

**Russell County Commission
Russell County Commission Chambers
Meeting Minutes November 9, 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 Lee led the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Mr. Lance Dement with Jaeger Pros representing Hog Control Systems, Southern Hog Control and Killing Time Outfitters spoke about the removal of feral hogs in the Russell County area.

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 Monday night work session on November 7, 2022.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Chairman Corbett asked for approval of the October 26, 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 Proclamation for the 2022 Alabama Farm-City Week. County Administrator Paulette Colbert read the following proclamation:

**Russell County Commission
PROCLAMATION
Alabama Farm-City Week 2022**

For nearly 65 years, the American people have joined together during Thanksgiving week to observe Farm-City Week, a time set aside to express gratitude for the bounty with which God has blessed our land. Throughout the week, Americans recognize the hard work and achievements of the farmers, rural townspeople, and city residents who make our nation's agricultural production and distribution system so successful. This cooperation between rural and city dwellers for mutual benefit truly helps to ensure our country's well-being.

America's farmers have provided nutritious food and fiber to sustain our people through many decades of progress. Farmers' productivity has increased steadily, thanks largely to their initiative in supporting and adopting science-based methods and materials. Because of this productivity, American farmers are able to meet the needs of our nation and a growing world.

American agriculture--and the many service industries that depend upon it--is a story of extraordinary labor creating extraordinary abundance. The American farmer has an impact on every aspect of life, from big cities to small towns and all of the routes in between. At this time of year, it is only fitting that all Americans offer a special sign of thanks to those who grow, harvest, and bring the fruits of sun, seed, and soil to our nation's tables.

NOW, THEREFORE, we, The Russell County Commission by virtue of the authority vested in us do hereby, proclaim the week of November 18 through November 24, 2022, as Alabama Farm-City Week. I call upon all citizens in rural and cities alike to join in recognizing the accomplishments of our productive farmers and of our urban residents, who cooperate to create abundance, wealth, and strength for our Nation.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, we have hereunto set our hand this 9th day of November in the year of our Lord two thousand twenty-two.

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

Chairman Corbett recognized Commissioner Reed who requested Mrs. Colbert research and prepare a proclamation for J.W. Brannen to be brought before the Commission at a later time. Commissioner Reed moved to approve the request. Seconded by Commissioner Screws. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. Motion passed.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

Chairman Corbett spoke about EMA Director David Martin updating the Commission on the construction of the new Public Safety Logistics Building (EMA/Sheriff Covid Building) at Monday night's work session.

Chairman Corbett spoke about the proposed bike trail, from Monday night's work session, where Daniel Wyatt from Lee-Russell Council of Governments presented detailed information.

BUSINESS ITEMS:

Chairman Corbett recognized Sheriff Heath Taylor who presented a request to surplus the following vehicles and request the Administrator to advertise the sale to be on govdeals.com. He stated the proceeds of 3 would go to the Commission, and 3 would go to the Sheriff's discretionary fund:

<u>Vehicle #</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>VIN</u>	<u>Titled to</u>
Vehicle #696-	2004 White Ford Explorer	VIN: 1FMZU62K24UA84510	- Commission
Vehicle #711-	2005 White Ford Crown Vic.	VIN: 2FAFP71WXSX128455	- Commission
Vehicle #728-	2008 White Ford F150 PU	VIN: 1FTRX12W38KC86680	- Commission
Vehicle #71-	2006 White Ford F150 PU	VIN: 1FTRX12W26NB18265	- Discretionary
Vehicle #727-	2005 Black Ford Explorer	VIN: 1FMZU62K35UB38186	- Discretionary
Vehicle #801-	1999 Gray GMC Yukon	VIN: 1GKEC13R3XJ806503	- Discretionary

Commissioner Lee moved to accept the request. Seconded by Commissioner Reed. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. Motion passed.

