

**Russell County Commission  
Meeting Minutes March 13, 2024  
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 Reverend Dr. Warren with Colbert AME Church in Seale, Alabama. Commissioner Screws led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

Mr. Shomari Figures introduced himself to the commission as one of the new democratic candidates running for Congress for Alabama's 2<sup>nd</sup> Congressional District and his interest in our local community.

Chair Costello thanked the County 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 citizens, elected officials, department heads, media, and guests.

Interim County Administrator Tina Thomas called roll of the Commission. Members present were Commissioner Scott Chambers, Commissioner Gentry Lee, Commissioner Chance Corbett, Commissioner Larry Screws, Commissioner Cattie Epps, Commissioner Ronnie Reed, and Chair Rod Costello. Also, present were County Attorney Hope Hicks, and Interim County Administrator Tina Thomas, who kept the minutes.

A quorum was established by the Interim County Administrator Tina Thomas.

Chair Costello stated that the agenda was approved at the work session Monday night, March 11, 2024.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Chair Costello requested approval of the minutes from the Commission meeting on February 28, 2024. Commissioner Corbett moved to approve the minutes; seconded by Commissioner Chambers. All Commissioners were in favor and said aye. Motion carried to approve the minutes.

**PROCLAMATIONS, RESOLUTIONS AND PRESENTATIONS:**

There were no proclamations, resolutions, or presentations.

**DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

Chair Costello recognized EMA Director David Martin who spoke about the Russell County EMA being recognized as a StormReady county by the US Department of Commerce, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAH), along with the National Weather Service, along with updating further information about the county.

**BUSINESS ITEMS:**

Chairman Costello recognized EMA Director David Martin who presented a signature request from the chair for the Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG), which is a sub awarded grant in the amount of \$2,337.00. Commissioner Corbett moved to for the chair to sign; seconded by Commissioner Chambers. All Commissioners were in favor and said aye. Motion carried.

Chairman Costello recognized EMA Director David Martin who presented a signature request from the chair for LED light replacement from Alabama Power. Commissioner Corbett moved for the

chair to sign; seconded by Commissioner Reed. Chairman Costello verified that there is a comprehensive list of lights we are paying for. Mr. Martin agreed that there is. All Commissioners were in favor and said aye. Motion carried.

Chairman Costello recognized Judge Harden with a petition for refund request for Daechang Seat Corporation. The company requested to be refunded the late fees and penalties for paying their business license late, which was not an error on the county's part, it was the company's oversight. Judge Harden stated that in the past he has refunded late fees and penalties if it was an accounting error but not if it was paid late. Attorney Hicks stated that she didn't see there was a way to wave a penalty for someone due to their own fault, because then every time you get a request, what would be the rationale for not waving it every time? Process is, if you pay it late, there is a penalty for paying it late. Her recommendation was to not wave the late fee or penalties on this. After further discussion, it was agreed not to set precedence, so the request for refund, was not voted on. Commissioner Corbett requested to move forward.

#### **COUNTY ENGINEER:**

County Engineer Shawn Blakeney presented a request to purchase a 2024 Caterpillar mini excavator from Sourcewell for \$86,660.54, which is this year's budgeted item. Commissioner Corbett moved to approve the request; seconded by Commissioner Chambers. All Commissioners were in favor and said aye. Motion carried.

County Engineer Shawn Blakeney presented a request to surplus a 2006 International 4300 dump truck with ID # 06007 that has 152,822 miles and sell it on GovDeals. Commissioner Screws moved to approve the request; seconded by Commissioner Epps. All Commissioners were in favor and said aye. Motion carried.

County Engineer Shawn Blakeney presented an update on the traffic study for Nuckols Road and Hwy 165 intersection project. He requested \$43,000 for striping to be paid by the Commission, if the project comes due in this fiscal year, and he would then take it out of his 2025 fiscal year's engineering budget. Commissioner Corbett spoke further on this project and added that it's a state highway that leads on to a county road and that this probably would not come due until the 2025 fiscal year budget takes effect. Commissioner Corbett moved to approve this project and requested the administrator to make the funds up to \$45,000 available upon request of the bill or invoice, and if it is due before the 2025 fiscal year budget, that it's reflected the same in the County Engineer's FY 2025 budget. Commissioner Reed seconded the motion. Commissioner Lee reiterated that this is to be paid back by the Engineering Department. All Commissioners were in favor and said aye. Motion carried.

#### **SANITATION:**

There was nothing presented in this area.

#### **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:**

Economic Development Tourism Director Victor Cross shared updates on activities coming in the Russell County area along with speaking about using radio and banners to help share events in both Russell County and the valley.

#### **ADMINISTRATOR:**

Interim County Administrator Tina Thomas presented the Russell County Utility Board appointments request. Commissioner Corbett moved to approve reappointing both Judy Monk and Lambert Glenn as board members; seconded by Commissioner Chambers. All Commissioners were in favor and said aye. Motion carried.

**CORONAVIRUS RESCUE ACT FUND:**

There was nothing presented in this area.

**ATTORNEY:**

Attorney Hope Hicks had nothing to present.

**COMMISSIONER DISCUSSION:**

Chairman Costello spoke about advertising banners that he shared with Mr. Cross for Russell County advertising with use of the Tourism funds.

Commissioner Epps spoke about iPads for the Commissioners for the meeting agendas.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

Announcements were made.

There being no further business, Commissioner Lee moved to adjourn; seconded by Commissioner Reed. All Commissioners were in favor and said aye. The meeting was adjourned.