

Russell County Commission
Russell County Commission Chambers
Meeting Minutes April 12, 2023
9:30 A.M. EST

An adjourned meeting of the Russell County Commission was called to order by Chair Rod Costello.

The invocation was given by Reverend Brad Hamby with Restoration House.

Chairman Reed led the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Mr. Harry Williams spoke of the drug take back event to be held on April 15th at the Crawford Walking Trail from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm ET.

Mr. Leroy Davis spoke of the Health & Wellness Fair to be held on April 29th from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm ET in front of Russell County High School football field.

Chair Costello 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 Gentry Lee, Commissioner Cattie Epps, Commissioner Chance Corbett, Commissioner Scott Chambers, Commissioner Ronnie Reed, Commissioner Larry Screws, and Chair Rod Costello. Also present were County Attorney Hope Hicks, and County Administrator Paulette Colbert who kept the minutes.

A quorum was established by the County Administrator Paulette Colbert.

Chair Costello stated the agenda was approved in the work session on Monday, April 10, 2023.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Chair Costello requested approval of the minutes from Commission meeting on March 22, 2023. Commissioner Lee moved to approve the minutes. Seconded by Commissioner Chambers. All Commissioners in favor said aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

PROCLAMATIONS, RESOLUTIONS AND PRESENTATIONS:

A proclamation was presented to Lisa Sandt with Lee-Russell Council of Governments for Fair Housing Month. She stated this is a requirement due to the County receiving the CDBG-CV grant funds. Commissioner Lee moved; Commissioner Reed seconded to approve the proclamation. All Commissioners in favor said aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

There were no discussion items.

BUSINESS ITEMS:

Chair Costello recognized Commissioner Screws who moved to approve soliciting bids for land clearing and buildings security for the Pittsview project. Commissioner Corbett seconded the motion. All Commissioners in favor said aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

Lisa Sandt with Lee-Russell Council of Governments stated another requirement of the CDBG-CV grant is to hold a public hearing on Fair Housing. She requested the public hearing be held on April 26, 2023 at 9:30 am ET in the Commission Chambers immediately preceding the regular Commission meeting. Commissioner Lee moved; seconded by Commissioner Chambers to approve the request. All Commissioners in favor said aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

Lisa Sandt with Lee-Russell Council of Governments notified the Commission of two grant opportunities for electric vehicle charging infrastructure. One through ADECA and the other a Community Grant. Both would require a twenty percent local match. Chair Costello moved; Commissioner Corbett seconded to approve moving forward with making application for the grant through ADECA and Commissioner Lee moved; Commissioner Reed seconded to approve moving forward with the Community Grant and to allow the Chair to sign any needed documentation. All Commissioners in favor said aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

David Martin, Emergency Management Director presented the Courthouse Emergency Plan for approval. Commissioner Screws moved; Commissioner Corbett seconded to approve the plan as presented. All Commissioners in favor said aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

Commissioner Reed requested to allocate \$1,250.00 and Chair Costello requested to allocate \$500.00 of their project funds to the Mayor's Education & Charity Ball. Commissioner Reed moved; Commissioner Corbett seconded to approve the requests. All Commissioners in favor said aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

Commissioner Reed requested to allocate the remaining balance of \$1,250.00 of his project funds to Safe Landing for Veterans. Commissioner Reed moved; Commissioner Epps seconded his request. All Commissioners in favor said aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

Ms. Brindlea Griffin, Chair, Russell County Board of Registrars presented a request for the Commission to participate in the GIS program offered by the Secretary of State's office. Commissioner Corbett moved; Commissioner Chambers seconded to allow the Chair to sign the contract with the Secretary of State for GIS services for the Russell County Board of Registrars. All Commissioners in favor said aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

Commissioner Epps moved; Commissioner Reed seconded adding a voting precinct to be located at the Mt. Olive/Sunderland Volunteer Fire Department in Commission District number 5. County Administrator Paulette Colbert took a roll call vote of the Commission as follows: District 1: Commissioner Lee, yes; District 5: Commissioner Epps, yes; District 6: Commissioner Corbett, yes; District 2: Commissioner Chambers, yes; District 4: Commissioner Reed, yes; District 7: Commissioner Screws, yes; and District 3: Chair Costello, yes. Motion carried unanimously.

