

Russell County Commission
Russell County Commission Chambers
Meeting Minutes October 27, 2021
9:30 A.M. EST

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

The invocation was given by Marty Holley from the Baptist Association.

Commissioner Reed led the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

No public comments were made.

Chairman Corbett thanked BEAM and The Citizen of East Alabama for covering our meetings and for streaming on Facebook live for people not able to attend. He welcomed our elected officials, visitors, department heads, and guests.

Chairman Corbett stated that the agenda was approved at Monday night's work session on October 25, 2021.

County Administrator Paulette Colbert called roll of the Commission. Member's present were Commissioner Cattie Epps, Commissioner Scott Chambers, Commissioner Ronnie Reed, Commissioner Gentry Lee, and Chairman Chance Corbett. Commissioner Rod Costello and Larry Screws were not present. Also, present was Interim County Attorney Hope Hicks and County Administrator Paulette Colbert, who kept minutes

A quorum was established by County Administrator Paulette Colbert.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Chairman Corbett presented to approve the minutes for October 13, 2021 Commission meeting. Commissioner Epps motioned to approve minutes. Seconded by Commissioner Reed. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. None opposed. The Commission passed the motion unanimously.

PROCLAMATIONS AND RESOLUTIONS:

Chairman Corbett presented Interim EMA Director David Martin with the renewal of a resolution for NMS compliant for the county. Mr. Martin stated that this is a renewal for the Chairman's signature. Chairman Corbett stated from Monday night this is almost the same resolution that was approved around 2006 or 2007 and Mrs. Colbert to keep a copy and give Mr. Martin a copy. Commissioner Epps asked if it should be read into the minutes.

Commissioner Lee stated that there will be a copy of it in the minutes. Motion by Commissioner Lee and seconded by Commissioner Reed. Call for vote was done by County Administrator Paulette Colbert: District 5: Epps, yes. District 2: Chambers, yes. District 4: Reed, yes. District 1: Lee, yes. District 6: Corbett, yes. Commission passed it unanimously.



DESIGNATION OF THE NATIONAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (NIMS) AS THE BASIS FOR ALL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT IN RUSSELL COUNTY

WHEREAS, the President in Homeland Security Directive (HSPD- 5), Directed the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security to develop and administer a National Incident Management System (NIMS), which would provide a consistent nationwide approach for Federal, State, Local and Tribal governments to work together more effectively and efficiently to prevent, prepare for, respond to and recover from domestic incidents, regardless of cause, size or complexity;

WHEREAS, the collective input and guidance from all Federal, State, Local and Tribal homeland security partners have been, and will continue to be, vital to the development, effective implementation and utilization of a comprehensive NIMS;

WHEREAS, it is necessary and desirable that all Federal, State, Local and Tribal emergency agencies and personnel coordinate their efforts to effectively and efficiently provide the highest levels of incident management;

WHEREAS, to facilitate the most efficient and effective incident management it is critical that Federal, State, Local and Tribal organizations utilize standardizes terminology, standardized organizational structures, uniform personnel qualification standards, uniform standards for planning, training and exercising, comprehensive resource management, and designated incident facilities during emergencies or disasters;

WHEREAS, the NIMS standardized procedures for managing personnel, communications, facilities and resources will improve Russell Counties ability to utilize federal funding to enhance local agency readiness, maintain first responder safety, and streamline incident management processes.

WHEREAS, the Incident Command System components of NIMS are already an integral part of various incident management activities throughout the (Jurisdiction), including current emergency management training programs; and

WHEREAS, the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks (9-11 Commission) recommended adoption of a standardized Incident Command System;

NOW, THEREFORE, I Russell County Commission, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and Laws of the State of Alabama and do hereby establish the National Incident Management System (NIMS) as Russell Counties standard for incident management.

ADOPTED AND APPROVED this 27th day of October, 2021.

Attest:

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Paulette Colbert".

Paulette Colbert, County Administrator

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Chance Corbett".

Chance Corbett, Commission Chair

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

No discussion items were made.

BUSINESS ITEMS:

Chairman Corbett presented Economic Development Advisor Victor Cross with the Approval for Ad in Business Alabama Magazine. Mr. Cross asked the Commission to approve placing a full-page color ad in Business Alabama monthly magazine because they are doing a spotlight on our county for \$2,887 to place the ad. Commissioner Lee motioned to approve with the funds coming from tourism. Seconded by Commissioner Reed. Chairman Corbett stated that there was a good presentation on it Monday night and he has copies to refer to on it. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. None opposed. The Commission passed the motion unanimously.

Chairman Corbett presented Commissioner Lee with the 911 Board appointment to replace Eddie Seymour. Commissioner Lee stated that Mr. Seymour has served on the Russell County 911 Board for many years very well, named John Rogers to replace Mr. Seymour. No vote was needed. Commissioner Lee stated he has given the information to Mrs. Colbert to share with Dana Murphy, E-911 Director.

Chairman Corbett presented Maintenance Director Leon Watson with the new phone system. Mr. Watson stated that Maintenance is ready to move forward with the purchase of the new phone system in the amount of \$12,298.00. At this time, he is asking the Commission to vote to let the Chairman sign the contract with BEAM to move forward for the phone system. Commissioner Epps moved to accept the recommendation. Seconded by Commissioner Reed. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. None opposed. The Commission passed the motion unanimously.

Chairman Corbett presented Sheriff Heath Taylor with the jail supplies bid award. Sheriff Taylor stated they received 2 bids: one from Columbus Paper and one from Merchants Nutrition Services. He asked the Commission to approve Merchants to receive the bid award. Motion to approve by Commissioner Reed, seconded by Commissioner Chambers. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. None opposed. The Commission passed the motion unanimously.

Chairman Corbett presented Sheriff Heath Taylor with declaring vehicles for sale. Sheriff Taylor stated that he had 2 vehicles that are titled to the Commission, and he asked that both vehicles be surplused so they can sell them on GovDeals and return the money to the General Fund. One is a 2013 Dodge Charger, VIN 2C3CDXAT5DH722024 and the other is a 2011 Ford Crown Vic, VIN 2FABP7BV7BX106588. Commissioner Epps moved to accept the recommendation. Seconded by Commissioner Reed. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. None opposed. The Commission passed the motion unanimously.

Chairman Corbett presented Sheriff Heath Taylor with the COVID Support Center. Sheriff Taylor stated that he presented an in-depth diagram Monday night, as well as providing

documentation on the vehicle they are requesting. It's a community truck that would serve our community in multiple ways. It is outfitted for health clinics, vaccination clinics, any type of flu vaccinations or COVID vaccinations and would travel anywhere in our county, and for crime prevention. He stated they will take the vehicle to any event, and that the vehicle is multifaceted in the sense that it's completely up to date electronically, as well as a crime scene vehicle that has all the things, they would need for that as well. Sheriff Taylor asked the Commission to approve the cost of the vehicle out of the Cares Act money, and he's been in discussion with the Commission attorney, he has provided her the crime stats she asked for Monday night, as well. He stated that on the Russell County crime stat increase, it's been pretty drastic over last 2 years that they've been dealing with COVID on a lot of the violent offenses they deal with, and she has that information. He asked the Commission to approve the \$824,923 cost of the truck. Chairman Corbet added a note, for the minutes and the Cares Act, that the Sheriff did a presentation Monday night. Commission Lee stated that they have two Commissioners not here today, and he feels that they need to have more Commissioners here before they vote on it. Commissioner Reed stated that they have a majority, and they can go ahead and vote on it, and move on it. Sheriff Taylor stated that he doesn't know if Commissioner Costello could vote on it anyways. Commissioner Lee stated since it doesn't benefit him, he can vote on it. Chairman Corbett agreed. Sheriff Taylor stated that he has spoken with Commissioner Costello on it, and not specifically to Commissioner Screws due to scheduling but for no other reason. Sheriff Taylor also asked, before they had a motion, to hear from the attorney in reference to this vehicle. Commissioner Reed motioned and Commissioner Epps seconded the request. Chairman Corbett asked if Ms. Hicks would talk about what the sheriff requested. Ms. Hicks stated she was there Monday where the sheriff made an excellent presentation, and she had spent a good bit of time yesterday researching because this is a lot of money, she wanted to make sure this meets all of the requirements. She stated that under the Interim Final Rule that the US Treasury has issued, which is the most up to date rule there is at this point, the Interim Final Rule is about 158 pages, and she went through it with a fine-tooth comb yesterday to see anything that would give her hesitation or pause. She said there were a couple of things that gave her hesitation and she spoke with the sheriff this morning. She stated that the sheriff stated that this is not only a crime scene vehicle, but this is a Russell County vehicle to be used for crime prevention, crime scenes, and for community-based violence prevention. She said they've talked about the ways he will use it and the log that will be kept every time this vehicle is used so if there is any question about it, that we'll always have the documentation. Ms. Hicks stated that the Interim Final Rule gives us 2 big categories she thinks this vehicle falls under. One is responding to the public health emergency, or it's negative impacts, while providing COVID-19 response and prevention including expenses related to COVID-19 vaccination programs and sites, including the acquisition of equipment or supplies, expenses of establishing temporary public medical facilities and other measures to increase COVID-19 treatment compacity. Including cost of providing COVID-19 testing and monitoring, and expenses for communication related to COVID-19 vaccination programs. She said in addition to COVID-19, the Interim Final Rule is very clear that the COVID-19 pandemic affected health across the board, and especially people that were already in compromised populations, lower income, and racial minorities had decreased access to health and if this vehicle is used to provide COVID vaccination clinics, especially if you are positive for COVID-19, then she believes this vehicle will fall under that

