

**Russell County Commission
Meeting Minutes November 8, 2023
Russell County Commission Chambers
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 Dr. Reverend Warren with AME Church.

Commissioner Screws led the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Ms. Eddream Lawrence spoke about the J.O.Y. Behind Bars programs.

Mr. Sheppard Dearing with the Russell County Water Authority updated the Commission about the donated funds project for replacing county water lines under paved roads, especially lines that are hard to get to in the event of an emergency. Mr. Dearing will get with the County Engineer for further directions.

Chair Costello thanked the Commission's IT department for broadcasting the meeting on Facebook live for the public, and The Citizen of East Alabama for covering the meeting. 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.

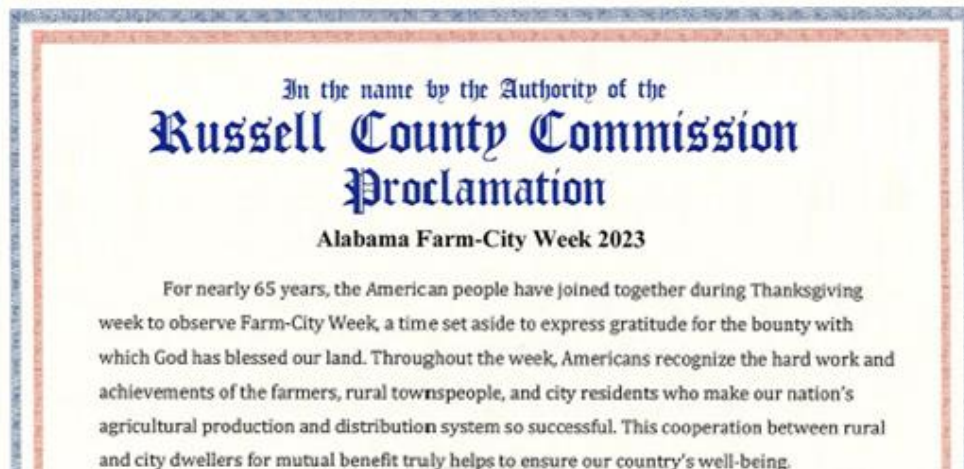
Chair Costello stated that the agenda was approved at the work session Monday night, November 6, 2023.

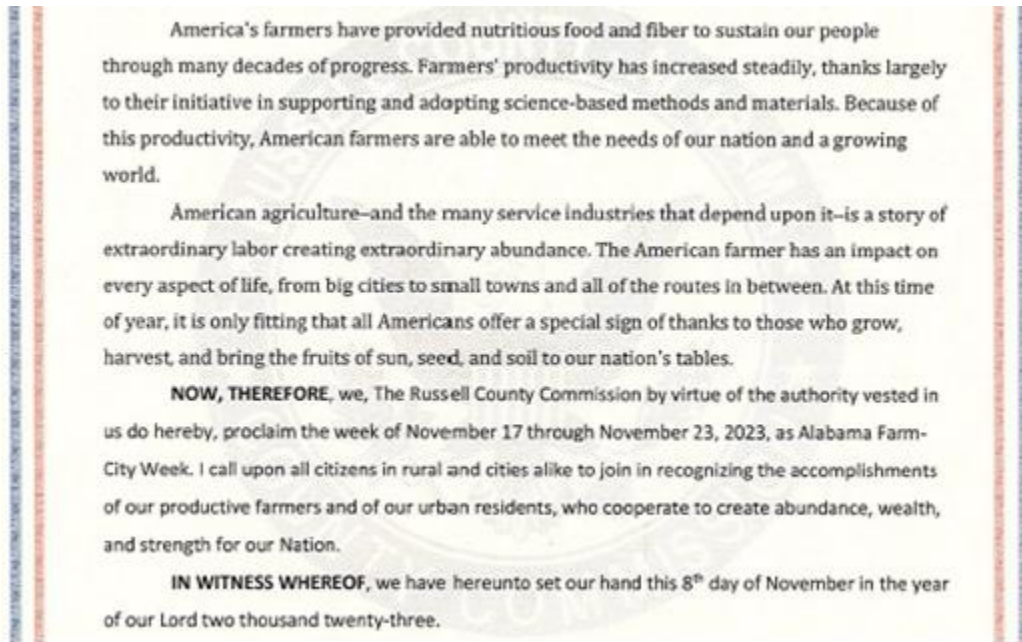
APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Chair Costello requested approval of the minutes from the Commission meeting on October 25, 2023. Commissioner Corbett moved to accept the minutes; seconded by Commissioner Chambers. All Commissioners were in favor and said aye. Motion carried to approve the minutes.

PROCLAMATIONS, RESOLUTIONS AND PRESENTATIONS:

Chairman Costello presented a proclamation for Alabama Farm City Week 2023 Proclamation to Ms. Jennifer Davidson with the Russell County office. County Administrator Paulette Colbert read the following:





Commissioner Lee moved to approve the proclamation; seconded by Commissioner Corbett. All Commissioners were in favor and said aye. Motion carried.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

Chairman Costello recognized Commissioner Corbett who updated the Commission and public about the new Crawford Senior Center program (working with Lee-Russell Council Governments) with a projected opening starting the 2nd week this January.

