

The Russell County Commission
Meeting Minutes
March 28, 2018
9:30 A.M. E.S.T

An Adjourned meeting of the Russell County Commission was called to order by Chair Peggy Martin.

The invocation was given by Rev. Brady Baird-Summerville United Methodist Church. Chair Martin stated Rev. Steve Reneau with Trinity United Methodist was supposed to do the invocation, but his grandmother passed away. Please keep the family in your prayers.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chair Peggy Martin.

Public Comments:

Dr. Screws wanted to come and introduce themselves to the County Commission and to let you know that we look forward working with you in the years to come. As stated, I am Jackie Screws, President of Chattahoochee Valley Community College, I started my tenure at the college on February 1, 2018. We have tried to hit the ground running to show this community that we are serious about what we are doing, and we have tried our best to get out and let people know who we are. I have with me today Dr. Chantae Calhoun, who is our Dean of Instruction. Moving forward she is going to be one of the instrumental administrators at the college who is able work to enhance and improve the program offerings we have at Chattahoochee Valley Community College. We look forward to working with you all and I am certain that this will not be the this is not going to be the last opportunity that I will have to come before you. I appreciate the opportunity to greet you this morning.

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

Administrator Horne called the Commission roll. Members present were Chair Peggy Martin, Vice Chair Carl Currington, Ronnie Reed, Cattie Epps, Chance Corbett and Larry Screws. Commission Gentry Lee was absent. Also present was the County Attorney Kenneth Funderburk and County Administrator Horne who kept the minutes.

A quorum was established.

Chair Martin requested a motion to approve the March 14th, 2018 meeting minutes. Commissioner Currington motioned to approve. Seconded by Commissioner Corbett. County Administrator polled the Commission. The vote was unanimous.

Sheriff Taylor presented Cpl. Desmond Hall and Sgt. Michael Schroeder with Alabama Jail Academy Certificates for completing the National Institute for Jail Operations with the Association of County Commission.

Chair Martin stated we thank them for their service and appreciate the fine staff the Sheriff has to protect our community.

Commissioner Reed presented the Volunteer Citizen of the Year award to Mr. Cedric Darrell Darty. Commissioner Reed thanked Mr. Darty for doing an outstanding job in the community and keep up the good work.

Commissioner Epps would like to say Cedric is a fine young man that he grew up in our community and also, his good friend Jerry Strong. They are very outstanding young men in the community and they serve their church very well. They give me respect.

Commissioner Epps would like to discuss the answering and returning phone calls in the Commission Office. I have had several concerns and I don't like to call them complaints. But I have had several concerns about the returning of the phone calls and not the answering of the phone in our Commission office. When citizens call the Commission Office and leave a message, I think we should return these phone calls. My concern is if our Administrator is too busy or has too much on her then apparently, we as Commissioners need to start looking to see whether she needs more assistance in the office because when citizens and even some of the employees have contacted me about those returning calls. It bothers me because we are here to serve the citizen. So, it's just a concern that we need to tighten up our "ship" in returning calls. Even though someone wants to speak to Mrs. Epps the ladies do very well about giving them my phone number or leaving a note on my desk. Just about everybody in Russell County has my phone number. I will return those calls. That is my concern that we need to make sure that phone calls are returned if we can answer the phone calls or if she needs to refer them to someone else. Just make sure the citizens of Russell County are taken care of.

Administrator Horne stated Thank You Commissioner Epps for bringing this to her attention. I want you to know that I take this very seriously in the office. We do work for the citizens and the community. If you have a certain situation or name of a person who has reported to you that I need to call back I will personally call and apologize. I will even go to their home and talk to them because that's how serious I take this. I have talked with my staff and researched everything and there is no knowledge of a complaint about return calls. However, I have requested the staff to refer them to my assistant Vicky Perry, Assistant Administrator if I am not available. But returning and responding to phone calls is very important. I just thank you for your support and informing me.

Commissioner Corbett responded, he definitely has no problem with what Commissioner Epps is saying because I want to get the phone calls returned. I too appreciate the staff that we do have because I get texts all day long and call the citizens back immediately or almost immediately. I think that part of the system works well. I

don't think I miss any phone calls. Every once in a while, I miss some mail and I don't know where that goes. Someone would say they sent me something. The phone calls for sure I am getting text messages saying call citizen back and I make those calls back and that's the way I prefer to be communicated with. They also can get my phone number off my card.

Commissioner Epps presented Kimberly Cobb Ray who is the director of the Macon/Russell County Agency for Aging.

