

The Geneva County Commission met in regular session on Monday, September 27, 2021, at 9:30 a.m. at the Geneva County Courthouse in Geneva, Alabama.

Commission Chairman Toby Seay called the meeting to order and welcomed guests present. Commissioner Fulford opened the meeting with prayer. Chairman Seay led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

There were no elected officials requesting to make public comment.

There were no citizens requesting to make public comment.

Commission Chairman Seay called the roll, and the following members were present: Commissioners Weston Spivey, Todd Brannon, Bart Wilks, and Wade Fulford. County Attorney Phil Eldridge; County Engineer, Justin Barfield; Assistant County Engineer, Mike Shirah; Sheriff, Tony Helms; Revenue Commissioner, Mary Ann Ellison; Solid Waste Director, Dawn Smith; EMA Director, Brian Smith and County Administrator Cindy Williams were also present. The following business was transacted:

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING

#### NEW BUSINESS:

1. Approve Minutes of September 13, 2021. Commissioner Brannon made a motion to approve the minutes of September 13, 2021. Commissioner Spivey seconded the motion. Vote was 4-0.
2. Judge Seay stated Mr. Scott Farmer with Southeast Alabama Regional Planning & Development had been inadvertently left off the agenda and asked for a motion to allow him to speak. Commissioner Fulford made a motion to allow Mr. Farmer to speak. Commissioner Spivey seconded the motion. Vote was 4-0. Mr. Farmer was present to discuss the redistricting of the County that will be required due to the 2020 Census. There is greater than a 10% deviation in some districts and that requires redistricting. Districts 1 and 3 have the most deviation. Mr. Farmer continued that he could go through the process with the Commission, there should be a public hearing set which should be advertised for two weeks, and he can set up a workshop with the Commission after the next scheduled Commission meeting on October 12, 2021. The boundary between districts two and three are the main concern at this point. The final redistricting must be in place by November 24, 2021, to be compliant with the statute for the May 2022 primary election. There will be a \$3,500.00 fee for this service. Commissioner Spivey made a motion to enter into an agreement with Southeast Alabama Regional Planning & Development for redistricting the County for a fee of \$3,500.00. Commissioner

Wilks seconded the motion. Vote was 4-0. Chairman Seay also asked Mr. Farmer to give an update on the four-lane feasibility study. Mr. Farmer stated that we had received the planning grant for the feasibility study to four-lane State Highway 52 from Malvern to Hartford and State Highway 167 from the Florida line to Enterprise. He stated this was not high on the State's priority list but if we could move forward with the feasibility study it would increase the chances of having four lane roads in the County. The State has taken over the portion from Malvern to Hartford so for the grant and feasibility study a change is being made for our grant of doing a study on a four lane from Hartford to Geneva. He is hopeful the study will get underway next year.

3. Proclamations/Resolutions: None
4. Bids: None
5. Board Appointments: None

**OLD BUSINESS:**

1. Board Appointments – None
2. Bids – None
3. Spec Building – Chairman Seay stated that the final punch list items are being completed and the advertising on the project can begin. This item can be removed from the agenda.
4. Courtroom Renovation/Old Jail renovation – There are stains on some sound panels, and they may have to be replaced. There are eight (8) items that remain on the punch list, but they are all being addressed and should be completed within the next week. Attorney Eldridge stated he had a Certificate of Substantial Completion from JMR+H that required the Chairman's signature. Commissioner Wilks made a motion to allow Chairman Seay to sign the Certificate of Substantial Completion. Commissioner Spivey seconded the motion. Vote was 4-0.
5. Budget – Commissioner Fulford made a motion to move the budget discussion to the end of the meeting. Commissioner Spivey seconded the motion. Vote was 4-0.

**REPORTS OF STAFF:**

**Sheriff:** Sheriff Helms stated that the aluminum racks for the Coroner's cooler for storage of bodies have been installed. The racks were donated by Outdoor Aluminum. There were several items discovered on the final walk-through at the jail. The air handlers are not working properly, and Carrier has been called to work on the issues. Thorn Electric has been notified about the generator and electrical problems. The vent hood in the kitchen shuts off and there is no explanation for the problem. These issues were addressed at the final close out meeting on the jail. There were questions and discussion regarding the size of the generator if it could handle everything and also if there should be a gas hood instead of electric. It was stated that the architect had advised against a gas hood.

The Sheriff said that he is working with Administrator Williams on a new Covid grant program for detention facilities. They have participated in a webinar and are gathering information to apply for items through the grant.

**County Administrator:** Mrs. Williams stated that she had a contract from MDI for waste disposal services that required the Chairman's signature. The contract is for three years at the same rates as we are currently paying for the services which is \$80.00 for the Courthouse and \$190.00 for the jail. Commissioner Wilks made a motion to allow Chairman Seay to sign the three-year contract with MDI for waste disposal services. Commissioner Brannon seconded the motion. Vote was 4-0.

Mrs. Williams also had the yearly contract with SARCOA for the In-Home Service department in the amount of \$13,000.00 that requires the Chairman's signature. Commissioner Fulford made a motion to allow Chairman Seay to sign the SARCOA agreement for FY2022. Commissioner Wilks seconded the motion. Vote was 4-0.

Mrs. Williams stated that at a past meeting the deposit and rental fee had been discussed for the Farm Center, but no decision was made. She stated that currently the deposit is \$50.00, and the rental fee is \$75.00. The deposit is not enough to cover most damages that occur to the property. After discussion Commissioner Wilks made a motion to raise the deposit on the Farm Center to \$250.00 and the rental fee to \$100.00, effective today. Commissioner Fulford seconded the motion. Vote was 4-0.

Administrator Williams stated that a four-day work week for the Courthouse had previously been discussed but no decision had been made. Due to Covid it would allow the maintenance employees time to thoroughly clean the Courthouse and for it to sit with no one inside for three days. There are two surrounding counties that have four-day work weeks, and they say it has helped with absenteeism and employee morale. Chairman Seay also reiterated these items and asked the Commission to consider the proposal. After much discussion Commissioner Wilks made a motion that beginning January 1, 2022, for a period of a six-month trial, the Courthouse would be open from 7:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday and closed on Friday. At the end of the six-month period it will be re-evaluated.

**County Engineer:** Engineer Barfield stated that the paving project on County Road 49 was complete, and they were working on the shoulder work and stripping. The paving project on County Road 8 (Goose Hollow Road) will begin next week. The contracted mowing of right of ways is nearing completion. They are currently in the Samson area and should be completed next week. He is looking at contracting out the mowing of right of ways again next year if the current work environment continues. His plans are for his department to be blading dirt roads this week and to utilize the tractors and box blades also to cover more ground. They are also planning to work Friday and Saturday to attempt to get as many roads bladed as possible. Currently there are fifteen (15) driveway pipes scheduled for installation. These are pushed out about one month.

**County Attorney:** Attorney Eldridge stated that he has prepared the Tower Use Agreement with E911 for its contractor. This is for the new software management program being installed for use by the Sheriff's Department and Jail. The County's IT

provider, Mr. Todd Medley with Foxhill, has also reviewed the agreement and approves. The agreement is that E911 and the company installing the hardware to our tower will use it only for the services for the County and not for personal use.

Attorney Eldridge also presented a resolution for the American Rescue Plan Act which designate the preliminary projects for use of the Fiscal Recovery Plan funds received under the American Rescue Plan, which he prepared at the request of the Chairman. He gave the Commissioners a copy for them to consider at a later meeting. This required much work including extensive reading and notes on the 151-page interim final rule and the 28 pages of frequently asked questions.

Mr. Eldridge stated the jail contract with the cities is up for renewal and he has new contracts prepared. These are with the four major cities in the County for housing of their city inmates in the Geneva County Jail. The contract would be for three (3) years. There has not been an increase in price since 2015 and with the expense of housing inmates in the new jail a price increase is warranted. The contract remains the same except for the cost per day which is going from \$20.00 per day to \$40.00 per day and from \$10.00 to \$20.00 on the nurses visit. These fees include housing and feeding of inmates. Commissioner Brannon made a motion to approve the contracts with the cities for housing of City inmates and the Sheriff should get the cities to sign the contracts. Commissioner Spivey seconded the motion. Vote was 4-0.

Attorney Eldridge also had an agreement from Administrator Williams for a Reciprocal Agreement between the State of Alabama Department of Revenue and Geneva County providing for the exchange of tax returns and information. This agreement has been in place but was amended during the 2019 Regular Session, Act 2019-101 was enacted to make certain updates to Section 40-2A-10 and the Department has updated its corresponding Rule 810-14-1-.29 General Disclosure and Exchange of Information Guidelines to mirror the changes in the statute and requires a new agreement.

Commissioner Spivey made a motion to allow Chairman Seay to sign the Reciprocal Agreement between the State of Alabama Department of Revenue and Geneva County providing for the exchange of tax returns and information. Commissioner Brannon seconded the motion. Vote was 4-0.

Mr. Eldridge informed the Commission that he will not be present at the October 12, 2021, Commission meeting.

**Chairman Seay:** Chairman Seay stated that he has received an agreement for engineering services from Southern Engineering Solutions for professional engineering services and consultation performed relative to the Engineering Design, and preparation of plans and specifications for construction of FY2022 Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside Program Project No. TAPAA-TA22(917) Sidewalk Replacement in the front of the Courthouse on Commerce Street. Southern Engineering Solutions had applied on behalf of the County for the grant. The cost for engineering design and overseeing the project will be \$22,600.00. Commissioner Wilks made a motion to accept the agreement with Southern Engineering Solutions and allow Chairman Seay to sign the agreement. Commissioner Brannon seconded the motion. Vote was 4-0.

Recently there was a fall in the Courthouse which has led us to the conclusion that our camera security system needs to be upgraded. We have been unable to obtain the footage to present to the Insurance Company due to the age of the system and it not being

compatible with new technology. We will be researching new systems and present information at a future Commission meeting.

