

**Russell County Commission
Russell County Commission Chambers
Meeting Minutes April 13, 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 Reverend Steve Pace with Summerville Baptist Church.

Commissioner Lee led the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Citizens shared road issues and requested for resurfacing to be done and it was noted by County Engineer Shawn Blakeney for the following citizens:

- Ms. Gloria Williams spoke about 14 Ferrell Road issues.
- Ms. Cassandra Smith spoke about Northfork Road issues.
- Ms. Shamika Thomas spoke about 3 Northfork Road issues.
- Ms. Betty Smith spoke about Northfork Road issues.

Prevention Services Coordinator of East Alabama Mental Health Emi Brooks spoke about the details of the Drug Take Back event on Saturday, April 23, 2022, at the Crawford Walking Trail at 2 pm ET.

Mr. Gary Leeds, President of the Fraternal Order of Police, Marcus Bruce Lee Lodge in Phenix City, spoke about a dedication ceremony to be held on Saturday the 21st of May at 11:00 am ET at the Judicial Center.

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, 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 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 April 11, 2022.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Chairman Corbett asked for approval of the minutes of March 23, 2022, Commission meeting. Commissioner Costello moved to approve the minutes. Seconded by Commissioner Chambers. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. Motion to approve the minutes passed.

PROCLAMATIONS, RESOLUTIONS AND PRESENTATIONS:

Chairman Corbett recognized Ms. Lisa Sandt with Lee-Russell Council of Governments with the Fair Housing Proclamation. County Administrator Paulette Colbert read the proclamation as follows:



PROCLAMATION
By the
Russell County Commission

WHEREAS, *the month of April is recognized throughout the state as Fair Housing Month; and*

WHEREAS, *Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968, as amended, set forth a national policy for fair housing without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status or disability; and*

WHEREAS, *the county of Russell continues to affirmatively further fair housing for its citizens;*

NOW, THEREFORE, *the Russell County Commission does hereby proclaim April 2022, as*

Fair Housing Month

in Russell County, in the state of Alabama.

Given Under Our Hands and the Great Seal of the County Commission of Russell County, Alabama, on this 13th day of April 2022.

Commissioner Lee moved to approve the proclamation. Seconded by Commissioner Reed. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. The proclamation passed unanimously.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

There were no discussion items.

BUSINESS ITEMS:

Chairman Corbett recognized Mr. Bill Friend with Enforcement who made a recommendation to continue with the abatement on 14 Giles Road in Phenix City and start the clean-up. Commissioner Chambers moved to approve the motion. Seconded by Commissioner Reed. County Administrator Paulette Colbert called vote of the Commission as follows: District 4: Commissioner Reed, yes; District 7: Commissioner Screws, yes; District 5: Commissioner Epps, yes; District 3: Commissioner Costello, yes; District 1: Commissioner Lee, no; District 2: Commissioner Chambers, yes; and District 6: Commissioner Corbett, yes. The Commission passed the motion.

Chairman Corbett recognized Sheriff Taylor who requested nine vehicles be surplus. He stated that six of them were purchased by the Commission. He requested to give Mrs. Colbert the ability to advertise them for two weeks in the paper that they will be sold on GovDeals.com beginning on a specific day that the advertising states. Commissioner Epps moved to accept the Sheriff's recommendation. Seconded by Commissioner Reed. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. The motion passed unanimously by the Commission.

Chairman Corbett presented to dedicate .5 acres at the Seale Sports Complex to house the Veterans Memorial. He stated that it will still be county property with it being maintained by both the county and the veterans' organizations. Commissioner Lee moved to accept the motion. Seconded by Commissioner Reed. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. The motion passed unanimously by the Commission.

Chairman Corbett recognized Mr. Ben McGarr with Lee-Russell Council of Governments requesting the Commission have a Fair Housing public hearing to be held on April 27th at 9:30 before the Commission meeting that morning. Mr. McGarr stated this is a HUD requirement that is associated with the coronavirus CDBG grant that the county received. Commissioner Lee moved to accept the motion. Seconded by Commissioner Reed. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. The motion passed unanimously by the Commission.

Chairman Corbett recognized Maintenance Director Leon Watson who requested awarding of the aerial lift bid and for the Chair to sign the contract to purchase a 2015 snorkel AB85J aerial lift from Ahern Reynolds in Auburn, Alabama in the amount of \$74,795, which is a budgeted item for this fiscal year. Commissioner Chambers moved to approve the bid award. Seconded by Commissioner Costello. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. The motion passed unanimously by the Commission.