Kimberly Cobb Ray state's she is the director Macon/Russell Community Action Agency. I will be finishing law school at the end of this year. Also, I have been in the community action network for the past ten years. My area is Macon/Russell County. I will be making a pledge and a plea to Macon County as well. Community action was born through the Lyndon Johnson administration when he launched the war on poverty. Community action agencies are considered the experts in eradicating poverty and the goal is still alive today as it was over 50 years ago. The community action agency that I work for has been established probably for the last 53 years. The unique and the most beautiful thing I think about community actions that their board of directors consist of a tripartite. The tripartite is three pieces. The first piece is a local government, the second piece consist of other community action agencies, other social services, and small business that are in the community, but the most important piece is that maximum feasible participation from low income to moderate income families that we represent. Their true purpose is to bring what the needs and concerns are of the organization. That is another reason I am here speaking with you today. One thing I can say, I cannot do this alone. I have an awesome staff but most of all I need my local governments, I need additional social services and other partnerships, but I really need to get the people involved so they can have a chance to become self-sufficient. Currently, our agency is really only providing emergency utility assistance and some emergency assistance which will consist rental to help people to not become homeless. We can do things in education, employment, financial literacy, housing, senior programs and nutrition. It's all about turning things around and reprogramming it to meet the needs. Each community action agency serves the County. My agency serves Macon/Russell. Russell County needs are completely difference from Macon County. Currently, our funding comes from HHS. We do have federal funds that come in, we also have some state funding that comes in, but the thing that we are really lacking is that local funding from our local government, cities, counties. I am here before you today for a couple of reasons. One to introduce myself and to let you know what my vision is but to really request additional funding. The federal and state grants are earmarked. Thy are only used for a specific purpose and you can only use them for a specific time. The non-federal funds actually help support and sustain the organization. There are certain things that the federal and state grants will not pay for. That's why non-federal funds are very important for the sustainability. Right now, my agency is facing a huge crisis. That is why they put me there is to try and turn it around. I can't do it alone. Today, I would like to request \$10,000. But more importantly I would love to be a part of your budget.

Chair Martin asked do you and the Lee/Russell Council Government have any relationship financially. Ms. Ray responded, "no I don't think so". The way our federal funding is strictly for Russell County and strictly for Macon County. Chair Martin asked do they do fund raising. Ms. Ray said that is another thing they are looking in to. My board is very engaged, and I think they did have a fund raiser last year, but with that being said you have to have up front money to raise money. Those are the things we are looking for.

Chair Martin asked County Administrator Horne if we have money to share? County Administer Horne stated, there are no funds approved in this budget however, you are welcome to submit a request. Those are presented to the entire Commission for consideration. You are also welcome to come back and make another presentation during budget time. It starts in June or July. We will start requesting agencies to send in a request and in August we will begin budget meetings and public review.

Commissioner Corbett stated that going forward all the appropriations that we approve that we have people like you to come and ask for and explain what the system is. What I would like to see with your agency since I don't know much about it is I would like to see your mission and goals and what you would use the money for. As a citizen of this county I would expect the money I put in to pay my taxes I would want it spent the right way. In this case it sounds like you have a really good mission. If you could put that on paper in writing. We also have projectors if you want to do a power point. Show us what you did in Montgomery. It sounds like you were very successful in Montgomery.

Ms. Ray stated that I have to have accountability and transparency. But most important is educating your local government and community on outcomes, programs and initiatives. I can commit to coming back once a quarter and updating you on the programs, outcomes and the lives we have impacted. Across the nation is a 1100 community action agency. A lot of them are going through revamping, reeducating and trying to move forward. With our funding we have to provide that type of documentation. But, it does start at home. If you don't know they sure don't know. I will come back and follow up on a quarterly basis.

Commissioner Reed stated, since we have Ms. Ray here, I have \$10,000 for recreation budgeted. I would like to give her \$2,000 of that money because they are always doing something good in the community. I have folks coming to me all the time for example when their lights get cut off and stuff like that and they don't have any money. I still help them anyway. If it would be alright with the Commission. I already have that money budgeted out for some basketball goals in my district. I don't think I will be using all that, so I would like to share some of it because it is a meaningful project as well.

Commissioner Reed motioned at this time I would like to make a motion to give Macon/Russell Agency for Aging \$2000. Seconded by Commissioner Currington.

Commissioner Corbett stated that he would support it, but as far as I am concerned I wish I had something in writing to look at what I was supporting. But since it's Commissioner Reed's money allocated, I am going to support it.

County Administrator Horne polled the Commission. The vote was unanimous.

