

The Russell County Commission
Meeting Minutes
April 10, 2019
9:30 A.M. EST

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

Chair Martin gave the invocation.

Commissioner Lee 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 Peggy Martin, Vice Chair Cattie Epps, Gentry Lee, Carl Currington, Ronnie Reed, Chance Corbett and Larry Screws. Also, present was the County Attorney Kenneth Funderburk.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Chair Martin requested approval of the March 27, 2019 Minutes. Commissioner Lee motioned to approve. Seconded by Commissioner Currington. Commissioner Martin and Commissioner Corbett abstained. The vote was approved.

Commissioner Screws stated Madam Chair, before we get to the Proclamation on the Agenda part, I ask that my item that was taken off the Agenda at the Work Session and I ask that it be placed back. Chair Martin asked Commissioner Screws would he repeat the item?

Commissioner Screws stated; what I listed was the Human Resource Department. Chair Martin asked Commissioner Screws was he making a motion to that effect? Commissioner Screws stated, Yes, mam.

Commissioner Lee asked; what does that involve? That is why we took it off, we didn't know what it was?

Commissioner Screws stated; he just wanted to discuss Human Resources Department.

Commissioner Lee stated; I objected to putting it on so you can't do it.

Commissioner Corbett stated; there is no description provided.

Commissioner Reed stated; Mr. Screws give him a description.

Commissioner Screws stated; you can object to it now and I can just add it at the next meeting.

Commissioner Lee stated; that is fine.

Commissioner Screws stated; I will add it to the next meeting.

Commissioner Lee stated; we were advised by our Attorney that we couldn't add something that we really didn't know what it was about.

Commissioner Reed stated; excuse me Madam Chair. Gentry we are no longer taking advice from our County Attorney.

Commissioner Lee stated; we don't? Maybe you don't, however I do.

Commissioner Corbett stated; what in the world did I miss Monday at Work Session.

Chair Martin asked; Did we get a second or not?

Commissioner Reed stated; He seconded.

Commissioner Lee stated; it doesn't matter. It only takes one objection. I objected. It has to be unanimous vote.

Chair Martin asked; is that correct Mr. Funderburk?

Mr. Funderburk state; Yes, mam.

Chair Martin asked; so, it is not added to the agenda.

Commissioner Lee stated; No.

Commissioner Screws stated; he would add it at the next meeting.

PROCLAMATION AND RESOLUTIONS:

Chair Martin asked; for Dr. Cooper to come forward to the front to accept the Sexual Assault Awareness Month Proclamation.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

Enforcement Officer, Bill Friend gave a report on the Business License Collections delinquent accounts.

Commissioner Reed stated; Madam Chair, before we move to business items; I got a little comment I want to make. I feel like we have spent over \$100,000 in legal fees I feel like we are going to have to lay employees off. I don't really think that is fair. We have been given bad legal advice. As you know, we got our County Attorney. We still continue to pay legal fees. If you ask me, I think, I feel like he should resign. Not only I feel like we are going to bring in the EEOC and The Civil Liberties Union to investigate the Russell County Commission Office. Things done got too far out of hand. That is the only thing I want to say at this moment. Thanks.

BUSINESS ITEMS:

Probate Judge Harden stated; the policy change that I am discussing today is our petty cash. For years we have operated off of petty cash balance of \$600. Due to the County growth and the amount of business we do, we are having to go the bank several times a day just to make change. If someone comes in the morning with a \$100 bill and then we have given out all of our change. What I am requesting is that we change the petty cash balance in the Probate Office to \$1200. Commissioner Lee motioned to approve. Seconded by Commission Currington. The vote was unanimous.

Commissioner Lee stated; I just have to say, I don't think he has to do this, but I appreciate Judge Harden coming and putting it on the record so there is never any question.

Judge Harden stated; I appreciate that Commissioner, part of this is because I want an audit trail for the auditors.

