

The Russell County Commission
Meeting Minutes
August 24th, 2016
9:00 A.M. EDT

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

The invocation was given by Reverend Tommy Poole, the Russell Baptist Association Interim Director.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Pugh.

Public Comments:

Planning Commission Chair David Ellis discussed a meeting with Cole Phillips concerning a sewer issue his trailer park has. He has 60-90 days before his law suit is over and he must come to a decision. Though he is not in violation at this time, but he is under mandate to do something about his sewer system and would like to know if the Commission has made a decision. He requested to place this item on the next Commission agenda.

Leroy Davis discussed an e-mail he received from the American Legion Department Commander of Alabama requesting help for the Louisiana National Guard Members who are assisting with flood areas in their state. Those guard members have also lost their homes and need assistance with basic items, such as cleaning supplies, Clorox, storage tubs, baby clothes and diapers. Donations will be recieved at the American Legion Post #135 and taken to the Louisiana area.

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, Tillman Pugh, Chair Peggy Martin, Ronnie Reed, Cattie Epps, Chance Corbett and Vice Chair Larry Screws. 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 August 10th, 2016 meeting minutes. Commissioner Pugh motioned to approve the minutes and was seconded by Commissioner Corbett. Commissioner Epps abstained from the vote due to her absence at that meeting. The five (5) remaining Commissioners voted to approve the meeting minutes.

Commissioner Epps motioned to place portrait of the late Della Gordon who worked for over County for 25 years. She requested to hang it in the hall with the portrait of the late

Dolly Wilson. Seconded by Commissioner Reed. The vote was unanimous. Chair Martin stated that Mrs. Gordon was a faithful employee and her dedication to the county was appreciated.

The S & W Contracts for the Revenue Commission, Tag and Appraisal Office were due for renewal. Commissioner Lee motioned to renew the contracts and was seconded by Commissioner Epps. The vote was unanimous.

Commissioner Corbett presented a contract for the new Engineer Shawn Blakeney. He explained that in the contract it states that he would be eligible for raises as any other department head would. There are no guarantee raises, and the salary has already been set by the Commission, so the salary was not up for negotiation. The only thing that should change in the present contract is the date, which should read September 1st, 2016. The other change is he will be provided a county vehicle to do business only, as would be applicable in ethics laws. The contract is for 4 years. Across the state most engineers have 4 year contract. Commissioner Corbett stated that we thought enough of our engineer to hire within and not do a search, so we need to protect him and the county as well. He motioned to approve the contract for the County Engineer Shaun Blakeney. Seconded by Commissioner Lee. The salary for the Engineer was discussed which is paid 70% by the state.

Commissioner Screws said that when he originally talked to Mr. Blakeney a contract was discussed but Commissioner Screws did let him know that he was not in favor of a contract. It did not mean that he did not think that Mr. Blakeney would not do a good job. His reason for not being in favor of the contract is because of anyone doing an ethics form has to be given a hearing. That gives you the opportunity to say what the reason is for termination. A contract would only prolong someone being terminated.

Commissioner Corbett stated that it doesn't require a hearing it only requires the Commission to state the reason in an open forum, not an executive session. This Commission body, without a contract, could come in and with four votes could fire our engineer because he did something that one Commissioner didn't like. That is what he is trying to prevent. Get the politics out of it. This is a large county with a lot of dirt roads and a lot of roads that need maintaining. They are doing a good job. The contract will protect the engineer and he can make decisions with politics in the back of his mind, instead in front of his mind.

Commissioner Lee acknowledged that a Commissioner has vocally opposed this and stated that the reason is because we could have a new commission in November. That is the main reason that the engineer needs a contract. He did not want a new commission to come in and with four votes get rid of the engineer who has only been working for four months. It is imperative he have a contract since there could be four contested positions.

Commissioner Epps agreed the Engineer needs a contract and it is not only for his protection, but it protects the Commissioners. We need to protect our investment in our

engineers. If there are new commissioners in November they could be mad because there are roads that have not been paved and decide to get rid of the engineer. Keep politics out of business. We need to take care of county business. It is time to take a vote.

