

MINUTES OF EMERGENCY MEETING

MONTGOMERY COUNTY COMMISSION

MARCH 17, 2020

FORMAL SESSION

Chairman Dean called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m. The meeting was held at the Montgomery County Administration Building and Courthouse Annex III.

The meeting was opened with prayer led by Commissioner Singleton.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chairman Dean.

Interim Administrator Cauthen called Roll to establish a quorum, and the following Commissioners were present: Chairman Dean, Vice Chairman Walker, Commissioner Harris and Commissioner Singleton. Commissioner Sankey was on teleconference. Also present was County Engineer George C. Speake.

NEW BUSINESS

Chairman Dean asked Personnel Director Carmen Douglas to brief the Commission regarding the City's plans concerning the COVID-19 Coronavirus Epidemic. Ms. Douglas stated that all City buildings are closed to the public and only City employees are allowed in the buildings.

Chairman Dean explained that the Emergency Meeting was called in order to gather information from Elected Officials and Department Heads on how they would handle the closing of their offices.

Presiding Circuit Judge Johnny Hardwick explained that Chief Justice of the Alabama Supreme Court issued an Administrative Order declaring that we should limit in person contact in the courthouse with certain exceptions. Judge Hardwick stated that they are going to get as close to closing as they can without being closed. He stated that they would do a lot of business online.

Commissioner Harris stated that the Commission has an issue as to constitutional rights based on actions that are taken in the Probate Judge's Office and the Revenue Commissioner's Office. He noted that there are filing requirements according to Alabama Law. He expressed his concern with the language in the Resolution that shuts down everything noting that, unless these requirements of filing documents are waived during this time, a lot of citizens' property rights will be put in jeopardy.

Revenue Commissioner Janet Buskey stated that they would be able to conduct the majority of business online and by mail. She noted that no one's property rights will be violated if the buildings close.

Probate Judge J C Love, III stated that his office would reduce manpower and close all tag lines. Online and mail-in services will not be interrupted.

Judge Love stated that the Election employees will not be able to work from home due to the March 31, 2020 run-off elections. He noted that the Secretary of State is waiting for an Attorney General's opinion on whether the Governor has the authority in an emergency to postpone an election.

Congresswoman Terri Sewell commended the County Commission for taking necessary steps to protect the citizens of Montgomery County and contain the virus to stop its spread.

Judge Hardwick stated that the housekeeping employees are our first line of defense in sanitizing the offices. Personnel Director Douglas said that if a decision is made to close buildings to the public, employees who perform essential functions would still need to come to work.

Interim Administrator Cauthen read a Resolution that was adopted in 2006 regarding the closing of County buildings when situations determine it necessary. (Copy of Resolution, Agenda Page 2-1, is attached to these Minutes.)

Chairman Dean stated that he called this Emergency Meeting so that all of the Elected Officials and Department Heads could help make this decision.

Commissioner Singleton suggested that the County follow the lead of the City, which is operations are full and functioning but there is no public access to the buildings.. He stated that the State may intervene soon to make the decision for us.

Commissioner Harris stated that the employees who do not have to be at work should not be here. Vice Chairman Walker stated that the purpose of this meeting is to discuss what would be best for the County.

Finance Director Sherrill Thomas stated that her office was essential because they process payroll and pay vendors. She stated that they will follow the rules and intend to be at work every day.

Revenue Manager Terri Henderson stated that they have online and mail in services and does not expect any interruptions. She noted that a lot of the staff members can work from home and have already taken steps to transition.

Attorney Ben McGough with the District Attorney's Office stated that District Attorney Daryl Bailey is planning to work with a limited staff in the office on a ten day rotation. He noted that several grand juries and trials have been cancelled for March and April. He stated that most work can be done remotely.

Information Technology Manager Rodney Smith stated that anyone who has a voice mail will be able to access it from home and that the IT department will be available to serve the needs of the employees.

County Engineer George Speake stated that the he can disburse their field crews and that their office staff can work from the office or home.

Chairman Dean stated that all County travel is cancelled.

COUNTY COMMISSION – ADOPTED RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY COMMISSION TO CLOSE ALL MONTGOMERY COUNTY FACILITIES TO THE PUBLIC AND TO TAKE OTHER NECESSARY STEPS TO PROTECT EMPLOYEES AND THE PUBLIC BECAUSE OF THE COVID-19 CORONAVIRUS EPIDEMIC. THE DURATION OF THIS RESOLUTION WOULD BE THROUGH MARCH 31, 2020

Vice Chairman Walker made a motion to adopt a Resolution authorizing the Montgomery County Commission to close all Montgomery County Facilities to the Public and to take Other Necessary Steps to Protect Employees and the Public because of the Covid-19 Coronavirus Epidemic. The Duration of this Resolution would be through March 31, 2020. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Singleton and unanimously approved by the Commission. (Copy of Resolution, Agenda Page 1-1, is attached to these Minutes.)

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Harris made a motion to adjourn the meeting of the Montgomery County Commission on March 17, 2020, at 2:14 p.m. The motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Walker and unanimously approved by the Commission.

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the Montgomery County Commission has joined the State and Federal Government in declaring an emergency due to the COVID-19 Coronavirus epidemic; and

WHEREAS, public health agencies have recommended the practice of social distancing and self-isolation to slow the spread of the pandemic to assist healthcare providers in keeping the number of those experiencing severe symptoms at a manageable level; and

WHEREAS, operations of local schools have been suspended, creating childcare issues for many employees; and

WHEREAS, it is anticipated that additional orders and recommendations from the State and Federal level will make it increasingly difficult to maintain routine operations;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY COMMISSION, that Montgomery County facilities shall be closed to the public and that the Montgomery County Commission will take all other necessary steps to protect employees and the public during the COVID-19 Coronavirus epidemic.

We hereby certify that the above
Resolution was adopted by the
Montgomery County Commission
on this, the 17th day of March, 2020.

CHAIRMAN ELTON N. DEAN, SR.

VICE CHAIRMAN RONDA M. WALKER

COMMISSIONER DANIEL HARRIS, JR.

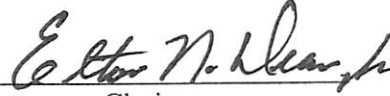
COMMISSIONER ISAIAH SANKEY

COMMISSIONER DOUG SINGLETON

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Commission at this time, the meeting stood adjourned until Tuesday, March 24, 2020, at 3:30 in the afternoon.


Interim County Administrator


Chairman