

Russell County Commission
Russell County Commission Chambers
Meeting Minutes September 14, 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 Steve Pace from Summerville Baptist Church.

Commissioner Reed led the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Mr. Harry Williams, founder of AD Advocacy, and the organizer of the 2nd Annual Crawford Community Health and Wellness fair, spoke about the details of the fair being at the Crawford Walking Trail.

Mr. Edwin Baez, Fire Chief for the Ft. Mitchell Volunteer Fire Department, inquired the status of their ARPA funds application request they submitted.

Chairman Corbett thanked BEAM Cable TV for broadcasting the meeting live for the public on Facebook, and The Citizen of East Alabama for covering the meetings. He welcomed the 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 the County Administrator Paulette Colbert.

Chairman Corbett stated that the agenda was approved at the work session on Monday night, September 12, 2022.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Chairman Corbett asked for approval of the following minutes from the last 3 meetings:

- August 10, 2022 Commission Meeting
- August 10, 2022 Called ARPA Meeting
- August 17, 2022 Called Annual Budget Meeting FY 2022/2023

Commissioner Costello moved to approve all three meeting minutes with the minor change from Mrs. Colbert in Monday's work session. Seconded by Commissioner Reed. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. Motion passed.

PROCLAMATIONS, RESOLUTIONS AND PRESENTATIONS:

Chairman Corbett presented the proclamation for NBHA 1D Teen World Champion, Noah Mills. County Administrator Paulette Colbert read the following:

Russell County Commission
PROCLAMATION
For
Mr. Noah Mills

WHEREAS, *the Russell County Commission hereby recognizes Mr. Noah Mills for winning and being named the NBHA 1-D Teen World Champion after competing in Perry, Georgia against over 1,200 other riders in his category; and*

WHEREAS, *Noah Mills, the son of Jerry and Laura Mills, is a resident of the Crawford community of Russell County; and*

WHEREAS, *Noah Mills is a member of the Crawford Baptist Church where he and his family are active members; and*

WHEREAS, *Noah Mills works at his family-owned Russell County business, Alabama Rock; and*

WHEREAS, *Noah Mills, who is 18 years old, has been riding horses for over 13 years and continues to win competitions and awards; and*

WHEREAS, *Noah Mills attended and graduated from Central High School in May 2022 and was a player on the 2022 State Champion Central High School baseball team;*

THEREFORE, *we, the elected members of the Russell County Commission, do hereby recognize and congratulate Mr. Noah Mills on this great accomplishment and wish him the best in all future endeavors.*

This Proclamation adopted and approved This 14th day of September, 2022

Commissioner Lee moved to approve the proclamation. Seconded by Commissioner Chambers. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. Motion passed and proclamation was approved.

Chairman Corbett presented to approve the creation of a proclamation for Mr. John (Johnny) M. Dudley that will be presented later. Commissioner Lee moved to approve the creation of proclamation. Seconded by Commissioner Costello. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. Motion passed and proclamation was approved for the next meeting.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

Chairman Corbett recognized Commission Screws who spoke about both the gun range and the zoning in District 7. Commissioner Screws asked Attorney Hope Hicks for the procedures they would need to get zoning started. Ms. Hicks stated that there would need to be a Comprehensive Zoning Plan to start zoning in one area with a plan to gradually move into more areas. She suggested to retain an expert by a vote of the Commission to move forward in exploring the idea and the hiring of people to do this, and them presenting proposals for what type of plan would be needed and how much it would cost to get it done, along with a time frame to get it done. Ms. Hicks stated that she knows other counties throughout the state that have already done zoning and planning, so we're not starting from scratch. Commissioner Screws stated he wanted to simply look at what it would take to get this done, not to vote on it. She said she could try to have some people come in two weeks that could begin talking with the Commissioners about zoning, not have a proposal in two weeks. She could tell them who she's contacted and if they are interested in submitting a proposal. Commissioner Screws stated he would like to have that done. Ms. Hicks stated that there would have to be a Comprehensive Zoning Plan for how zoning will be implemented.

BUSINESS ITEMS:

Chairman Corbett recognized Enforcement Officer, Bill Friend who presented the abatement of property located at 29 Old Opelika Road, Phenix City, Alabama, and requested to be declared by resolution a public nuisance. Commissioner Costello moved to approve the recommendation and begin the abatement process. Seconded by Commissioner Epps. Mr. Friend requested a public hearing to be held on the 28th of September of 2022 at the beginning of the next Commission meeting. Commissioner Costello added this to his motion. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. Motion passed.

Chairman Corbett recognized Sheriff Health Taylor with the request for Commission to send out their annual jail food bids. He requested the Administrator to send them out on September 16th, to be opened at 3 pm ET on September 22nd in the Commission Chambers. Commissioner Epps moved to accept the request. Seconded by Commissioner Chambers. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. Motion passed.

