

The Russell County Commission
Meeting Minutes
March 8th, 2017
9:30 A.M. EST

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

The invocation was given by Marty Holley, Director of Missions for Russell Baptist Association.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Screws .

Public Comments:

David Ellis who discussed the Water Board Appointment, which will come to term this month.

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

The Commission roll was called. Members present were: Gentry Lee, Carl Currington, Peggy Martin, Ronnie Reed, Cattie Epps, Chance Corbett and Larry Screws. Also present was the Attorney Robert Lane, and Assistant County Administrator Vickie Perry, who kept the minutes.

A quorum was established.

Chair Martin requested a motion to approve the February 22nd, 2017 meeting minutes. Commissioner Epps motioned to approve the minutes. Seconded by Commissioner Reed. The vote was unanimous.

County Engineer Shawn Blakeney gave a presentation concerning ACCA Legislation on ATRIP II Bond Issue. Purchasing power has diminished due to inflation. The last increase gas tax that the county road departments received was in 1991 and was only \$.18. Today that \$.18 only equals to \$.09 ½ in purchasing power because of inflation and fuel economy.

Drivers pay less gas tax because cars now have better gas mileage creating less revenue for the same amount of travel. In 2013 the Obama Administration passed a regulation that by 2025, new vehicles to average approximately 54 ½ miles per gallon. Road maintenance funding is based on how many gallons of gas are sold. Therefore, the revenue for road maintenance is becoming less each year.

Federal programs are not going to help fund county road maintenance. If the State \$.18 were adjusted for inflation based on consumer price index that would increase gas tax from \$.12 to \$.30 per gallon. Currently \$.18 is \$.10 less than the National Average.

There are 640 miles of road in Russell County, 430 are paved and 210 are unpaved. 194 miles are Federal Aide routes. The County receives approximately \$533,000 per year from the State, which the County must match 20%.

To create a resurfacing plan on nonfederal aide routes, 20 year asphalt and 12 year surface treatment \$915,000 would need to be budgeted per year. As of now Engineering is budgeting \$300,000 a year. In 2012 Governor Bentley released ATRIP, Russell County and City receives approximately a total of \$11,000,000. The County was able to resurface 56 miles of road and replace 2 bridges, but all of that was Federal Aide Routes, none of that touched the county roads.

The ACCA has proposed an ATRIP Bond Issue this year in legislation. This is a \$1.2 billion bond investment, which will put Alabamians to work and many of the projects will be let to contract before this year ends. The money will be divided among county's using the gasoline tax formula. This would be a \$.03 increase for the next 15 years to pay off the bond. After 15 years the gas tax will go away.

All counties will receive a minimum of \$10 million all monies must be spent on roads and bridges in the counties, no salaries, equipment or anything else. Municipalities within the county will receive 20% based on population.

All projects will be let to contract by using rural road guidelines. Individual projects will not require approval by ALDOT, which will make projects go much faster.

Money received will be able to used on all roads not just Federal Aide Routes. This will cost the average citizen who drives about 20,000 miles a year approximately \$.08 a day or \$30 a year. Russell County would receive about \$16.2 million with Phenix City receiving a little more than \$3 million and Hurtsboro about \$54,000. This money can go toward a lot of non-Federal Aide Routes and could pave approximately 150 miles of county roads.

Mr. Blakeney asked citizens to contact local State Representatives to let them know that they support this legislation.

The Personnel Review Board appointment for District 1 will come to term this month. Commissioner Lee contacted Michael Cox who holds the position and indicated he would like to continue to serving. Therefore Commissioner Lee reappointed Mr. Cox to serve another 3 year term.

County Engineer Shawn Blakeney gave the results of the Hydrostatic Chip Spreader bid on February 28, 2017. There were 2 bids, Cowin Equipment submitted \$152,356 for a 2017 Etnyre Hydrostatic Chip Spreader and Tractors and Equipment for a 2017 Roscoe

Hydrostatic Chip Spreader for the amount of \$157,300. Both companies met the bid specs. Mr. Blakeney stated that this is a budgeted item and recommended awarding the bid to Cowin Equipment. Commissioner Lee motioned to approve his recommendation, Seconded by Commissioner Screws. The vote was unanimous.

Sanitation Director Wanda Hardie requested approval for a budget transfer as follows:

Garbage Fund 511

Increase 511 35500 000	Fund Balance	\$179,087.00
Increase 511 54100 550	Motor Vehicle	\$179,087.00
	Total	\$179,087.00

This transfer will go toward the purchase of a replacement for the garbage truck that burned in January 2017.

Commissioner Screws motioned to approve the budget transfer and was seconded by Commissioner Reed. The vote was unanimous.