County Administrator Horne stated; As presented to the Commissioners at the last Commission meeting, I am requesting a salary adjustment for Ms. Cade who is in the Human Resource Office. As listed in your book, I previously requested her salary to be set at \$40,000. She will be going through the normal evaluation and probation period of 6 months. She will be monitored and reviewed at that time. Commissioner Lee motioned to approve. Seconded by Commissioner Currington.

Commissioner Epps stated; she has a question. I would like to ask the Administrator will Ms. Cade be going to work shops and getting training in the field that she is being put into?

County Administrator Horne stated; I hope she will attend.

Commissioner Screws stated; Madam Chair, before we go. We looked at the list that Ms. Cade will be doing under this particular management. Why can't we just make her a Director? She is doing everything anyway, rather than a manager. In fact, I make a motion, we make her a Director.

Commissioner Lee; stated there is already a motion on the table.

Commissioner Corbett stated; Madam Chair, we are in discussion on the motion. Can I say something? I don't have a problem if she is going to do the job. I do think it's reckless of us to just come up here and make a motion like that to hire a Director when we haven't advertised, and we don't have any discussion about it. We just make a motion to hire a Director. We need to be fair. There may be somebody out there that wants to put their name in. I think Ms. Cade is doing a great job, I can't wait to see how she turns this thing around. That is not on the agenda. Honestly, I hope this Commission is a little better than just coming up here and appointing a Director or Department Heads without advertising the position or without taking applications.

Commissioner Lee stated; Madam Chair, that is the purpose of the six-month probation period. At the end of six-months, if everything is not satisfactory; I think that is the time to look at it.

Commissioner Screws stated; Commissioner Corbett, do you have someone you would like to recommend?

Commissioner Corbett stated; absolutely not. I work with some very high professionals in Human Resources and I have seen the pool and it is pretty rich. I think if Ms. Cade does a great job with the duties, then she will probably have my 100 percent backing. If she goes into this in five-months and decides this not the job for her; then, I think we need to take applications. I think that is why we have a six-month probation period there. She has got a little history there, but she hasn't been in this position before. You are suggesting a person that has not even been in the position and making her a Director. That makes no sense to me.

Commissioner Screws stated, even if she is a Director, she has six-months in that area.

Commissioner Corbett stated; again, we haven't advertised that position and you are trying to hire a Director. That would be like "hey, David, you want to be an EMA Director". That doesn't make since to me. We need to start the process. If we are going to hire a Director down the road; first off, it needs to be turned into a Director's position. It is not a Directors' position; it is a manager's position. Then, we need to take applications for a new Department Head position if that is what we choose to do. I think we just need to set some rules instead of just coming up here and say I decide that I want to make somebody a Director or Department Head because I feel like it today.

Commissioner Screws stated; that is why we all have one vote.

Commissioner Reed stated; Madam Chair, are we still in discussion? Chair Martin stated, Yes.

Commissioner Reed stated; that is exactly why I am in favor of bringing in the EEOC and The Civil Liberties Union to investigate this Commission, the County Commission Office because the office is out of order if you ask me. We pick and choose what and do what we want to do.

Commissioner Corbett stated; actually, this is the same way the last person that was managing Human Resources just came to the table and we put her in the position.

Commissioner Reed stated; we are tired of people mistreating people. If we have to, we going to file a law suit to shut this Commission Office down.

Commissioner Lee stated; point of order. The motion on the table is to approve a salary increase. It doesn't have anything to do with that you are talking about.

Commissioner Reed stated; Madam Chair, this got out of order when one other Commissioner keeps running their mouth about a certain issue.

Commissioner Epps stated, Madam Chair, will you call for the vote, please?

Chair Martin asked County Administrator to poll the Commission. The vote was unanimous.

County Attorney Mr. Funderburk stated; I did tell you at the Work Session we are waiting on the appointment of the new Judge with the suit the City filed against the County. The local Judges have recused themselves as of Monday. Hopefully, we will have another Judge soon.

Announcements were made.

Commissioner Corbett motion to adjourn.