Chairman Corbett recognized Sheriff Heath Taylor who presented a salary schedule amendment. Sheriff Taylor stated that he is having issues with filling the 2 part-time Communication Officer (Dispatcher) positions. He requested to merge them into one full-time position. He stated he would not need to request a budget amendment due to this being a reduction. Commissioner Epps moved to accept the recommendation. Seconded by Commissioner Reed. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. Motion passed.

Chairman Corbett recognized EMA Director David Martin with the request of future plans of existing buildings and contents on property adjacent to construction of the EMA/Sheriff COVID Building. Chairman Corbett stated that County Engineer Shawn Blakeney received 2 quotes for removing the buildings along with the trees. Mrs. Colbert stated there should be funds available in Public Building Road and Bridge Fund Other Professional Services. Chairman Corbett moved to approve the lower quote of \$7,500 (from contractor Rod Watson) to remove the buildings and to dispose of the items needed. Chairman Corbett stated that since it falls within the \$15,000 pricing, it does not need to be bid out and requested the engineer oversee the project. Seconded by Commissioner Costello. 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 EMA Director David Martin with the approval request to surplus and destroy 10-12 years old computer equipment in their current Logistics Building. Commissioner Lee moved to approve the request. Seconded by Commissioner Chambers. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. Motion passed.

Chairman Corbett recognized Commissioner Screws with two project funds requests. Commissioner Screws requested to donate \$500 to the Seale Volunteer Fire Department and \$500 to the Phenix City Art Council. Commissioner Screws moved to accept the request. Seconded by Commissioner Reed. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. Motion passed.

Chairman Corbett presented the request to name the new EMA/Sheriff building, which is the new logistical building construction site spoken about earlier in this meeting on Prentiss Drive. He spoke with Attorney Hicks to verify that the word COVID did not have to be in the name. It was also asked if we could name the building while it is still under construction, and still paying for it under the ARPA Funds. Attorney Hicks stated that she didn't think there would be a problem. The building working project name can continue to stay as it is, but the Commission can choose the official name. Chairman Corbett stated the name was proposed as the Russell County Public Safety Logistics Building that both the Sheriff and EMA Director agreed with. Commissioner Costello moved to approve the name request. Seconded by Commissioner Reed. Commissioner Lee clarified that the project name is still just like it was on the bills that have been paid so far. That will not change. Chairman Corbett agreed and stated that any signage, addressing or anything else will be under the new name. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. Motion passed.

COUNTY ENGINEER:

County Engineer Shawn Blakeney had nothing to present in this area.

SANITATION:

Sanitation Director Ward Dudley presented the request to purchase 500 new garbage cans through the SourceWell Purchasing State bid for \$32,890.95, and the vendor stated they should possibly be here sometime shortly after the 1st of the year. Commissioner Lee moved to approve the request. Seconded by Commissioner Chambers. Chairman Corbett discussed that these cans would replace some cans that have been damaged over time from the first rounds, and to also help Sanitation increase their inventory for new customers, as well. Also, it has already been approved by the Sanitation Board and is within their budget. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. Motion passed.

Sanitation Director Ward Dudley presented the request to bid out dumpsters. He stated that the same vendor he spoke about purchasing the new trash cans stated that they also have the dumpsters on SourceWell, so bidding them out is not a necessity anymore. Mr. Dudley stated that he's waiting on a quote from them and hopefully the next meeting he will have a request to purchase the dumpsters. He

stated that this is a budgeted item. Commissioner Costello moved to postpone this agenda item. Seconded by Commissioner Chambers. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. Motion passed.

