

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
OF THE ETOWAH COUNTY COMMISSION
ETOWAH COUNTY, ALABAMA
MARCH 15, 2022**

PUBLIC HEARING

Robert Nail, County Engineer, conducted a public hearing concerning the vacation of a portion of Jessie Avenue (in the Coats Bend Community).

Commissioner Johnny Grant called the meeting to order on the 15th Day of March, 2022 at 9:00 am with Commissioner Washington asking the Prayer and leading the Pledge to the Flag.

CALL OF ROLL TO ESTABLISH A QUORUM: The following 5 out of 6 Commission members were at the meeting and accordingly a quorum was present:

District 1 – Joey Statum
District 2 - Johnny Grant
District 3 – Jamie Grant

District 4 – Tim Ramsey
District 5 – Jeffery Washington

Absent: District 6 - Craig Inzer

PUBLIC COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS: Two people signed in to speak about the late fee on property tax that went into effect this year. Ms. Naylor and Mr. Simmons each explained their individual issues - in one case a parcel was left out when the property was recorded and a correction was going to be made. The Revenue Clerk was going by the information she had but once the correction is made in the Probate Office, the fee can be reimbursed. The other situation involved multiple parcels of property and 5 of 6 were paid and then a late fee was charged on the one that was missed.

Both Citizens were thanked for coming in to express their concerns to the Commission. They were assured as with any situation, any fee caused by a clerical error will be corrected.

PUBLIC COMMENTS FROM ELECTED OFFICIALS AND OTHERS: Revenue Commissioner Becky Nordgren said according to the State, the burden lies on the property owner and they only send out the notices as a courtesy. She apologized for the frustration the workers are experiencing because it's a new tax. She thinks the fee may help with those chronically late but thinks it's excessive in some cases when the amount of the tax is a small amount, it can be over 1,000%. She said she believes elected officials should serve the public first and this is new for everyone. She believes the statutes allows the Commission to make changes and is asking them to revisit it because the ones owing the least have to pay the greatest penalty.

Commissioner Ramsey said he has received about 6 phone calls with people complaining about the new tax fine, which he has been discussing for the last 3 weeks, and he would like to discuss giving a one-time grace for some of these issues and thinks the fee is too high.

Commissioner Jamie Grant said he thinks it should be looked at on a case-by-case basis.

Probate Judge Scott Hassell said he was working on a project with the Board of Registrars to get an updated map which is needed due to redistricting. He said it will show the exact line (online) so everyone will know which District they are in. He also said the student poll workers will be allowed to participate again this year and Shane & Kevin have found the funds to pay the students like they were paid with Covid Funds in the last election. Scott also reminded everyone that instead of voting at Elliott Community Center, those voters will be at Dwight Baptist Church for the 2022 elections (due to Elliott CC being torn down). He said the Mobile Mental Health Program will be ready to go as soon as they hear back from CRS (liability insurance) and the County Attorney.

AWARDS, PRESENTATIONS, PROCLAMATIONS, OR ANNOUNCEMENTS: Becky Nordgren, Revenue Commissioner, presented Casey Reaves a Certificate for 20 Years of Service. Casey works in the Mapping Department and she said she appreciated Casey and was proud to give him the award. She said he is a great employee and he loves his job. Casey thanked the Revenue Commissioner and the County Commission and said he appreciated working in such a great environment. He also thanked his Supervisor, Tina Denson.

Upon motion of Commissioner Statum, seconded by Commissioner Ramsey, with all other members voting "yes", the following resolution was adopted:

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE ETOWAH COUNTY COMMISSION: That the following item was approved:

To recess in order to have a Work Session at 9:32 am.

PASSED AND ADOPTED THIS 15th DAY OF MARCH, 2022.

Upon motion of Commissioner Ramsey, seconded by Commissioner Washington, with all other members voting “yes”, the following resolution was adopted:

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE ETOWAH COUNTY COMMISSION: That the following item was approved:

To call the Etowah County Commission Meeting back to order at 9:38 am.

PASSED AND ADOPTED THIS 15th DAY OF MARCH, 2022.

OLD BUSINESS: None.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Upon motion of Commissioner Statum seconded by Commissioner Ramsey, with all other members present voting “yes”, the following resolution was passed and adopted:

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE ETOWAH COUNTY COMMISSION: That the following items on the Consent Agenda were approved as presented:

CONSENT AGENDA: All items designated as “Consent” are considered to be routine and non-controversial and will be approved by one motion. No separate discussion of these items will be permitted unless a Commissioner so requests. If so, such item(s) will revert to New Business.