Chairman Corbett recognized Commissioner Epps and Commissioner Lee with project money requests. Commissioner Epps requested to donate \$1,000 of her project money to the Russell County High School Girls Flag Football and donating \$500 to the Russell County Veterans Council. Commissioner Lee requested to contribute \$1,500 to the Phenix City Art Council. Commissioner Costello moved to accept both requests. Seconded by Commissioner Screws. Chairman Corbett stated that this is money from the 2021/2022 fiscal year budget. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. Motion passed.

Chairman Corbett presented the request for repairs to the building next to the Board of Education that is attached to the old Annex Building on 14th Street, across from the Judicial Center. He stated that the Superintendent of Russell County Schools, Dr. Brenda Coley, asked the county to allow them to move over into that space because of the sheer growth they've had and the lack of space they have in the Annex Building. The building needs work to be done on it to be occupied (livable) to include the roof on the building and the HVAC system. Maintenance Director Leon Watson's estimates are \$50,000 for both the roof and HVAC system. This is to be paid from the Capital Improvement Fund. Mr. Watson received an update from the contractor, and if they pull the trigger on it today, it would be 30 days before they could put the roof on it, and he knows Dr. Coley is trying to get in it by December, so they are ready to move on it, if approved today. Mrs. Colbert stated that this is a Public Works Project and would need to be bid. Mr. Watson stated that if the Commission approved this today, he requests to accept bids for the replacement of the roof. Commissioner Lee moved to accept the request for the Board of Education to use the building. Seconded by Commissioner Screws. Chairman Corbett stated that part of the renovation is to fix the front window of the building, as well. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. Motion passed. Commissioner Lee moved to allow the administrator and the maintenance director to send out advertisement for bids, and for the bids to be opened October 14th at 3 pm ET. Seconded by Commissioner Reed.

Chairman Corbett recognized EMA Director David Martin who presented the bid results for the mobile LED lights to be purchased from the CDBG Grant. Mr. Martin stated there were no bids received and he's working with Lee-Russell Council Governments to get 3 quotes and will report back.

Chairman Corbett presented the request to get a new traffic count study on Highway 165. He stated that County Engineer Shawn Blakeney reached out to the state as to what the process would be. Chairman Corbett stated that there will be no cost to the county, but there is a letter and a resolution that has to be approved (that was provided to the Commissioners). Chairman Corbett moved to accept the resolution and to get it sent off to get the traffic study completed. Seconded by Commissioner Chambers. Commissioner Screws clarified, for the minutes, ARPA money does not require a traffic count. Chairman Corbett agreed that ARPA money doesn't require a traffic study, and he asked it to be done for clarification and viability of businesses in the area. 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 Economic Tourism Director Victor Cross who presented the economic development in Hatchechubbee. Mr. Cross presented an application for abatement of taxes for 10 years for Parallel Pines Industries, LTD, Inc.. Commissioner Screws moved to accept the request. Seconded by Commissioner Epps. Commissioner Costello asked if Attorney Hicks has read the agreement. Ms. Hicks said she hasn't seen it. Commissioner Corbett stated that he thinks since it's a legal document that their attorney needs to go over the agreement first. Commissioner Costello moved to postpone the abatement request until they have their attorney to look over the document. Chairman Corbett seconded the motion. 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 to postpone unanimously.

Chairman Corbett presented the request by Mr. Leroy Davis to use the courthouse parking lot for a voter registration event, which he presented at this past Monday night's work session for Sunday, September 25th. Commissioner Screws moved to accept the request. Seconded by Commissioner Costello. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. Motion passed.

Chairman Corbett recognized EMA Director David Martin who presented the EMPG agreement. This is a sub award grant for EMPG from the state in the amount of \$2,337.00. It requires the Chair's signature to receive the funds. Commissioner Lee moved to allow the Chair to sign the documents to be returned by the EMA Director. Seconded by Commissioner Costello. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. Motion passed.

COUNTY ENGINEER:

County Engineer Shawn Blakeney requested to surplus the following equipment that are all in their budget for this coming year. They need to surplus them to get them to auction at the end of September.

- 2015 Massey Ferguson Tractor: Property # 15027 /Asset ID # 350599
- 2016 Tandem Axle Mack Dump Truck: Property # 16003 /Asset ID # 34773
- 2016 Tandem Axle Mack Dump Truck: Property # 16001 /Asset ID # 34772

Commissioner Costello moved to approve the request. Seconded by Commissioner Chambers. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. Motion passed.

SANITATION:

There was nothing presented in the Sanitation area.

ADMINISTRATOR:

County Administrator Paulette Colbert presented the Personnel Review Board appointments that are expiring for District 2, District 3, District 4, District 5, and District 6. The Commissioner's reappointed all of the existing district members. No vote was required.