Chairman Corbett recognized Judge Harden who requested to purchase meals for poll workers. He stated he has the money in the elections budget. Attorney Hope Hicks voiced that after researching she did not see any issues with the request. Commissioner Lee moved to approve the request. Seconded by Commissioner Reed. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. The motion passed unanimously by the Commission.

Chairman Corbett recognized Commissioner Screws who then moved to offer Interim Attorney Hope Hicks a contract to be worked out between the administrator and the chairperson, then to be brought back to the Commission for approval. Commissioner Lee seconded the request. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. The motion passed unanimously by the Commission.

Chairman Corbett recognized Commissioner Costello who presented the \$7,500 expenditure reporting. Commissioner Costello moved to increase the mandatory reporting of budgeted items to the Commission from \$7,500 to \$15,000. It was clarified for the minutes, that anything that is approved in the budget for a specific item that is less than \$15,000 will not need department heads to report it to the Commission. Motioned seconded by Commissioner Reed. Since it was a policy change, County Administrator Paulette Colbert called vote of the Commission as follows: District 4: Commissioner Reed, yes; District 7: Commissioner Screws, yes; District 5: Commissioner Epps, yes; District 3: Commissioner Costello, yes; District 1: Commissioner Lee, yes; District 2: Commissioner Chambers, yes; and District 6: Commissioner Corbett, yes. The Commission passed the motion unanimously.

Chairman Corbett recognized Commissioner Costello who presented the sanitation pay to the engineer. Commissioner Costello moved for County Engineer Shawn Blakeney to continue to help new Sanitation Director, Mr. Ward Dudley, and that Mr. Blakeney's extra stipend pay for Interim continue through the last work period in June. Seconded by Commissioner Reed. County Administrator Paulette Colbert called vote of the Commission as follows: District 4: Commissioner Reed, no; District 7: Commissioner Screws, yes; District 5: Commissioner Epps, abstained; District 3: Commissioner Costello, yes; District 1: Commissioner Lee, no; District 2: Commissioner Chambers, no; and District 6: Commissioner Corbett, no. The motion failed to pass by the Commission.

Chairman Corbett presented to continue the interim pay for the engineer doing the sanitation position as he on boards the new director until the end of the budget year. Commissioner Lee moved to approve the interim pay request. Seconded by Commissioner Chambers. County Administrator Paulette Colbert called vote of the Commission as follows: District 4: Commissioner Reed, yes; District 7: Commissioner Screws, no; District 5: Commissioner Epps, yes; District 3: Commissioner Costello, no; District 1: Commissioner Lee, yes; District 2: Commissioner Chambers, yes; and District 6: Commissioner Corbett, yes. The Commission passed the motion.

Chairman Corbett recognized Mrs. Naomi Elliott who presented the Relay for Life Request with the American Cancer Society. Mrs. Elliott discussed what the Relay for Life represents and requested donations for the event from the Commission. Commissioner Lee moved; seconded by Commissioner Reed to contribute the following to this event from their project funds: Commissioner Lee, \$500; Commissioner Costello, \$500; and Chairman Corbett, \$500 for a total of \$1,500. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. The motion passed unanimously by the Commission.

Chairman Corbett recognized Commissioner Screws who presented the Russell County High School Bass Club donation. Commissioner Screws moved; Commissioner Reed seconded to give the Bass Club at Russell County High School a total of \$3,800 from the following Commissioner's project money: Commissioner Screws, \$1,000; Commissioner Corbett, \$1,000; Commissioner Costello, \$300; Commissioner Epps \$1,000; and Commissioner Lee, \$500. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. The motion passed unanimously by the Commission.

