

**Russell County Commission  
Russell County Commission Chambers  
Meeting Minutes August 9, 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 Mr. Wash Williams.

Commissioner Lee led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

Mr. Leroy Davis spoke about grants from Wiregrass RC&D and updated the Commission on the Pittsview project.

Jennifer Davidson, County Coordinator with the Alabama Cooperative Extension office in Russell County, shared highlights along with annual updates with the Commission.

Russell County High School football coach Dillion Griggs shared his appreciation for donations from the Commission and spoke of the areas it helps in the schools and asked for a minimum of \$2,500 sponsorship from this upcoming year budget.

Chair Costello thanked the Commission's IT department for broadcasting the meeting Facebook live for the public, 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, August 7, 2023 and requested adding under Engineer, Federal Aid Agreement, and under the Business Items, appropriation for Commissioner Epps and appropriation for himself. Commissioner Corbett moved to add the 3 items to the agenda. Seconded by Commissioner Reed. All Commissioners were in favor and said aye. None opposed. Motion carried to approve the agenda with the additions.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Chair Costello requested approval of the minutes from Commission meeting on July 26, 2023. Commissioner Epps moved; Seconded by Commissioner Chambers. Commissioner Corbett abstained since he was not present in the July 26<sup>th</sup> meeting because he was at a conference. All Commissioners were in favor and said aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

**PROCLAMATIONS, RESOLUTIONS AND PRESENTATIONS:**

Commissioner Reed requested for a proclamation to be created for Mr. James Sellers and to be presented in the Commission meeting on September 13, 2023. Commissioner Reed moved to approve the request; seconded by Commissioner Screws. All Commissioners were in favor and said aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

**DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

There were no discussion items.

**BUSINESS ITEMS:**

Chairman Costello recognized Special Enforcement Officer Bill Friend who requested an abatement for clean-up on 58 Old Crawford Road and requested a public hearing at the next Commission meeting on September 13, 2023 at 9:30 am. Mr. Friend presented it as a public nuisance complaint that was opened February 24<sup>th</sup>. The owner knows it is being abated and does not want to pay to clean it up but wants to keep the property. Commissioner Chambers moved to approve the request. Seconded by Commissioner Screws. All Commissioners were in favor and said aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

Chairman Costello recognized Special Enforcement Officer Bill Friend who requested a salary adjustment from \$34,000 to \$37,000 for his position since the state retirement system raised the limit last year and he did not change his budget. The funds are currently in his budget. Commissioner Screws moved to approve the request; seconded by Commissioner Corbett. All Commissioners were in favor and said aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

Chairman Costello recognized Commissioner Corbett who stated that a tourism grant had been awarded for an event to be held in Crawford for the tentative date of September 16, 2023, which it might be moved due to heat outside (state granted authority to do so). He requested and moved approval to sign the agreement for the \$3,900 tourism grant. Commissioner Corbett stated that it has his name on it, but any Commissioner can sign it with the permission of the Commission. Commissioner Lee seconded the request. Chairman Costello stated that this is a no match grant straight from the state. All Commissioners were in favor and said aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

Chairman Costello recognized Commissioner Epps who presented and moved a request to contribute \$4,000 of her appropriation money to the 50/50 NAACP scholarship fund. Seconded by Commissioner Screws. All Commissioners were in favor and said aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

Chairman Costello presented and moved a request to contribute \$2,450 of his remaining appropriation funds to go to the Russell County football organization as a sponsorship from the entire Russell County Commission. Seconded by Commissioner Reed. All Commissioners were in favor and said aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

**COUNTY ENGINEER:**

Chair Costello recognized County Engineer Shawn Blakeney who requested to send the award of the Federal Aid Agreement MPO Owens Road /McClendon Road project to East Alabama Paving. Commissioner Lee moved to accept the award request. Seconded by Commissioner Corbett. All Commissioners were in favor and said aye. None opposed. Motion carried. Mr. Blakeney also stated that there is a funding agreement that needs to be signed. The overall project cost \$645,346.84 with the county's portion is \$104,074.92, which is a budgeted line item. Commissioner Corbett moved to accept the request to sign the funding agreement; seconded by Commissioner Chambers. All Commissioners were in favor and said aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

Chair Costello recognized County Engineer Shawn Blakeney who requested budget transfer requests as follows:

➤ **Budget Transfer Request:**

- Increase Line Item No. 211 Office Supplies \$2,000.00
- Increase Line Item No. 214 Minor Equipment \$10,000.00
- Increase Line Item No. 219 Misc Supplies \$100.00
- Increase Line Item No. 251 Telephone \$7,000.00
- Increase Line Item No. 550 Motor Vehicle \$19,051.00
- Increase Line Item No. 272 Insurance for Equipment \$34,000
- Decrease Line Item 113 Salaries & Wages \$38,151
- Decrease Line Item 212 Fuel and Lubricant \$34,000


Commissioner Lee moved to approve the request; seconded by Commissioner Screws. All Commissioners were in favor and said aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

Chair Costello recognized County Engineer Shawn Blakeney who requested to purchase 2 pickup trucks as follows:

- Purchase 2 Pickup Trucks from ALDOT Surplus
  - 2016 Dodge Ram 1500 for \$20,566.00 with 81,992 miles
  - 2017 Ford F150 for \$28,485.00 with 32,770 miles


Commissioner Screws moved to approve the request; seconded by Commissioner Epps. All Commissioners were in favor and said aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

Chair Costello recognized County Engineer Shawn Blakeney who presented the FY 2024 County Transportation Plan that is a part of the new Gas Tax Law agreement as follows:



