

Russell County Commission
Russell County Commission Chambers
Meeting Minutes May 26, 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.

Commissioner Costello led the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

No public comments.

Chairman Corbett thanked everyone at the meeting as well as our partners with Cable TV of East Alabama BEAM for broadcasting the meeting on Facebook Live as well as The Citizen of East Alabama for keeping track of the meetings. He welcomed our elected officials, department heads, and guests.

Chairman Corbett stated that the agenda was approved unanimously at the work session on May 24^h by the Commission.

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.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Chairman Corbett presented to approve the May 12, 2021 Commission meeting minutes. Motion to approve by Commissioner Epps. Seconded by Commissioner Reed. 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 stated there was a great public servant that recently retired from The Board of Education, Ms. Dilly Elliot, and he wants to work up a proclamation in her honor for the next meeting.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

Chairman Corbett stated there were no discussion items.

BUSINESS ITEMS:

Chairman Corbett presented an update on the County Administrator report. He updated the Commission and the public by saying the search committee, which was comprised of 3 Commissioners, did the interviews which was charged by the committee. They interviewed the 4 candidates and came back with the top 2 candidates which were the best 2 out of the 4 that fit the role. However, after following discussion Monday night he is going to yield to Commissioner Reed request that he had related to this search process. Commissioner Reed stated that he wants to make a motion to continue to search and to interview new people that might want to put in their application at this time. He motions to open the search up for about 3 weeks. Seconded by Commissioner Lee. Commissioner Lee

asked if Chairman Corbett would make suggestions? Chairman Corbett agreed that he would in form of a motion, but this is based on this motion. No further discussion was made. Interim County Administrator Paulette Colbert called roll of the Commission. The Commission passed the motion unanimously.

Chairman Corbett discussed the formatting of the (County Administrator Job) search committee. He stated that previously the applications were to be received by Ms. Colbert, but he asked, at this time, because we have an interest by an internal candidate, to entertain a motion to allow the applications for the next 10 days be received by Mr. Max Herring through the HR Department. Mr. Herring will receive and compile applications for the interviews, which will then be handed off to the search committee and that Max serve on the search committee, as well, and ask Ms. Colbert to step aside from the search committee. Commissioner Lee asked if Max will be a voting member of the search committee? Chairman Corbett stated that he will serve on the search committee to take notes, receive applications, and schedule the interviews as Ms. Colbert did previously. Commissioner Lee motioned.

Seconded by Commissioner Screws. Commissioner Costello stated that Chairman Corbett stated 10 days, is that correct? Chairman Corbett said no and corrected it to be for 3 weeks. He restated that the motion would be for the next 3 weeks that applications would be received by Max, and he will coordinate them and setup the interviews. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. None opposed. The Commission passed the motion unanimously

Chairman Corbett presented Chief Deputy Alexander with the Sheriff's Department asking the Commission to approve the purchase of Surplus Vehicles. Chief Alexander asked to surplus Vehicle #701, a 2005 Ford Crown Victoria that has 223,370 miles and is not operable. Commissioner Reed motioned. Seconded by Commissioner Epps. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. None opposed. The Commission passed the motion unanimously. Chairman Corbett presented the DHR (Department of Human Resources) appointment. He reminded the Commissioners that there is a requirement by the DHR for the DHR board where appointments are to come before the full Commission. Those are not appointed by district. We have one member of the DHR, which is Ms. Jacqueline Davis, and she has indicated that she can no longer serve in that position. We are in order to make sure they have a quorum when they meet, and it is asked that we present a nominee for that or an appointee for that position. He was contacted by one of the DHR board members about a possible name for that, and then he was actually contacted by that person, Mr. Mike Snapp. Chairman Corbett nominated Mr. Mike Snapp for that position. Commissioner Lee moved nominations to be closed. Seconded by Commissioner Reed. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. None opposed. The Commission passed the motion unanimously. Chairman Corbett stated that by default Mr. Mike Snapp will become the appointment to DHR.

Chairman Corbett presented the EMA organization. Before he yielded the floor to this, he stated they received a letter about 4:30 or so yesterday afternoon from our EMA Director that he is indicated that he plans to retire. He has put his letter in effective July 1st, he will be retiring from the position of EMA. Chairman Corbett told Mr. Franklin that he appreciated the work he has done in Emergency Management.