Law Enforcement Appreciation dinner has been scheduled for October 26, 2021, at 6:30 p.m. at the Farm Center. Chairman Seay is asking that the rental fee be waved at the Farm Center for this event. Commissioner Wilks made a motion to wave the fee at the Farm Center for the Law Enforcement Appreciation dinner. Commissioner Brannon seconded the motion. Vote was 4-0.

Chairman Seay reminded the Commission that October 28, 2021, there will be an Investing with Alabama Counties meeting at 12:30 p.m. at the Ag Plex in Ozark and the ACCA District meeting will be held that same night at 6:00 in Ozark at the Hoppergrass Restaurant.

Chairman Seay asked permission from the Commission to sign a long-term detention subsidy contract for juvenile detention with Southeast Alabama Diversion Center. Commissioner Brannon made a motion to allow Chairman Seay to sign the juvenile detention contract with Southeast Alabama Diversion Center. Commissioner Wilks seconded the motion. Vote was 4-0.

The Chairman stated that agreements had been signed by the City of Hartford and Air Performance regarding the County selling five acres of the Industrial Park to Wiregrass Electric. Attorney Eldridge stated that a public hearing is required. He will prepare the advertising and schedule the hearing after the October 25, 2021, Commission meeting.

**Revenue Commissioner:** Ms. Ellison stated her department was prepared for property tax collections to begin October 1, 2021. Laney Adkinson from her department will be in Slocomb at the City Hall every Wednesday in October and November again this year to assist residents with tax collection. Ms. Ellison informed the Commission that there are 2,170 homes in the County that are exempt from property tax.

**EMA Director:** Mr. Smith stated that he had attended a class in Decatur a few weeks ago and has two more conferences he will be attending this year. He presented the Commissioners with an EMA guideline to elected officials.

**Solid Waste Director:** Mrs. Smith presented the Commission with a request for adding a bathroom facility onto the building at the Solid Waste yard. There is already a septic tank, water line and electrical at the building.

**E-911:** Mr. Jeremy Williams was not present but sent word to Chairman Seay that the jail software training was scheduled for October 5 – 7, 2021. All cities have joined and are on board for the new software program.

**Auburn Extension:** Ms. Marks sent word that the Fish Fry and Forestry meeting had been cancelled.

**Commissioner's:** None of the Commissioners had anything further to add.

Administrator Williams provided the Commissioners with a proposed budget for FY2022. The Commissioners reviewed the budget and discussion began.

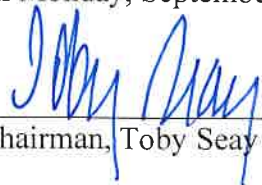
Sheriff Helms stated that he had obtained quotes from Stivers Ford for F150 trucks. The cost is \$34,037.00 per truck and they should be in before the calendar year end. These are on State bid and the Sheriff will furnish written proof of same. He also has financing information from Ford Credit at a rate of 6.35% on a four-year and five-year lease. His plan is to replace some of the oldest Tahoe's in his inventory. The Commission asked the Administrator to check on financing rates with Trustmark, and Bancorp. The Sheriff stated that the generator used for the old jail could be used for the Coroner's cooler. Engineer Barfield discussed the FY2022 Transportation Plan, and the funds needed to complete the project. Funds will come from the Federal Aid Fund, Rebuild Alabama Fund, and the RRR Fund. He is certain he will need funds from the Jail Fund, which are also for Road and Bridge, to be able to completely fund the project. Commissioner Wilks made a motion to allow the remaining funds required for the FY 2022 Transportation Plan, after funds from the Federal Aid Fund, Rebuild Alabama Fund and RRR Fund have been expended, to be moved from the Jail account. Commissioner Brannon seconded the motion. Vote was 4-0.


Chairman Seay stated there is a court cost that is restricted for maintenance of the jail that builds approximately \$50,000 per year. These funds should be set aside in a separate account or at least a separate cash account for the maintenance of the jail. Currently it may not be needed but years down the road it will be needed for the upkeep and maintenance of the jail. He also stated that a portion of funds from the Jail Fund could be set aside with the court cost funds for this purpose. Commissioner Brannon made a motion to set up a separate cash account for the Court costs for the Jail maintenance and add an additional \$50,000 per year from the Jail Fund. Commissioner Wilks seconded the motion. Vote was 4-0.

Commissioner Wilks made a motion to approve the FY2022 budget with a 2% pay increase for all employees. Commissioner Brannon seconded the motion. Vote was 4-0.

Commissioner Spivey made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Fulford seconded the motion. Vote was 4-0.

The above constitutes the minutes of the meeting of the Geneva County Commission held on Monday, September 27, 2021.

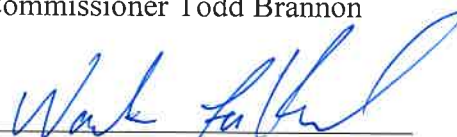
  
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Chairman, Toby Seay

  
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Cindy Williams  
County Administrator

  
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Commissioner Weston Spivey

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Commissioner Todd Brannon

  
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