Special Enforcement Officer Bill Friend requested approval to hire a part-time employee to work two (2) to three (3) days a week. His present employee works four (4) days a week and also schedules vacations two (2) to three (3) times a year, three (3) weeks each time. Mr. Friend states that his budget will not increase, because the current employee's position is budgeted as a full-time employee, but is working as part-time.

Mr. Friend stated that a part-time worker is needed because several years ago a software issue with the business license program created confusion by sending renewal cards along with citations at the same time. He would like to be able to personally visit each business and decide at the time of the visit if the business is delinquent and should receive a citation. He prefers this method over mailing the citation. Also, traditionally business licenses are closed out in March, but for the past two (2) years it has taken until August to complete the process. His department then proceeds checking mobile homes tags.

The part-time employee's job "Assistant License Inspector" will search for mobile homes that are located on dirt roads, etc., that have not purchased tags. They would only work four (4) months, April, May, June and July. Commissioner Lee motioned to approve Mr. Friend's request. Seconded by Commissioner Reed. Commissioner Lee explained the salary for current employee is not paid for his vacations and off days, which leaves unused salary money in the budget. The vote was unanimous.

Parks and Recreation Director Bill Taylor requested to bid fencing for the ball fields at the Ladonia Sports Complex on March 30th, 2017 at 4:00 p.m. in the Commission Chamber. Specs and a vendors list were provided in the Commissioner's packets. Commissioner Reed motioned to approve the bid. Seconded by Commissioner Screws.

Appointment for the Russell County Water and Sewer Board Appointment, David Smith, comes to term this month. Chair Martin reminded the Commission of the public comment David Ellis had made prior to today's meeting. Commissioner Lee stated that

since David Smith is the current appointment and has expressed his willingness to continue serving on the Board, he motioned to nominate David Smith.

Commissioner Screws nominated Mark Godwin to serve on the Water and Sewer Board.

Commissioner Lee stated that Mr. Ellis brought up a good point that a policy was established for this particular board, since it was so important that the Commission would take resume's and applications. Has this policy been thrown out now?

Commissioner Reed informed the Commission can set any rule that they want at any time. At this time I motion to close the nominations. Seconded by Commissioner Screws.

Commissioner Corbett stated that he was not against appointing board members and he is not against appointing board members who will do a good job. There was a precedence and think that it is unfair that the Commission is doing this at this time without taking resumes applications. As Commissioner Reed said the Commission can change our rules every time that we want, but that is not a good practice. It should be the same way every time and was made for this appointment. This is the only way for the county to do that because there may be other people out there such as retire employees of the water system or county who would like to be considered but are not aware of the opening. Commissioner Corbett recommended voting this motion down and take applications and resumes.

Commissioner Reed replied that it is only one appointment and should go through a long process for one appointment.

Commissioner Epps acknowledge that the Commission can make changes at any time. When the Commission is sworn in November she feels that if it is felt changes should be made to do those at that time not wait until half the year. Make changes if necessary; do not make changes because the Commission wants to make changes is not fair to the citizens.

Commissioner Lee motioned to table this item until the Commission can do this through the process that was established three (3) years ago. Seconded by Commissioner Corbett. District 1(Lee) voted, yes; District 2 (Currington) voted, yes; District 3 (Martin) voted, yes; District 4 (Reed) voted, no; District 5 (Epps) voted, yes; District 6(Corbett) voted, yes; District 7(Screws) voted, no. 5 yes votes and 2 no votes, the vote passed.

Commissioner Lee asked that since this item has been tabled that the County will be taking applications and resumes for anyone interested.

Commissioner Corbett thought to do that would require a motion, but it was decided that since this became policy 3 years ago it would not be necessary. Commissioner Lee

wanted to make it clear that when Mr. Torbert or Mr. Brundridge's appointments come to term, applications will be taken for those as well.

Commissioner Corbett motioned to set a date to receive the applications for the Water Board appointment for March 30th, by 5:00 p.m. and forward to the Commission for consideration by the April 12th, 2017 Commission meeting. Seconded by Commissioner Lee. The vote was unanimous.

Assistant Administrator Vickie Perry presented the ACCA Liability Self-insurance for the next three (3) years, 2018-2020. She requested approval for the participation resolution and to authorize the Chair to sign all required documents. Commissioner Lee motioned to approve. Seconded by Commissioner Epps. The vote was unanimous. Commissioner Lee informed the public that the county's liability and workman's compensation is through the Alabama County Commissioners Association. If all Alabama counties that participate in this program have a good year, the county gets a dividend.

County Attorney Kenneth Funderburk has requested to cancel the executive session since he was unable to be here.

Announcements were made.

Commissioner Lee motioned to adjourn the meeting.

Meeting was adjourned.