

**Russell County Commission**  
**Russell County Commission Chambers**  
**Meeting Minutes October 12, 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 Don Abrams with Trinity UMC.

Commissioner Corbett led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

Ms. Emi Brooks with East Alabama Mental Health discussed a Health Fair and drug take back event to be held at the Ft. Mitchell Fire Department.

Mr. Jamie Graham discussed a pill drop box being located at the Judicial Building with a ribbon cutting ceremony to be held October 22, 2022 at 9:30 am with court program graduation to follow.

Mr. Leroy Davis discussed a luncheon to be held in the Commission Chambers on October 28<sup>th</sup> for Wiregrass R C & D.

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 presented the agenda for approval since there was no work session this past Monday night, October 10, 2022 due to holiday closing. Commissioner Lee requested to add Project Fund Expenditure to the agenda. Commissioner Lee moved to approve the agenda with the added item. Seconded by Commissioner Reed. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. Motion passed.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Chairman Corbett asked for approval of the September 28, 2022 Commission meeting minutes. Commissioner Costello moved to approve the meeting minutes. Seconded by Commissioner Chambers. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. Motion passed.

**PROCLAMATIONS, RESOLUTIONS AND PRESENTATIONS:**

Chairman Corbett presented the resolution to support 2 amendments that will be on the general election ballot this year. One is amendment 2 which deals with the ability for the local governments to partner with local internet providers and provide funding for more internet service and capability throughout the counties and rural areas. Amendment 7 is dealing with the ability for the local governments to enforce and have economic development powers without having to go through legislation. This was sent to the Commission from the ACCA. County Administrator Paulette Colbert read the following resolution:

# Russell County Commission RESOLUTION

*WHEREAS, the Russell County Commission stands in favor of Amendment 2 and Amendment 7 to the Alabama Constitution, which will promote broadband expansion and economic development, respectively.*

*WHEREAS, citizens across the state are urged to vote "Yes" on Amendment 2 and Amendment 7 on Election Day, November 8, 2022.*

*WHEREAS, Amendment 2 would authorize state and local governments to use certain public funds to incentivize broadband expansion, most notably in the rural and underserved areas of the state.*

*WHEREAS, Amendment 7 makes several necessary technical changes to local governments' economic development powers—the most important of which is clarifying that all counties may exercise these powers, regardless of whether they also have a local constitutional amendment pertaining to economic development.*

*NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the Russell County Commission that it expresses its resolute support of Amendments 2 and 7 to the Alabama Constitution and any other legislation or policy modeled similarly.*

PASSED, APPROVED and ADOPTED this 12<sup>th</sup> day of October, 2022.

Commissioner Lee moved to approve the resolution. Seconded by Commissioner Costello. Commissioner Lee stated that voting on this does not mean that they are either in favor of or not in favor of any other amendments and that these 2 were recommended by the County Commission Association is why they are being voted on. Chairman Corbett agreed and stated these 2 amendments were pertaining to county government, which he thinks is the reason ACCA sent it out. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. Motion passed.

## **DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

Chairman Corbett recognized Commission Reed who requested an update status of the electric vehicle charging stations from both Commissioner Costello and Maintenance Director Leon Watson. Mr. Watson stated that he has been in contact with Lee-Russell Council of Governments who said ADECA should be making funding announcements in a few weeks, and we should be notified regarding the funding status of the applications.

## **BUSINESS ITEMS:**

Chairman Corbett recognized Commission Reed who presented a donation request for Mother Mary Mission in the amount of \$7,000.00 from his project money. Commissioner Reed moved to approve the request. Seconded by Commissioner Costello. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. Motion passed.

Chairman Corbett recognized Revenue Commissioner Naomi Elliott, who also spoke on behalf of Appraiser Heath Crowe who could not be at the meeting, for both of their departments, to pay E-Ring, Inc. for maintenance and support costs for the 2022 /2023 year in the total amount of \$75,180.00 Breakdown for Mapping and Appraisal is \$56,385.00 and the Revenue Department for \$18,795.00. Chairman Corbett asked if this complied with the bid law. Mrs. Colbert stated that it is a professional service. Commissioner Lee moved to approve the request. Seconded by Commissioner Costello. Commissioner Lee stated, for the record, the \$56,385.00 for Appraisal is shared by different groups. Mrs. Elliott stated that now the State Revenue

Department allows part of the assessment and collections to be paid out of the budget for the appraisal and mapping department. Hers would be more if it was not for that. She stated this is a budgeted item paid on a yearly basis. Chairman Corbett stated that this is a system they currently use, and it is a professional service. Mrs. Elliott agreed. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. Motion passed.

