

Russell County Commission  
Russell County Commission Chambers  
Meeting Minutes May 12, 2021  
9:30 A.M. EST

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

The invocation was given by Paster Grant Parker from Epworth United Methodist Church.

Chairman Chambers led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

Ms. Eddream Lawrence came to speak about her house and road so Chairman Corbett notified her that County Engineer Shawn Blakeney was not present (on vacation) and Allen is filling in from Engineer's Office and will not be able to comment. Ms. Lawrence greeted the Commission and welcomed the new Commissioners. She then stated that someone came out to help her issue but it didn't alleviate the problem and so she wanted to bring it back to the Commission's attention. She hasn't been here (to the Chambers) in 4 years and was thankful to be back because so much has happened since that time. She stated that she read the core values for this Commission on the website, and said those words were wonderful and thought we just have to rely on those words and carry out those duties here. She then read that several years ago she came to the Russell County Commission to make a complaint about the effect of the landscape of her driveway and the foundation earth under her house located at 15 Sunset Drive, and the negative effects the road has on her house. Her house is situated very close to the road and the road was initially flat. Prior to her father's death, he advised that the road not be elevated. He was a former road engineer in Russell County, and he said this would cause erosion issues that would eventually cause the house to start sinking and shifting. He specifically would not allow the road engineer to come on that road. He would sit on his porch and tell him he couldn't come out here, and if you do, we would have problems with the house. So due to the dragging the road and elevating the road, the elevation of the road lead to more water in her yard and the erosion of soil into her house. She said the foundation of her house, over the years, has become more destabilized leading to cracks in the walls and sunken floors. Assessing the damage by Alabama Professional Service (APS) was included in the folder (she provided to the Commissioners). Ms. Lawrence said that this problem with her house requires the Commission's immediate attention. Included in the folder she provided is also a copy of August 2017 record of her appeal to the Commission to pave Samuel /Denson Hill Roads. To this date, nothing has been done to improve this road, nor has the road been paved. She stated that she believes that Commissioner Lee brought it to their attention on what they are going to do about Samuel Road, but nothing was never done about paving it. It's not paved but she just wants the Commission to put it back on the agenda for this year because there are a lot of funds will be coming down with roads and bridges from Washington DC and money will be here and she wants them to put it as #1 for paving for new roads. She stated that the engineer has said that he was not going to pave any new roads because he was dealing with the roads that already need repairing. She said he went ahead and paved 2 new dirt roads so she thinks Samuel Road should have been one of those. She said that she knows that it's Mr. Screws district, but obviously it did not come up at the time for that to be done so she wants him to put it back there because she believes this governing body can handle these issues because she doesn't want to have to appeal to a higher authority to get this done, because with her house, something has to be done. She said at that time, they don't want to build her a new house, do you? She said so she's back here and you can't control the water, and she can't either, but we can control what we do, and we can get her house stabilized. She gives them permission to move this road away from her house, down the way from it on her property, if necessary, because she thinks it will have to be done. She lives on top of a hill and no water should be settling in her yard like it's a river. It's not running down the hill not that they've changed the landscape of the road. Chairman Corbett thanked her and said he will pass her comments to the County Engineer for him to address it.

Chairman Corbett thanked everyone at the meeting as well as our partners with Cable TV of East Alabama BEAM for broadcasting the meeting as well as the ability to put it on Facebook Live with our crew for those that cannot make the meeting. He welcomed our elected officials, department heads, guests, and media.

Interim County Administrator Paulette Colbert called roll of the Commission. Member's present were Commissioner Rod Costello, Commissioner Cattie Epps, Commissioner Scott Chambers, Commissioner Larry Screws, Commissioner Ronnie Reed, Commissioner Gentry Lee, and Chairman Chance Corbett. Also, present was the Interim County Attorney Megan McCarthy (while Hope Hicks is on vacation) and Interim County Administrator Paulette Colbert, who kept minutes.

A quorum was established by Interim County Administrator Paulette Colbert.