Commissioner Reed commented that Mr. Franklin has done a good job and we just need to accept his retirement. Commissioner Lee stated that he appreciated his service for the county and will miss him and wishes him many blessings on what lies ahead. Commissioner Costello also thanked Mr. Franklin for his service to Russell County and he believed the letter spoke of a smooth transition into his retirement, and that's what everyone desires. Commissioner Costello made a motion to accept Mr. Franklin's retirement letter for the EMA Director, and Director Bob Franklin, and due to the realization, we are now approaching hurricane season and there will likely be much more work and coordination to do in the weeks coming weeks and months, so he said that Mr. Franklin should be placed on administrative leave with pay until July 1st, until his retirement. Commissioner Reed seconded the notion. Interim County Administrator Paulette Colbert polled the Commission. Commissioner Lee objected while all the other Commissioners approved the motion. Commissioner Epps thanked Mr. Franklin for his service.

Chairman Corbett presented to the Commissioners, since they have put the EMA Director on administrative leave until July 1st, then they need to appoint an interim position because if they do not then they will not have an EMA Director at this time, and we need to make sure we have it handled. Commissioner Reed said he thinks we already have a man working at the EMA Department that would qualify for the position. Chairman Corbett stated they have a

Deputy Director that is working there in this position, and if he's going to be put on administrative leave till July 1st, we will not have anyone serving in that capacity. Commissioner Reed asked if we could appoint the man working there at this time as the interim for the time being? Chairman Corbett stated the Deputy Director is David Martin. Commissioner Reed stated at this time he moves to go ahead and appoint him until we make our final decision as interim. Motion by Commissioner Reed to appoint David Martin as the Interim EMA Director until the time of the permanent position is filled. Commissioner Costello seconded. Commissioner Epps asked how long it will take until the position is filled? Chairman Corbett stated that since this has all started yesterday, they are not really sure that they have the answer to that since the Commission is going to have to decide the process for replacing the EMA Director, so whatever that process is and if it takes weeks, months or whatever it takes to find a replacement for that position, then he assumes by this motion that the Deputy Director, if approved, would serve as the interim EMA Director until that permanent position is filled. Commissioner Reed asked if they should amend the motion and let him serve until we fill the position within 30 days? Chairman Corbett suggested they do not tie themselves to that because we just extended the search we were doing for the Administrator and if we keep extending it, we will have to extend this motion, as well. Chairman Corbett stated the definition of interim is temporary. By definition "interim" is until a permanent can be found. Interim Attorney Hope Hicks agreed and said that an interim is temporary and is not a permanent. Ms. Hicks said you can have an interim in place, or you can have the Deputy Director stay as the Deputy Director and be the Director, by default, be in charge without ever naming him the interim. Interim County Administrator Paulette Colbert polled the Commission. The motion was passed unanimously.

Chairman Corbett presented Commissioner Reed with the Mayor's Scholarship Funding. Commissioner Reed asked the Interim Attorney Hope Hicks for her legal opinion concerning the ball donation because he would like to give a \$2,200 donation and he would like her opinion before making the motion. Ms. Hicks said that her office has done some research into as to whether or not this donation would be appropriate out of a public fund. From where the money is funded for the Mayor's Ball would be considered, this fund would be an appropriate fund to make a donation to. She recommends that the Commission move to designate this as an appropriate public fund, and when the Commission approves that, the Commissioner Reed would be free to use the money in his account to make a donation. Commissioner Epps asked Ms. Hicks if it is considered a project from his appropriation? Ms. Hicks said yes it would be considered a project and it will be public funds for a project. Commissioner Reed made a motion to declare Mayor's Ball Scholarship event a public benefit. Ms. Hicks suggested that the Commission find that the Mayor's Ball serves as a public benefit there for funds to be designated into it. Seconded by Commissioner Costello. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. None opposed. The Commission passed the motion unanimously. Commissioner Reed motioned to give the Mayor's Ball \$2,200 for the scholarship fund from his discretionary funds, so it's not new money. Seconded by Commissioner Costello. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. None opposed. The Commission passed the motion unanimously.

