

MINUTES OF THE LEE COUNTY COMMISSION, REGULAR TERM, JUNE 30, 2025

The Lee County Commission convened in regular session at the Courthouse in Opelika, Alabama, Tuesday, June 30, 2025, at 5:00 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited, followed by an invocation by Commissioner Morris.

The Chairman declared a quorum and officially opened the meeting with the following members recorded as being present: Judge Jere Colley, Chairman, and Commissioners Doug Cannon, Ross Morris, Jeff Drury, Tony Langley and Richard LaGrand.

Lance Farrar said he was happy to see Commissioner LaGrand back. He stated he wanted to bring attention back to an issue with a public records request which began 44 weeks ago. He stated he submitted two public records requests on Aug. 26, 2024, for a listing of customers that had never paid their ADSI bill and those deemed delinquent but had paid at some point. He said he submitted an additional request on March 31, 2025, as a follow-up to his initial request as well as another request on June 9, 2025. He stated he is still waiting for a response on where the public records are and if they have been destroyed or misplaced. He requested to be placed on the next agenda to discuss the public records issues.

John Sophocleus wished the Commission a Happy Fourth and also stated he was pleased to see Commissioner LaGrand back and wished him continued improvement. He thanked the Commission for their actions at the last meeting in getting assistance for the Probate Judge and stated he was working on a resolution to provide further assistance. He also thanked County Engineer Justin Hardee for his work on addressing traffic concerns on Moore's Mill Road and Lee Road 112.

Judy Lockhart said she echoed what others have said, that she was happy to have Commissioner LaGrand back and prayed that he continued to do well. She thanked Commissioners Cannon and LaGrand and the Commission for their efforts with the Loachapoka Community Park. She stated the walking trail has historical information about the town posted in various spots, and requested security cameras be put in place prior to Phase II beginning to address concerns and issues. She invited the Commission and public to attend the 150th Anniversary of Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church, which will be held at 1 p.m. on the second Sunday in July. She then thanked the Commission for all they do.

Mayor Ricky Holder stated that for the 4th time in a row, the entire Loachapoka City Council was unopposed in the upcoming municipal elections scheduled for August. He also thanked the Commission and Probate Judge for the work they do every day and that it is seen by the community. He discussed the Community Park and certain amenities that still needed to be

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installed, including exercise equipment at various spots along the walking trail and playground equipment. He said he had spoken to Ryan Norris and there are recreation funds earmarked for Loachapoka and would like to move forward with these projects if possible.

Judge Colley recognized the elected officials in attendance: Sheriff Jay Jones, Revenue Commissioner Oline Price and Loachapoka Mayor Ricky Holder. News media in attendance: Hannah Goldfinger with the Opelika Observer.

Commissioner Drury recognized two students from Smiths Station High School for their recent accomplishments. Haley Sicarello is the AHSAA State Record holder in soccer for hat tricks in a season with 13; 2nd all-time for consecutive matches with a hat trick at five; and 18th all-time with 55 goals in a season. According to Max Preps she is also ranked first in AHSAA 7A division, 3rd in AHSAA overall, and 15th nationally. Bryant Pearce finished second in 2024 and third at the 2025 State of Alabama Skills USA Competition in Firefighting; in addition, college students were also competing this year raising the level of competition.

Commissioner Langley recognized Beauregard High School student Zoey Holden, daughter of EMA employee Michael Holden. She is an incoming sophomore who has been invited to compete in the Dominican Republic as part of the Team USA U19 Softball. In addition, she has played with both the JV and Varsity teams, has a 4.0 GPA and will dual-enroll at Southern Union in History for the upcoming year.

Ann Whittelsey provided an update on the capital campaign for the Community Market. She stated construction is scheduled to be completed by the end of September 2025. She stated thanks to the efforts of State Sen. Jay Hovey, the State will be providing \$700,000 in addition to the gifts from the cities of Auburn and Opelika and other entries and individuals. She said the overall campaign goal of \$3.9 million is in reach because of the generosity of the citizens of Lee County. She stated the rate of food insecurity in Lee County has risen 19 percent in two years and predicts that number to continue to rise as previous benefits are decreased. She stated she hoped the Commission would agree to join the campaign as well.

John McDonald provided an update on the disposal convenience centers which reopened on June 7. He stated it is going well, and the department is currently running both the centers and bulk pick-up which will officially end on July 29. He said last month with the one disposal day and the bulk pick-up the department hauled more than 251 tons of trash not including curbside cart collection and 32 1/2 tons of recycling. The disposal sites on the weekend not including bulk pickup was 223.24 tons and recycling was almost 59 tons. He complimented the departments for coming together as a team to make this happen; he also thanked the Highway Department for their work in getting the sites ready and the Sheriff's Office for their security

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presence. He also stated the boom trucks have been helpful and would like to keep 2-3 for use with the centers and any possible future bulk pick-ups as the sites are too busy for a backhoe. Judge Colley asked what tasks are different between the boom truck and a backhoe. Mr. McDonald stated the boom is better able to pack, crush, combine and transfer. He also stated that once the transition is complete, he would like to do something for the employees in recognition for their efforts.