COUNTY ENGINEER:

County Engineer Shawn Blakeney presented a resolution for vacating right of way between US Highway 431 and South Seale Road. This was advertised on August 16th, 23rd, 30th and September 6th, 2018. He said it was approved at the September 12, 2018 Commission meeting, but the department does not have the signed resolution needed to have it recorded in the probate judge's office. Commissioner Lee moved the motion to approve. Seconded by Commissioner Costello. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. The motion passed unanimously by the Commission. See resolution below:

***RESOLUTION**

STATE OF ALABAMA
RUSSELL COUNTY

RESOLUTION REGARDING VACATION OF *an unnamed right-of-way lying in section 32, Township 17, Range 30* running between US highway 431 and South Seale Road

WHEREAS, a written petition was filed with the Russell County Commission by ***Phillip E Hornsby***, being the landowner adjoining and/or abutting a portion of a right-of-way for a county road described therein and commonly known as, ***an unnamed right-of-way lying in section 32, Township 17, Range 30*** running between US highway 431 and South Seale Road, and

WHEREAS, said petition requested the Russell County Commission to vacate that portion of said road which lies ***in section 32, Township 17, Range 30*** running between US highway 431 and South Seale Road, which said road portion is more particularly described on Exhibit "A" attached hereto and made a part hereof, and

WHEREAS, prior to taking action on said petition the Russell County Commission scheduled a public hearing to be held at the regularly scheduled meeting of the Russell County Commission set for ***September 12, 2018***, and

WHEREAS, said scheduled meeting was advertised in *the Phenix Citizen* for four (4) successive weeks, on, to wit, **August 16, 23, 30 and September 6 of 2018**, and

WHEREAS, notice of the scheduled meeting was posted on the bulletin board at the County Courthouse for the same period of time covered by the newspaper publication, and

WHEREAS, a copy of the notice of said meeting was also served by certified U.S. Mail at least 30 days prior to the scheduled meeting on all abutting landowners and on all entities known to have facilities or equipment within the public right-of-way sought to be vacated, and

WHEREAS, in accordance with the said notice a public hearing was held on the date and time aforesaid wherein proponents and opponents were given the opportunity to speak on the vacation issue, and

WHEREAS, a Motion to Approve the Vacation was made by the County Commissioner in whose district the portion of said right-of-way to be vacated is located, and

WHEREAS, said motion carried unanimously,

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Russell County Commission finds that no entity or person will be cut off from access by the vacation of said road, but to the

contrary, all other entities and persons already have reasonable and convenient access to their properties, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED by the Russell County Commission that this Commission finds that it is in the best interest of the public that such portion of **an unnamed right-of-way lying in section 32, Township 17, Range 30 running between US highway 431 and South Seale Road** be vacated, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED by the unanimous consent of the Russell County Commission that the portion of **an unnamed right-of-way lying in section 32, Township 17, Range 30 running between US highway 431 and South Seale Road**, described on Exhibit "A" attached hereto and made a part hereof be and the same hereby is vacated and divested of all public rights and liabilities, including any rights which may have been acquired by prescription, and that title to such road is now vested in the abutting landowners subject to the right of entities with utilities in place at this time to continue to maintain, extend, and enlarge their lines to the same extent as if the vacation had not occurred, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this resolution shall be recorded in the Office of the Judge of Probate of Russell County, Alabama, and further that it shall be published once in a newspaper in the County no later than 14 days from this date.

County Engineer Shawn Blakeney requested approval for an updated Household Garbage Collection Policy Effective January 1, 2022. Commissioner Epps moved to accept the policy change recommendation from the engineer; Seconded by Commissioner Chambers. 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.

ADMINISTRATOR:

County Administrator Paulette Colbert had nothing to present.

CORONAVIRUS RESCUE ACT FUND:

Chairman Corbett recognized County Administrator Paulette Colbert who requested to pay an invoice to Hecht Burdeshaw for services rendered through February 28, 2022, from the Coronavirus Rescue Act Fund in the amount of \$1,620 for the design contract for a building to house the COVID command vehicle, and to share with the Emergency Management Agency. Commissioner Lee moved to approve; seconded by Commissioner Chambers. 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 Maintenance Director Leon Watson who requested the Commission due to American Mortuary being non-responsive to approve the next lowest bidder in the amount of \$20,376 with Mobi Medical to purchase the coroner's morgue racks and lift equipment, which includes shipping and delivery. Commissioner Costello moved to approve Mr. Watson's request. 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.

HUMAN RESOURCES: *Information was in Commissioner's Packets*

COUNTY ATTORNEY:

Attorney Hope Hicks discussed the United Way and the Chattahoochee Valley Community Foundation were unable to distribute all funds allotted them from the CDBG-CV project and there is a question pertaining to the amount their administrative fees should be. After further discussion, it was decided to research this and bring it back to the Commission.

COMMISSIONER DISCUSSION:

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