

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
OF THE ETOWAH COUNTY COMMISSION
ETOWAH COUNTY, ALABAMA
MAY 3, 2022**

Commissioner Johnny Grant called the meeting to order on the 3rd Day of May, 2022 at 9:00 am with Commissioner Ramsey asking the Prayer and leading the Pledge to the Flag.

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

District 1 – Joey Statum	District 4 – Tim Ramsey
District 2 - Johnny Grant	District 5 – Jeffery Washington
District 3 – Jamie Grant	District 6 – Craig Inzer

PUBLIC COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS: We had several citizens that signed in to speak. Harvey Martin, representing the Attalla Coalition, was concerned about the jail. He talked about a candle lighting vigil held for an inmate that died and asked for a committee to be formed to investigate the Detention Center even though the death is being investigated by another police agency. He didn't think inmates should be able to get drugs in the jail with the X-ray machines and said one death was one too many. He also didn't agree with police investigating other police.

Doris Payne asked to speak about her grandson who died in April 2021, seven days after being found unresponsive in his cell. She wanted to know how her grandson was able to get drugs in jail when he had guards all around him. She said no one had contacted her with answers.

Dr. Jannetta McCurley, a Registered Nurse, discussed the large number of people arrested with mental health issues including substance abuse or mental disorders and requested help getting a Mental Health Crisis Center in Gadsden. (They are opening them up in several cities in the State). She believes the Detention Center has a drug problem and the X-ray machines need to be used on everyone. She requested all Correction Officers be trained on Narcan and for it to be available for them to use.

Richard Leatherwood said the inmate that died was his nephew and they tried to get him in rehab and knew he needed mental help. He said his family was 'broken' and just wanted to know how they can help. They organized a vigil to get help and said he doesn't understand how drugs are getting in the jail. The Sheriff did contact his sister, expressing sympathy. He is calling on the leaders of the community to help and said this was the only string his family had to hold on to.

PUBLIC COMMENTS FROM ELECTED OFFICIALS AND OTHERS:

Scott Hassell, Judge of Probate, congratulated the young men & women on the Robotics Team and said he was very proud of them. He then discussed May being 'Mental Health Awareness Month' and he introduced Ricky Johnson, the Community Mental Health Officer. He will be working through the MCAT (Mobile Crisis Assistance Team) and will be available every day for mental health situations. Judge Hassell is thankful for the Crisis Centers that Governor Ivey has started across the State and is glad they were able to finally get the MCAT Program started.

Sheriff Horton said he appreciated Superintendent Colegrove and the Robotics Teams and all of their hard work. He said he sympathized with the people that had lost someone and they make every effort to keep drugs and contraband out of the jail. One challenge they face is due to the way the jail sits on a street corner without a fence around it. They put in unbreakable glass and the inmates found a way to melt it and put in metal grates but they cannot completely block up the windows. Even with 2 X-ray machines, they cannot catch all of the drugs. The inmate that died was in the facility less than 12 hours and was a detainee from the department of corrections. They have psychiatric help in the jail and the Correction Officers are certified and trained in CPR but the problems start at home and they have to learn right from wrong when they are young. God also gives us free will and you cannot guard someone 24 hours a day. They have an Impact Center, cameras, security, and a substance abuse program the inmates can go through. Many of the mental health issues are a result of drug abuse. He said he was praying for all of the families.

AWARDS, PRESENTATIONS, PROCLAMATIONS, OR ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Advanced Disposal will have open top containers at four locations between 7:00 am and 12:00 pm for residential cleanup of household trash on **Saturday, May 7th, 2022.** They do not accept tires, batteries, appliances or hazardous waste.

Locations of containers:

Leeth Gap and Sardis Road – across from old County Shop
Intersection of Hwy 278 & Hwy 132
Whorton Bend Volunteer Fire Department
Gaston High School at Hwy 411 North

The Etowah Middle School Robotics Teams, made up of 7th and 8th graders, attended the meeting to show the Commissioners their robot and things they could do and to thank them for all of their support. Along with the students, teachers, parents, Board Members, and the Superintendent (Jeff Colegrove) came to the meeting. Superintendent Colegrove thanked the Commission for recognizing the students and teachers that have worked so hard with the program.

Jeff Little, Personnel Director, introduced Dorothea Kurdziel, the new Rural Transportation Director.

Upon motion of Commissioner Statum, seconded by Commissioner Johnny 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:

Commissioner Statum requested that we skip the work session today and go straight into the meeting. All Commissioners were in agreement.

PASSED AND ADOPTED THIS 3RD DAY OF MAY, 2022.

