

STATE OF ALABAMA )  
COLBERT COUNTY )

## Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Colbert County Commission 10/21/2025

The Colbert County Commission met today in regular session at the Colbert County Courthouse. Chairman Bendall called the work session to order at 5:08 p.m. with the regular meeting following at 5:48 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 with the exception of Commissioner Gardiner. Pastor Perry Burgess offered the prayer and Commissioner Mansell led the Pledge of Allegiance. Chairman Bendall declared that a quorum was present for the purpose of the transaction of business.

### PUBLIC COMMENTS

Perry Burgess came before the Commission asking for reconsideration of appropriations for The Shoals Area COARMM located at 500 S. Montgomery Ave. in Town Plaza Shopping Center, Sheffield, Al. Shoals Area COARMM is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization that is now celebrating its 30<sup>th</sup> years of community service this 2025-26 school year. COARMM provides tutoring and mentoring to students in the community. Their staff is comprised of all volunteers, 3 being tutors from the community and the rest by partnering with UNA, which provides tutors for the organization. COARMM receives its funding from the community, with personal donations, churches, business partnerships, fundraisers, small grants, and city and county governments providing the largest portions. Its mission is to foster academic and social support to predominantly at-risk children by providing free tutoring and mentoring regardless of race, religious beliefs, gender, or status. Mr. Burgess stated that he was present because he received word that Colbert County made no appropriation for COARMM in 2025-2026. Mr. Burgess told the Commission that it COARMM runs a pretty tight ship and operates with a shoestring budget; it needs all the funding that it can get. Burgess asked the commission to reconsider its decision. Mr. Burgess reminded the Commission that the \$2,500 that was received from the Commission in prior years is a vital part of the organization’s budget.

Mrs. Edna Burgess, Pastor Perry Burgess’s wife, introduced herself stating that she is a 2015 retiree from Colbert County as a victims advocate in the court system and now, she advocates for at-risk children and expressed her appreciation to the commission for allowing them to speak.

Perry Burgess provided the commission with a list showing funds received during the previous year. The document listed donations from various local churches, local government appropriations, and grants. Burgess informed the Commission that their financial books and statements are kept at the center and are open to wishes to review them, to see the center itself, or speak with him about the services provided.

Commissioner Barnes asked if COARMM has iPads or other things they need to do their schoolwork on? Burgess responded by saying, we have received, through grants, state-of-the-art computers that were purchased last year, iPads, chrome books as well as traditional books and reading materials etc. Mr. Burgess stated that COARMM has a great need for unrestricted appropriations for use in helping to pay for utilities, rent, and other fixed operating costs.

Commissioner Isom stated that he has been by the facility a couple of times while working for Senator Stutts to drop off some grant checks and appreciates what Mr. Burgess and COARMM do for the children.

Commissioner Bailey stated that she requested information about actual expenditures a couple of weeks ago. Rather, what was received was projected expenses and income for the current year. Commissioner Bailey stated that she would like to review the actual expenses and income from last year. She reiterated that the Commission has been supportive of COARMM, and for that reason, she asks for detailed information of past expenses and expenditures. Commissioner Bailey stated that the County has provided \$22,500.00 in appropriations to COARMM over the past 10 years,

not including \$16,500.00 in CCCDC grants, for a total of \$39,000.00. She stated that she obviously feels strongly about what COARMM does.

## **BOARD APPOINTEE REPORTS**

None

## **AWARDS AND PRESENTATIONS**

None

## **PUBLIC HEARING**

None

## **CONSENT AGENDA**

Chairman Bendall announced that the business before the Commission was the approval of the consent agenda. Commissioner Mansell 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 Bailey. Chairman Bendall 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 October 7, 2025, meeting minutes and waived reading of same.
2. Approved October 21 Bills as presented by CFO Eaton.
3. Reappointed Commissioner Gardiner to a term on the board of directors of the Inspiration Landing Development Cooperative District.
4. Approved changing the county's life insurance provider from Standard Life to Prudential Life due to Standard Life's proposed rate increase.

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

None

## **REPORTS FROM STAFF**

Chairman Bendall 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: Derrick Grissom from the HHG Department was terminated for not calling in and missing work on Oct. 10, 2025. Jonathan Dill has resigned from the Water Department effective Oct. 3, 2025. Rachel Williamson has resigned from her position as a corrections officer at the County Jail effective October 15, 2025.

### **County CFO:**

CFO April Eaton made the following reports: The 2025 fiscal year has been closed, a year-end financial report for the Commissioners will be provided at the next Commission meeting. Ms. Eaton also stated that the quarterly ARPA report, due to US Treasury by 10/31/2025 has been submitted. Lastly, the additional money for the new bond issue for the justice center is scheduled to be wired into our specified bank account on October 26<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

### **County Attorney:**

No Report

### **E-911/EMA Director:**

Director Jody Hitt made the following report: Our yearly grant from ADPH from RDS is \$5,500.00, to be used for regional distribution of emergency supplies.