use. The second category is responding to the public health emergency or its negative economic impacts, while providing programs, services, or other assistance to populations disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 public health emergency, such as programs or services that facilitate access to health and social services including community violence intervention programs. She stated that if the sheriff is taking this vehicle to the public schools, taking it to Crawford Market Days, and it's going to all of these public events where the sheriff and his staff can interact with people, build a relationship between law enforcement and the community, and actually put on programs about gun violence prevention, trying to get in the schools to stop gang violence and gun violence, those types of things, then she thinks it falls under this. Ms. Hicks spoke with Mrs. Colbert about this, long after we are all gone from this and if this truck lasts 30 years, like we think it's going to last, then it will be bought with federal money and it's not really federal grant money but there are certain rules and regulations about disposing of property bought with federal funds, so we want to make sure we document this, so those that come after us and when it's time for this vehicle to be retired, that it's properly disposed of under federal guidelines. Ms. Hicks added that if we use it for COVID related, and the health issues disproportionately impacting the communities, and if it's used for crime prevention, she believes it falls within the terms of the American Rescue Plan. Commissioner Lee stated that the sheriff will have a lot of record keeping and Sheriff Heath said he will do it. Chairman Corbett stated that it's a good idea to keep record keeping with it and they do it when it is dispatched across the river. Sheriff Taylor stated that the factory is recommending they exercise the vehicle every 2 weeks, so they are already planning on bringing the vehicle out from where it is stored every 2 weeks to the Walmart parking lot, or a school, or somewhere and setting the vehicle up, communicating and interacting with the community every 2 weeks and that's just to keep up the vehicle maintenance properly, so it's going to be multi-used for that, and all of that is going to be covered. Chairman Corbett stated, as a Commissioner, and not as a Chair, that he feels this is a once in a lifetime opportunity for the county to do somethings that's going to support a lot of programs and he feels it's a good use of the funds and he hates Commissioner Screws is not present but he knows there is a time crunch on this purchase, and due to shipping and other factoring delays, there is a time crunch and at this time he is leaning towards supporting this and will share the details at a different time. Commissioner Lee asked Attorney Hope Hicks to verify in simple terms that this is an allowed purchase under the American Rescue Plan, or she thinks it is. Ms. Hicks then stated based on the latest information that is out, based on the US Treasury's Interim File Rule, under the US Treasury's frequently asked questions form that they have, and based on the information National Association of Counties, with everything she's read, she believes this is an authorized use. Chairman Corbett stated based on conversations they had Monday night that if she would have come back to say that it wasn't, he thinks them, as a Commission, were going to be proactive and try to find the money anyway, whether it was borrowing it or whatever, so he thinks they are going in the right direction. If something comes back either way, they'll take action at some point. Commissioner Epps stated that everything the attorney said was given to them outlined in the package given to them so she feels they can't go wrong with what the attorney says, and they should call for the vote. Commissioner Reed suggested to move forward with the vote. Chairman Corbett said he was trying to exercise courtesy. County Administrator Paulette Colbert called the vote as follows: District 5: Epps, yes. District

2: Chambers, yes. District 4: Reed, yes. District 1: Lee, yes. District 6: Corbett, yes. The Commission passed the motion unanimously.

COUNTY ENGINEER:

County Engineer Shawn Blakeney presented discussing Monday night using the American Rescue Plan money to place pavilions throughout the county and to have broadband access. He stated that they have a facility at the Ladonia Sports Complex that already has a concrete pad and wants to purchase a pavilion to put there, but due to the fact they were going to purchase multiple pavilions across the county, they need to bid this out as a public works bid for pavilions so at this time he requested to send out bids on 11/2, open the bids on 12/2, the week after Thanksgiving in the Commission Chambers, and award them on 12/8 at the first Commission meeting in December. Motioned by Commissioner Lee. Seconded by Commissioner Chambers. Chairman Corbet stated that even though they have not made any decisions on the other pavilions yet, it's smart to do this. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. None opposed. The Commission passed the motion unanimously. Commission Lee asked the attorney since this is using the American Rescue Plan money, do they need to have a voice vote to put everybody on record? Ms. Hicks stated that right now they are not deciding how to pay for it yet but just sending out the bids, but she did get with Shawn on the fence issue on Monday but is still looking into it. Chairman Corbett stated that they will make sure to do a call vote when using the ARP money.