Commissioner Pugh acknowledged his support of the contract. He stated that he has seen engineers leave a county and because there is not an adequate supply of engineers it starts a domino effect. That means that we have to begin a search for a new engineer or raise salaries to hold on to the engineers we have. I think the contract is a stable thing to do for our citizens.

Administrator Horne polled the Commission: District 1(Lee) voted, yes; District 2 (Pugh) voted, yes; District 3 (Martin) voted, yes; District 4 (Reed) voted, no; District 5 (Epps) voted, yes; District 6(Corbett) voted, yes; District 7(Screws) voted, no. Five (5) yes votes and two (2) no votes, the motion passed. The Engineer’s contact was approved.

Administrator Horne requested approval to begin the public budget meeting to follow the regular Commission Meeting on September 14th, at 1:00 p.m. She added that depending on how that meeting goes the Commission may have to return on September 15th, for another budget meeting. Commissioner Lee motioned to approve and was seconded by Commissioner Epps. Commissioner Pugh left the meeting. The six (6) Commissioners that remained in the meeting voted unanimously to begin the budget meeting on September 14th, at 1:00 p.m.

The RDS Contract was presented by Administrator Horne. She recommended extending the contract for the Sales and Use, and Rental Tax collections. She will bring the contract back in October for review. Commissioner Lee motioned to approve the recommendation, Seconded by Commissioner Corbett. The vote was unanimous.

Sheriff Heath Taylor requested end of the year to clean up some of the line items and to place extra funds in to electricity as well as transfer left over funds left into motor vehicles for the purchase of patrol cars. The request for the budget transfers is as follows:

SHERIFF-52100			
DECREASE	001 52100 211	OFFICE SUPPLIES	\$5,150.00
DECREASE	001 52100 212	FUEL & LUBRICANTS	\$20,000.00
DECREASE	001 52100 214	MINOR EQUIP	\$17,910.26
DECREASE	001 52100 327	UNIFORMS	\$2,000.00
DECREASE	001 52100 542	COMM & EQUIP	\$3,500.00
		TIRES & TUBES	\$2,600.00
INCREASE	001 52100 215		
INCREASE	001 52100 234	VEHICLE REPAIR	\$3,500.00
INCREASE	001 52100 239	OTHER REPAIRS	\$3,170.96
INCREASE	001 52100 241	ELECTRICITY	\$8,000.00

INCREASE	001 52100 265	REGISTRATION	\$355.00
INCREASE	001 52100 315	VEHICLE LICENSE PLATE	\$150.00
INCREASE	001 52100 329	LAW ENFORCEMENT	\$1,284.30
INCREASE	001 52100 499	OTHER	\$2,500.00
INCREASE	001 52100 550	MOTOR VEHICLES	\$27,000.00
		TOTAL	\$48,560.26
JAIL-52200			
DECREASE	001 52200 211	OFFICE SUPPLIES	\$2,500.00
DECREASE	001 52200 212	FUEL & LUBRICANTS	\$200.00
DECREASE	001 52200 214	MINOR EQUIP	\$14,800.00
DECREASE	001 52200 327	UNIFORMS	\$10,198.98
DECREASE	001 52200 530	IMP OTHER THAN	\$30,000.00
INCREASE	001 52200 216	CLEANING SUPPLIES	\$3,600.00
INCREASE	001 52200 223	COPY MACHINE RENTAL	\$100.00
INCREASE	001 52200 239	OTHER REPAIRS	\$5,200.00
INCREASE	001 52200 250	COMMUNICATIONS	\$4,440.84
INCREASE	001 52200 304	CONTRACT SERVICES	\$7,500.00
INCREASE	001 52200 499	OTHER	\$200.00
INCREASE	001 52200 550	MOTOR VEHICLES	\$36,658.14
		TOTAL	\$57,698.98

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

Administrator Horne also requested to do end of the year budget transfers as follows:

GENERAL FUND 001			
COMMISSION-51100			
INCREASE	001 35500 000	FUND BALANCE	\$360,482.00
INCREASE	001 51100 530	IMP OTHER THAN	\$360,482.00
		TOTAL	\$360,482.00
EMA-52300			
DECREASE	001 52300 304	CONTRACT SERVICES	\$2,900.00
INCREASE	001 52300 223	COPY MACHINE RENTAL	\$300.00
INCREASE	001 52300 239	OTHER REPAIRS	\$600.00
INCREASE	001 52300 265	REGISTRATION & TRAIN	\$2,000.00
		TOTAL	\$2,900.00
CORONER-52400			
DECREASE	001 52400 212	FUEL & LUBRICANTS	\$ 1,000.00
DECREASE	001 52400 215	TIRES & TUBES	\$800.00
DECREASE	001 52400 219	OTHER MIS SUPPLIES	\$393.00

INCREASE	001 52400 265	REGISTRATION	\$800.00
INCREASE	001 52400 251	TELEPHONE	\$1,000.00
INCREASE	001 52400 327	UNIFORMS	\$393.00
		TOTAL	\$2,193.00
BLD, INSPECTOR-52710			
DECREASE	001 52710 214	MINOR EQUIP	\$1,000.00
DECREASE	001 52710 233	OFFICE REPAIRS	\$1,000.00
INCREASE	001 52710 211	OFFICE SUPPLIES	\$1,000.00
INCREASE	001 52710 251	TELEPHONE	\$1,000.00
		TOTAL	\$2,000.00
ENFORCEMENT-52711			
DECREASE	001 52711 199	MIS SERVICE	\$200.00
INCREASE	001 52711 215	TIRES & TUBES	\$200.00
INCREASE	001 35500 000	FUND BALANCE	\$10,000.00
INCREASE	001 52711 214	MINOR EQUIP	\$10,000.00
		TOTAL	\$10,200.00
ANIMAL CONTROL-55400			
DECREASE	001 52100 211	OFFICE SUPPLIES	\$76.38
INCREASE	001 55400 211	OFFICE SUPPLIES	\$76.38
		TOTAL	\$76.38
PARK & REC-57200			
DECREASE	001 57200 219	OTHER MIS SUPPLIES	\$10,000.00
INCREASE	001 57200 239	OTHER REPAIRS	\$2,000.00
INCREASE	001 57200 241	ELECTRICITY	\$8,000.00
		TOTAL	\$10,000.00
ROAD & BRIDGE FUND-112			
INCREASE	112 35500 000	FUND BALANCE	\$250,000.00
INCREASE	112 51100 520 (PURCHASE OF OLD LIBRARY)	BUILDING	\$250,000.00
DECREASE	112 51100 304	CONTRACT SERVICES	\$20,000.00
INCREASE	112 51100 262	MILEAGE	\$5,000.00
INCREASE	112 51100 265	REGISTRATION & TRAIN	\$5,000.00

INCREASE	112 51100 271	BLDG INSURANCE	\$10,000.00
		TOTAL	\$270,000.00
SANITATION-511			
DECREASE	511 54100 219	OTHER MIS SUPPLIES	\$14,000.00
INCREASE	511 54100 214	MINOR EQUIP	\$10,000.00
INCREASE	511 54100 223	COPY MACHINE	\$2,000.00
INCREASE	511 54100 241	ELECTRICITY	\$2,000.00
		TOTAL	\$14,000.00

Commissioner Epps motioned to approve. Seconded by Commissioner Reed. The vote was unanimous.

County Attorney Kenneth Funderburk recommended to go into executive session to discuss an economic development. This is a preliminary session and does not expect to take action when they return from the executive session. Commissioner Screws motioned to convene into executive session. Seconded by Commissioner Reed. The vote was unanimous.

Announcements were made before moving into executive session.

The Commission returned to the Commission Chambers. Commissioner Corbett motioned to reconvene the Commission Meeting. Seconded by Commissioner Epps. The vote was unanimous.

County Attorney Funderburk stated that there was no action to take at this time.

Commissioner Corbett motioned to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned.