

Russell County Commission
Russell County Commission Chambers
Meeting Minutes November 24, 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 Commissioner Costello.

Commissioner Screws led the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Mr. Leroy Davis discussed end of the year awards from the annual Wiregrass RC&D. He stated that the Sheriff Department won the Grant of the Year, and they received money to get a canine. A Tallapoosa Electric Corporation representative was present to receive the Elective Corporation for the 2020 year. Mr. Davis shared that he received the Leader of the Year Award for 2020 and he appreciated being put on the Wiregrass Committee.

Chairman Corbett thanked BEAM Cable TV for broadcasting the meeting live on Facebook, and The Citizen of East Alabama for covering our meetings for the citizens of Russell County. He welcomed our elected officials, department heads, visitors, and guests.

Chairman Corbett stated that the agenda was approved at Monday night's work session on November 22, 2021.

Assistant County Administrator /Finance Manager Tina Thomas 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 Interim County Attorney Hope Hicks and Assistant County Administrator /Finance Manager Tina Thomas kept the minutes while County Administrator Paulette Colbert was out.

A quorum was established by Assistant County Administrator /Finance Manager Tina Thomas.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Chairman Corbett ask for approval of the minutes for November 10,2021 Commission meeting. Commissioner Epps motioned to approve minutes as presented. Seconded by Commissioner Costello. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. None opposed. The Commission passed the motion unanimously.

PROCLAMATIONS AND RESOLUTIONS:

No proclamations or resolutions were made.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

No discussion items were made.

BUSINESS ITEMS:

Chairman Corbett recognized Commissioner Reed to present the COVID-19 pay for contract employees. Attorney Hope Hicks stated that the previous motion did not include contract employees so they can make a motion to give those additional contract employees, because they would also meet the guidelines they were employed, they were subject to hazardous conditions, they regularly interact with coworkers or people, so then they would be eligible for the pay but somebody would have to make a motion because they were not included in the past motion. Commissioner Reed motioned for the COVID pay for the doctors and any other additional contact employees. Seconded by Commissioner Costello. Commissioner Lee asked, for the record, that this is legal in her opinion? Ms. Hicks agreed that it was. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. None opposed. The Commission passed the motion unanimously.

Chairman Corbett recognized Commissioner Screws to present the Russell County Cheerleading Squad. Commissioner Screws stated that Monday night they had Ms. Renee Thomas come talk to the Commission about the Russell County Cheerleaders being invited to the nationals and are trying to go. He asked, in a form of a motion, that each Commissioner donate \$200 of their project money towards this effort. Motion by Commissioner Screws and seconded by Commissioner Lee. In discussion, Commissioner Costello stated that they were told Monday night that this was the very first time they were invited to the nationals, so it is a big deal. Assistant County Administrator /Finance Manager Tina Thomas called the vote: District 3: Costello, yes. District 5: Epps, yes. District 2: Chambers, yes. District 7: Screws, yes. District 4: Reed, yes. District 1: Lee, yes. District 6: Corbett, yes. The Commission passed the motion unanimously.

Chairman Corbett recognized Interim EMA Director David Martin to present the bid request for the COVID Response trailer. Mr. Martin requested for bids for the Covid Response Trailer that is funded by the CDBG Funds, which is the Community Block Development funds. He presented Ben McGarr with the Lee-Russell Council of Government to speak more on it. Mr. McGarr stated that he has worked with Mr. Martin to prepare the bid announcement for the trailer that was a part of the overall projects that were approved for the CDBG Covid funding that the county was awarded earlier in the year. He said because this equipment is going to be estimated to be over \$7,500, they have to bid it out through this process, and it's all been checked, and if the Commission approves it, he will work with the Administrator and get a bid announcement out next week. Chairman Corbett stated that typically our bids are for \$15,000 but the CDBG requires it to be at the \$7,500 mark. Commissioner Lee stated, for the record, they need to put when the bid opening will be. Mr. Martin agreed and said the request will be send out by Lee-Russell Council on Monday, November 29th, and asked to be returned by Wednesday, December the 15th at 10 am to be opened here in the Commission Chambers. He stated that this will allow for the approval for the trailer purchase at the Commission meeting on December 22nd. Motion to approve by Commissioner Screws. Seconded by Commissioner

Chambers. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. None opposed. The Commission passed the motion unanimously.

Chairman Corbett recognized Maintenance Director Leon Watson to present the awarding of the septic bid. Mr. Watson stated that maintenance open bids were open in the Commission Chambers on Thursday, November the 18th at 3 pm, and present were both Ben McGarr and County Administrator Paulette Colbert. Mr. Watson said that after three weeks of advertisement, they received only one bid for the new septic tank system from Stephen Head Construction Company in the amount of \$33,610 which is \$3,610 over budget project amount but it is his recommendation that the Commission vote to move forward with this project and award the job to Stephen Head Construction. He then turned it over to Ben McGarr who is with Lee-Russell Council Government, who is handling the grant funds for this project. Mr. McGarr stated that the original budgeted amount for this project was \$30,000, so the grant will cover the \$30,000 but anything over that will be the county's responsibility. Motion to accept the recommendation by Commissioner Epps. Seconded by Commissioner Costello. Chairman Corbett stated that the additional funds can come from the old Russell County Courthouse Association. Assistant County Administrator /Finance Manager Tina Thomas called the vote: District 3: Costello, yes. District 5: Epps, yes. District 2: Chambers, yes. District 7: Screws, yes. District 4: Reed, yes. District 1: Lee, yes. District 6: Corbett, yes. The Commission passed the motion unanimously.

