

**Russell County Commission  
Russell County Commission Chambers  
Meeting Minutes March 23, 2022  
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 Pastor Alice Hubbard with True Believers Ministry.

Commissioner Epps led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

Mr. Wilbert D. Payne, Jr. presented awards to the Commission and the Russell County Sheriff Heath Taylor on behalf of the Fort Mitchell National Cemetery Support Committee. He thanked them for their support for Wreaths Across America for 2021.

Chairman Corbett thanked BEAM Cable TV for broadcasting our meeting to those who are not able to attend and The Citizen of East Alabama for covering the meetings. He welcomed our elected officials, department heads, other media, and guests.

County Administrator Paulette Colbert called roll of the Commission. Member's present were Commissioner Ronnie Reed, Commissioner Larry Screws, Commissioner Cattie Epps, Commissioner Rod Costello, Commissioner Gentry Lee, Commissioner Scott Chambers, and Chairman Chance Corbett. Also present was Interim County Attorney Megan McCarthy who was sitting in for Attorney Hope Hicks, and County Administrator Paulette Colbert who kept the minutes.

A quorum was established by County Administrator Paulette Colbert.

Chairman Corbett stated that the agenda was approved at Monday night's work session on March 21, 2022.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Chairman Corbett asked for approval of the minutes of March 9, 2022, Commission meeting. Commissioner Reed added a correction to page 6, to include adding "big truck" to when he himself spoke that he was glad they didn't go with the Association of the County Commission because the Sheriff wouldn't be able to get his big truck for his project. Commissioner Epps moved to approve the minutes as printed with the necessary correction. Seconded by Commissioner Costello. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. Motion to approve the minutes passed.

**PROCLAMATIONS, RESOLUTIONS AND PRESENTATIONS:**

Chairman Corbett recognized Commissioner Epps who presented a \$2,000 check from her project fund to Principal Vanita Pharrams of Mount Olive Intermediate School. Ms. Pharrams thanked all the Russell County Commissioners and promised Commissioner Epps the money will be put to great use.

**DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

There were no discussion items.

**BUSINESS ITEMS:**

Chairman Corbett recognized EMA Director David Martin who presented a salary schedule amendment request. He requested to decrease the Operation Specialist Position by \$6,948.80, going from \$37,320.61 to \$30,371.81 and increase the IT Specialist position \$6,948.80, going from \$33,051.20 to \$40,000. Also, change the title from IT Specialist to Logistics Officer. Chairman Corbett verified with Mrs. Colbert that this is in his current budget. She agreed. Commissioner Costello moved to accept the amendment. Commissioner Chambers seconded. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. Motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Corbett recognized Commissioner Screws who presented a donation request to the Uplift Foundation. Commissioner Screws moved, to donate \$5,000 of his project money to the Uplift Foundation for

scholarships. Seconded by Commissioner Reed. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. The motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Corbett presented the East Alabama Mental Health-Mental Retardation Board appointments. He stated that Mrs. Colbert previously presented three currently open positions. Mr. Jeff Gibson was nominated by Chairman Corbett, and he also stated that Mrs. Colbert had brought the name of Mr. Jesse Gideon from Hurtsboro. Mr. Gibson and Mr. Gideon both reached out expressing a desire to serve. Chairman Corbett stated Mr. Gideon as a second nomination. Commissioner Screws moved to accept the two nominees pending the third one at a later date. Seconded by Commissioner Costello. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. Motion passed unanimously. Mrs. Colbert stated she will notify them. Commissioner Corbett asked if there was a time period in which they need to fill the vacant third spot? He asked as soon as possible? Mrs. Colbert said there was not, but all the positions have expired. Commissioner Screws added that it needs to be a Russell County resident. Chairman Corbett stated that is pretty much the qualifying factor. Commissioner Reed added that they can not live in the city to be on the board because the city makes appointments, as well. Mrs. Colbert agreed and stated it must be a county resident, and Chairman added it must be outside the city limits. Commissioner Reed stated that the city makes an appointment, and the county makes three appointments. Chairman Corbett said they are safe with the two just chosen and stated that both live outside Phenix City, and actually one requirement was to be in the Hurtsboro area and that is Mr. Gideon.

#### **COUNTY ENGINEER:**

Assistant County Engineer Ray Martin discussed the purchase of a truck from ALDOT Surplus for the Highway Department. It's a budgeted item purchase of a 2015 Dodge Ram 1500 extended cab for \$23,718.00. Commissioner Screws moved to approve the purchase. Seconded by Commissioner Lee. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. The motion passed unanimously.

