

The Russell County Commission
Meeting Minutes
July 22, 2015
9:30 A.M. EST

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

The invocation was given by Reverend Ladarius Hood, Pastor of Bethlehem Missionary Baptist Church.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Reed. .

Public Comments:

Extension Office Agent Jennifer Davidson discussed upcoming classes that will be held at the Extension Office.

Citizen Billy Deel discussed problems and services that are not available to him since his property on Newberry Drive was annexed by the City without his consent.

American Legion #135 Post Commander Leroy Davis Jr. gave a Consolidated Post Report. This report details projects and programs the American Legion provides for the community.

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

The Commission roll was called. Members present were: Chair Peggy Martin, Vice Chair Cattie Epps, Gentry Lee, Tillman Pugh, Ronnie Reed, Chance Corbett and Larry Screws. Also present were 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 24th, 2015 meeting minutes. Commissioner Lee motioned to approve the minutes and was seconded by Commissioner Reed. 6 Commissioners voted to approve the minutes. Commissioner Corbett abstained due to his absence at that meeting.

Commissioner Corbett and Lee presented a proclamation to each of Phenix City All Stars for advancing to the National Championship.

EMA Director Bob Franklin recognized EMA Training Coordinator/IT Specialist David Martin for achieving his Intermediate Certification, which he completed 100 hours

optional training and 9 required classes for a total of 650 hours of training in addition to his basic requirements.

Commissioner Corbett presented a posthumous proclamation to the family of William Land, who was one of the founding members of the Cottonton Volunteer Fire Department as well as a member of the Fort Mitchell Water Board.

Colonel Gary Jones, Executive Vice President of Military Affairs Columbus Chamber and Valley Partnership gave an update on the reduction of personnel at Fort Benning.

Probate Secretary Doretha Alston announced that Dr. Valerie Richardson has given approval for the Voting Precinct to move from the Troy Campus back to the CVCC building. Line changes for District 6 will be discussed during another meeting. Commissioner Corbett motioned to approve moving the voting precinct and was seconded by Commissioner Lee. The vote was unanimous.

Administrator Horne stated due to delays in the planning stages of the Ambulance / Sheriff's Substation building, she requested to change the opening bid date to August 21st at 1:00 p.m. Commissioner Screws motioned to approve. Seconded by Commissioner Reed. The vote was unanimous.

Special Enforcement Officer Bill Friend stated that when the renovations for the Masonic Lodge were in progress, installation of a handicap pad was overlooked. Federal and State Law require handicap pads at public facilities. 4 estimates were received provided in the Commission packets for review. Mr. Friend requested approval for installation of the pad. Commissioner Corbett motioned to approve the request and was seconded by Commissioner Lee. Commissioner Corbett stated funds for this was budgeted. The vote was unanimous.

Commissioner Epps stated while attending the NACo Conference at a round table discussion concerning investments she realized the County was not protecting their investment, meaning the County Administrator. She presented a 5 year contract for the Administrator. She felt this will protect the county as a whole. Counties invest in their Administrators by sending them for more education only to have them walk off the job. She felt that the Commission would not want this to happen. Administrator Horne works hard and has succeeded in keeping Russell County's head above water, when other counties have not. She always has the county at heart. Commissioner Epps motioned to place Administrator Horne under a 5 year contract. Seconded by Commissioner Reed. The vote was unanimous.

Administrator Horne stated that she could not do this job without her staff. You are only as good as the people who are around you. She thanked the Commission for allowing her to do her job and she will continue to serve as best as she could and continue to work hard for the department heads, employees and especially the citizens.

Sheriff Taylor discussed a recent approved budget amendment. Since its approval he discovered some jail line items had been overlooked. While preparing the 2015-2016

budget requests, it was noticed that a few line items were short and needed correcting. Therefore, he requested to make these transfers as follows:

GENERAL FUND 001

JAIL-52200

DECREASE	001 52200 211	OFFICE SUPPLIES	\$ 4,000.00
DECREASE	001 52200 218	FOOD FOR INMATES	\$14,000.00
DECREASE	001 52200 304	CONTRACT SERVICES	\$ 3,000.00
INCREASE	001 52200 216	CLEANING SUPPLIES	\$ 5,000.00
INCREASE	001 52200 250	COMMUNICATIONS	\$ 5,000.00
INCREASE	001 52200 251	TELEPHONE	\$ 1,000.00
INCREASE	001 52200 219	OTHER MISC SUPPLIES	\$10,000.00
TOTAL			\$21,000.00

Commissioner Epps motioned to approve the budget transfers. Seconded by Commissioner Corbett. The vote was unanimous.

