

MINUTES OF THE LEE COUNTY COMMISSION, REGULAR MEETING, APRIL 11, 2022

The Lee County Commission convened in regular session at the Courthouse in Opelika, Alabama, Monday, April 11, 2022. The Chairman declared a quorum and officially opened the meeting with the following members recorded as being present: Judge Bill English, Chairman, and Commissioners Doug Cannon, Ross Morris, Gary Long, Robert Ham and Richard LaGrand. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited, followed by an invocation by Commissioner Morris. Elected Officials in attendance: Opelika City Council member Erica Norris. News media in attendance: The Observer reporter Hannah Lester.

Judge English said County Engineer Justin Hardee would like to add an item to the agenda under reports. Mr. Hardee stated he had inadvertently left the item off the agenda in recognition of National Work Zone Awareness Week. Mr. Hardee stated it is this week, April 11-15, 2022, and the theme is "Work Zones are a Sign to Slow Down". Mr. Hardee asked the news media in attendance to recognize it too. Mr. Hardee reminded everyone to slow down in a work zone stating a crash occurs in a work zone nationwide every five minutes. Mr. Hardee provided additional statistical information. Mr. Hardee said Lee County is growing which equates to an increased traffic load as well.

Copies of the items on the Consent Agenda sent to the Commissioners in their packets included: listings of claims, a procurement card transactions listing, and minutes of the March 28 meeting. Additionally, a list of claims for ratification was presented prior to the meeting. Announcement of two positions on the Lee County Planning Commission for District 1 representatives was made. Commissioner Cannon made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Ham to approve the consent agenda items as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Morris made a motion approving the following Resolution appointing Ashley Aaron to the Lee County Planning Commission as a District 2 representative, replacing his position on the Board. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Long and carried unanimously.

BE IT RESOLVED, Lee County Commission hereby appoints Ashley Aaron to the Lee County Planning Commission as a District 2 representative to replace Commissioner Morris.

Judge English said he included in the packets for each Commissioner a summary of the evaluation forms he received from each member on Mr. Hardee's annual evaluation. Judge English said as requested he did not share any of the evaluations and since some Commissioners requested their form not be shared, none were shared with Mr. Hardee. Judge English questioned if the Commission wished to discuss the item. Commissioner Cannon said he appreciated Mr. Hardee for the job he does and recommended he be granted a 5% salary increase. Commissioner Long agreed saying that Mr. Hardee has done an incredible job along

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with his staff. Further, Commissioner Long said Mr. Hardee does what he has to do to get the job done. Commissioner Long said Mr. Hardee not only serves in his position as county engineer, but he handles services outside his command, as in the case in attending the Planning Commission meetings. Commissioner Long questioned how many meetings, if any, had Mr. Hardee missed. Mr. Hardee said he has missed only one meeting. Commissioner Ham agreed, stating Mr. Hardee makes Lee County a better place to live. Commissioner LaGrand also agreed stating he has ridden many miles alongside Mr. Hardee. Judge English agreed saying he questioned Mr. Hardee's youth when Mr. Hardee was being considered for the position, but said he was wrong, and thanked Mr. Hardee for the great job he has done. Commissioner Cannon made a motion granting Mr. Hardee a 5% merit increase. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Long and carried unanimously. Mr. Hardee took a moment to thank the Commission and agreed with the statement concerning his staff, saying he owes it to his staff; they earn it every day.

Mr. Hardee recommended the Commission accept Magnolia Ridge II Subdivision for maintenance upon the final inspection performed on April 4, 2022. Mr. Hardee recommended the roads in the subdivision: Lee Road 2222, Lee Road 2223 and Lee Road 2224 be accepted for permanent maintenance by the Highway Department. Commissioner LaGrand made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Ham to accept Magnolia Ridge II Subdivision for maintenance as recommended. The motion carried unanimously.

