

**Russell County Commission
Meeting Minutes July 10, 2024
Russell County Commission Chambers
9:30 A.M. EST**

An adjourned meeting of the Russell County Commission was called to order by Vice-Chair Corbett.

The invocation was given Mr. David Ellis since Reverend Cross from First United Methodist Church was not present.

Veteran Mr. Leroy David led the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

No public comments were made.

County Administrator Chandra Wright called roll of the Commission. Members present were Commissioner Scott Chambers, Commissioner Gentry Lee, Vice-Chair Chance Corbett, Commissioner Larry Screws, Commissioner Cattie Epps, and Commissioner Ronnie Reed. Chairman Rod Costello was not present. Also, present were County Attorney Hope Hicks, and County Administrator Chandra Wright, who kept the minutes.

A quorum was established by the County Administrator Chandra Wright.

Vice-Chair Corbett stated that the agenda was approved at the work session on Monday night, July 8th.

Reverend Molly Cross with First United Methodist Church arrived late and lead another invocation.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Vice-Chair Corbett requested approval of the minutes from the Commission meeting on June 26, 2024. Commissioner Lee moved to approve the minutes as presented; seconded by Commissioner Chambers. All Commissioners present were in favor and said aye. Motion carried to approve the minutes.

PROCLAMATIONS, RESOLUTIONS AND PRESENTATIONS:

There was nothing presented in this area.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

Vice-Chair Corbett recognized Mr. Holt from BEAM who presented a county broadband fiber update and presentation.

Vice-Chair Corbett recognized EMA Director David Martin who shared award recognitions from the AAEM (Alabama Association of Emergency Managers) Disaster Preparedness Conference. Mr. Martin shared many awards the department received, and he also recognized EMA Deputy Director Samantha Cato for her master level certification (highest level received for emergency management) on behalf of the Alabama Association of Emergency Managers.

BUSINESS ITEMS:

Vice-Chair Corbett recognized EMA Director David Martin who presented a budget transfer request to decrease Line Item 541 (Equipment and Furniture) by \$9,000 and increase Line Item 219 (Other Miscellaneous Supplies). Commissioner Chambers moved to approve the request; seconded by Commissioner Reed. All Commissioners present were in favor and said aye. Motion carried.

Vice-Chair Corbett presented the Fort Mitchell Indian Heritage Center where the Historic Chattahoochee Commission has requested to vacate the agreement made back in around 1987 with the Russell County Commission to maintain the Chattahoochee Indian Heritage Center location on 165 Fort Mitchell Park next

to the National Cemetery and Visitor Center. He presented a resolution drafted by Attorney Hicks which would in essence resend that. County Administrator Chandra Wright read the following resolution aloud:

RESOLUTION

Be It Resolved by the Russell County Commission at its regularly scheduled meeting on July 10, 2024, that in 1986 or 1987 the Russell County Commission granted permission to the Historic Chattahoochee Commission to use a portion of the Fort Mitchell Park for the construction of the Chattahoochee Indian Heritage Center.

The Russell County Commission hereby rescinds, revokes, and vacates that action. From this date forward the Russell County Commission will be responsible for the maintenance of the Chattahoochee Indian Heritage Center at the Fort Mitchell Park including but not limited to the grounds, the Sacred Fire Sculpture, ground mounted plaques, the stickball field, parking area and lighting. The Russell County Commission intends to maintain the area for the purpose of celebrating the culture and accomplishments of the Native Americans who inhabited the Chattahoochee River Valley until their removal in the 1830s and educating the public on the culture and accomplishments.

ADOPTED and APPROVED by the Commission with a vote of 7 yeas and 0 nays, with 0 abstentions.

RUSSELL COUNTY COMMISSION

By: KE Castillo

Chairman

ATTEST:

Chandra Wright

County Administrator

Commissioner Lee moved to approve the resolution; seconded by Commissioner Chambers. Vice-Chair Corbett stated it is the intent for the Commission to continue with what has already been there. It is not the intention to do away with anything. From a separate meeting yesterday with the Board of the Russell County Historical Commission, they will be working directly with the Historic Chattahoochee Commission on any other funds that were left and available for future programming and educational activities. All Commissioners present were in favor and said aye. The resolution passed.

