August. There will be a .6 cent increase, .2 cents next year and .2 cents the third year totaling .10 cents. There has been a lot of talk about the index.

The index is going to be based on the construction cost for what it would take to build road and bridges and how its influx from year to year. This could be up to .1 cent every

two years additional revenue but as the Senate talked yesterday, since 2003, if this index would have been on there the current gas tax it would only have rose .1 cent in the last fifteen years. It went up twice and went down once; if it goes up one year and the next year the market falls down, the .1 cent will decrease. That will influx up and down; it will not be just rising out of control.

Commissioner Screws stated this will be separate money from what we call federal aid.

Shawn stated, yes. There is going to be a lot to this bill. We get \$533,000 every year from the State through federal money. The state is now going to provide counties \$400,000 a year. Money we can use on federal aid route roads and bridges. This will be bid locally through the county. It is not going to have to go through the State. There is going to be separate money through ALDOT for county projects. There is going to be several grant opportunities for the counties to apply for with the State. There is going to be more grant money out there for cities and counties to do safety projects also. County Engineer stated, one more time, this money is not for dirt roads. It is for existing paved roads and bridges.

BUSINESS ITEMS:

County Administrator Horne stated: The EMA Director and his staff are currently working in Lee County as they have since the tornado. Administrator Horne announced, there was a bid opening on March 1st for the three community storm shelters. The low bid as EMA Director Bob Franklin reported on Monday at the work session, is Aqua Marine. The bid Tabulation Sheet has been provided to you. The bid met the bid specs. Commissioner Epps motioned for acceptance of this recommendation. Seconded by Commissioner Reed. The vote as unanimous.

Commissioner Epps made a motion to accept all 4 Court orders for cremations. Seconded by Commissioner Reed. The vote was unanimous.

Sheppard Dearing with the Russell County Water Authority requested for Robert Brundidge to be re-appointment to the Board of the Russell County Water and Sewer Authority. Mr. Brundidge provided a letter requesting to be re-appointed to the Board. Commissioner Screws motioned to approve. Seconded by Commissioner Epps. Commissioner Reed asked for Discussion: Has Mr. Brundidge been attending all the meetings? Sheppard answered, yes sir. The vote was unanimous.

County Administrator LeAnn Horne stated Mr. Jimmy Adams presented an ad for the Commission's consideration which is for the Exchange Club. Commissioner Lee stated, it is for the Exchange Club and it benefits the Exchange Club. The Rodeo is partnered with the Stewart Center. The check will be made out to the Exchange Club of Phenix City.

County Administrator stated, there was some discussion on Monday evening regarding the level of sponsorship that the Commission would like to do. One recommendation was the Chute Sponsorship. The other one is the Event Sponsorship. Commissioner Lee moved, that the Commission contribute the \$1000 to this worthy project. The people do not realize the Exchange Club helps with children in Russell County and Phenix City. The latest event the Exchange Club voted on was to send three children to 4-H camp summer camp. Just about everything the Exchange Club does is for children. This \$1000 is going to the Exchange Club funding to provide for projects. We are co-sponsors of the rodeo with the Stewart Home. Seconded by Commissioner Screws. The vote was unanimous.

Commissioner Corbett ask for discussion: He stated, he completely supports the Exchange Club. He stated he has been in it for years and was the President for a couple of years. I am a little concerned with it being a rodeo and the Sheriff's Department has a rodeo too. He stated he was making sure it is not conflicting with the Sheriff's rodeo and as the Commission supports the Sheriff's rodeo as well.

Commissioner Lee stated The Exchange Club actually asked the Sheriff and of course he may not of said if he didn't agree with it but he did give approval.

Sheriff Taylor stated: let's be clear. Sheriff stated, he gave approval for the Exchange Club to rent the arena. The Exchange Club asked me did I care if they rented the arena to another entity to do a rodeo. He said; it's yall's arena. You can rent to whomever you want. The Exchange Club never asked if they could sponsor a rodeo. In my opinion, it is going to be in conflict. The Exchange Club is sponsoring a rodeo. This rodeo occurred last year. That is how it was addressed to me "did I care if the Exchange Club rented the arena for a rodeo". Sheriff Taylor said, it is the Exchange Club's arena and he doesn't care.

Commissioner Lee stated, this rodeo went on last year. The horse show is not being done so that takes one event away. We are not adding any events.

Sheriff Taylor said, no one asked me about the Exchange Club sponsoring and hosting a rodeo.

Commissioner Lee stated, we were told that you were asked. Sheriff Taylor said, I was asked did I care if the arena was rented by another rodeo and he said how can I care it's your arena.

Commissioner Lee stated, there is six months in between the rodeos, and he doesn't think there will be any conflict in sponsorship. Commissioner Corbett stated we need to make sure we sponsor the Sheriff's rodeo. Commissioner Lee stated, the Exchange Club can make a decision after the rodeo. If they make as much money as they did with the horse show the Exchange Club is going to re-do the fence and the lights at the arena.

Commissioner Corbett stated, he did not bring this up to get conflict. He just wanted to make a point that he would like the Commission to support the Sheriff's rodeo as well and to show this is not replacing it. The vote was unanimous.

Commissioner Corbett stated the tornado that happened in Lee County, is one of the largest disasters that has happened, occurred and mainly especially with the number of people that died from that event. The Sheriff's Office, Engineering and Emergency Management helped come to the aid. Commissioner Corbett stated, that all the proceeds they get from the Crawford Cookie Crawl will go towards the Lee County tornado victims. He encouraged for other to donate if possible.

Announcements were made.

Commissioner Epps motioned to adjourn.

Attest: _____ Signed: _____
County Administrator Chair