BUSINESS ITEMS:

Chairman Costello recognized Commissioner Corbett who moved to make a project fund donation to Russell County Education Foundation as follows: Commissioner Corbett donated \$1,000, Commissioner Costello donated \$1,000, Commissioner Screws donated \$1,000, Commissioner Chambers donated \$500, Commissioner Lee donated \$500, and Commissioner Epps donated \$1,000 with the total donation amount to be \$5,000. Seconded by Commissioner Reed. All Commissioners were in favor and said aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

Chairman Costello recognized Commissioner Corbett who presented and moved to make a \$1,000 project fund donation to the Russell County Historical Commission for the Uchee Methodist Church project restoration. Seconded by Commissioner Reed. All Commissioners were in favor and said aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

Chairman Costello recognized Commissioner Corbett who presented a Policy on Policies and moved to postpone this to the next Commission meeting; seconded by Commissioner Lee. All Commissioners were in favor and said aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

Chairman Costello recognized Commissioner Corbett who presented the Retiree Insurance Cost Policy change request which consists of term of employment with the county for new employees hired after January 1, 2024 as follows:

At the time an employee with Russell County meets the conditions for retirement as set forth in the Employee Retirement Systems of Alabama Regulations and Russell County Procedures, he/she may elect to retire and receive benefits. The County shall provide individual medical coverage for all employees who retire with the county as follows:

HIRED PRIOR TO JANUARY 1, 2024

1. 10 years with the County, 10 years in County Health insurance program, Age 60 or more: County pays 100% of premium.
2. 25 years of participation in The Retirement Systems of Alabama, at least 10 years in County Health Insurance program, any age: County pays 100% of premium.

HIRED JANUARY 1, 2024 AND FORWARD

1. 10 years of service – Age 60 or more: 10 years in County Health insurance program: County pays 25% of premium, Retiree pays 75% of premium.
2. 15 years of service – Age 60 or more: 10 years in County Health insurance program: County pays 50% of premium, Retiree pays 50% of premium.
3. 20 years of service – Age 60 or more: 10 Years in County Health insurance program: County pays 65% of premium, Retiree pays 35% of premium.
4. 25 years of service – Any age: 10 years in County Health insurance program: County pays 75% of premium, Retiree pays 25% of premium.
5. 30 years of service – Any age: 10 years in County Health insurance program: County pays 100% of premium.

At age 65, (must have Part B Medicare), the retiree's health insurance coverage with the County will become a supplemental policy.

To receive the retiree insurance benefit, the employee's last ten years prior to retirement must have been with Russell County Commission.

If an employee terminates employment with Russell County Commission prior to retiring and is separated for more than one year, he/she will not receive the insurance benefit that comes with retiring from Russell County. (Example: if an employee leaves, they have up to one year to be hired back to retain their status for retiree insurance purposes).

Commissioner Corbett moved to approve this request; seconded by Commissioner Lee. Attorney Hope Hicks verified that this is legal action. Commissioner Lee asked if this could be changed by majority Commission vote later, if needed. Attorney Hicks agreed. 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. The motion passed.

Chairman Costello recognized Sheriff Department Chief Alexander who presented the request to surplus and sell the following vehicles since they are no longer operable:

Request permission to sell the following vehicles on GovDeals since they are no longer usable:

#696 2004 Ford Explorer

#711 2005 Ford Crown Vic

#728 2008 Ford F-150

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

Chairman Costello recognized Maintenance Director Leon Watson who requested permission to purchase a Trane chiller (equipment only) for Judicial Center from the Omni contract # 3341 in the amount of \$109,534. It will be installed as a backup; it is 33 weeks out and approval today will allow it to be installed in the spring of 2025. Commissioner Lee moved to accept the request; seconded by Commissioner Reed. All Commissioners were in favor and said aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

COUNTY ENGINEER:

Assistant County Engineer Ray Martin presented the request for chair signature on the ADEM Grant award for \$150,000. Commissioner Epps moved to accept the recommendation; seconded by Commissioner Chambers. All Commissioners were in favor and said aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

SANITATION:

The Sanitation Director has nothing to present.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

The Economic Development Director had nothing to present.

ADMINISTRATOR:

County Administrator Paulette Colbert requested the Commission approval of scheduling a public hearing for the CDBG-CV Grant closeout with Lisa Sandt with Lee-Russell Council of Governments to be held on December 13, 2023, at 9:30 AM ET. Commissioner Lee moved to accept the request; seconded by Commissioner Chambers. All Commissioners were in favor and said aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

County Administrator Paulette Colbert presented the Commission meeting schedule request for the 2024 year. Commissioner Lee moved to accept the request; seconded by Commissioner Reed. All Commissioners were in favor and said aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

CORONAVIRUS RESCUE ACT FUND:

County Administrator Paulette Colbert presented the request to pay an invoice from Hecht Burdeshaw, Inc. for the amount of \$571.40 for project 2022-006 RCSO COVID supply storage from the Coronavirus Rescue Act Fund. Motion to approve by Commissioner Corbett; seconded by Commissioner Corbett. 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. The motion passed.

ATTORNEY:

Attorney Hicks has nothing to present.

COMMISSIONER DISCUSSION:

There was no discussion.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Announcements were made.

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