Copies of the items on the Consent Agenda sent to the Commissioners in their packets included: listings of claims to be approved and ratified, procurement card transactions listing, and a copy of the minutes from June 9, 2025. The first reading of Valerie Gray to the East Alabama Health Care Authority was made. Commissioner Cannon made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda which was seconded by Commissioner Morris. The motion carried unanimously.

In Old Business, Commissioner Drury introduced the COO position selection process. He stated that as discussed in the work session, the Commission would like to set the week of July 14th to begin the interview process. Commissioners were requested to narrow their list down to three and give those names to Judge Colley by the end of the day on July 1. Commissioner Cannon requested that any interview questions also be sent to Judge Colley for compilation, which would then be sent out to all Commissioners. No action was required on this item.

In New Business, Sheriff Jones presented an educational reimbursement request from Deputy Hayden Greenlee for two classes, they are: 1) Terrorism Response Operations and 2) Leading Teams. Sheriff Jones said the two classes pertain to his current position. Commissioner Langley made a motion, seconded by Commissioner LaGrand, to approve the educational reimbursement request as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Hardee presented the bid results for RALCP 41-146-24. He stated bids were opened on June 18 for the roundabout construction project at the intersection of Moore's Mill and Society Hill Roads. He stated no bids were received and requested the Commission to allow the Highway Department to act pursuant to Code of Alabama 39-2-6(b). This code section allows for the receipt of informal quotes from negotiations with contractors since the formal public works bid process was initially observed. A location map for the proposed project and a copy of the code section were included in the packets. Commissioner Morris made a motion to authorize the Highway Department to begin the informal process which was seconded by Commissioner LaGrand. The motion passed unanimously.

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Mr. Hardee then presented the bid results for LCP 41-PPLR-25, resurfacing 4.6 miles on various Lee County roads in Commission District 1, 4 and 5. He stated one bid was received from the bid opening on June 18 from East Alabama Paving Company for \$1,098,389. He stated the funds are budgeted and recommended awarding the project to EAP. Commissioner Cannon asked if this project was a full-depth reclamation project; Mr. Hardee stated it was not; this would be an asphalt layer on top of scrub seal. The FDR projects would be a different bid. Commissioner Langley made a motion to approve the bid, which was seconded by Commissioner LaGrand. The motion passed unanimously.

Michael Holden with EMA presented a Central Alabama Community Foundation donation for a drone purchase. He stated the EMA drone program was in need of a new drone due to age and pending federal restrictions. The Central Alabama Community Foundation asked how it could partner with EMA to address any immediate needs and identified a replacement drone as an immediate need. The new drone will have the additional capabilities of a speaker to broadcast messages, a spotlight and inferred cameras. The cost of the drone is \$37,000, which will be fully funded by the Foundation and will be purchased through a purchasing co-op, so no bidding is necessary. Ms. Burton Crenshaw with the Foundation stated it started serving a four-county area a year ago through its affiliate, the East Alabama Community Foundation, with the parent CACF serving 14 total counties. She stated it works with non-profits as well as municipalities and counties to fill a funding gap for certain items. The drone is being funded through its Lee County Disaster Relief Fund. Commissioner Drury authorized the Chair to sign the contract for the drone, which was seconded by Commissioner LaGrand. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Hardee presented the bid results for LCP 41-SSWT-25, the Smiths Station Walking Trail Renovation project. He stated that similar to the roundabout project, no bids were received at the June 27 bid opening. He requested the Commission take the same course of action as earlier by allowing the Parks Department to work with contractors and negotiate for the work through informal bids as the formal public works bid process was initially observed. Commissioner Drury made the motion, which was seconded by Commissioner Cannon. The motion passed unanimously.

As the last item, Mr. McDonald requested approval for the revision of several job descriptions within the Environmental Services department. He stated the revisions are necessary to reflect the current operating system. The revised descriptions include Environmental Services Worker, ES Truck Driver, Boom Truck Operator and ES Supervisor. He said the ES Supervisor is a merged description as there is no longer a separate recycling supervisor or a solid waste supervisor. He respectfully requested approval of the revised job descriptions and to submit the descriptions for review for possible pay grade changes.

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Commissioner Cannon made a motion to approve with Commissioner Morris seconding. The motion passed unanimously.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:53 p.m.