

**PUBLIC HEARING FOR  
Fair Housing  
April 27, 2022**

The Public Hearing was called to order by Chairman Chance Corbett.

Business included Fair Housing general information presented by Mr. Ben McGarr with Lee-Russell Council of Governments.

There were no public comments.

Commissioner Lee moved to adjourn. Seconded by Commissioner Costello. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. Motion to adjourn the public hearing was approved.

**Russell County Commission  
Russell County Commission Chambers  
Meeting Minutes April 27, 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 Don Abrams with Trinity UMC.

Commissioner Chambers led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

Father Tom Wise gave the Commission an update on behalf of Mother Mary Mission.

Chairman Corbett thanked BEAM Cable TV for broadcasting our meeting live for the public on Facebook, 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. Members 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 County Attorney Hope Hicks, and County Administrator Paulette Colbert who kept the minutes.

A quorum was established by County Administrator Paulette Colbert.

Chairman Corbett presented the agenda to be approved. There was no work session Monday night due to a state holiday. Commissioner Corbett added under the Business Items, a donation from his project money to the Russell County Historical Commission for a historic building project they are working on in the amount of \$1,500.00. Commissioner Reed moved to approve the agenda with the addition. Seconded by Commissioner Lee. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. Motion to approve the agenda was approved unanimously.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Chairman Corbett asked for approval of the minutes of April 13, 2022, Commission meeting. Commissioner Corbett requested a correction to page 3, in the 5<sup>th</sup> paragraph where they spoke about raising the expenditure reporting from \$7,500 to \$15,000 and where it states, "approved in the budget for an item that is less than \$15,000," he requested to add the word "specific" in front of the word "item" to then say, "any specific item that was approved in the budget" because it was discussed in length and it was modified in the motion.

Commissioner Lee moved to approve the minutes. Seconded by Commissioner Costello. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. Motion to approve the minutes with the correction passed.

**PROCLAMATIONS, RESOLUTIONS AND PRESENTATIONS:**

There were no proclamations, resolutions, or presentations to be made.

**DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

Chairman Corbett recognized Planning Commission Chairman David Ellis who discussed information and updates for the Planning Commission.

**BUSINESS ITEMS:**

Chairman Corbett recognized Commissioner Reed who discussed the attorney contract with salary and mileage for Attorney Hope Hicks, and to include a 30-day notice in case she wanted to move on. After further discussion, Attorney Hope Hicks spoke of a draft scope proposal that she has submitted to the Commissioners and submitted to them to include her rates, reimbursement of mileage at the IRS rate (since it fluctuates based on gas prices) and included a 30-day notice clause for both sides. Ms. Hicks stated the proposal would be through December 31, 2024, to get through the next election term. Commissioner Lee moved to postpone the attorney proposal until the next meeting to give Commissioners time to look at the proposal details and rates. Commissioner Chambers seconded the motion. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. Motion to postpone until the next meeting was passed unanimously.

Chairman Corbett recognized Commissioner Reed who presented American Rescue Act Funding distribution requests. Nothing was voted on this at the present time since more will be discussed on the next May 9<sup>th</sup> early 4 pm ET work session that will include discussing the American Rescue Act Fund distributions.

Chairman Corbett presented a request to donate \$1,500 of his project money to the Russell County Historical Commission for work on the Old Uchee Methodist Church. Commissioner Corbett moved to make the donation. Seconded by Commissioner Lee. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. Motion was passed unanimously.

**COUNTY ENGINEER:**

Ben Elliott with the County Engineering Department presented the awarding of annual bids as follows:

**AWARD ANNUAL BIDS  
AT  
RUSSELL COUNTY COMMISSION MEETING ON APRIL 27, 2022**

BID NO.	DESCRIPTION	AWARD BID TO LOW BIDDER
001-21	STRIPING AND MARKINGS	OZARK STRIPING
002-21	LIQUID ASPHALT	SPLIT BID-ERGON AND HUNTS
004A-22	BITUMINOUS PAVING (PUBLIC WORKS BID)	EAST ALABAMA PAVING
005-41	GRASSING	NO BID
006-21	CORRUGATE STEEL AND HDPE PIPE	NO BID
007-21	AGGREGATE	COLUMBUS QUARRY
008-21	CONCRETE PIPE	NO BID
009-21	TRUCK HAULING	HILTON COOPER CONTRACTING
010-21	MOTOR GRADER BLADES	THOMPSON CAT
014-21	FENCING	SPLIT BID-GEORGIA FENCE WHOLESALE, INC. AND AFFORDABLE FENCING SOLUTION

Commissioner Lee moved to approve. Seconded by Commissioner Chambers. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. The motion passed unanimously by the Commission.

