

MINUTES OF THE LEE COUNTY COMMISSION, REGULAR TERM, SEPT 8, 2025

The Lee County Commission convened in regular session at the Courthouse in Opelika, Alabama, Monday, Sept. 8, 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.

Vikki Reed discussed the county attorney agenda item. She said she would like to be on the board or have citizens represented on the board to have a say on who serves Lee County. She stated that was a large expense and residents should be included in those discussions.

Commissioner Tony Langley said it had been 24 years since 9/11, a terrible tragedy in America with first responders going in knowing many may not make it out. He wanted everyone to remember those that fell that day and those who continue to serve. He asked that any first responders in the audience with the Sheriff, EMA, Fire or any first responder to stand and be recognized and he thanked them for their service.

Judge Colley recognized the elected officials in attendance: Sheriff Jay Jones, District Attorney Jessica Ventiere, Coroner Daniel Sexton and Opelika City Councilman Todd Rauch.

Commissioner LaGrand encouraged everyone to visit the Tunnel to Towers exhibit which is coming to Alabama for the first time. The mobile Never Forget exhibit, which will make Opelika its first stop, will be housed on the Southern Union campus. The exhibit features artifacts from Ground Zero, videos, audio, and tributes to the first responders who made the ultimate sacrifice. Tours will be conducted by retired New York City firefighters and first responders who were present that day. EMA Director Rita Smith stated planning for the event had been ongoing for more than a year; she said more than 1800 eighth graders were scheduled to see the exhibit. The exhibit is free and open to the public and will be in Opelika through Sept. 16.

County Administrator Holly Leverette recognized two employees for outstanding commitment to professional development. HR Director Lisa Ruffin and HR Technician Irene Lane earned the Certificate in County Administration from the Association of County Commissions of Alabama. To achieve the certification, recipients must complete four basic classes totaling 48 hours which included overview of County Government; Ethics; personnel administration and

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finance and revenue. In addition to the basic classes, participants must also choose a 12-hour elective course for a total of 60 hours which could include conflict management; general management and supervision; disaster preparedness and response; general accounting; communication and media relations; and legislative and governmental relations. Their certification reflects not only their commitment to their own growth but also to the citizens of the county.

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 Aug. 25, 2025. First reading of Bill White, Vicki Hudson and Gina Ivey were made to the DHR Board. Announcements were also made regarding openings on the Youth Development Center Board and two openings on the Lee County Recreation Board (District 3 and District 4). Commissioner Cannon made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda which was seconded by Commissioner Morris. The motion carried unanimously.

In Old Business, Judge Colley discussed the County Attorney hiring committee. He stated he had received the applications and requested for interim County Attorney Tutt Barrett as well as himself to be members of the committee. Ms. Leverette stated she had spoken to the new county COO, Mr. Blake Beck, who recommended that the committee be comprised of himself and two county commissioners. Commissioner Cannon made a motion for the committee to have the COO, Mr. Barrett, the Chair, Commissioners Morris and Drury and one citizen. Following discussion, it was determined the Commission would select the citizen from applications submitted by October 1. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Morris and passed unanimously.

Under New Business, Sheriff Jones presented an ABC License application for Retail Beer- Off Premises, Retail Table Wine- Off Premise and Tobacco Only sales for Americas Freedom Fuels 4 located in District 3. Sheriff Jones stated there were no objections to the license. Commissioner Drury made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Langley, to approve the following Resolution for issuance of the licenses to Americas Freedom Fuels 4. The motion passed unanimously.

BE IT RESOLVED, the Lee County Commission hereby approves the applications for a Retail Beer- Off Premises, Retail Table Wine- Off Premise and Tobacco Only licenses for Americas Freedom Fuels 4 located at 1350 Lee Road 230, Phenix City, Alabama.

Sheriff Jones presented an ABC License application for Retail Beer- Off Premises Only and Retail Table Wine- Off Premises Only for Dollar General Stores #30938 and #301014 both located in District 4. Sheriff Jones stated there were no objections to the license. Commissioner Langley made a motion, seconded by Commissioner LaGrand, to approve the following Resolution for issuance of the licenses to Dollar General The motion passed unanimously.

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BE IT RESOLVED, the Lee County Commission hereby approves the applications for a Retail Beer- Off Premises Only and Retail Table Wine- Off Premises Only licenses for Dollar General Store #30938 located at 7950 Lee Road 379, Salem, AL 36874 and Dollar General Store #31014 located at 911 Lee Road 250, Salem, AL, 36874.