County Engineer Shawn Blakeney presented the driveway permit costs and that he's spoken to others in several counties about driveway permits, out of the 4 he's spoken to, 3 do not install driveways. Barbour County still does. Mr. Blakeney liked to recommend a \$25 application fee that includes an initial inspection and final inspection of the pipe installation on the property to see that it's installed properly with them hiring an outside contractor to install the driveways. Motion to approved by Commissioner Lee. Seconded by Commissioner Chambers. Commissioner Lee stated that the County Engineer is making this recommendation. It was presented by the Commission for him to come up with a new plan. Chairman Corbett agreed and stated that we were charging citizens one amount and not allowing contractors to utilize the same service for different reasons, and it was brought up by the Commission and not by the engineer alone. Commissioner Epps asked if this would also include businesses that put in driveways? Mr. Blakeney agreed. He also stated that they currently have 2 or 3 driveway permits they are trying to install today, so any current driveway permits they have now will use the current process they are under now. Chairman Corbett stated to make an effective date after the current ones will be completed, as of December 1st. Mr. Blakeney agreed. Ms. Hicks stated that he could make any applications received before November 1st be on the old plan and any after November 1st or later would be on the new plan. Commissioner Lee agreed to make his motion to include that. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. None opposed. The Commission passed the motion unanimously. Attorney Hope Hicks called for a voice vote because of Commissioner Chambers role. County Administrator Paulette Colbert called the vote as follows: District 5: Epps, yes. District 2:

Chambers, abstained. District 4: Reed, yes. District 1: Lee, yes. District 6: Corbett, yes. The motion passed.

County Engineer Shawn Blakeney presented Sanitation Department items. Mr. Blakeney stated that they officially own the Sanitation building and the land at 56 Silver Run Drive in Seale Alabama for the new Sanitation Department, and the next step is for remodeling and updating the office. At a previous meeting Hecht Burdeshaw Architects, Inc. discussed getting an asbestos test done, and they found asbestos in the flooring. Their recommendation was to remove it under the contract. Mr. Blakeney recommended hiring Hecht Burdeshaw Architect, Inc. to start this process so they can get the building remodeled to move in it. Commissioner Epps moved to accept the recommendation. Seconded by Commissioner Reed. Commissioner Lee asked if work was being done on the other shop and storage buildings. Mr. Blakeney discussed the other Silver Run Drive buildings, reroofing one of them, along with other fixes done in house. Commissioner Lee verified that the only thing the architect will do is the office. It was agreed and the rest coming from Sanitation that helps the county, as well. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. None opposed. The Commission passed the motion unanimously.

HUMAN RESOURCES:

- New Hires for September
- September Job Openings through Alabama Department of Labor
- Remaining Job Vacancies

COUNTY ATTORNEY:

Interim County Attorney Hope Hicks stated that she left a revised grant application that Mrs. Colbert handed out to the Commissioners. She said there was one adjustment she made to make it read easier, but it will not change any of the information, so she asked for them to look at it and to put it on the agenda 2 weeks from now for the application to be approved. Also, she has confirmed that the Baldwin County Administrator and their Planning and Zoning Director are available to come to the work session on the 8th to be there at 4:00 pm EST, and one of their commissioners might be coming, as well. Commissioner Lee moved that the work session on November 8th starts at 4:00 pm EST. Seconded by Commissioner Epps. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. None opposed. The Commission passed the motion unanimously. Chairman Corbett asked Mrs. Colbert to put the application on the next agenda.

COMMISSIONER DISCUSSION:

Chairman Corbett stated that with the application, if anyone asks any department heads or in the Commission Office about any of the non-profit funding, this is the process, and the application should be approved at the next meeting and at that point they will be able to apply for it. Commissioner Epps asked the attorney, even though the application has not been approved yet, if an organization calls them, can the Commissioner send the application out to them, or should they have them pick them up from the office? Ms. Hicks said that once they

are approved, the Commissioners can send them out themselves, but they need to return them to the office, so there will be one central person getting all of the applications. Chairman Corbett stated that he's hoping when this is brought up at the next meeting, they can have a conversation on who is going to receive them and who it's going to be forwarded to because of it's importance.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- ***Tuning Into Kids Program:*** Weekly on Thursdays through Nov 18th from 5:30 pm - 7:30 pm EST
~ at the Russell County Extension Office 508 14th Street, Phenix City ~*Registration is Required* ~
- ***Crawford Baptist Church Community Wide Trunk-o-Treat*** at Crawford Park October 31st from 5 to 7 pm EST
- ***Crawford Market Days*** on November 20th from 8 am to 2 pm EST

Motion to adjourn by Commissioner Lee seconded by Commissioner Reed.