Assistant County Engineer Ray Martin presented the Wills Valley Road resurfacing bid award. Mr. Martin stated it was the first Craft Project for the year and requested to award the Wills Valley Craft Project to East Alabama Paving in the amount of \$263,037.65. He requested if the Commission awarded it, permission be given for the Chair and the Administrator to sign the necessary contract documents to get the project moving. Commissioner Reed asked if it was bid out. Mr. Martin said it was bid out through the ACCA Craft Funds. Commissioner Screws moved to approve the bid award. Seconded by Commissioner Epps. Chairman Corbett thanked Mr. Martin for pushing this through because it's much needed, and it was a project from a couple of years ago that was pushed back with funding. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. The motion passed unanimously.

Assistant County Engineer Ray Martin requested to reject the Survey Equipment bid. Mr. Martin stated that they received bids on the survey equipment, with only one bid received. They would like to reject that bid due to it being twice the amount they budgeted. Mr. Martin requested to reject that bid and modify the bid, resend the bid out, and receive bids on 4/28/2022 at 2:30 pm in the Commission Chambers, then they will bring it back to the Commission for bid awarding on 5/11/2022. Commissioner Epps moved to accept the recommendation. Seconded by Commissioner Costello. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. The motion passed unanimously.

Assistant County Engineer Ray Martin requested to solicit annual bids. Mr. Martin stated the materials request to bid for this year is as follows: Bid # 001-22 Striping and Markings, Bid # 002-22 Liquid Asphalt, Bid # 004a-22 Bituminous paving (a public perks bid), Bid # 005-22 Grassing, Bid # 006-22 Corrugated Steel & HDPE Pipe, Bid # 007-22 Aggregate, Bid # 008-22 Concrete Pipe, Bid # 009-22 Truck Hauling, Bid # 010-22 Motor Grader Blades, and Bid # 014-22 Fencing. He stated they are looking to send out these bids tomorrow, receive bids on 4/20/2022 at 2:30 in the Commission Chambers, and then they will bring back to the Commission to award bids on 4/27/2022. Commissioner Costello moved to approve the motion to solicit the annual bids. Seconded by Commissioner Reed. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. The motion passed unanimously.

Assistant County Engineer Ray Martin requested to solicit bids to resurface Upshaw Flats Road. He stated it is a Craft Project and it will be bid through the ACCA just like the rest of them. He said they will send out and receive bids on May 18, 2022 at 2:30 in the Commission Chambers, then they would bring it back before the Commission on the May 25<sup>th</sup> meeting to award the bid. Commissioner Screws moved to approve the motion.

Seconded by Commissioner Reed. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. The motion passed unanimously.

**Parks & Recreation Department /Discussion Item:**

Assistant County Engineer Ray Martin requested to purchase two items that were previously approved in the budget for two John Deere Z915E mowers from SunSouth through the Sourcewell contract for the price of \$16,699.76 for both mowers. Commissioner Lee moved to approve the purchase. Seconded by Commissioner Costello. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. The motion passed unanimously.

**Sanitation Department /Discussion Item:**

Assistant County Engineer Ray Martin requested to purchase a budgeted item which is a 2015 Ram 1500 extended cab from ALDOT Surplus in the amount of \$24,005.00. Commissioner Screws moved to approve the purchase. Commissioner Epps seconded the motion. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. The motion passed unanimously.

**ADMINISTRATOR:**

County Administrator Paulette Colbert had nothing to present.

**CORONAVIRUS RESCUE ACT FUND:**

Chairman Corbett recognized County Administrator Paulette Colbert who requested to pay attorney fees to Ball, Ball, Matthews & Novak, P.A. Attorneys at Law for services rendered and expenses incurred of \$1,935.00 from the Coronavirus Rescue Act Fund. Commissioner Lee moved to approve the request to pay the attorney fees. Seconded by Commissioner Reed. County Administrator Paulette Colbert polled the Commission as follows: Commissioner Ronnie Reed, yes; Commissioner Larry Screws, yes; Commissioner Cattie Epps, yes; Commissioner Rod Costello, yes; Commissioner Gentry Lee, yes; Commissioner Scott Chambers, yes; and Chairman Chance Corbett, yes. The Commission approved the request unanimously.

Chairman Corbett recognized County Administrator Paulette Colbert who presented the Approved Expenditures/Amounts Paid monthly Report which was in their binders for their information.