Chairman Corbett recognized Motor Vehicle License Commissioner Carrie Bowman who requested to pay the S&W maintenance fees and support for the 2022 /2023 year in the amount of \$32,671.80, which is paid every year. Commissioner Chambers moved to approve the request. Seconded by Commissioner Reed. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. Motion passed.

Chairman Corbett recognized Sheriff Heath Taylor with a request for approval of an Alcoholic Beverage Control off-premises license application for Family Dollar in Seale. He stated that they have done their investigations and had no reason to deny it. Commissioner Screws moved to approve the request. Seconded by Commissioner Lee. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. Motion passed. Sheriff Taylor stated that historically the Commission would not approve off-premises license, but would only approve on-premises businesses that want to sell alcohol, and this is an off-premises business. He stated that a new lady at the state stated otherwise, and he didn't know if the state would continue to do this, but he wanted to go by what they requested them to approve.

Chairman Corbett recognized Sheriff Heath Taylor who presented the results of the jail food and paper products and cleaning supplies bid. He asked the Commission to accept the bid from Columbus Paper, who was the low bidder for the paper products and cleaning supplies. He asked the Commission to allow the administrator to accept Columbus Paper Company bid, along with Merchants Food Service for the Jail food, being the only bidder, at \$2.80 per inmate, per day. Commissioner Lee moved to accept the request. Seconded by Commissioner Reed. Sheriff Taylor stated that these are bid for a year, and it's bid every year. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. Motion passed.

Chairman Corbett recognized Commissioner Lee who presented a request to give \$2,000.00 of his project money to the Seale Voluntary Fire Department. Commissioner Lee moved to accept the request. Seconded by Commissioner Reed. Chairman Corbett stated he wanted to also make a donation. Commissioner Lee amended his motion. Commissioner Lee then moved to request a donation of \$2,000.00 from his project money and \$2,000.00 from Chairman Corbett's project money, totaling \$4,000 to the Seale Voluntary Fire Department. Seconded by Commissioner Reed. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. Motion passed.

#### **COUNTY ENGINEER:**

County Engineer Shawn Blakeney discussed the lighting for the Ladonia Sports Complex requested by Commissioner Chambers. Commissioner Lee asked Attorney Hicks if the ARPA money could be used for lighting. After further discussion, Ms. Hicks stated that initially it couldn't be covered. She stated that the regulations were changed, and she needs to see if there is a way to justify it under the new guidelines. Commissioner Epps suggested applying for grants first to see if any are available for this. Mr. Blakeney stated he has touched base with several granting opportunities for funding on it.

#### **SANITATION:**

Nothing was presented in the Sanitation area.

#### **ADMINISTRATOR:**

County Administrator Paulette Colbert had nothing to present in this area.

#### **CORONAVIRUS RESCUE ACT FUND:**

Chairman Corbett recognized Commissioner Screws who requested to take the remaining 2017 Warrant money from the old library (old post office building funds) and use it towards the construction of the new EMA/Sheriff building and re-direct the ARPA funds in that same amount to go to non-profit organizations.

Commissioner Screws moved to accept this request. Seconded by Commissioner Reed. After much discussion, Chairman Corbett re-stated the motion. Commissioner Screws agreed to just basically swap the money. County Administrator Paulette Colbert called vote of the Commission as follows: District 4: Commissioner Reed, abstained; District 7: Commissioner Screws, yes; District 5: Commissioner Epps, yes; District 3: Commissioner Costello, no; District 1: Commissioner Lee, no; District 2: Commissioner Chambers, no; and District 6: Commissioner Corbett, no. The motion failed: 4 to 2, with one abstention.

**COUNTY ATTORNEY:**

Attorney Hope Hicks updated the Commission on the project with the Board of Education and zoning per Commissioner Screws' request.

**COMMISSIONER DISCUSSION:**

Chairman Corbett discussed scheduling an APRA Funding meeting. Commissioner Lee moved to have the meeting on December 14, 2022, directly after the Commission meeting. Seconded by Commissioner Reed. Chairman Corbett stated that it will be an open meeting for anyone to attend. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. Motion passed.

Chairman Corbett discussed a groundbreaking ceremony for the EMA /Sheriff building after the meeting today.

Chairman Corbett discussed the Veteran's Memorial project on Silver Run Road.

Chairman Corbett discussed holiday decorating projects at the Old Seale Courthouse.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

Announcements were made.

Commissioner Lee moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Commissioner Costello. All were in favor by saying aye. The meeting was adjourned.