Ben Elliott with the County Engineering Department presented an update to the Flood Damage Prevention Resolution including changes made after review by Ms. Hicks. Commissioner Costello moved to approve the resolution. Seconded by Commissioner Chambers. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. The motion passed unanimously by the Commission.

**ADMINISTRATOR:**

County Administrator Paulette Colbert presented the Planning Commission appointments needed. District 6 is expiring on May 12, 2022, and a reminder of the vacancy in District 7's appointment. Commissioner Corbett requested to reappoint for District 6, Ms. Peggy Blackshear. Commissioner Screws requested to appoint Mr. Clarence Gordey for District 7.

County Administrator Paulette Colbert presented the Interim Policy Amendment. She stated the Commission approved a policy on June 14, 2017 granting the Administrator the authority to provide a salary increase for a department head that is in an interim position and that the increase would only be temporary and only effective during the time they are serving in an interim position. The policy did not specify what the temporary time would be. Mrs. Colbert presented the below amended policy to include the specified length of service for the interim position.

**INTERIM POLICY AMENDMENT**

The Administrator has the ability to give a department head who is acting in a different role assuming more responsibilities of a different department up to 10% pay increase of their current salary; if it is more than 10% that will have to come to the Commission for approval.

The increase will only be in effect during the time that they serve in an interim position *which will be no longer than six (6) months. Extension of the six (6) months will only be granted by Commission approval.*

Commissioner Lee moved to approve the amended policy. Seconded by Commissioner Chambers. Since this is an amended policy, Commissioner Corbett stated that it will take effect after the next meeting. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. The motion passed unanimously by the Commission. Mrs. Colbert stated that if needed, she would bring the extension to the Commission after 6 months.

**CORONAVIRUS RESCUE ACT FUND:**

Chairman Corbett recognized County Administrator Paulette Colbert who requested to pay an invoice for attorney fees to Ball, Ball Matthews & Novak for services rendered and expenses incurred in the amount of \$855 to be paid from the Coronavirus Rescue Act Fund. Commissioner Lee moved to approve the request; 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 County Administrator Paulette Colbert who requested to pay an invoice for architectural services rendered through March 31, 2022 for Hecht Burdeshaw Architects, Inc. in the amount of \$23,580 for a design contract that was approved back in February for the building to house the COVID command vehicle and to share with the emergency management agency. Mrs. Colbert requested this to be paid out of the Coronavirus Rescue Act Fund. Commissioner Corbett moved to approve the request; seconded by Commissioner Chambers. After discussion was had by the Commissioners, County Administrator Paulette Colbert called vote of 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 update from the Coronavirus Rescue Act Fund and stated that the quarterly report due April 29<sup>th</sup> has been submitted to the Treasury Department.

**COUNTY ATTORNEY:**

Attorney Hope Hicks discussed the United Way and the Chattahoochee Valley Community Foundation who were unable to distribute \$86,000 of the CDBG-CV project funds. She stated that after she discussed this with Lisa Sandt and Ben McGarr with Lee-Russell Council of Governments, they have a couple of ideas of how this money can be spent based on the Memorandum of Understanding. Ms. Hicks stated that she will keep working on this and bring it back to the work session on May 9, 2022. After Commissioner Reed's inquiry about the money, she also stated that they are not going to send the money back, but she said they will spend it in Russell County.

Attorney Hope Hicks requested to go into executive session at the conclusion of this meeting with no actions needing to be taken by the Commission, the meeting can be adjourned from executive session and not come back. Commissioner Epps moved to go into executive session; seconded by Commissioner Costello. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. The motion passed unanimously by the Commission. Attorney Hope Hicks stated that the purpose of this executive session is to discuss with your attorney the legal ramifications of, and legal options for pending litigations. Ms. Hicks, as an attorney, licensed to practice law in the State of Alabama made the oral declaration that this is an acceptable exception under the open meetings act and it is appropriate for executive session. Commissioner Corbett requested a real estate issue (real estate matters) be included in the executive session. Ms. Hicks agreed and stated that the discussion of possible real estate ventures would fall under an exception and is appropriate for an executive session.

**COMMISSIONER DISCUSSION:**

Chairman Corbett discussed the Prescription Drug Take-Back Event that was held at the Crawford Walking Trail.

Commissioner Epps discussed the Russell-Macon Community Action Agency.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

Announcements were made.

The meeting was adjourned in the executive session.