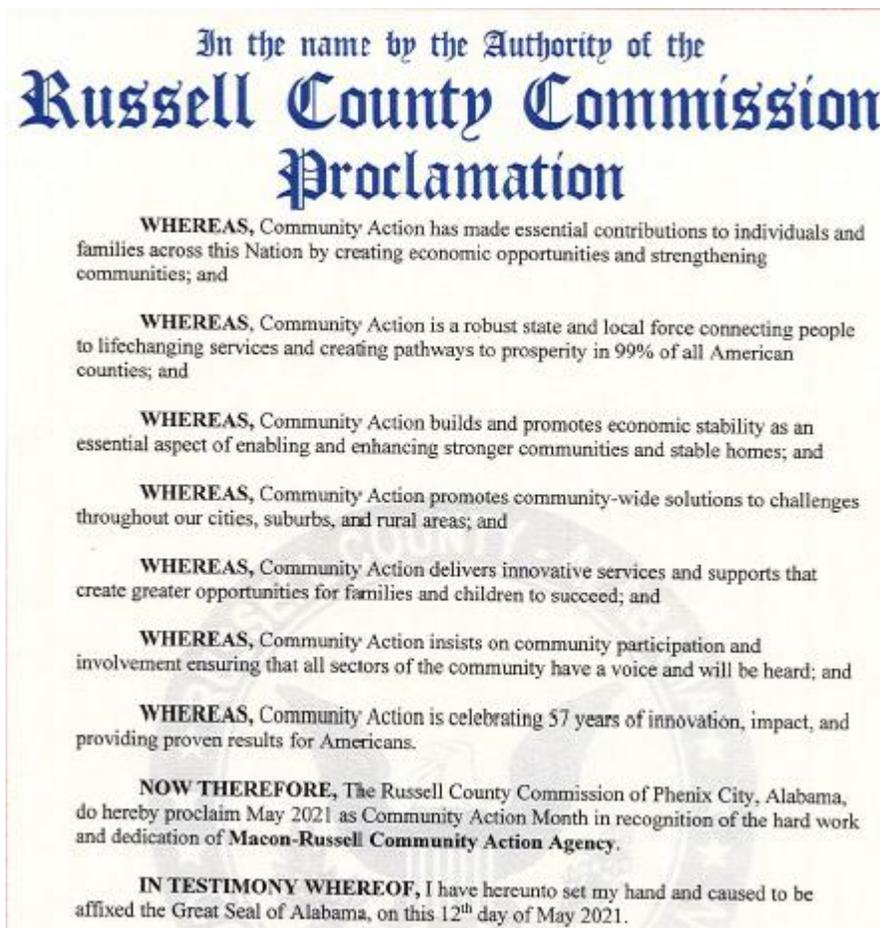
Chairman Corbett stated that the agenda was approved unanimously at the work session on May 10<sup>th</sup> by the Commission.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Chairman Corbett presented to approve the April 28, 2021 Commission meeting minutes. Motion to approve by Commissioner Costello. Seconded by Commissioner Epps. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. None opposed. The Commission passed the motion to approve the minutes unanimously.

**PROCLAMATIONS AND RESOLUTIONS:**

Chairman Corbett presented a proclamation for Community Action Month by Commissioner Epps. She asked for Ms. Walker to come to the front to present her the below proclamation on behalf of the Russell County Commission while Interim County Administrator Paulette Colbert read it aloud.



Commissioner Epps motioned to approve the proclamation. Seconded by Commissioner Screws. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. None opposed. The Commission passed the motion to approve the proclamation unanimously. Commissioner Epps thanked Ms. Walker for the work that she does on behalf of the Russell County Commission.

**DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

Chairman Corbett presented an update on the Economic Development Advisory Committee. He said he added it on the agenda and, as they spoke about Monday night, they formed the Economic Development Advisory Committee. They met the first time a couple of weeks ago and had a 100% attendance, and had some visitors, as well, with both advisory and voting members. It was probably one of the best meetings we've had discussing economic development in this county in a long time. He said he was very proud of the people that were there and their ability to state their opinions and listen to other opinions. He believes there will be good actions out of this committee going forward. Their plan right now is to meet once a month on fourth Thursday, here at the courthouse. He believes they will get some very good action out of that. He wanted to report it since it was formed in a Commission meeting by a vote, he wanted to make sure to give an update on it.

### **BUSINESS ITEMS:**

Chairman Corbett presented an update on the Planning Commission Appointments. He stated that Monday night Ms. Colbert reported to the Commission that there are several positions that are up for either renewal or up for an appointment for the Planning Commission and they left the list with them so if you have one that was expiring or expired that they bring an appointment, if you chose at this meeting or at a later meeting. Commissioner Lee requested to reappoint Mr. Jerry Phillips (District 1). Commissioner Chambers requested to appoint David Ellis for District 2.

Commissioner Costello requested to reappoint Mr. Ronald Lunsford (District 3).