COUNTY ENGINEER:

County Engineer Shawn Blakeney requested soliciting annual bids to be opened in the Commission Chambers on May 18, 2023 at 2:30 pm ET for the following:

Bid Number 001-23 STRIPING AND MARKING
 BID NUMBER 002-23 LIQUID ASPHALT
 BID NUMBER 004A-23 BITUMINOUS PAVING (PUBLIC WORKS BID)
 BID NUMBER 005-23 GRASSING
 BID NUMBER 006-23 CORRUGATE STEEL AND HDPE PIPE
 BID NUMBER 007-23 AGGREGATE
 BID NUMBER 008-23 CONCRETE PIPE
 BID NUMBER 009-23 TRUCKING HAULING
 BID NUMBER 010-23 MOTOR GRADER BLADES
 BID NUMBER 014-23 FENCING

Commissioner Corbett moved; Commissioner Chambers seconded the request. All Commissioners in favor said aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

County Engineer Shawn Blakeney requested soliciting bids for Gammage Road, which is a FAEF project through the ACCA website. Commissioner Screws moved; Commissioner Epps seconded the request. All Commissioners in favor said aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

SANITATION:

Sanitation Director Ward Dudley had nothing to present.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

Economic Development and Tourism Director Victor Cross requested a twenty-year property and sales and use tax abatement for Leeward Energy for a Solar Farm Project. He stated that if approved they would pay the County Commission in lieu of taxes an amount of \$2,500.00 per year for twenty years. He also stated that if approved all documentation would go through the County Attorney before submittal. Commissioner Reed moved; Commissioner Epps seconded to approve the tax abatement. County Administrator Paulette Colbert took a roll call vote of the Commission as follows: District 1: Commissioner Lee, no; District 5: Commissioner Epps, yes; District 6: Commissioner Corbett, yes; District 2: Commissioner Chambers, no; District 4: Commissioner Reed, yes; District 7: Commissioner Screws, yes; and District 3: Chair Costello, yes. Motion carried five yes and two no votes.

ADMINISTRATOR:

County Administrator Paulette Colbert presented the Russell County Department of Resources Board appointments. Commissioner Lee moved; Commissioner Corbett seconded to re-appoint Reverend Bradford McDaniel. All Commissioners in favor said aye. None opposed. Motion carried. Commissioner Corbett moved; Commissioner Chambers seconded to appoint Ms. Pat Waldrop to complete the term of Ms. Alice Daniel who resigned in January 2023. All Commissioners in favor said aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

County Administrator Paulette Colbert spoke of a certificate of deposit that was not renewed in 2020 and would like to re-invest these funds. She requested to purchase a certificate of deposit with General Fund money in the amount of \$1,100,000.00 at a local bank with the highest quoted rate. Commissioner Corbett moved; Commissioner Screws seconded to approve the request. All Commissioners in favor said aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

CORONAVIRUS RESCUE ACT FUND:

Commissioner Corbett recognized representatives from Freedom Farm Crossroad, Inc. with a request for funding from the County's share of the American Rescue Plan funds. Attorney Hope Hicks stated that this is an eligible use of ARPA funds. Commissioner Corbett moved; Commissioner Chambers seconded to approve \$60,000.00 be paid to Freedom Farm Crossroad, Inc. from the Coronavirus Rescue Act Fund. County Administrator Paulette Colbert took a roll call vote of the Commission as follows: District 1: Commissioner Lee, yes; District 5: Commissioner Epps, yes; District 6: Commissioner Corbett, yes; District 2: Commissioner Chambers, yes; District 4: Commissioner Reed, yes; District 7: Commissioner Screws, yes; and District 3: Chairman Costello, yes. Motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Corbett requested soliciting bids for a pavilion in Crawford to be opened in the Commission Chambers on May 19, 2023 at 3:00 pm ET. Commissioner Corbett moved; Commissioner Chambers seconded to approve the request. County Administrator Paulette Colbert took a roll call vote of the Commission as follows: District 1: Commissioner Lee, yes; District 5: Commissioner Epps, yes; District 6: Commissioner Corbett, yes; District 2: Commissioner Chambers, yes; District 4: Commissioner Reed, yes; District 7: Commissioner Screws, yes; and District 3: Chairman Costello, yes. Motion passed unanimously.

County Engineer, Shawn Blakeney requested soliciting bids for installation of lighting at the Ladonia Park to be opened in the Commission Chambers on June 6, 2023 at 3:00 pm ET. Commissioner Lee moved; Commissioner Corbett seconded to approve the request. County Administrator Paulette Colbert took a roll call vote of the Commission as follows: District 1: Commissioner Lee, yes; District 5: Commissioner Epps, yes; District 6: Commissioner Corbett, yes; District 2: Commissioner Chambers, yes; District 4: Commissioner Reed, yes; District 7: Commissioner Screws, yes; and District 3: Chairman Costello, yes. Motion passed unanimously.

COUNTY ATTORNEY:

Attorney Hope Hicks had nothing to present.

COMMISSIONER DISCUSSION:

Commissioner Reed discussed that Mr. Leroy Davis work with Freedom Farm Crossroad, Inc. for possible grants.

Commissioner Corbett discussed the need for IT improvements to be made in the Chambers for making presentations easier and correcting the sound system feedback.

Commissioner Epps discussed the LED sign in Ft. Mitchell and was told by Mr. Watson that it should be up and running in approximately three weeks. She also discussed budgeting for a flagpole.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Announcements were made.

There being no further business, Commissioner Epps moved; Commissioner Reed seconded to adjourn the meeting.