OLD BUSINESS: None.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Upon motion of Commissioner Ramsey seconded by Commissioner Inzer, 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 April 5, 2022 and April 19, 2022 of the Etowah County Commission be, and the same are hereby approved as written.
- B. The Proposed Agenda for May 3, 2022
- C. Reported Financial Transactions. A copy of the Credit Card Purchases for March and April, 2022 has been filed in Attachment Book 12, Page 81.
- D. To approve the designation that the following organization serves a public purpose and is eligible to receive public funds:
 - a. Gadsden Museum of Art Board
- E. To approve the request of Lori Howell, Animal Control Director, to hire Brittany Coheley as Kennel Technician, effective May 9, 2022. This is a replacement to be paid from the Animal Shelter, General Fund, at an hourly rate of \$12.00.
- F. To place the name of Charles Skaggs in the Sheriff’s Office job slot of Part-time Deputy Sheriff (up to 19 hours), effective April 21, 2022. This is a replacement to be paid from the General Fund – Courthouse Security, at an hourly rate of \$15.36.
- G. To place the name of Pat McCleod in the Sheriff’s Office job slot of Part-time Deputy Sheriff (up to 19 hours), effective April 21, 2022. This is a replacement to be paid from the General Fund – Courthouse Security, at an hourly rate of \$15.36.

PASSED AND ADOPTED THIS 3RD DAY OF MAY, 2022.

NEW BUSINESS:

Upon motion of Commissioner Johnny Grant, seconded by Commissioner Inzer, 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 Final Reading and Approval for ABC License Application Type 050-Retail Beer (Off Premises Only) and Type 070 – Retail Table Wine (Off Premises Only) for applicant **DOLGENCORP LLC (Steven Grant Sunderland, CEO)** under the trade name, **DOLLAR GENERAL STORES 23434, located at 235 Satterfield Lane, Gadsden, AL 35901.** This property is located in the County.

PASSED AND ADOPTED THIS 3RD DAY OF MAY, 2022.

Upon motion of Commissioner Washington, 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 approve the Agreement between the City of Gadsden and Etowah County regarding street resurfacing on Hillsboro Drive with the District 5 Commissioner Jeffery Washington providing \$81,665 toward the project and the City of Gadsden paying any additional costs. Also, to authorize the Commission President to execute the document. A copy of this Agreement has been filed in Attachment Book 12, Page 82.

PASSED AND ADOPTED THIS 3RD DAY OF MAY, 2022.

Upon motion of Commissioner Washington, 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 approve the Agreement Between the City of Gadsden and Etowah County regarding an access road serving Oscar Adams Elementary School in East Gadsden, with the District 5 Commissioner Jeffery Washington providing \$111,050 toward the project and the City of Gadsden paying any additional costs. Also, to authorize the Commission President to execute the document. A copy of this Agreement has been filed in Attachment Book 12, Page 83.

PASSED AND ADOPTED THIS 3rd DAY OF MAY, 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 approve the Agreement with the Town of Sardis City regarding Son Johnson Road and to authorize the Commission President to execute the document. The County will resurface the road and then relinquish any further control, management, supervision, regulation, repair maintenance, and improvement to the Town of Sardis City.

Under discussion Robert Nail, County Engineer, explained that this project is funded under Rebuild Alabama and the road will be fixed and turned over to the Town of Sardis City. The cost will be around \$40,000.

A copy of this Agreement has been filed in Attachment Book 12, Page 84.

PASSED AND ADOPTED THIS 3rd DAY OF MAY, 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 approve the Resolution for Project No. ECP 28-076-18, which involves making improvements on Appalachian Highway such as resurfacing, traffic stripes, and guardrail.

Under discussion Robert Nail, County Engineer, explained that this project does not have funding yet but they are working on trying to get it funded.

A copy of this Agreement has been filed in Attachment Book 12, Page 85.

PASSED AND ADOPTED THIS 3rd DAY OF MAY, 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 approve a Memorandum of Understanding with the City of Rainbow City regarding the Little Canoe Creek Mega Site.

Under discussion Shane Ellison, CAO, summarized the MOU stating that it establishes a working relationship between Etowah County and Rainbow City regarding the Little Canoe Creek Mega Site. The property is currently unincorporated but is adjacent to Rainbow City. The county will continue to develop and promote the property with projects currently in the works to expand the pad to 100 acres and provide a 2nd road into the site. These improvements are being funded by Norfolk Southern and they have this location classified as a Prime Site. Alabama Power has also invested heavily into the project with a new substation; and GMC is currently working on the design portion for water & sewer. Eventually the property will be included in Rainbow City Limits and they will purchase it from the County, once a business commits. Elizabeth Lawler with Norfolk Southern, Spencer Williams with Alabama Power, Mayor Joe Taylor with Rainbow City, and GMC Representative, Jason Harper, were also at the meeting to show their support.