Chairman Corbett presented the Commissioner Epps with the \$250 reimbursement class for Wesley Beasley for Wiregrass training. Commissioner Epps stated at this time she moves to reimburse Mr. Wesley for his class that he is going to for the Wiregrass for \$250 and he will be sending the receipts as well as a copy of the class he is taking. Seconded by Commissioner Lee. Chairman Corbett noted for the minutes that Mr. Wesley was appointed by the Commission to serve on the Wiregrass board, and therefore we are reimbursing a board member that was appointed by the Commission. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. None opposed. The Commission passed the motion unanimously.

COUNTY ENGINEER:

Chairman Corbett presented County Engineer Shawn Blakeney with the Concurrence Award for ATRIP II Project. Mr. Blakeney stated they had an ATRIP II Project that they applied for a couple of years ago and was awarded \$154,787.56. The project bids were open Friday, April 30, 2021. McElhenney Construction Company out of Mobile got the project. It was the acceleration lane on 431 off County Line 4 Pruitt Road in Pittsview. The project came in at \$194,904.69 and Mr. Blakeney needs the Chair to sign the concurrence award letter for the project to accept the project. The county's portion of it would be \$40,117.13, which we will get reimbursed some of that money because we're going to do the engineering and

inspection on the project. Motioned by Commissioner Lee. Seconded by Commissioner Screws. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. None opposed. The Commission passed the motion unanimously to allow the Chair to sign.

Chairman Corbett presented County Engineer Shawn Blakeney with budget transfers. Mr. Blakeney asked for the Parks and Rec project as follows:

- Increase Line Item 228 Uniform Rental \$1,000.00
- Decrease Line Item 214 Minor Equipment \$1,000.00

Mr. Blakeney stated this is not increasing the budget, just a budget transfer. Commissioner Epps motioned to approve. Seconded by Commissioner Reed. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. None opposed. The Commission passed the motion unanimously.

Chairman Corbett presented County Engineer Shawn Blakeney with a Sanitation Department budget transfer request. Mr. Blakeney requested the following budget transfer:

- Decrease Line Item 561 Construction Equipment \$30,000.00
- Decrease Line Item 214 Minor Equipment \$20,000.00
- Increase Line Item 234 Repair & Maintenance \$40,000.00
- Increase Line Item 304 Contract Services \$10,000.00

This budget transfer request is for a Mac truck that has broken down for an estimate around \$10,000 on it and also has 3 or 4 systems they have to replace for roughly \$6,000 apiece. He says part costs have gone up and they've had a lot of trouble with trucks breaking down and hopefully our new trucks will be here soon. Motioned by Commissioner Screws. Seconded by Commissioner Costello. Commissioner Lee stated that we get a lot of use from the trucks, and he's surprised they hold up as well as they do with a lot of miles on the county roads. Mr. Blakeney stated most of the trucks are 2012 and 2013 models and they run daily, all day, every day. Commissioner Screws asked what they do with the old trucks? Mr. Blakeney said that they will sell them. Chairman Corbett added that then somebody else can get some use out of them. Commissioner Costello asked if the repairs are completed on the building that had the compressor? Mr. Blakeney answered that it's not completed but they are looking into starting it, and they are actually using the ALDOC district building shop right now. Commissioner Costello said he was just wondering because he remembered the pictures of the damage. Mr. Blakeney said that actually the outside of that shop is what they use for their big trucks, but ALDOC let them use their shop when our building was damaged. Mr. Blakeney said ALDOC was over there last week doing an appraisal so hopefully it'll take another 60 to 90 days to get the appraisal in so we're pushing the 60 day mark now so hopefully in the next 15 to 30 days. Commissioner Lee asked if it still looked as bad when they toured it. Mr. Blakeney said the inside of it looks the same and they've only been using the 2 big shops. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. None opposed. The Commission passed the motion unanimously.

ADMINISTRATOR:

Interim County Administrator Paulette Colbert had no discussion.

COUNTY ATTORNEY:

No discussion from the County Attorney.