County Administrator Paulette Colbert presented the request to open an account for Ladonia Pavilion rental funds at Truist Bank. Commissioner Chambers moved to approve the request. Seconded by Commissioner Costello. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. Motion passed.

County Administrator Paulette Colbert presented the Juvenile Department budget increase request for the Professional Services line item. Commissioner Costello moved to level fund the Judicial Department budget with no increase. Seconded by Commissioner Lee. Attorney Hope Hicks stated that legally there is no obligation to fund an increase so you can vote to fund it or not, it's completely the Commission's discretion. 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, no; District 3: Commissioner Costello, yes; District 1: Commissioner Lee, yes; District 2: Commissioner

Chambers, yes; and District 6: Commissioner Corbett, yes. The motion passed 5 to 2. Mrs. Colbert asked the Commission to pay an invoice in the amount of \$16,284 for the cost of salary and fringe benefits for the Juvenile Department employee for the 3rd quarter of fiscal year 2022. If paid, this will be over their current budget. The Commission stated that it is not approved for payment, per the past approved motion.

CORONAVIRUS RESCUE ACT FUND:

County Administrator Paulette Colbert requested payment for an invoice from Ball, Ball, Matthews & Novak for services rendered and expenses incurred in the amount of \$67.50 from the Coronavirus Rescue Act Fund. Commissioner Chambers moved to approve the request. 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, yes; District 2: Commissioner Chambers, yes; and District 6: Commissioner Corbett, yes. The motion passed.

County Administrator Paulette Colbert requested payment for an invoice from Hecht Burdeshaw Architects, Inc. in the amount of \$5,590.75 for architectural services rendered through July 31, 2022 for design contract for the Covid Sheriff EMA building to be paid from the Coronavirus Rescue Act Fund. Commissioner Costello moved to accept the 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, 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 motion passed.

County Administrator Paulette Colbert requested to renew the annual license agreement for Procore for the fiscal year that ends 2023. This is the software used to submit the required treasury reports for the ARPA funds. She said once the agreement is signed and returned to Diversified Computer Services, she should receive an invoice in the amount of \$12,000, and she would also like to request permission to pay this invoice from the Coronavirus Rescue Act Fund. Commissioner Lee moved to approve the 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, 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 motion passed.

Chairman Corbett recognized Sheriff Heath Taylor and EMA Director David Martin who presented the COVID EMA/Sheriff Building bid results. Sheriff Taylor requested the acceptance of the low bid (without any alternatives) from Hosey-Lancour Construction, LLC, and give permission to whomever the Commission deems necessary to value engineer any of the projects in the scope of this project. Attorney Hope Hicks stated she can not answer if ARPA funds can be used because she has not seen any information on this. Commissioner Chambers moved to approve the low bid if it meets the guidelines followed by our attorney (after her reviewing it). Seconded by Commissioner Reed. Attorney Hicks stated that they have previously approved 1.45 million for this project, today would be approving an additional \$650,000, so she said voting to accept this bid, she thinks they need to understand they are approving an additional \$650,000 over what they previously approved. She said if you don't approve the \$650,000, then they can't accept the bid because they've not approved the money. Commissioner Chambers modified his motion to approve up to an additional \$650,000 out of the ARPA money. Attorney Hicks stated since we are trying to be very clear in record keeping for ARPA in all the minutes, she recommends withdrawing the motion and that there be an initial motion to approve \$620,000 or \$650,000 addition for this building, and then a second motion to accept the bid subject to it meeting the ARPA guidelines. Commissioner Chambers agreed to withdraw his motion. Commissioner Chambers moved to approve an additional \$650,000 out of the ARPA funds for this building project. 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, yes; District 2: Commissioner Chambers, yes; and District 6: Commissioner Corbett, yes. The motion passed. Commissioner Chambers moved to accept the low bidder for the building as presented

and upon approval of the attorney that this is a covered expense under ARPA. Seconded by Commissioner Reed. Attorney Hicks stated that this motion being approved is subject to her review and that it meets the ARPA guidelines for expenses. 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 motion passed. Sheriff Taylor asked if it needed to be specified who can be part of the value engineering of the building, because he thinks there might be a little that can be value engineered out. He said obviously Chairman Corbett and Commissioner Chambers would be. Chairman Corbett stated that he thinks any of the Commissioners can be involved in it.

COUNTY ATTORNEY:

Attorney Hope Hicks had nothing to present.

COMMISSIONER DISCUSSION:

Commissioner Epps discussed to set a date for redistricting. Chairman Corbett stated that it has been set for October 25th, with a backup date of November 10th.

Commissioner Reed discussed the American Rescue Act fund non-profit distributions.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Announcements were made.

Commissioner Lee moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Commissioner Chambers. All were in favor by saying aye. Motion passed and the meeting was adjourned.