**FY 2024 County Transportation Plan**  
**Russell County**

Date Approved by the Russell County Commission: **August 9, 2023**  
 Date Amended by the Russell County Commission: **(If Applicable)**



Map Title	Project Title	Road Number	Miles			Road Improvement Project			Project Length (Miles)	Description of Work	Total Project Estimated Cost	Estimated Amount To Be Obligated Under Competitive Bid	Estimated Amount To Be Obligated Under Public Works	Competition/Agency Fees or Other All Other Fees Separable to Project (and 4579)	CM&F Amount	FA&F Amount
			LC	Long	Lat	Long	Project	Improvement								
Estimated Budget Balance																
Estimated Annual Revenue																
1	04-027-01-001-01	Public Road	30.1403	45.3277	27.2228	48.3175	X	2.29	Rehabilitate and Improve	\$170,000.00			CM&F	\$170,000.00		
2	04-027-01-001-04	Open Road	32.4171	44.5181	32.6283	48.1167	X	1.30	Rehabilitate and Improve (from Repaired Road)	\$40,100.00			CM&F	\$40,100.00		
3	04-027-01-001-04	Public Road	32.2025	43.3716	32.2039	46.4280	X	1.74	Rehabilitate and Improve (from Repaired Road)	\$104,000.00			CM&F	\$104,000.00		
4	04-027-01-001-04	Open Road	32.2994	46.6586	32.3441	44.9702	X	1.58	Rehabilitate and Improve (from Repaired Road)	\$175,000.00			CM&F	\$175,000.00		
5	04-027-01-001-04	Open Road	32.2277	46.2046	32.2948	43.1011	X	1.19	Rehabilitate and Improve (from Repaired Road)	\$118,800.00			CM&F	\$118,800.00		
6	04-027-01-001-04	Water Road	32.2060	46.2087	32.2028	43.3418	X	3.61	Rehabilitate and Improve (from Repaired Road)	\$214,900.00			CM&F	\$214,900.00		
7	04-027-01-001-04	Repaired Road	32.4231	44.8387	32.4893	45.0447	X	3.13	Rehabilitate and Improve (from Repaired Road)	\$59,000.00			FA&F	\$59,000.00		
<b>Total/FY's Total</b>																
			Total Miles Amended in CIP						Total CIP Estimated Cost							
			(Total Miles Amended from Individual Maps Multiplied)						\$4,103,841.00							
						\$0.00						\$1.00				
						\$0.00						\$42,751.00				
						\$281,800.00						\$42,751.00				
						\$20,450.00						\$42,751.00				

Notes: Any amendments to the CIP and/or other items to be carried forward and processed as the regular agenda process.

Remarks:

CIP# 04-027-01-001-04

Commissioner Corbett moved to approve the request; seconded by Commissioner Screws. All Commissioners were in favor and said aye. None opposed. Motion carried. Mr. Blakeney stated it only needs approval and not to be signed.

Chair Costello recognized County Engineer Shawn Blakeney who requested (under Parks and Recreation) the following budget transfer request:

**Park & Recreation Items:**

- Budget Transfer
  - Increase Line Item No. 121 Retirement \$3,000.00
  - Decrease Line Item No. 212 Fuel and Lubricant \$3,000.00

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

**SANITATION:**

The Sanitation Department Director had nothing to present.

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:**

The Economic Development Director had nothing to present.

**ADMINISTRATOR:**

The County Administrator had nothing to present.

**CORONAVIRUS RESCUE ACT FUND:**

Chair Costello recognized County Engineer Shawn Blakeney with the Pittsview School project bid awarding request to go to Roger's Grading, LLC in the amount of \$219,000. Commissioner Screws moved to accept the bid request to clear the property on the Pittsview Walking Trail site and it to be paid out of the Coronavirus Rescue Act Fund; seconded by Commissioner Reed. Attorney Hope Hicks stated that this is an approved expense. 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.

County Administrator Paulette Colbert, due to there not being another Commission meeting at the end of this month, she requested to pay any routine monthly invoices from services provided from the Coronavirus Rescue Act Fund. She stated that she will email a copy to the Commission with any invoices she receives. Motion to approve by Commissioner Lee; Seconded by Commissioner Screws. 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.

**ATTORNEY:**

There was nothing presented in this area.

**COMMISSIONER DISCUSSION:**

Commissioner Corbett shared his appreciation for the Crawford Community Center storm cleanup. He also spoke about streamlining policies for better future reference, along with checking on an electronic meeting policy in September, with the help from the attorney. He updated the Commission with the Seale Veterans Memorial and planning to do the dedication on this Veterans Day, November 11th.

Commissioner Reed spoke with Economic Director Victor Cross about funds for a statue for Harvey Glance from the Tourism funds. Commissioner Corbett shared the reminder that the Commission approved that all historic marker requests would go through the Historical Commission since they have the initial approval on it.

Commissioner Reed spoke about the courthouse vending machines. It will be covered in next month's meeting after further research.

Chairman Costello recognized EMA Director David Martin who shared updates on their go bags purchases, along with sharing appreciation to different departments with storm cleanup from the night before around the county.

Chairman Costello spoke about receiving information yesterday on the DCIP Grant in Fort Mitchell, and that we were not invited to apply further so we will not be a part of the consideration for this federal grant this year.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

Announcements were made.

There being no further business, Commissioner Corbett moved to adjourn the meeting; Commissioner Screws seconded. All Commissioners were in favor and said aye. None opposed. The meeting was adjourned.