COMMISSIONER DISCUSSION:

Commissioner Reed shared that in their folders is information on new laws that have changed with the Judicial out in Ladonia and how much the city can go out for police jurisdiction. He stated that when it's time to go out and get revenues, that some time we can get confused so he has a copy of the law that's intact for everyone to go over so we'll know exactly what we'll be in the state of the law. Chairman Corbett also noted that he received a call from the building inspector last night about this, and he told him to give him time to read over it and address it with the attorney, as well. Interim Attorney Hope Hicks said that she talked to Senator Elliott, the one that introduced this bill, and she will go over it with him. Ms. Hicks said she will come up with a PowerPoint presentation over the final points and will have an opinion from the AG's

office, on behalf of another client, about a couple of things this bill touches on and she will have this information in a couple of weeks.

Commissioner Reed stated we are losing revenue and that is why we want everybody to know about the new bill. Commissioner Costello asked if this has been enacted in to law? Ms. Hicks agreed that it has, and she said the effective date is a very few days from now although most of it doesn't really take effect until the beginning of next year, but the effective date is 60 days plus the days that are in this. Also, the jurisdictions and things are going to change as far as building permits and things like that. There are provisions in here where you have to give cities notices, and the cities that have been permitting, she says there are a lot of steps, and she is working on getting all of the information.

Commissioner Screws asked how much we are getting for the Care Act for the jobs plan? Chairman Corbett said he does not have that in front of him, but he has been given some estimates on it and he will make sure we have it for the next meeting. Chairman Corbett said he is working with the attorney, and the administrator is working towards making sure that we are in line to receive the money and that we have everything in place, like the bank accounts, and we have Sam's number all done to get all of it in place. Chairman Corbett asked Ms. Colbert if she could send it out to the Commissioners because he doesn't want it to quote it wrong. Commissioner Screws wanted to make sure to share it with the people out in the county so they will know what they can apply for. Chairman Corbett stated that that's definitely something this Commission's going to have to do. One thing we are fortunate with our attorney, is that she had already been working on this with the ACCA and the other groups on what qualifies as projects that we can spend this money on so that's something we're going to, as a Commission, make some decisions before we communicate. Chairman Corbett said we have a lot of work to do on this project. Commissioner Reed mentioned that we would get at least 11 million and Lee County already might have received 22 million, from what he understands. Chairman Corbett said that he didn't have the numbers in front of him right now, but it should be a substantial amount of money and a game changer for a lot of projects for this county.

Commissioner Epps mentioned from Monday night when they discussed the take home vehicles and Ms. Colbert was nice enough to give them a copy of the past policy that we used and she asked for everyone to please read the policy so at the next meeting she thinks they should have it on the agenda, to discuss the take home vehicles because in reading the policy, even though it's an old policy, she doesn't think they are really going by that policy, as well. She thinks it is something that they need to take care of and not just let it linger on. At the next meeting she would like to ask that would be placed back on the agenda for a discussion in detail of who should and who shouldn't, and why. Chairman Corbett agreed that we can handle it, but the only thing he cautions on is that they do not have a work session at the next meeting, so if it's something that wants to be discussed at work session, it should be discussed in the second meeting in June. Commissioner Epps stated that she wanted it discussed at a work session because she prefers to get things kind of ironed out before they get in front of everybody. She would like it to be discussed in a business way and handling things in a business way, so she told Max to make it in the next after next meeting in June. Chairman Corbett stated the June 21st work session and Commissioner Epps agreed.

Commissioner Epps also stated that all of the Commissioners need an updated copy of the emails because she doesn't have a copy of all the new emails and when they send something to Mr. Max, he can also have it to refer to and send it to someone else so it won't get so confused about what did they get, and that they didn't happen and you always have a backup. She has always said that she believes in cross training and someone else should know what's going on in your department. She asked if we could get that to the Commissioners because she doesn't have everybody's email address right now. Chairman Corbett asked Ms. Colbert to please send those emails out.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- Courthouse closed May 31, 2021 for the Memorial Day Holiday
- Courthouse closed June 7, 2021 for Jefferson Davis's Birthday – **NO WORK SESSION THAT DAY**
- Crawford Market Days – June 19, 2021 from 8am-1pm EST
- Sanitation Notification of pickup, closed Monday 31st and will pick up will be Tuesday.

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

The Commission meeting was adjourned.