- A. That the Minutes of the Regular Meetings dated February 22, 2022 and March 1, 2022 of the Etowah County Commission be, and the same are hereby approved as written.
- B. The Proposed Agenda for March 15, 2022
- C. Reported Financial Transactions. A copy of the Cash Disbursements, Online Transfers, and Wire Transfers for February, 2022, has been filed in Attachment Book 12, Page 67.
- D. To approve the request of Melissa Lett, Purchasing Accountant, to let a new bid for Election Advertising – Probate.
- E. To approve the request of Melissa Lett, Purchasing Accountant, to award Bid No FY 2021-2022-10 Inmate Uniforms to Bob Barker Company, Inc., the lowest responsible bidder.
- F. To approve the request of Melissa Lett, Purchasing Accountant, to award Bid No FY 2021-2022-09 Printing – Letterhead, Envelopes, & Forms to First Impressions, the sole bidder.
- G. To approve the request of Melissa Lett, Purchasing Accountant, to award Bid No FY 2021-2022-06 Unfinished Traffic Signs to G & C Supply Company, Inc., the lowest bidder of posts.
- H. To place the name of Christopher Roden in the Sheriff’s Office job slot of Detention Deputy, effective March 14, 2022. This is a replacement to be paid from the Jail Fund, at an hourly rate of \$14.98.
- I. To place the name of Taylor Cranford in the Sheriff’s Office job slot of Detention Deputy, effective March 14, 2022. This is a replacement to be paid from the Jail Fund, at an hourly rate of \$14.98.
- J. To place the name of Jordan Hodge in the Sheriff’s Office job slot of Deputy Sheriff/Trainee, effective March 7, 2022. This is a replacement to be paid from the Sheriff’s Office, General Fund, at an hourly rate of \$14.62.
- K. To approve the request of Becky Nordgren, Revenue Commissioner, to hire Gail Mashburn as a Revenue Tag & Title Clerk, effective March 15, 2022. This is a replacement to be paid from the General – Revenue Fund, at an hourly rate of \$12.00.

PASSED AND ADOPTED THIS 15th DAY OF MARCH, 2022.

NEW BUSINESS:

Upon motion of Commissioner Johnny Grant, seconded by Commissioner Ramsey, with all other members voting “yes”, the following resolution was adopted:

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE ETOWAH COUNTY COMMISSION: That the following item was approved:

The ‘Resolution of Assent’ to Vacate a portion of Jessie Avenue, as recommended by the County Engineer, Robert Nail, certifying that all of the criteria have been met. A copy of this Resolution is filed in Attachment Book 12, Page 68.

PASSED AND ADOPTED THIS 15th DAY OF MARCH, 2022.

Upon motion of Commissioner Washington, seconded by Commissioner Jamie Grant, with all other members voting “yes”, the following resolution was adopted:

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE ETOWAH COUNTY COMMISSION: That the following item was approved:

The request of the Chief Administrative Office to approve a contract addendum for B. Craig Lipscomb, Architect, for the additional ‘architectural and engineering’ services in the amount of \$9,480 for the Board of Education Building. Additional

services include IT infrastructure plans and specifications throughout the building and design services for the existing teller area. A copy of this addendum is filed in Attachment Book 12, Page 69.

PASSED AND ADOPTED THIS 15th DAY OF MARCH, 2022.

Upon motion of Commissioner Ramsey, seconded by Commissioner Washington, with all other members voting “yes”, the following resolution was adopted:

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE ETOWAH COUNTY COMMISSION: That the following item was approved:

To have the First Reading to appoint Margarett Fuhrman to the Etowah County Department of Human Resources Board. Margarett Fuhrman will replace Jean Foster, who tendered her resignation from the board.

PASSED AND ADOPTED THIS 15th DAY OF MARCH, 2022.

Upon motion of Commissioner Ramsey, seconded by Commissioner Jamie Grant, with all other members voting “yes”, the following resolution was adopted:

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE ETOWAH COUNTY COMMISSION: That the following item was approved:

To have the First Reading for ABC License Application Type 060-Retail Table Wine (ON or OFF Premises) for applicant **AHAVA SPRINGS LLC (David Anthony Carrell)** under the trade name, **AHAVA SPRINGS WINERY, located at 954 Sumatanga Road, Gallant, AL 35972.**

PASSED AND ADOPTED THIS 15th DAY OF MARCH, 2022.

Upon motion of Commissioner Statum, seconded by Commissioner Washington, with all other members voting “yes”, the following resolution was adopted:

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE ETOWAH COUNTY COMMISSION: That the following item was approved:

To approve the Fiscal Year 2022 Certifications and Assurances for Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Assistance and to authorize the Commission President to execute the Agreement.

