

Russell County Commission
Oath of Office for Board of Commissioners
County Commission Chambers
Wednesday, November 13, 2024 9:00 am ET

Judge David Johnson administered the Oath of Office for the Russell County Board of Commissioners' swearing-in ceremony.

Russell County Commission
Meeting Minutes November 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 Pastor Alice Hubbard with True Believers Ministry.

Commissioner Darty led the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

There were no public comments.

Chairman Costello reminded everyone to please silent cell phones and not take calls during the meeting.

Chairman Costello thanked our Keith Lee with the Russell County Commission IT Department for Facebook Live, The Citizen of East Alabama for covering the meetings. He welcomed our elected officials, department heads, media, and guests.

County Administrator Chandra Wright called roll of the Commission. Members present were Commissioner Scott Chambers, Commissioner Gentry Lee, Commissioner Chance Corbett, Commissioner Larry Screws, Commissioner Cedric Darty, Commissioner Ronnie Reed, and Chairman Rod Costello. 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.

Chair Costello recognized the Glenwood 12th grade honors class who was present in the meeting and a school representative spoke.

Chair Costello requested approval of the presented agenda since there was not a work session Monday due to the Veterans' Day holiday closure. Commissioner Corbett moved to approve the agenda; seconded by Commissioner Chambers. All Commissioners were in favor and said aye. Motion carried to approve the agenda.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

2024.11.13 (CM)-1: Chair Costello requested approval of the minutes from the Commission meeting on October 23, 2024. Commissioner Corbett moved to approve the minutes presented in their book; seconded by Commissioner Reed. Commissioner Corbett stated that he had sent in a minor correction with the DHR donation total, and it has been fixed in the minutes. All Commissioners were in favor and said aye. Motion carried to approve the minutes.

PROCLAMATIONS, RESOLUTIONS AND PRESENTATIONS:

Chairman Costello recognized Human Resources Director Max Herring who presented the Employee of the Month for November 2024 from the Russell County Maintenance Department. Mr. Darren Edmond was

recognized as employee of the month. After the presentation, pictures were taken of Darren and his certificate.

2024.11.13 (CM)-2: Chairman Costello presented the Alabama Farm City Week 2024 to Ms. Jennifer Davidson, Russell County Extension County Coordinator. County Administrator Chandra Wright read aloud the following proclamation:

Russell County Commission
PROCLAMATION
Alabama Farm-City Week 2024

For nearly 65 years, the American people have joined together during Thanksgiving week to observe Farm-City Week, a time set aside to express gratitude for the bounty with which God has blessed our land. Throughout the week, Americans recognize the hard work and achievements of the farmers, rural townspeople, and city residents who make our nation's agricultural production and distribution system so successful. This cooperation between rural and city dwellers for mutual benefit truly helps to ensure our country's well-being.

America's farmers have provided nutritious food and fiber to sustain our people through many decades of progress. Farmers' productivity has increased steadily, thanks largely to their initiative in supporting and adopting science-based methods and materials. Because of this productivity, American farmers are able to meet the needs of our nation and a growing world.

American agriculture-and the many service industries that depend upon it-is a story of extraordinary labor creating extraordinary abundance. The American farmer has an impact on every aspect of life, from big cities to small towns and all of the routes in between. At this time of year, it is only fitting that all Americans offer a special sign of thanks to those who grow, harvest, and bring the fruits of sun, seed, and soil to our nation's tables.

NOW, THEREFORE, We, The Russell County Commission by virtue of the authority vested in us do hereby, proclaim the week of November 22 through November 28, 2024, as Alabama Farm-City Week. I call upon all citizens in rural and cities alike to join in recognizing the accomplishments of our productive farmers and of our urban residents, who cooperate to create abundance, wealth, and strength for our Nation.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, we have hereunto set our hand this 13th day of November in the year of our Lord two thousand twenty-four.

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

2024.11.13 (CM)-3: Chairman Costello recognized Commissioner Corbett who presented the approval of three proclamations for previous employees that have passed in the Russell County Highway Department by County Engineer Shawn Blakeney. Commissioner Corbett moved to approve the three proclamations which will be read and presented to the families in a January meeting. The proclamations are for the following:

- Mrs. Anne Johnson
- Mr. Jeffrey Williams
- Mr. Joe "Trey" Reed Hooton III

Commissioner Reed seconded the motion. All Commissioners were in favor and said aye. Motion carried.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

2024.11.13 (CM)-6: Chairman Costello presented a request from where the state requested a letter from the Commission to write a letter to do a speed study. County Engineer Shawn Blakeney discussed him reaching out to Ms. Crawford with ALDOT after he noticed several accidents along the corridor from mile marker 111 to mile marker 109 on Highway 431 (across from Renfroes). He spoke with Ms. Crawford about possibly doing a speed study in that area because the speed limit is still 65 through that area, and she said it would help to get a letter from the Commission to approve to send to her. Commission Corbett moved to approve a letter to the ALDOT to request a speed study in that area. Seconded by Commissioner Chambers. All Commissioners were in favor and said aye. Motion carried.