County Engineer:

County Engineer Jeremy Robison made the following reports: Engineers of the South is working on a grant proposal for the development of a plan to address compliance with future PFAS regulations, there will be no match by the County and there is no charge for applying. Robison requested permission to go forward with the grant application. There were no objections from Commissioners. Mr. Robison also informed the Commission that there was money available for replacement of pavement reflectors and he would be working with each Commissioner to address specific needs within their districts. Mr. Robison also provided the Commission with a report he compiled regarding county roads that do not currently have a posted speed. He asked the Commission to review the report and determine whether the Commission wished to post speed limits on those roads listed.

NEW BUSINESS

A motion was made by Commissioner Bailey and seconded by Commissioner Barnes to adopt certain amendments proposed to F. Y. 2025/2026 Budget. The Chair stated that the matter before the Commission was approval of the following budget amendments:

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2025 - 2026 AMENDED BUDGET EFFECTIVE 10/16/2025 INCLUDES  
THE FOLLOWING

- Additional 3% raise to Roger Creekmore and April Eaton
- 5% Raise to Nicole Creel upon completion of her HR Certification
- 5% Raise to Emily Benson, April Southern and Alicia Baker upon completion of Certification
- Raise Missy Pilkinton to Grade 11 Step 2
- Raise Alicia Baker to Grade 6 Step 4
- Raise Board of Registrars Pay to \$180/ day based up on the \$35 / day increase in State Reimbursement
- Raise Lee Smith, Chief Deputy pay from \$37,000 to \$39,000 effective January 1st.
- Make Danielle Cole's pay equal to Edie Myrick
- Increase Jessica Weeks, Investigator's pay by \$3,000 for her to become Child Forensic Interviewer
- Additional 5% raise to Maria Strickland
- Additional 5% raise to Casheta Rutland
- Additional 5% raise to Jonathan Shavers
- Additional 3% raise to all Revenue Commissioner and Reappraisal Employees to help get their salary competitive with surrounding counties
- Move the following Road Department Employees to their next step on the Road Department Pay Scale:  
Gilbert Barga, Jim Berryman, Samuel Berryman, Richard Cantrell, Mitch Clifton, Chris Dennis, Shalin Dennis, Tod Jimenez, James Fisher, Jason Franks, Nathan Garrison, Jesse Hunt, Tracy Jackson, James Cruse, Adam Marcum, Riley Myrick, Rodney Polk, Tanner Myrick, Landon Puckett, Stacy Richardson, Anthony Strickland, Jason Smith, Jai Triplett, and Michelle Thompson
- Move the following Water Department Employess to their next step on the Water Department Pay Scale:  
Philip Brewer, Jack Deaton, Jonathan Dill, Craig Sparks, Stephen Lacey, Kelly Deaton, Ray McGee, Amanda Skipworth, Larry Howard, and Jordan Shirley
- 5% Raise to County Engineer Jeremy Robison, upon completion / passing Bridge Inspection School
- Move Emily Benson to Grade 14, no pay change
- Move Jennifer Harbin and Pat Gargis to Grade 11 no pay change
- Adjust Pay Scales by the 3 Percent cost of living

Chairman Bendall called for discussion of the motion. Commissioner Isom stated his opposition to the raises contained in the budget amendment and requested the Chair ask CFO Eaton to read aloud the proposed amendments. The Chair recognized Ms. Eaton and she read the requested materials. Commissioner Isom further stated that all people, including the county’s employees, must realize that the budget is comprised of taxpayer money and in addition, the County has undertaken major expenditures at the new jail. Going forward, Isom stated that he would prefer that Department heads would make their raise requests directly to the Commission and not Commission staff. Making his point clear, he stated that he was opposed to non-standard raises. Commissioner Mansell spoke and stated that the Commission should be consistent and he would like for the Commission to examine pay-scales prior to formulating the next budget. Chairman Bendall asked for any additional discussion and hearing none, asked the County Administrator to call the roll, and a roll call vote was had as follows:

|            |     |
|------------|-----|
| District 1 | Yea |
| District 2 | Yea |

|            |         |
|------------|---------|
| District 3 | Absent  |
| District 4 | Yea     |
| District 5 | Yea     |
| District 6 | Abstain |

The Chair stated that the budget amendment is approved.

**DISCUSSION ITEMS BY COMMISSIONERS**

Commissioner Bendall stated that he appreciates all the employees and the job they do for the County. He agrees with Commissioner Isom that no one be left out. It takes a lot of money to live, and he appreciates what they do for the County.

Commissioner Bailey stated thanked those that reached out especially after the initial vote on the budget Amendment. She thanked all that thanked the Commission and stated that we do not undervalue what our employees do, and do not want to lose employees to someone else that’s paying more. So, we want to be as competitive as we can. Mr. Isom is correct, we do have some expenditures coming up. That is why she gave up \$10,000 donation to a nonprofit that she is very close to. It is very important that we are good stewards of the county money. Bailey thanked the county employees for all the work that they do.

Commissioner Mansell stated that our goal is to be consistent and to try to be fair to everybody. Mansell said that hopefully with the requested information received, it will allow us to relook at things before next budget year to make sure that we are competitive across the state with geographical locations similar to our own.

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COMMISSIONER, DISTRICT 1

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COMMISSIONER, DISTRICT 2

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COMMISSIONER, DISTRICT 3

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COMMISSIONER, DISTRICT 4

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CHAIRMAN

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COMMISSIONER, DISTRICT 6