Commissioner Screws asked to remain with Mr. Perry until the end of his term, based on the law, he will then make the change. Commissioner Epps stated she contacted the appointee for her, Mr. Crawford, and he said he would not be able to serve so at this time she would like to appoint Mr. Lambert Glenn in that position.

Commissioner Reed asked Ms. Paulette Colbert if she called anyone. Ms. Colbert said she called his appointment, and he was willing to serve again. Commissioner Reed asked to reappoint Mr. Oscar Tuff. Chairman Corbett stated that these are reappointed to the Planning Commission and since these are district appointments, he doesn't think they need to vote on, so he thinks we are good to move on it and it is stated in the minutes of this meeting.

Chairman Corbett presented the County Administrator search process. He stated that Monday night he reported to the Commission that the search committee was charged with taking the applications that were received for County Administrator and doing due diligence to vet the requirements of the job verses the applications and resumes, and to bring back the top 5 candidates to the Commission. Unfortunately, we've received only 4 applications, so he is bringing all 4 back to the Commission at this time. He stated we did have a discussion Monday night, and the discussion at the work session was to ask the search committee to do the initial interviews of the 4 candidates and bring back the top 2 for the Commission to decide if they would like to interview the top 2. Commissioner Lee moved that the search committee interview all 4 candidates and bring back 2 recommendations to the Commission if they meet the qualifications. Commissioner Reed seconded that motion. Interim County Administrator Paulette Colbert called roll of the Commission. The Commission passed the motion unanimously.

### **COUNTY ENGINEER:**

No discussion from the County Engineer.

### **ADMINISTRATOR:**

Chairman Corbett presented Interim County Administrator Paulette Colbert with the update on the courthouse telephones. Ms. Colbert said that Monday night she reported the urgent need to replace the existing telephone system at the courthouse building. As she stated, the existing Samsung System is discontinued therefore are unable to obtain replacement parts. Ms. Colbert is requesting to purchase a new telephone system for the courthouse at 1000 Broad Street from BEAM for \$3,360 plus an install fee of \$1,500. This is a budgeted item. BEAM provides complimentary internet and cable service to the county buildings, but there is a charge for telephone service. There will be an increase in the monthly phone service of \$2,000, which was not included in the current budget. Telephone service is charged to the

individual departments each month, and there most likely will be a need to amend those budgets before year's end to accommodate this increase.

Chairman Corbett comment on it, before they entertain a motion, asked if she has spoken to the auditors as well, and we are following the purchasing guidelines. That was also Commissioner Lee's question before he made the motion, and he also moved that we contract with BEAM for the telephone services. Motioned by Commissioner Lee. Seconded by Commissioner Chambers. Commissioner Lee wanted to make sure that it is on the record, since we are not bidding this, it meets the legal requirements. Commissioner Epps asked that when if they make the change, can we also change the names because we still have names show of people that have retired and gone. For example, when someone calls her, their name shows up instead of the person that's really in that position. Ms. Colbert stated that will be updated. Interim County Administrator Paulette Colbert called roll of the Commission. The Commission passed the motion unanimously.

**COUNTY ATTORNEY:**

No discussion from the Interim County Attorney.

**COMMISSIONER DISCUSSION:**

Commissioner Epps discussed when she introduced Ms. Walker from the Russell Council Agency and she is new on board. She would like to let the Commissioners know that when she came in, she came in with a lot of experience. At one point, we almost lost that agency completely and another person came in, Ms. Kimberly, and brought us to the top of the mountain. Now she has taken us over the top of the mountain with the experience that she came in with. The agency is doing well, and I think we are looking for maybe a satellite somewhere in the unincorporated area of the county, which we have been working together to get that done. She would like for Commissioners to know that we do have people in the county that serve both the city and the unincorporated area of the county for the citizens of Russell County because we are all Russell County. She would like to thank her for coming and reminding us that this is the agency of the month for May, so we appreciate her coming and she thanks the Commission for recognizing the agency with the proclamation this morning.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

- Crawford Market Days on May 15<sup>th</sup> and is the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday monthly from 8 to 1 pm.
- Crawford Committee project will be selling Boston butts starting this Friday.
- Health Fair in Crawford on June 12<sup>th</sup> and he will announce at a future meeting.

Motion moved to adjourn by Commissioner Lee. Seconded by Commissioner Reed.

The Commission meeting was adjourned.

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
County Administrator

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chair