Chairman Corbett recognized Commissioner Reed to present the District 4 E911 board appointment. Commissioner Reed stated that, for the records, he is reappointing himself for District 4 on the E-911 Board.

Chairman Corbett addressed the topic of the Water Board appointment. He stated that the Commissioners were notified Monday night, and before, that one of the three Water Board appointments is up for appointment that expired in March of 2021, so it is past time to take action on this. At this time, Chairman Corbett opened the floor for appointments to the Water Board. Commissioner Reed stated that the person needs to be on the water system and needs to live in the county, as well, before they are eligible to be on this board. Commissioner Lee stated to appoint Mr. David Smith, who was on the board before. Motion to close nominations by Commissioner Lee and seconded by Commissioner Chambers. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. None opposed. The Commission passed the motion unanimously.

Chairman Corbett addressed the topic of the Utility Board appointments, prior named as Sanitation, and the Commissioners had a list of the positions that are up for reappointments. They spoke in the Monday work session that this board was created by the Commission. In an effort to keep these terms staggering and not to appoint them all at the same time, the suggestion was to take the end-term dates and add 6 years to each of those terms. Commissioner Lee moved that all members ending term date be extended by six years. Seconded by Commissioner Chambers. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. None opposed. The Commission passed the motion unanimously. Commissioner Screws verified that the members will be notified.

Chairman Corbett addressed the topic of the election of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman. Commissioner Costello nominated Commissioner Corbett to remain as the Chairman. Commissioner Corbett yielded the floor to the vice chairman since he was nominated himself. Commissioner Lee asked if there are any more nominations three times. There were no more nominations and Commissioner Epps moved the nomination be closed. Seconded by

Commissioner Reed. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. None opposed. The Commission passed the motion unanimously. Commissioner Lee stated that Commissioner Corbett is elected Chair. Commissioner Lee yielded the floor to Chairman Corbett.

Chairman Corbett addressed the topic of the election of the Vice-Chairman. Commissioner Reed nominated Commissioner Rod Costello as the Vice-Chairman. Chairman Corbett asked three times for any other nominations, and none were made. Commissioner Lee motioned to close the nominations. Seconded by Commissioner Reed. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. None opposed. The Commission passed the motion unanimously. Commissioner Costello was nominated as the Vice-Chairman.

Chairman Corbett addressed the topic of the voting order. They passed a cup and chose numbers to distinguish the current year voting order, instead of voting by districts. Commissioner Lee added that he also established that the Chair vote last. The voting order was chosen as follows:

Voting 1st: Commissioner Reed
Voting 2nd: Commissioner Screws
Voting 3rd: Commissioner Epps
Voting 4th: Commissioner Costello
Voting 5th: Commissioner Lee
Voting 6th: Commissioner Chambers
Voting 7th: Chairman Corbett

COUNTY ENGINEER:

Assistant County Engineer Ray Martin stated a revision in sanitation pickup this week for the Thanksgiving Holiday. He said the Sanitation Department will be closed tomorrow, and anybody's trash pickup that is scheduled for Thursday will be picked up on Friday.

ADMINISTRATOR:

Assistant County Administrator /Finance Manager Tina Thomas had nothing to present.

COUNTY ATTORNEY:

Interim County Attorney Hope Hicks stated that from the previous 2 weeks ago meeting, that the Commission had voted to give the employees Covid pay, she specifically excluded officials. After looking into it further, there are two ways to look at it. Ms. Hicks stated that the attorney general's opinion specifically said that elected officials were excluded, but she said when you look at Omnibus Pay Act, if you give it across the board then elected officials can be included. She says she's spoken with the general counsel for the Department of Examiners, and she's spoken to the head of the Opinions Division for the Attorney General's Office, who didn't necessarily like her question, but he said he would look at it and get back with her on it. So, before she states an absolute no or absolute yes, she would like to get their opinions on it. Ms. Hicks hopes to get those opinions for the Commission before the next meeting. As of right now, initially the answer they gave was no, but she thinks she has them looking at things from our perspective as well.

COMMISSIONER DISCUSSION:

Chairman Corbett discussed the opening of the restrooms at the Crawford Walking Trail. He gave credit to Leon and our Maintenance Department for all of the hard work they did on it. He has heard a lot of appreciation from many others on how nice it turned out.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- **Crawford Square:** Tree Lighting on Tuesday, 11/30 at 6 pm ET
- **Fort Mitchell Fire Station:** Christmas Tree Lighting & Santa on Saturday, December 4th at 6 pm ET
- **Christmas at Fort Mitchell:** Christmas Pictures & Santa's Sleigh Sunday, December 5th from 1 pm to 4 pm ET

Motion to adjourn by Commissioner Screws seconded by Commissioner Reed.

Meeting was adjourned.