COUNTY ENGINEER:

County Engineer Shawn Blakeney presented a request to award the Traffic Striping bid #001-24 to JLD Enterprises. Commissioner Screws moved to approve the request; seconded by Commissioner Chambers. All Commissioners present were in favor and said aye. Motion carried.

County Engineer Shawn Blakeney presented the updated floodplain ordinances and requested it to be adopted and signed by the Commission. He stated the last time they were updated was in the 2022 year. Commissioner Epps moved to approve the request; seconded by Commissioner Screws. All Commissioners present were in favor and said aye. Motion carried.

SANITATION:

Sanitation Director Ward Dudley presented a budget transfer request of \$10,000 from Line Item # 212 (Fuel and Lubricants) to Line Item # 215 (Tires). Commissioner Lee moved to approve the request; seconded by Commissioner Screws. All Commissioners present were in favor and said aye. Motion carried.

ADMINISTRATOR:

The County Administrator presented the E-911 board appointments whose terms expire on August 12, 2024. One from District 5 and one from District 6. Vice-Chair Corbett stated that he does not believe he has a

conflict, but there could be perceived as one, so he asked Commissioner Lee (who grew up in his district) to actually make his District 6 board appointment. Commissioner Lee requested to reappoint Mr. Johnny Crouch and Commissioner Epps requested to reappoint Ferdinand Crawford for District 5.

CORONAVIRUS RESCUE ACT FUND:

Attorney Hope Hicks spoke about ARPA Funds designation regarding the Ladonia Sewer Project. She stated that since there have been some complications with this, if the Commission wants to move forward, she can certainly continue to look at it by doing some research on the annexation, and if it would or would not apply. Otherwise, she said if the Commission wants to move away from this project, then her opinion was that the Commission would need to vote where they had designated the funds to be held for that project, and to take those funds and put them back just for general use under the ARPA Funds. Commissioner Chambers moved to proceed and carry on with this project, and to see what avenues they might need to go down with putting sewage in the Ladonia area. Seconded by Commissioner Lee. Attorney Hicks stated that, in her opinion, by the first meeting in October the Commission would need to decide what to do, either to go forward or move away from this project, and to make sure to get everything in order (to get all of the money spent), so you don't end up having to give money back that was received. Ms. Hicks suggested not waiting until the last minute. Commissioner Chambers stated that his plan is to work on it with the attorney with some things that are out there to help us with this project. After further discussion, Vice-Chair Corbett restated that the motion is to work towards this project and then get a report at a later date. County Administrator Chandra Wright took a roll call vote of the Commission as follows: District 2: Commissioner Chambers, yes; District 1: Commissioner Lee, yes; District 6: Commissioner Corbett, yes; District 7: Commissioner Screws, no; District 5: Commissioner Epps, no; and District 4: Commissioner Reed, yes. Motion carried.

ATTORNEY:

Attorney Hope Hicks spoke about the State of Alabama negotiating with pharmacies regarding opioid settlements, and that the state has reached another agreement with Kroger. The allocation to the State of Alabama to be distributed will be 19 million dollars over 10 years, and there is an agreement that has been provided to us, for the attorneys that are handling this for the state. Attorney Hicks asked the Commission to vote to approve entering into this agreement and authorizing the Chairman to sign the agreement. Commissioner Lee moved to approve the request; seconded by Commissioner Reed. All Commissioners present were in favor and said aye. Motion carried.

COMMISSIONER DISCUSSION:

Vice-Chair Corbett discussed that he is working with Ms. Wright on tourism ideas for our county for the upcoming budget and spoke about upcoming marketing and advertising ideas to show the great things we have in Russell County.

Vice-Chair Corbett spoke about the interest in getting pickleball courts in our county and asked our engineer to look more into the cost and to focus on the Seale and Ladonia sports complexes.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Announcements were made.

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