

The Russell County Commission
Meeting Minutes
July 13th, 2016
9:30 A.M. EDT

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

The invocation was given by Keith Badowski, Minister at Epworth United Methodist Church.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Corbett.

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

The Commission roll was called, members present were: Gentry Lee, Chair Peggy Martin, Ronnie Reed, Cattie Epps Chance Corbett and Vice Chair Larry Screws. Tillman Pugh was absent. Also present was the County Attorney, Kenneth Funderburk and County Administrator LeAnn Horne, who kept the minutes.

A quorum was established.

Chair Martin requested a motion to approve the June 22nd, 2016 meeting minutes. Commissioner Epps motioned to approve the minutes and was seconded by Commissioner Reed. Commissioners Lee, Reed, Martin voted to approve the minutes. Commissioner Cornett abstained due to his absence at that meeting. The meeting minutes were approved.

Commissioner Reed gave a certificate of recognition to Eugene J. Shiver for his service to the county.

Commissioner Epps discussed the need for recreation in the Fort Mitchell area. She made a motion to give Recreation Director Bill Taylor permission to look at sites in Fort Mitchell and to bring back cost for establishing some type of recreation there to be included in the 2016-2017 budget. She would also ask that the Recreation Director to give a report to the Commission at least once a month to keep them updated. Seconded by Commissioner Corbett. The report will become a quarterly report after the next Commission meeting. The vote was unanimous.

Special Enforcement Officer Bill Friend presented a land abatement for the property at 1603 Wynn Road. He requested that the Commission declare this a public nuisance by resolution and to have a public hearing on July 27th, 2016 prior to the Commission Meeting. Commissioner Screws motioned to declare this a public nuisance. Seconded by Commissioner Reed. The vote was unanimous.

County Engineer Larry Kite stated that the City of Phenix City proposed the Commission to deed them right-of ways along Dobbs Drive and Auburn Road due to a proposed intersection improvement project. When the city annexes property on both sides of a county right-of-way that right-of-way becomes the city responsibility. That is what has happen in this area. The County still owns two small pieces on Dobbs Drive and a portion on Auburn Road from the City Limits up to Dobbs Drive. This agreement would relinquish the county from the responsibility of maintaining those portions of right-of-way. There is no funding involved. Commissioner Corbett motioned to approve the agreement. Seconded by Commissioner Epps. The vote was unanimous.

Mr. Kite also presented the Bradley Road Railroad Crossing Resolution that was prosed several years ago by the Alabama Department of Transportation installing railroad crossing improvements at Bradley Road going toward Hwy 165 at Sweetwater Branch Road. This project is funded by Federal Safety dollars in cooperation with the Railroad. There will be no county funding for this project, but there is a maintenance agreement because it is on a county right-of-way that will need to be executed. There is also a construction agreement because there is a county pipe that has to be extended for before the crossing can be done. The County will be reimbursed for that work. Commissioner Epps motioned to approve the agreements. Seconded by Commissioner Screws. The vote was unanimous.

The term for the at-large position for the Planning Commission will come to term July 28th. The position is held by Bill Friend, who has been on the board since 2007 and wishes to continue serving. Commissioner Epps motioned to reappoint Mr. Friend for the Planning Commission and was seconded by Commissioner Lee. The vote was unanimous.

County Administrator LeAnn Horne discussed a presentation given by Walter Lewis who represents Piper Jaffery. The presentation is a refunding opportunity or refinancing option for the Commission. She requested the authority to work with Mr. Lewis gathering financial information for the Commission. So he can prepare to move forward to the Bond market if the Commission approves. At this time Administrator Horne requested to commence with the initial steps which are due diligence, preliminary underwriting, and documentation to bring back to the Commission. Commissioner Screws motioned to approve. Seconded by Commissioner Reed. The vote was unanimous.

Administrator Horne reminded the Commission that at the June 22nd Commission Meeting it was requested that she and H.R. Manager Carolyn Robinson to meet with Shawn Blakeney, who is currently the Assistant Engineer to review his salary and make a proposal back to the Commission as he becomes the County Engineer. The meeting was held and Mr. Blakeney provided a salary survey of all engineers in the State of Alabama to give the Commission an idea of the salaries engineers are being paid and a written request for engineer's salary. The proposed salary is for \$120,000, which is \$13,464 less than what is currently being paid. At this time Mr. Blakeney is being paid a County Assistant Engineer's salary, but if approved today that will change and he will

move to that salary slot as he takes over the duties when Mr. Kite retires the first of August. Commissioner Screws motioned to approve and was seconded by Commissioner Reed.

Commissioner Corbett requested that at the next meeting to consider placing Mr. Blakeney under contract to retain Mr. Blakeney and his expertise going forward working to maintain the County's roads and for job security as our Engineer since this is a very political job to allow him the ability to make decisions without influence from individual Commissioners.

Commissioner Lee stated a contract does not only protect the employee, it also protects the County.

Before Administrator Horne polled the Commission she informed Commissioners of that \$120,000 the \$73,782 will be paid by the State. The vote was unanimous.

H.R. Manager Carolyn Robinson provided a new hire and job availability report in the Commission packets for review.

Announcements were made:

Crawford Park at the Historic Tuckabatchee Masonic Lodge was submitted for an award and won the National Association of Counties the "Best in Class" Achievement Award.

Avis S. Dunbar, Constituent Services Representative for Congressman Mike Rogers, comes to the Courthouse the 1st Tuesday each month from 1:00-3:00 p.m. to assist citizens.

The Lee Russell Council of Governments will hold a transportation public meeting on Thursday July 21st at 10:00 a.m. Central time at the Senior Center at 506 Owens Street in Hurtsboro.

The meeting was adjourned.