PASSED AND ADOPTED THIS 15th DAY OF MARCH, 2022.

Upon motion of Commissioner Statum, seconded by Commissioner Ramsey, with all other members voting “yes”, the following resolution was adopted:

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE ETOWAH COUNTY COMMISSION: That the following item was approved:

To renew the hunting lease with Mark Gullede and Allen Woodall (Wesson Lake Hunting Club) for one year from April 16, 2022 to April 16, 2023, with options for two additional one-year extensions and to authorize the CAO to execute the document. A copy of this agreement has been filed in Attachment Book 12, Page 70.

PASSED AND ADOPTED THIS 15th DAY OF MARCH, 2022

Upon motion of Commissioner Jamie Grant, seconded by Commissioner Washington, with all other members voting “yes”, the following resolution was adopted:

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE ETOWAH COUNTY COMMISSION: That the following item was approved:

To authorize an Executive Session, to discuss business and commerce, after a roll call vote with the majority approving the session. This was certified by the County Attorney as meeting the criteria that will allow an executive session. In addition to the Commissioners and the County Attorney, Kevin Dollar and Shane Ellison will also attend the session. District 1- yes; District 2 – yes; District 3 – yes; District 4 – yes; and District 5 – yes. The meeting was dismissed for Executive Session at 10:05 am.

PASSED AND ADOPTED THIS 15th DAY OF MARCH, 2022

Upon motion of Commissioner Statum, seconded by Commissioner Ramsey, with all other members voting “yes”, the following resolution was adopted:

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE ETOWAH COUNTY COMMISSION: That the following item was approved:

To reconvene from Executive Session at 11:00 am.

PASSED AND ADOPTED THIS 15th DAY OF MARCH, 2022.

REPORTS FROM THE STAFF:

Chief Administrative Officer: Shane said we will not meet next week (March 22nd) and the next work session will be on March 29, 2022. There are at least 3 local elementary schools with Robotic Teams that will be competing in Dallas, Texas in May. They are asking for donation to help pay for travel and these are tax deductible. (Duck Springs, Etowah, & Ivalee). There may be other schools and Shane said he would check on it. Shane will also meet with Alabama Power and GMC on Thursday at Little Canoe Creek and he sent in the Billboard proof to be updated.

County Engineer: No Report.

County Attorney: No Report.

Other: No Report.

DISCUSSION BY COMMISSIONERS:

Commissioner Washington thanked everyone for coming and said hopefully we can do something about the property tax late fee.

Commissioner Ramsey thanked Mr. Simmons & Ms. Naylor for coming to the meeting and making their concerns known. He said he would like to see a committee to meet with Becky about the issues & how they can be improved. He feels the Legislative Act needs to be tweaked a little. He also said he is glad to see things going on at the Megasite and everyone moving forward. He complimented Casey for being a dedicated employee and for being someone his fellow employees talk about in a positive way.

Commissioner Jamie Grant thanked Casey for his dedication & attitude and thanked everyone for coming to the meeting. He thanked the citizens for coming to express their concerns and thanked Robert Nail for all he has done to help out in his District the last couple of weeks.

Commissioner Statum thanked Casey for all he does and for his 20 years of dealing with the public. He said he is not for changing the late fee on property tax and pointed out that everyone had heard Commissioner Ramsey's concerns for the last 9 months about the condition of the roads in his District. He said 47.5% of the late fee is to be used on the roads and it's a late penalty, not a tax. It is modeled after the one they have in DeKalb County and they use their fee for rural water. He said a few people were late every year but your taxes are due on October 1st of the year and you have a 90-day leeway with the last day to pay without penalty being December 31st. He said it will be better next year because word will get out but the Resolution to add the late penalty was signed by all Commissioners. The money generated from the penalty is divided between Roads & Bridges (47.5%); the Megasite (40%); and the Revenue Commissioner (12.5%). We have just voted \$200,000 of money that had been set aside to be transferred for Road work and this new penalty has added \$250,000 for Road Work.

Commissioner Johnny Grant thanked everyone for coming.

ADJOURN: The Chair then entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting. Upon motion of Commissioner Washington, seconded by Commissioner Inzer, with all other members voting "yes", the motion was passed. The meeting was adjourned at 11:05 am.

Joey Statum, Commissioner, District 1

Tim Ramsey, Commissioner, District 4

Johnny Grant, President, Commissioner, District 2

Jeffery Washington, Commissioner, District 5

Jamie W. Grant, Commissioner, District 3

Absent

Craig Inzer, Jr., Commissioner, District 6