Judge Colley stated the Appointing Authority evaluation sheets had been submitted to Attorney Robbie Hyde. He said she would compile the results for an average after which he would then meet with the appointing authorities to review their respective evaluations. Commissioner Cannon made a motion to authorize the meeting with Ms. Hyde and the appointing authorities which was seconded by Commissioner Morris. The motion passed unanimously.

The next item, the Morgue Capital Expanse Request, was removed from the agenda.

Ms. Leverette presented a partnership request from the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services. She stated the ARDS, the lead agency for the State Traumatic Brain Injury program, would be opening several Regional Traumatic Brain Injury Centers focusing on serving veterans and National Guard members, and wished to have one of the regional centers located in Lee County. She stated the main considerations were proximity to veteran services and adequate space as the needs included: access to five lockable offices, standard operating hours of 8 a.m.- 5 p.m., availability of a shared conference or meeting room, low congestion area with adequate parking and a preference for veteran-friendly facilities. Upon reviewing locations, it was determined the Bennie Adkins Meeting Center would fit their needs as the building has the space necessary and also houses the Veteran Services Officers.

Ms. April Tuner with ARDS addressed the commission and stated the other areas in consideration for regional centers include Mobile, Dothan, Birmingham and Huntsville. She said there is not another program in the US similar to this and is a free service provided in addition to services already offered by the VA. She said funding for the program comes from the Governor's state funding through the Veterans Steering Committee, so it is sustainable year after year.

Jamie Popwell, founder of Flags for Vets, addressed the Commission and shared this was a service much-needed in the area and shows the care the county has for the veterans and service members living here. Drew Lumpkin, with Operation Iron Ruck which raises awareness of veteran suicides, stated that per capita the state of Alabama was the worst in the country for veteran suicides with TBIs a direct cause. He said the Center would be a tremendous resource for those needing assistance and would allow for Lee County to be a leader in the state on this issue.

Ms. Turner stated the center has the support of the Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Mental Health. She stated there would be no on-site evaluations of TBIs, but will find out what services are needed, resources, screening and sending them to the clinic. Ms. Leverette stated if the Commission approved the partnership, it would need to authorize the chair to work with the attorney to draft an MOU; Ms. Turner stated they have a sample MOU

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being used by the other areas which can be provided. Commissioner LaGrand made the motion to approve the use of the Bennie Adkins Meeting Center for a regional TBI center by ARDS and authorize the chair to work with the attorney on the MOU. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Cannon and passed unanimously.

County Engineer Justin Hardee presented a request to post a portion of Lee Road 250 from US Highway 280 North to Lee Road 279 as a "No Trucks Route." Citizens have approached the Highway Department as well as Commissioner Langley to express concerns over the number of trucks using the road as a cut-through. Per a traffic study conducted in June 2025, 21% of the truck utilizes the roadway, which is double what is normally seen in the county. Because of that and the amount of residences on the route, the Highway Department is requesting the Commission to designate the portion of Lee Road 250 between US 280 and Lee Road 279 as a "No Trucks" route to prevent thru traffic and post signage stating such. A motion was made by Commissioner Langley to approve the designation which was seconded by Commissioner Drury. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Hardee presented the results of the Highway Department's FY2026 Annual Maintenance Bids. Mr. Hardee recommended the following vendors be awarded the maintenance bids. Commissioner Cannon made a motion to award the following vendors the maintenance bids and to extend the maintenance bids as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Morris and carried unanimously.

FY2025-2026 Highway Maintenance Bids

Bid#2025-09 – Class 3 Reinforced T&G Concrete Pipe-----Foley Products Company LLC

Bid#2025-10–Gasoline & Diesel Fuel (over 5000 gallons)-Petroleum Traders Corporation

Bid#2025-11 – Geotextiles-----Sunshine Supplies, Inc.

Bid#2025-12 – Grader Cutter Blades-----Thompson Tractor Co.

Wear Parts & Equipment Co. Inc

Bid#2025 -13 – Maintenance Stone-----Vulcan Materials Co. (#78, #89)

The following vendors were awarded a one (1) year extension period on the bids as stated in the bids under Section 2.1:

First Extension (FY 2024-2025)

Bid#2024-12 – Emulsified Asphalt-----Ergon Asphalt & Emulsions
(CRS-2, CRS-2P)

Bid#2024-13–Gasoline & Diesel Fuel (less than 5000 gallons)- Fletcher Oil Company

Bid#2024-15 – Maintenance Stone-----Vulcan Materials Company

(#1, #7, #8910, Gabion Stone 3in-8in)

Second Extension (FY 2023-2024)

Bid#2023-14 – Emulsified Asphalt-----Ergon Asphalt & Emulsions
(CMS-1PC)