The Public Building Authority appointment term has expired. All 3 positions of this board are Commission appointed not district appointed. The current member, Bobby Mathews, is not able to continue service. Commissioner Pugh motioned to appoint Mike Davis to fill the position for the next 6 years. Seconded by Commissioner Lee. The vote was unanimous.

The District 1 appointment for the E-911 Board is expiring. Commissioner Lee reappointed Eddie Seymour for another 4 year term. Since this is a district appointed position it does not need voting on by the Commission body.

S&W Contracts for the Revenue Commission, Tag and Mapper/Appraisal Office are due for renewal. Commissioner Lee stated these contracts come up for renewal every year; therefore, he motioned to approve them for another year. Seconded by Commissioner Screws. The vote was unanimous.

County Engineer Larry Kite presented several agenda items:

- ADEM Contract for the removal of scrap tires located on McKenzie Road in Seale. The County will be reimbursed for all equipment and labor associated with this work up to \$17,806.00 which is the estimated cost provided by ADEM. Commissioner Screws motioned to approve the contract and was seconded by Commissioner Epps. The vote was unanimous.
- Purchase request for sign cutter /plotter with associated hardware and software from Tapco in the amount of \$12,078.50. This equipment will allow the Engineering department to produce signs in house saving time and money on purchasing ready-made sign facing. Commissioner Screws motioned to approve the purchase and was seconded by Commissioner Epps. The vote was unanimous.

- ALDOT funding agreement for ATRIP projects ready for bid. The agreements state that the County will commit for a 20 % funding match on the following projects:
 - ACBRZ59572-ATRP (007) RCP 57-030-12, ATRIP 57-03-12- bridge replacement on Uchee Hill Highway over Little Uchee Creek; total project cost - \$588,900; county funds - \$117,780.
 - ACBRZ59573 – ATRP (007), RCP 27-036-12, ATRIP 57-03-12; Bridge replacement on Pittsview Highway over Weolustee Creek; total project cost-\$777,530; county Funds - \$155,506.
 - ACNU59576-ATRP (006), RCP 57-038-12, ATRIP 57-03-16; Resurfacing Greenburt Road from Cottonton Road to Oswichee Road; total project cost- \$927,110; county funds- \$185,422.

Mr. Kite stated the State estimates have come very close to the original estimates approved in his 2014-2015 budget. Bids could come in lower or higher than what has been estimated. Mr. Kite also requests approval of all three agreements and the Chair to execute the documents. Commissioner Screws motioned to approve all three agreements. Seconded by Commissioner Epps. The vote was unanimous.

Commissioner Corbett stated that at Monday night's work session he asked the County Engineer to recommend a speed limit for Walston Road, which is a very short narrow road dirt road in the Crawford area. Residents on the road have complained about speeding in the area. It is understood in Alabama if there is not a posted sign the speed limit is 35 mph. Commissioner Corbett and the Engineers agree 35 mph is too fast for that road. Mr. Kite recommended changing and posting a sign for 20 mph. Commissioner Corbett motioned to change the speed limit on Walston Road to 20 mph. Seconded by Commissioner Lee. District 1(Lee) voted, yes; District 2 (Pugh) voted, no; District 3 (Martin) voted, yes; District 4 (Reed) voted, yes; District 5 (Epps) voted, yes; District 6(Corbett) voted, yes; District 7(Screws) voted, yes. 6 yes votes and 1 no vote the motion carried.

Chair Martin began discussion of Parks and Recreation Director Appointments. She thanked the Search Committee, who met and screened the applicants. She also thanked the candidates for applying. All candidates are top notched, but had to be narrowed down. The Commission body charged the Committee with bringing the top three applicants. David Ellis, who headed the committee and the other members, did a wonderful job and she thanked them for serving.

The Commission conducted separate interviews with the three candidates at Monday night's work session. Each Commissioner was allowed to ask one question per candidate, and must ask the same question to each.

Commissioner Pugh discussed how the voting process should go, when the floor is open for nominations. If none of nominees receive a majority of the votes, the process will be repeated. If on the third time the Commission is unable to fill the Director's position; in thirty days this will be brought back and try again.

Commissioner Lee: The Commission is not limited to these three candidates. If any of the Commissioners wish to nominate someone other than these three candidates, they could do so.

Commissioner Lee: After reading resumes and listening to interviews, I thought I had my mind made up. The more thought I gave this; I came to the conclusion, that we have a county employee who made the top three and normally the County tries to promote county employees when possible. This employee has had to fill this position for the last six to seven months and has done an excellent job in keeping the Commission informed and getting work done. Therefore, I nominate, J.C. Monk.

Commissioner Pugh nominated Mr. Derik Denny.

Commissioner Screws nominated Mr. Bill Taylor.

Commissioner Lee motioned to close the nominations. Seconded by Commissioner Reed.

Commissioner Screws: I don't think this is the way that the EMA position was handled.

