

MINUTES, LIMESTONE COUNTY COMMISSION, DECEMBER 13, 2017

The Limestone County Commission reconvened the meeting from December 4, 2017 at 10:00 a.m. today at the Washington Street Courthouse Annex, 310 West Washington Street, Athens, AL.

Present: Stanley Hill, Steve Turner, Jason Black, and Ben Harrison. Absent: None. Mark Yarbrough, Chairman presided.

There was a discussion for a proposed resolution authorizing, approving and directing the employment of certain law firms to represent the County in potential litigation against contributors of opioid addiction crisis.

John Plunk, an Athens Attorney, briefed the Commission on the opioid crisis and how they are distributed. He stated if the Commission agrees to join a class-action suit against opioid manufacturers, it would cost the county nothing up front. If successful, attorney fees would be 30% of anything collected from the defendants. He said there is no guarantee of recovery.

Sheriff Mike Blakely stated that investigators face the occasional quandary because there are cases where a person caught with opioids may have a valid prescription. He stressed that working this type of drug case is more difficult for law enforcement, because who are we to question if a person needs it? The bottom line is, even if we don't see a dime from the law suit, it will have an impact.

The Agreement for Right-of-way Acquisition for the approaches and bridge replacement on Old Highway 20 and the Agreement for Utility Relocation on Old Highway 20 over Limestone Creek. Both agreements require a 20% match from the County. Chairman Yarbrough explained former Governor Robert Bentley and Alabama Department of Transportation Director John Cooper had agreed to fund the project 100%, with no county match. Speaker Mac McCutcheon helped make it possible. Commissioner Jason Black said this has become almost comical. Can you imagine if we had a major statewide disaster and 50 bridges washed out? This one bridge has been held up since December 2015. Chairman Yarbrough announced the agreements would be removed from the agenda if the match requirement wasn't resolved.

Mark Maclin brief the Commission regarding the request from Carpenter Technology to extend the final jobs target date from January 1, 2018 to January 1, 2019. He said they currently have filled 181 employees of the 200 jobs target. He said that Carpenter anticipates hiring 76 employees next year, putting them beyond the final jobs target.

MOTION was made by Jason Black and seconded by Steve Turner to suspend the Rules of Order to consider a request from the Huntsville-Madison County Airport Authority.

The Administrator called the roll. Jason Black, aye; Steve Turner, aye; Stanley Hill, aye; and Ben Harrison, aye. Motion carries unanimously.

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MOTION was made by Jason Black and seconded by Steve Turner to approve to join as an interested party in the Huntsville-Madison County Airport Authority's application for the FAA UAS Integration Pilot Program.

The Chairman asked if there was any discussion. Mark Maclin said he had spoken with Lisa Bullard, executive assistant at the Huntsville-Madison County Airport Authority regarding their request. She confirmed there is no commitment of the County. She said this concerns the testing sites for integrating the use of unmanned aircraft, and there are only five sites that will be selected for these programs. They are trying to have Huntsville selected as one of the sites and they believe having local government entities as an "Interested Party" will show the FAA strong community support for the Authority hosting the program. The Administrator called the roll. Jason Black, aye; Steve Turner, aye; Stanley Hill, aye; and Ben Harrison, aye. Motion carries unanimously.

Items were discussed for the December 18, 2017 agenda.

Stanley Hill: District 1 is doing some striping on Looney, Holt, Bethel, McKee and Harvest roads. His district is also performing routine road maintenance and repairs.

Steve Turner: Requested to add additional speed limit signs on Nick Davis Road and asked the Engineering Department to evaluate the number of signs needed. He discussed a replacement vehicle for the District 2 Litter Crew. He requested to add to the agenda to sell the following equipment on GovDeals; litter van and trailer, 2005 Dodge Ram, and a 2001 Ford F-150.

Jason Black: District 3 is purchasing a 1-ton flatbed truck for its litter crew. He said that his district is performing routine roads repairs and maintenance and cleaning out ditches where there are major drainage issues.

Ben Harrison: District 4 hit a snag during a culvert replacement on Pope Road when a 6-inch water line was cut and hoped the pipe would be laid today. He discussed proposals for additional funding options for roads; Federal Funds Swap, TVA in-lieu of Taxes to divert the special hospital tax fund 5% allocation, Simplified Sellers Use Fee, and how district funds are distributed. He recommended to wait about submitting a resolution for the federal funds swap until Senator Author Orr gets his bills drafted. He said he would like to place resolutions on Monday's agenda for consideration for the Simplified Sellers Use Fee, the hospital portion of TVA in-lieu of taxes, and how district funds are distributed.

Adjourned at 11:06 a.m.