**COUNTY ATTORNEY:**

Interim County Attorney Megan McCarthy had nothing to share but stated that Attorney Hope Hicks will be at the work session at 4 pm on April 11<sup>th</sup> and will be present at the next Commission meeting on April 13, 2022.

**COMMISSIONER DISCUSSION:**

Commissioner Reed reminded those who have not filed their statement of economic interest report with the ethics commission, that it is due by April 1st. Chairman Corbett stated that the Statement of Economic Interest is required by the ethics commission and all elected officials, and certain employees must file.

Commissioner Screws spoke about hiring the attorney permanently and he would like to put it on the next meeting agenda to discuss. Chairman Corbett asked Mrs. Colbert to put it under discussion on the next meeting agenda.

Commissioner Costello stated he would like to add to the next meeting agenda under discussion the need to report budgeted items of \$7,500 or more. He stated he thinks they should amend the number on all budgeted items, as long as they were budgeted items, he thinks they can amend it. Chairman Corbett asked Mrs. Colbert to add it.

Commissioner Epps stated she would like to add to the next meeting agenda to discuss the electrical sign for Historical Fort Mitchell and the Senior Center. Chairman Corbett added that if she's ok with it, he would like to put it on the agenda for the 4 pm meeting because Ms. Hicks may be able to report on it because that was one of the projects he asked her to look into. Commissioner Epps agreed. He asked Mrs. Colbert to add it.

Chairman Corbett reported about a trip he made last week to Montgomery with Major General Donahue, the leader of Fort Benning, and others bringing Fort Benning to the forefront in recognizing the portion of Fort Benning that is in Alabama. He said the first person who jumped out of an airplane was here in Alabama

because the field is here on the Alabama side. They met with Governor Ivey, and she made good comments about making sure that Fort Benning was recognizing everything to do as a state regarding the military installations and soldiers and their families. He discussed meeting others at the meeting and the good discussions about education and pushing our county forward. It was mentioned at the meeting about how the archery tournament on the Alabama side was a good project. Chairman Corbett stated that this trip was one of the better meetings he's been to and was told that Fort Benning is the fourth largest geographical military institution in the state of Alabama. The discussion was centered around taking care of those soldiers, their families, their education facilities, and making them want to come to Alabama to live. He said the plan now is for the lieutenant governor to make a trip down to Russell County and tour Fort Benning from Russell County.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

- Relay for Life Classic Car & Truck Show: Saturday, April 2, 2022, 10 am to 2 pm ET  
-Location: Crawford Walking Trail
- Relay for Life Event: Friday night, April 29, 2022 at the Crawford Walking Trail
- Ft. Mitchell Pioneer Day: April 9, 2022 from 9 am to 3 pm ET at Ft. Mitchell Historic Site, Hwy 165
- Crawford Market Days: Coming April 16<sup>th</sup> (the 3rd Saturday), 8 am to 1 pm ET
- Work Session on April 11, 2022, will begin at 4:00 pm ET to Discuss American Rescue Plan
- Bunco Bash Tournament: Tuesday April 12th at 5:30 pm ET at 2400 Dobbs Drive, PC Ala. 36870
- Extension Office Pond Mgmt. Workshop: Thursday, May 5, 2022 at Old Seale Courthouse  
-Registration 8:30 am EDT, Class Begins 2:00 pm ET
- Regional Emergency Preparedness Day: May 7, 2022 at 10:30 am to 3:00 pm ET  
-Smith Station Government Center

Commissioner Screws asked if there was a plan, date, or time set to look at the people and agencies who have applied for the rescue money, and to see what to cut the list down to what they plan to offer them. Chairman Corbett stated that he has not taken an action beyond what has been done in these meetings and he says they probably will need to be prepared to discuss it in the meeting on April 11<sup>th</sup> and then make a plan. He said communication is going to be a big part of this (with those applicants) because the Commission needs to decide if they want some applicants come and present to them, or do they want to decide to make a threshold on this, and if you didn't meet it, you don't get it. Chairman Corbett restated that he doesn't have a plan yet, but maybe they could talk about it at the next work session.

Commissioner Reed asked about the veterans' memorial site previously discussed. Chairman Corbett stated that it will be on the next agenda along with a plan for Trey with our engineering to show the county property and how much of that will be utilized before the Commission votes on that.

Commissioner Epps moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Commissioner Costello.

Meeting was adjourned.