Economic Development & Tourism Director Victor Cross presented Macon County Economic Development Authority. Mr. Cross stated that we have been approached by Kim Davis. Kim Davis is with the Macon County Economic Development Authority. She approached Commissioner Epps and she sent her to me. What is going on is there is a company called Leonardo DRS and they are about to locate a T100 Jet Trainer Manufacturing Facility very possibly in Tuskegee, Alabama. The development authority is seeking help with resolutions of support for this project. They have gotten resolutions from Macon County, Lee County, Pike County, Bullock County and the Association of Commissioners. I would like to recommend us getting on board and supporting them as well. They are also reaching out to Congressman Rogers, Congressman Palmer, Congressman Aderholt, Burn, and Congresswoman Sewell and Senator Shelby and Jones. If we could help with this, it would be something very positive. It is going to create about 750 jobs, but there maybe another 4,000 jobs created because of suppliers.

Commissioner Epps motioned to accept the recommendation. Seconded by Commissioner Reed. County Administrator Horne polled the Commission. The vote was unanimous.

Chair Martin request Mic Cole to photograph Opening Day Ceremonies at both Seale and Ladonia Complex. She asked for \$15 an hour and it is estimated to take three hours so that will be \$45 total.

Commissioner Screws motioned to approve. Commissioner Martin Seconded.

Commissioner Corbett stated he did not have a problem with it, but I do think we need to try to get Victor some help on the tourism side to do things like this. We have a lot of things going on and some of us take pictures of our own events to and can share that in anything we do. I think it would be good to have the ability to send someone to document like the Cookie Crawl in Ft. Mitchell.

Commissioner Epps said I support it. When we started the contract with Mrs. Cole I thought I recommended we give her \$500 and that would cover everything we have. She does an excellent job. When we look at \$15 extra each time we need something we are going to spend more money that if we just give her an extra \$50 a month. That would cover all the programs we just talked about.

Commissioner Corbett stated I don't know if I agree with that because this is the only request I have seen beyond the request for some publication or something. I think again, I just don't like making decisions like this on the fly, I want to see something up

front. What's it for, what's it about, we defeated that motion before so that shouldn't even be talked about at this meeting. If there is a proposal let's write it up and look at it. I just don't like coming up here when this wasn't talked about on Monday from what I understand as far as that part going back to make a decision. I just don't like making decisions up here that we haven't had time to look at.

Commissioner Epps stated, it was not meant to make a decision, I was bringing it up as a discussion because you are the one who brought up the Ft. Mitchell Easter Egg Hunt and that sort of thing. It was doing a discussion of something we can think about and go back and revisit. I wasn't saying make that decision now.

Commissioner Corbett stated, I appreciate it, but the one before was on a discussion and we made a motion and approved it. I just wanted to get ahead of it and say I like to see things in writing.

Commissioner Epps said it was just a discussion not to make a decision. Just us, as Commissioners, think about it and bring it back to the table.

County Administrator Horne polled the Commission. The vote was unanimous.

Commissioner Martin stated, the County Attorney Mr. Funderburk has provided a letter stating they need to go into Executive Session because they have a personnel matter. County Attorney Mr. Funderburk stated the Commissioners will not have to return to the meeting after the session due to it being a personnel matter.

Announcements were made.

Commissioner Martin motioned to go into the Executive Session. Seconded by Commissioner Corbett.

County Administrator Horne polled the Commission. The vote was unanimous. County Administrator Horne stated we are recessed into Executive Session.

Russell County Commission reconvened from executive session. Chair Martin motioned to reconvene. Commissioner Currington seconded. Commission approved unanimous vote.

County Attorney Kenneth Funderburk recommended not taking Personnel Review Board Action with the request from a county employee. He reported that the action taken did not violate federal or state law and it was in order with the county personnel policies and procedures.

Chair Martin voted to accept the County Attorney's recommendation. Commissioner Reed seconded. The Commission approved and accepted the County Attorney's recommendation as to the personnel request by unanimous vote.

Commissioner Currington requested to add to the agenda the surplus of the Sanitation Garbage Truck #S-15 Ford – Sterling 2007 VIN #2FZHCHDJ67AY90341. He explained there were buyers interested. The potential for the truck to sell is very likely and it may sell before the next official commission meeting. There were no objections.

Commissioner Currington motioned to surplus Sanitation Garbage Truck #S-15 Ford – Sterling , 2007, VIN #2FZHCHDJ67AY90341. Commissioner Corbett seconded. The Commission approved the surplus of Sanitation 2007 Sterling Garbage Truck by unanimous vote.

Commissioner Currington motioned to adjourn.