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Bid#2023-15 – Maintenance Stone-----Martin Marietta (1"Crusher Run)
Wadley Crushed Stone (3/4" Crusher
Run, #4, #57, M-10, Class 1 Rip Rap,
Class 2 Rip Rap)
Bid#2023-16–Picked up at the Plant Bituminous Treatment-----East Alabama Paving Co.
Bid#2023-17 – Plant Cold Mix-----Advanced Asphalt Products

Next, Mr. Hardee presented a partial road acceptance for The Lakes Subdivision located in District 3. The ongoing issue concerns a subdivision constructed in the 1990s which was not built to county standards so the roads were not accepted into the county maintenance system. At issue is that Phenix City maintains portions that lie within their limits, but do not maintain small portions of individual lots that remain in the county in the same subdivision. For example, if a pothole is in front of a house which is in the county portion, it is not getting fixed as it was not accepted into the county maintenance system, but neither is the city maintaining it as it is not located within their city limits. A location map identifying the parcels at issue with specific addresses were included in the packet.

He stated the recommendation from the Highway Department to address the concerns of the citizens and Commissioner Drury, would be to accept only those portions that still lie in the County. Should a call come in from Lee Roads 500, 2024 or 2029 an address verification would be conducted and work in the public right-of-way would only be conducted on specific addresses marked as county. It is important to note that no portion of the roadway located across or near the dam is included. Judge Colley asked if the developer should be held responsible for the roads not being accepted; Mr. Barret stated that in general, until roads are accepted by the county it should be the developer. In addition, he stated a bond would be required to help prevent these situations however that was not required when this subdivision was constructed. Commissioner Drury made a motion to accept specific portions of Lee Roads 500, 2024 and 2029 into the county maintenance system, which was seconded by Commissioner LaGrand. The motion passed unanimously.

Environmental Services Director John McDonald provided an update on the weekend convenience center update. He stated that included in the packets was a listing of the tonnage numbers from each site so Commissioner could see the growth rate, fluctuations and trends. In the first weekend of operation of operation at the six sites (one open on Saturday only the rest Saturday and Sunday), 50 tons were collected. Now, on average the department is collected between 60-70 tons per weekend with one weekend at 140 tons and that is with the same 7 employees working the sites. He did say the Sheriff's Department provides inmate assistance at the busiest sites. Mr. McDonald said the growth reflects the issues beginning to see several of the same issues when the sites were open previously including large trailers of items which can overwhelm the staff and city residents and contractors utilizing the sites. He also stated he is concerned about future attrition with his staff due to the issues; in addition, he said the current number of staff is not sufficient to utilize mitigation measures discussed including checkpoints,

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cameras, etc., or any possible future boom truck routes. Commissioner Langley said the main focus needs to be the employees and their safety. Commissioner Drury asked if all the sites are now fenced, with Mr. McDonald stating that all except the one located at the Loachapoka Water Authority are fenced. Commissioner Drury asked for quotes on lighting and camera systems for those that don't have them as well as exploring monitoring options such as punch cards, stickers, etc. which would necessitate additional staffing needs. Mr. McDonald said he would contact other counties on their systems and report back to the Commission at a later date. No action was taken on this item.

Last, Safety/Governmental Relations Coordinator Wendy Swann presented for Commission consideration the Safety Incentive Discount Program Verification form for the current year. Ms. Swann said to qualify for the discount, the ACCA has tasked the members to meet several guidelines for the coverage year including: 1) appoint a Safety Coordinator, create a safety committee, complete Safety Coordinator training, conduct two county-wide safety meetings, four departmental safety meetings and maintain documentation; 2) Implement and Enforce drug/alcohol policies and procedures; 3) Conduct Employee Orientations for all employees; 4) Implement and Enforce a return to work/modified duty policy; 5) Implement and Enforce a written seat belt policy; 6) Implement and enforce a wireless communications devices policy; 7) Complete Public Officials and/or Administrative Staff loss prevention training; 8) Complete Sheriff's Office ACCA-sponsored Training Program: sending two correctional officers to three of four AJTA courses and two deputies to safety training; 9) Complete Road and Bridge Department training – R&B Safety Director and one road supervisor attend supervisor training; 10) Cooperate with Fund's Risk Management program; and 11) ensure IT staff completes CISA, password management and email phishing training.

Ms. Swann said all requirements to qualify for the SIDP discount will have been met for the current year by the required deadline. The Safety Committee continues to meet on a regular basis and addresses items including departmental safety concerns, trainings, quarterly reviews of accidents/losses and discusses any findings from walk through reviews by County Risk Services. Commissioner Cannon made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Morris to authorize the Chairman to sign the Safety Incentive Verification form for the current year. The motion carried unanimously.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:08 p.m.