Next, Mr. Hardee presented an Adopt-A-Mile application from the State PALS Association for Lee Road 86. Mr. Hardee said the request is from Summer Manley to adopt one (1) mile of Lee Road 86 which is located in District 4. Commissioner Ham made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Cannon to authorize Judge English to sign the Adopt-A-Mile application as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Hardee presented a request from a citizen to decrease the speed limit on Lee Road 123. Mr. Hardee stated the road is 0.780 miles in length and has experienced considerable residential development the past several years with more lots proposed. The speed limit is currently posted at 45 mph. Mr. Hardee said due to the residential development along the road, the Highway Department recommends the speed limit be reduced from 45 mph to 25 mph on Lee Road 123. The Highway Department recommends this as a reasonable and safe maximum speed limit. Commissioner Ham made a motion, seconded by Commissioner LaGrand to decrease the speed limit from 45 mph to 25 mph on Lee Road 123. The motion carried unanimously.

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Mr. Hardee presented a request from a citizen to reduce the speed limit on Lee Road 878. Mr. Hardee stated the road is 0.400 miles in length and is a narrow dirt road with several horizontal curves. The speed limit is posted at 25 mph currently. Mr. Hardee said due to the narrowness and curvature of the road, the Highway Department recommends the speed limit be reduced from 25 mph to 15 mph for Lee Road 878. The Highway Department recommends this as a reasonable and safe maximum speed limit. Commissioner Long made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Ham to decrease the speed limit from 25 mph to 15 mph on Lee Road 878. The motion carried unanimously.

LCSO Sergeant Lee McLeroy presented a Special Events Retail license application for Greenawalt Hospitality for an event to be held at Legacy at Serenity Farms which is located in District 1. The venue is a one-day event to be held Thursday, April 21, 2022, in an enclosed pavilion with a patio and bar/service area. Commissioner Cannon made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Morris to approve the following Resolution granting the Special Events Retail license. The motion carried unanimously.

BE IT RESOLVED, the Lee County Commission does hereby approve the Special Events Retail license for Legacy at Serenity Farms located at 1995 W Farmville Road, Auburn, Alabama for the one-day event to be held on April 21, 2022.

Chief Administrative Officer Holly Leverette presented for Commission consideration a lease extension for the Auburn Satellite Office. Mrs. Leverette said this is the second five-year extension on the original lease dated April 4, 2007. Commissioner Ham questioned if the county owns the building and only leases the lot. Mrs. Leverette answered in the affirmative. Commissioner Ham made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Long authorizing the Chairman to sign the lease extension for an additional five years. The motion carried unanimously.

Emergency Management Agency Director Rita Smith presented a request to reclassify the deputy director position from non-exempt status to exempt status. Ms. Smith stated the status was changed to non-exempt during the pay and classification study several years ago, but since she was not director at that time, she was not made aware of the change. Mrs. Leverette stated she and Ms. Smith had discussed the issue and agree the position should be an exempt position. Commissioner Morris questioned if this is the position presented at an earlier meeting where a compromise on the salary was made. Ms. Smith answered in the affirmative. Commissioner Long suggested next time Ms. Smith look into whether the position is exempt or non-exempt before bringing it to the Commission. Ms. Smith stated she previously had done her due diligence. Judge English questioned whether or not Ms. Smith held the position of Deputy Director previously. Ms. Smith stated she did not, she was the Public Information

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Officer and Grants Manager, stating she did the job, but did not hold the title. Commissioner Ham made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Cannon to reclass the deputy director position from non-exempt to exempt status. The motion carried unanimously.

Judge English said an executive session needs to be added to the agenda by unanimous consent of the Commission. Commissioner Morris made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Cannon to add the item to the agenda. The motion carried unanimously.

At approximately 5:30 p.m., Judge English stated the Executive Session is on the character and good name of an individual. Judge English said County Attorney Stan Martin and Attorney Robbie Hyde need to attend. Judge English said the session is estimated to last approximately 20-30 minutes and formal action is anticipated at the conclusion. Commissioner Long made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Ham to adjourn into executive session. The motion carried unanimously.

Upon conclusion of the executive session, at approximately 6:00 p.m., Commissioner Long made a motion at the suggestion of Attorney Robbie Hyde to appoint Roger Rendleman to research a personnel matter. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Cannon and carried on a vote of 4-0-1, with Commissioner LaGrand abstaining.

At approximately 6:00 p.m. Commissioner Long made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Morris to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.