After some discussion it was agreed by the other Commissioners that this is being handled the same way.

Commissioner Corbett: This has been my point all along. There needs to be rules set and the Commission stick to those rules.

Commissioner Corbett: I owe an explanation to the people in my district and the audience. I appreciate the Search Committee for their work and I think this process went better than any process I have seen. One of the finalists for this job position, years ago, father married into my wife's family. Even though I have known the finalist 8 years prior to that, I think this is a very important decision and a very important position in the county. I did check with ethics laws and was cleared on being able to make a decision on this. However, there are some grey areas that I did not want to step off into. Perception also is factored into my decision, as well. I know if I was a citizen and I heard an official promote a family member, my perception would be tainted as well and I think I owe an explanation to everyone. At this point there are 3 good candidates and I was impressed with all three interviews. I applaud the Chair for holding the structure together and putting us through this task. At this time because of the perception and a very hard decision that I have had to make, I recuse myself from the process until a candidate has been chosen.

Commissioner Lee: Commissioner Corbett, you can return to vote if that candidate is eliminated.

Commissioner Corbett: I understand but choose not to do so, if that happens.

Commissioner Epps: I apologize to the candidates for not being at the work session on Monday night for the interviews. I did read all of the applications and they are all great candidates. I also appreciate every person that applied for this position. I want to thank the Search Committee for their work. You are trying to do what is best for this County. My job is not to put politics into business and this is a business decision, not a political decision. I hope, we as Commissioners, realize that we are politicians, but when it comes to business we have to take care of the business of the county.

Commission Pugh asked the Chair to take the nominations in reversed order and vote for them by a show of hands, instead of roll call.

Mr. Taylor— there were 3 hands raised. Commissioners Reed, Epps and Screws.

Mr. Monk— there were 2 hands raised: Chair Martin and Commissioner Lee

Mr. Denny – 1 hand raised: Commissioner Pugh

Mr. Denny was eliminated.

Commissioner Pugh motioned to open the floor again to nominations.

Commissioner Screws nominated Mr. Taylor.

Attorney Funderburk: One has been eliminated only leaving 2. Opening up the nominations will not be in order.

Commissioner Lee: If a decision is not made today. This will be brought back at the next meeting and nominations will be made.

Mr. Taylor – 3 votes: Commissioners Screws, Epps and Reed.

Mr. Monk – 3 votes: Commissioner Lee, Pugh and Martin.

A tie was declared.

Commissioner Pugh: The Commission can vote one more time and if it is still a deadlock, I will motion to give this a 30 day period and come back for nominations again. The Commission can decide if they want to continue an hour or 30 seconds.

Attorney Funderburk: Let's clarify whether Commissioner Corbett, since his abstention was conditional, wants to vote.

Commissioner Corbett: Do I want to vote? Absolutely I do, but I feel like I can't.

Commissioner Lee: You can vote one more time if it is still a tie, this will come back to another meeting.

Mr. Taylor – 4 votes: Commissioner Pugh, Reed, Epps and Screws.

Mr. Taylor becomes the new Parks and Recreation Director for Russell County.

Administrator Horne: Since Mr. Taylor has been selected there is a little housekeeping I would like to mention to the Commission, if you would allow. One would be a salary that needs to be discussed, as well as, allowing me to meet with Mr. Taylor concerning his relocation time period and a starting date that needs to be discussed. I will need your authority to do that.

Commissioner Pugh: I motion to allow you to negotiate and come back with a contract that we can vote up or down. Seconded by Commissioner Screws. The vote is unanimous,

Attorney Funderburk presented the Real Estate Lease between Russell County and The Phenix City Museum, Inc. All requested corrections have been made. He recommended approval of the contract and authorizing the Chair to sign documents, after it has been approved by the City. Then, if the other party agrees we could have them to sign the contract here, so the Commission could be aware the document has been accepted.

Commissioner Pugh would like to approve the contract, but he would like for it to be submitted to the committee with whom the Commission has dealt, "The Phenix City Museum Committee". If they want to go back to ask who is funding their money, it will get back to them. If it is legal questions that they have, I would like for their Attorney to be involved.

Attorney Funderburk asked Commissioner Pugh to clarify that he wants the contract submitted to the Phenix City Museum Committee and not the City.

Commissioner Pugh stated that is right.

Commissioner Lee replied if they accept the contract as is then the Chair can sign, but if there is one change it will have to come back to the Commission.

Attorney Funderburk announced he would like it brought back to the Commission so they would know that it was approved; not show up in 6 months later with an approval.

After clarification Commissioner Pugh's motion to approve the contract and was seconded by Commissioner Reed. The vote was unanimous.

Announcements were made.

Commissioner Reed motioned to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned.