

STATE OF ALABAMA)
COLBERT COUNTY)

Minutes of a Regular Meeting
of the
Colbert County Commission
2/18/2025

The Colbert County Commission met today in regular session at the Colbert County Courthouse. Chairperson Bailey called the work session to order at 5:00 p.m. with the regular meeting following at 5:50 p.m., the time and place previously scheduled for such work session and regular meeting. All Commissioners answered “present” at the call of the roll except for Commissioner Tommy Barnes who was absent. Commissioner Bendall offered the prayer and led the Pledge of Allegiance. Chairperson Bailey declared that a quorum was present for the purpose of the transaction of business.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chairperson Tori Bailey opened with comments about the recent storm. She acknowledged and thanked the many people who have been working very hard to clean up storm damage and keep the public safe. She expressed the Commission’s gratitude to the Sheriff’s department for directing traffic, and to the EMA department for working tirelessly all night long. Bailey read a letter from Eddie Gilbert who is the director of the Limestone County EMA extending his sincerest gratitude to our County and especially to EMA for their dedicated response to the mutual aid request following the December 28 & 29 tornado that impacted the City of Athens. “There we were helping someone else and now it’s our turn.” Bailey proudly stated “Our guys have been incredibly wonderful about extending assistance.”

Tuscumbia Mayor William Foster expressed his gratitude to the EMA, Sheriff Balentine, and the County. Mayor Foster stated that over 900,000 lbs. of debris had been collected just today and almost 400,000 lbs. were collected yesterday. Mayor Foster stated that today they are going to get started on removal. Foster stated that the City of Tuscumbia has been very fortunate to have so much support from surrounding communities. The night of the tornado, help came from the County, the City of Sheffield, and the City of Muscle Shoals. Mayor Foster expressed the City’s gratitude for local police and volunteer fire departments, stating that all 14 volunteer departments provided help by clearing roads for ambulances. Mayor Foster noted that despite the storm’s severity, there were no deaths or serious injuries. Four other municipalities were called in to help with the power outages. The City was without power for sewer and water treatment for a period of time, which is critical to maintain. Mayor Foster stated that many local mayors were present during clean-up and Foster stated that he can’t express enough appreciation to everybody that has assisted Tuscumbia and Colbert County. He reported that as of tonight, utilities should have 100% coverage on all structures that can accept power. Tuscumbia Rec. Center is being used as a warming station as well as temporary housing and for further assistance citizens in need will be put in touch with Red Cross. As of now, everything is looking really good. The City is way ahead of schedule on clean-up because of the extra help. Soon, machinery will arrive to assist with debris removal. Mayor Foster asked for citizens to be patient and remain calm. The command center is in Tuscumbia City Hall. Chairperson Bailey added that the Multipurpose Center in Tuscumbia, Gattman Park in Muscle Shoals, Leighton Storm Shelter, and the Michael Center in Sheffield are all open to assist those in need. Mayor Foster mentioned that a lot of churches extended help and have provided food everyday, feeding everyone coming in to help. He extended his appreciation to everyone and stated that he expects the City should recover very quickly.

Sheriff Balentine updated the Commission on traffic control in the hardest hit areas. He stated that it is necessary to take some detours in the residential areas of Tuscumbia to get downtown, but for the most part the main flow is restored. He stated that it has been a difficult few days. Balentine also said he became a bit emotional looking around seeing all the different entities coming from everywhere to help. He’s going to work something out about doing some extra patrols to stave off looters. Bailey thanked Sheriff Balentine and stated that the County has a great team of first responders.

EMA Director Jody Hitt also expressed his appreciation to County Engineer Robison. Hitt stated that once he was able to get out to assess the situation, he called Jeremy and asked if he could have a crew out to help in Tuscumbia. Robison was happy to do so, and within 30 min - 1 hour the City of Tuscumbia was saturated with essential workers. Hitt expressed his appreciation to the Commission for their help in being able to have the equipment necessary to provide help and aid in emergency situations.

Justice Center Update

Ed Hester and Greg Willis of Lambert Ezell Durham Architecture presented an update on the progress at the Justice Center. Commissioner Tyrus Mansell stated that the Commissioners were getting questions from the public about the progress of the Justice Center, so he would ask the direct question: when will the project be bid? Mr. Willis responded that there were some details with the water flow rates and supplemental fire protection requirements, and the plans must be submitted to the state for approval, but it is anticipated that the project will go to bid March 31, with award anticipated May 1.

BOARD APPOINTEE REPORTS

None

AWARDS AND PRESENTATIONS

None

PUBLIC HEARING

None

CONSENT AGENDA

Chairperson Bailey announced that the business before the Commission was the approval of the consent agenda. Commissioner Bendall made a motion to adopt and approve the matters placed on the consent agenda during the work session. The motion was duly seconded by Commissioner Bendall. Chairperson Bailey stated that the adoption and approval of a consent agenda comprised of the following items of business was properly before the Commission and stated the matters as follows:

1. Approved February 4th, 2025, meeting minutes and waived reading of same.
2. Approved February 18th, 2025, meeting minutes and waived reading of the same.
3. Approved request for payment of unused accrued annual leave by Jamie Cheattom in the amount of \$632.16.
4. Approved request from County Engineer to declare as surplus CE-016 air compressor and adopted the following resolution:

RESOLUTION NUMBER 2025-0018

A RESOLUTION TO DECLARE CERTAIN PROPERTY AS SURPLUS PROPERTY

WHEREAS, the Colbert County Commission has been informed by the County Engineer that certain property hereinafter described and previously used in the performance of duties at the Road Department is no longer required for use by County personnel; and

WHEREAS, the Commission has determined that such property is surplus property and the County has no further use of such property due to the age and condition thereof, and that it is not economical for the County to retool or refit the property in order for it to be able to be placed in service at Road Department.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Colbert County Commission that the following described property be declared surplus property and be disposed of by the County Engineer in a manner that will require no further expenditure by the County or expose the County to any liability in the further use of or operation of such property and the County Commission does hereby authorize the County Engineer to dispose of said property in such manner. The Commission finds that the following constitutes surplus property:

Equipment Description	Equipment ID
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UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

REPORTS FROM STAFF

Chairperson Bailey announced that the Commission would hear reports from staff. Upon being recognized by the Chair, the following reports were heard by the Commission:

County Administrator:

Administrator Roger Creekmore made the following reports: Cooper Johnson is a new hire for the Colbert County EMA specialist effective March 3rd. His beginning salary is \$40,831.81 annually. Jaylan Triplett was hired as HMT1 effective February 6th at the Road Department \$29,827.20 annually. Jamie Cheattom handed in her resignation letter effective February 10, 2025. Chris Osborn has successfully completed his certification for appraiser in the Revenue Commissioners office which carries a 5% increase in annual salary.

County CFO:

No Report

County Attorney:

County Attorney Edgar Black made the following report: Engineer Robison, Commissioner Mansell, and Commissioner Barnes will be traveling to Washington DC in April to meet with our public Legislative Delegation. Black feels that it is important for them to discuss EPA regulations and the possibility of the EPA changing existing PAFS regulations. A letter has been drafted to serve as a guideline.

E911/EMA Director:

EMA Director Jody Hitt made the following report: Wanted to add that eight more counties to come in with our damage assessment and we are at 92 houses reported with damage and expect the numbers to rise as they continue to process. Within 1hr - 1hr 20min they answered over 100 calls on E911 side. Administrator Creekmore gave a shout-out to all of the Volunteer Fire Departments, the Ladies Auxiliary as well as White Oak Fire Department.

County Engineer:

County Engineer Jeremy Robison made the following report: Since our area will be expecting snow tonight, the department will be getting the spreaders ready. ACCA is asking county engineers to meet in Montgomery in the morning to discuss proposed legislation that will affect county roads.

DISCUSSION ITEMS BY COMMISSIONERS

Creekmore announced a reminder that the courthouse will open at 10:00 A.M. tomorrow due to inclement weather.

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Commissioner Mansell made motion to adjourn, which was duly seconded by Commissioner Gardiner. The Chair called for the vote of the Commission and announced that the motion was unanimously adopted and the meeting was adjourned at 5:51 p.m.

COMMISSIONER, DISTRICT 1

COMMISSIONER, DISTRICT 2

COMMISSIONER, DISTRICT 3

CHAIRPERSON

COMMISSIONER, DISTRICT 5

COMMISSIONER, DISTRICT 6