

MINUTES OF THE LEE COUNTY COMMISSION, REGULAR TERM, JULY 14, 2025

The Lee County Commission convened in regular session at the Courthouse in Opelika, Alabama, Monday, July 14, 2025, at 5:00 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited, followed by an invocation by Commissioner Drury.

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.

Prior to public comments, Commissioner Drury read the Commission's policy on decorum.

John Sophocleus stated he had again received mail fraud which would be addressed somewhat with agenda item 8a and requested a copy of customer contract #01-981 0, for USPS mail fraud investigation #C2125451. He then discussed work session agenda item 3B and stated that previously there had been four trash vendors in the county who would also do bulk pickup. He said he was surprised at the number of people stating they would use the dumpsters now that they are open; he added he was against wrongful dumping. He also stated indigent people should not have to ask for relief from a bill they should not be obliged to pay.

Farmville VFD Fire Chief Carson Stroud thanked the Commissioners and Commissioner Cannon for the assistance provided to the department in constructing a second station in District 1, and the Highway Department for its work on land grading and site prep. He also thanked Commissioner Cannon for the donation of gravel for the parking area. He said the new station is active and already cutting down on response times for citizens in the area.

Commissioner Langley thanked the EMA, Sheriff's Office and all county employees for their hard work and assistance during the recent microburst severe storm event.

Judge Colley recognized the elected officials in attendance: District Attorney Jessica Ventiere. News media in attendance: Alex Husting with the Opelika- Auburn News and Hannah Goldfinger with the Opelika Observer. Judge Colley also stated the Probate Office and District Attorney's Office in conjunction with area law enforcement would be conducting a Scam Stoppers event designed to inform the public of various texting scams. The event will be held on July 24 at the Opelika Chamber of Commerce.

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,

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and a copy of the minutes from June 30, 2025. Also announced were five openings on the LRCOG MPO Citizens Advisory Committee. Commissioner Cannon made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda which was seconded by Commissioner LaGrand. The motion carried unanimously.

Under old business, Commissioner Cannon made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Morris to approve the following resolution to appoint Valerie Gray to the East Alabama Health Care Authority. The motion carried unanimously.

BE IT RESOLVED, the Lee County Commission does hereby appoint Valerie Gray to the East Alabama Health Care Authority for a six-year term from Sept. 30, 2025, to Sept. 30, 2031. 2027

In New Business, Lance Farrar came before the Commission asking for clarification regarding his previous public records requests from 2023 and 2024. He said he presented a request in 2023 for the names of those deemed delinquent and after waiting 53 weeks for a response, submitted a second request on Aug. 26, 2024, for those deemed delinquent and also those who have never paid ADSI. He stated he did receive the requested records within the last week but wanted to find out why it took more than a year for the request to be granted. He cited Alabama Code 36-12-40 which addresses the rights of citizens to inspect and copy public records if applicable by law and again questioned why the request took so long.

Ms. Leverette stated that on Sept. 9, 2025, the Commission adopted a formal policy and procedures to address public records requests spurred by the passage of Act #2024-278; prior to that a formal policy was not in place. She stated the formal policy should prevent any such issue from occurring again. Mr. Farrar stated he was aware of the Act, but stated there had been laws enacted in 1923, 1940, 1983 and 2004 addressing public records as well. Continuing his comments, he asked if anyone had been contacted to ask about the location of his missing request. He was notified the employee who previously handled those requests was retired and no longer with the county.

Commissioner Drury asked since the requested records have now been received, what additional information was Mr. Farrar looking for; Mr. Farrar reiterated he wanted to know the status and location of his original request as the county is supposed to maintain a copy. Commissioner Drury stated the formal policy currently in place should address his concerns. Mr. Farrar stated again he wanted to see the request he initially made with his signature which has yet to be located. As the request was initially filed with a now-retired employee, Commissioner Drury directed Ms. Leverette to look through any boxes in storage to see if the original request can be located.

In his comments Mr. Farrar also brought up the issue of bonds for certain county employees and the filing of a grievance against the bond if feel wronged against and provided an affidavit of such to the Commissioners. No action was taken by the Commission.

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Mr. John Sweatman, secretary for the Opelika Industrial Development Authority, presented a request to amend the Articles of Reincorporation for the entity. Mr. Sweatman stated for statutory proposes. the OIDA needs Commission approval to increase the number of board members from seven to nine. Judge Colley asked if this was the only change, with Mr. Sweatman stating it was. Commissioner Cannon made a motion to approve with Commissioner Morris seconding. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Hardee presented a speed limit reduction on a portion of Lee Road 040, from Lee Road 165 estimated to Lee Road 126, for Commission consideration. Mr. Hardee said a citizen approached the Highway Department asking to reduce the speed limit on the 1.81 mile section of the roadway which is in Commission District 5. The Highway Department conducted a traffic study and recommended the speed limit be reduced from 45 m.p.h. to 35 m.p.h., which is a reasonable and safe maximum speed limit. A location map was included in the packets. Commissioner LaGrand made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Langley, to approve the speed limit reduction from 45 m.p.h. to 35 m.p.h. on this portion of Lee Road 040. The motion carried unanimously.

Jeff Jennings presented the bid results for Bid #2025-07 for Milnor Washing Machines for the Lee County Detention Center. He stated three bids were sent out and bids were opened on July 8. He stated no bids were received and he has reached out to vendors to negotiate and would like to request the Commission to award the negotiated bid to Pellerin Laundry Machinery. He stated the cost of the machines increased from \$45,000 to \$58,130. Commissioner Drury asked if the amount was budgeted with Mr. Jennings stating the original budgeted amount was \$45,000 but there are other funds within the Building Maintenance budget which can be used to offset the extra cost. Commissioner Morris made a motion to award the negotiated bid to Pellerin which was seconded by Commissioner Drury. The motion passed unanimously.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:37 p.m.