Chairman Costello recognized Commissioner Reed with a DHR Board Appointment. Commissioner Reed requested to postpone it since it will be on the next November 27, 2024 agenda.

BUSINESS ITEMS:

2024.11.13 (MN)-1: Chairman Costello recognized Maintenance Director Leon Watson who presented the Awarding of Sewer Installation at Ft. Mitchell Historical Site. Mr. Watson requested to move forward, after they advertised, they had one bidder for the Indian Trading Post at the Ft. Mitchell site. He added that even though they were the sole bidder on this, they were the same company that installed the last new bathrooms for us at Ft. Mitchell, and there were multiple bids on it. Mr. Watson requested to approve the bid of \$10,000 All-Pro Septic Services in Phenix City. Commissioner Lee moved to approve the request; seconded by Commissioner Darty. Mr. Watson also requested that Attorney Hicks draw up the contract between All-Pro and the county. All Commissioners were in favor and said aye. Motion carried. carried.

2024.11.13 (TG)-1: Chairman Costello recognized Tag Commissioner Carrie Bowman with the S&W Computers annual maintenance fee payment request in the amount of \$40,518.54. Chairman Costello added that this is a budgeted item. Commissioner Screws moved to approve the request; seconded by Commissioner Chambers. All Commissioners were in favor and said aye. Motion passed.

2024.11.13 (CM)-5: Chairman Costello recognized Commissioner Corbett with a speed limit reduction request at Chapman Street. He stated that several months back it was brought to his attention that Chapman Street did not have a speed limit sign, so he requested our engineer to put it up. Unfortunately, it had an adverse effect since a neighbor is driving 25 MPH on a road that probably doesn't need to be driven that fast. After he met with the engineer, they came up with a proposal that that speed be reduced to 15 MPH, since it's a very short, dead end dirt road. He shared that many complaints have come up with this. Ms. Hope, a local resident of the road, shared her opinion on the speed limit and all the small children on the road. Because of the recommendation and agreement with the engineer, Commissioner Corbett moved to reduce the speed limit on Chapman Street to 15 MPH. Commissioner Darty seconded the motion. In discussion, Commissioner Screws asked that County Engineer Shawn Blakeney make sure that are speed limit signs on all the dirt roads, so everybody knows the speed. All Commissioners were in favor and said aye. Motion passed. Attorney Hope Hicks requested that Mr. Blakeney look at this and come back to the commission with the cost because she thinks it is going to be cost prohibitive to put signs on all the dirt roads. She knew the state law on dirt roads but for citizens that don't know, maybe we could put out a reminder every 2-3 months of the speed limit on a non-posted dirt road is 35 MPR and a paved road is 45 MPH, to make citizens aware of it that way.

COUNTY ENGINEER:

County Engineer Shawn Blakeney had nothing to present at this time.

SANITATION:

Sanitation Director Ward Dudley had nothing to present at this time.

ADMINISTRATOR:

2024.11.13 (CM)-4: County Administrator Chandra Wright presented the approval of the 2025 Commission meeting schedule. Commissioner Screws moved to approve the request; seconded by Commissioner Corbett. All other Commissioners were in favor and said aye. Motion carried.

HUMAN RESOURCES:

Information was included in the Commissioner's packets.

CORONAVIRUS RESCUE ACT FUND:

There was nothing presented in this area.

ATTORNEY:

2024.11.13 (CM)-7: Commissioner Corbett raised an issue that he believed needed discussion in an executive session. He stated that it falls within the parameters of being able to go into executive session to discuss Economic Development, and no vote would be required. Attorney Hope Hicks stated that as an attorney licensed to practice in the State of Alabama, the matters to be discussed in executive session would fall under the Exceptions to the Open Meeting Act. It would be to discuss the consideration of the governmental body is willing to offer or accept when considering the purchase, sale, exchange, lease, or market value of real property, and that is one of the exceptions. She stated that they'd need to vote to go into Executive Session, and because no action is expected today, you adjourn this meeting into Executive Session and adjourn the meeting from there. Commissioner Corbett stated that after they go through with the rest of the agenda, to include announcements, he moved that they go into Executive Session, and they will adjourn from the Executive Session and not return to the Commission chambers. Seconded by Commissioner Lee. All other Commissioners were in favor and said aye. Motion carried.

COMMISSIONER DISCUSSION:

Commission Corbett shared an update on the Seale Veterans' Day event.

Commission Corbett spoke about sharing the video at the Chamber breakfast this morning that he and Chandra did for the county. It was received very well with a lot of compliments on it.

Commission Corbett recognized and congratulated Commissioner Darty for winning, and they look forward to working with him. He congratulated the Probate Judge elect Belinda Strickland for her win.

Commissioner Corbett shared the busy lighting schedule for first week in December to include: December 3rd they start lighting in Crawford, then on Thursday is the lighting at the Ladonia Sports Complex, Friday night will be at the Seale Courthouse, then on Sunday they'll be at Ft. Mitchell Community Center.

Commissioner Lee recognized and thanked the Glenwood class for observing today's meeting.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Announcements were made.

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