ADMINISTRATOR:

County Administrator Paulette Colbert requested approval of the Forever Wild Land Trust Funds. The FWLT is providing funding to each county commission where Forever Wild owns land. Forever Wild owns 4,735 acres of land in Russell County which are exempt from property taxes. They will pay Russell County \$7,576.00 for fiscal year 2023, which does not represent a property tax payment, but is a reasonable fee paid to the county commission to accomplish the goals of Forever Wild, including but not limited to the support, promotion, protection, and conservations of such lands within the county. The ACCA notified Mrs. Colbert that they see no reason why the County Commission should not accept these funds, so she requested the Commission to approve the chair to sign the required documents to receive these funds, which includes a Memorandum of Understanding, a resolution, and an invoice. Commissioner Epps moved to accept the recommendation. Seconded by Commissioner Reed. Attorney Hicks stated that Mrs. Colbert sent her this information yesterday to look over, and she stated this will not give the Forever Wild Land Trust any ability to acquire any land that they don't have. Attorney Hicks thinks the Commission should go ahead and approve this, but she has talked to one of the attorneys for the Department of Conservation and she is running it further up the chain of command to give us information on how this money can be spent. She wants to know if it's general state laws or is there something specific with this before we start spending the funds. Commissioner Epps moved to amend the motion to allow the attorney to guide us through what the funds can be used on. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. Motion passed.

County Administrator Paulette Colbert presented the request of the appointment of the Department of Human Resources. She stated that Ms. Peggy Martin's appointment is expiring December 14, 2022. She has spoken with Ms. Martin, and she is willing to continue to serve on the board, if it's the Commission's pleasure. Commissioner Lee 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 request for the holiday in lieu of Mardi Gras. Mrs. Colbert stated that Governor Ivey has added Friday, November 25, 2022 as an additional holiday for Thanksgiving and Monday, January 2, 2023 for the New Year's Day but she did not grant any additional days for Christmas. Mrs. Colbert requested to designate Friday, December 23, 2022 in lieu of the floating Mardi Gras holiday. Commissioner Reed moved to accept the request. Seconded by Commissioner Chambers. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. Motion passed.

HUMAN RESOURCES:

Human Resources information was in Commissioner's packets.

CORONAVIRUS RESCUE ACT FUND:

County Administrator Paulette Colbert requested to pay an invoice in the amount of \$55,654.92 to Hosey-Lancour Construction LLC for work on the construction of the new building at 403 Prentiss Drive, listed as project RCSO – Covid Supply Storage Building to be paid from the Coronavirus Rescue Act Fund. Commissioner Costello moved to accept 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 ATTORNEY:

Attorney Hope Hicks updated the Commission on the Pittsview property. After further discussion, she stated that we may need to hire an abstractor to survey this, and she asked the Commission to vote to approve an abstractor, if necessary, so we don't have to wait 2 more weeks to move forward with it. Commissioner Screws moved to approve the abstractor for the Pittsview project. Seconded by Commissioner Epps. Commissioner Lee wanted to verify where this would be paid from for the minutes. Attorney Hicks stated that this would be a Professional Service and wouldn't require any sort of bid. There was not an estimate amount for the service yet. It would be determined by what Mrs. Elliott could find in

her records to see if we could get to that stage. If needed, the administrator is to come back to the Commission for approval of the payment for the abstractor services. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. Motion passed to proceed with that portion of the project.

Attorney Hicks presented the request for an Executive Session, and she stated that the purpose of the Executive Session would be to discuss with your attorney the legal ramifications of, and legal options for pending litigation, controversies not yet being litigated, but imminently likely to be litigated or imminently likely to be litigated if the governmental body pursues a proposed course of action. She stated that this is an acceptable reason under the Executive Session Laws for the State of Alabama Open Meetings Act. Commissioner Costello moved to go into an Executive Session. Seconded by Commissioner Epps. Attorney Hick stated the Commission will not need to take action after the meeting, and that they can adjourn from the Executive Session. All Commissioners were in favor by saying aye. Motion passed.

COMMISSIONER DISCUSSION:

Chairman Corbett discussed and thanked those who were a part of yesterday's election in our county.

Chairman Corbett shared Ms. Peggy Martin's award nomination for the CVCC Foundation Board. The award is for distinguished service and shared the dinner information for any Commissioner's to attend.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Announcements were made.

The Commissioners did not return and was adjourned from executive session.