Mayor Joe Taylor discussed the story behind the MOU saying the idea started with individual conversations and the admission that, as the smallest land mass county in the State, it will be an advantage to refit the county. This is not just about one municipality or Community but will benefit all locations in Etowah County and also in the surrounding counties. They are already working with GSCC on training so the work force will be ready and available when needed. Everyone wants to see this project finished.

Commissioner Grant said he appreciated everything they've done with the Megasite.

Commissioner Ramsey thanked Mayor Taylor and said it was a great step in the right direction for the County. Rainbow City will provide fire and police protection and it will be a great partnership.

Commissioner Inzer thanked Mr. Turnbach for consulting on the agreement. He said it took effort from everyone and everyone had a part in getting us where we are today and to where we are going. He said he knows Joey has been here from the beginning. The Megasite will benefit every municipality and every community.

Commissioner Jamie Grant said it just makes sense for the county and the communities to work together.

Commissioner Washington said we can move forward with a chance for cohesiveness; the county working with the municipalities and he wants to see the county reach across to work with others to make the county better.

Commissioner Joey Statum said he was super excited. He said this is bigger than anyone realizes and it affects more than just this county. This is historic and we will see industry come that will help our kids and grandkids. He said he appreciated Jim Turnbach and Mayor Taylor for all they've done. He said he doesn't have all of the answers but it's definitely a step in the right direction.

Mayor Taylor said Rainbow City will affirm the decision the county made today on Wednesday at 5:00 pm. He said a lot of people try to say we lack leaders but this is not true.

Commissioner Statum added that part of the success is a result of the help from Alabama Power and Norfolk Southern Railroad. He thanked everyone for their hard work and said “It’s coming” and he can envision we will be announcing a new business soon! Spencer Williams with Alabama Power said they will continue to support the Mega Site and he thanked the Commission and Mayor Taylor for working together and ‘pulling the cart in the same direction’. Elizabeth Lawler with Norfolk Southern Railroad said she would so much like to see this collective, partnership, an anchor site for Norfolk Southern and she appreciated them being a leader – starting out with just a piece of land. Also, Jason Harper, with GMC, said it was a great day and it took a lot of working together to get where they are now. He added that everyone was getting prepared for the next level.

A copy of this Agreement has been filed in Attachment Book 12, Page 86.

PASSED AND ADOPTED THIS 3rd DAY OF MAY, 2022.

REPORTS FROM THE STAFF:

- Chief Administrative Officer:** No Report.
- County Engineer:** No Report.
- County Attorney:** No Report.
- Other:** No Report.

DISCUSSION BY COMMISSIONERS:

Commissioner Johnny Grant said, in reference to the comments made about the Memo of Understanding with Rainbow City regarding the Mega Site, their intent was ‘not to take away from the people that have lost a loved one and he wished we had an answer for them’. He added that the Commission will continue to look for answers at the problems and the mental health issues they have been dealing with. “It’s a horrible thing” and he thanked everyone for bringing it to the Commission’s attention. Commissioner Jamie Grant said the students came on a good day to see how the Commission works and said he hoped they would all make good decisions in the future. He said they are on the right track to have a successful future with their interest in the Robotics Team.

Commissioner Craig Inzer thanked everyone for coming to the meeting and especially his wife.

Commissioner Ramsey also thanked his wife for coming to the meeting and said he campaigned on a slogan of ‘better together’ and was glad to see all of the cooperation. He was excited about the students going to the world competition in Robotics and said he hopes they do well. He also thanked the teachers for the supervision and support of this program. He said he appreciated the words of the Sheriff and the Probate Judge especially regarding the mental health issues and expressed how hard it has been to fund programs to help with the mental health programs since they were shut down at the state level. He said a lot of money has been invested to try to help with Mental Health for example he recently donated to Maximizing Mental Health. They allow you to pay for sponsorships to handle mental health services where they are needed. He said he was sorry for the loss for both families and knows the pain doesn’t end – his heart is with them. It is a great day for Rainbow City and the County regarding the MOU on the Mega Site but he doesn’t want the joy of that announcement to overshadow their sorrow.

Representative Gil Isbell was at the meeting and said it was a great day and how communication and working together will allow him to be in a position to make things happen. He said he will check into the process for getting a mental health crisis center in Etowah County. In talking to Judge Hassell he said he realized the need for one in this area. He thanked the Commissioners for their time and hard work and for recognizing him. He also congratulated Etowah Middle School and said he hoped they did well in their competition. That is where he attended school.

Commissioner Johnny Grant thanked everyone and dismissed the meeting.

ADJOURN: The Chair then entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting. Upon motion of Commissioner Inzer, seconded by Commissioner Jamie Grant, with all other members voting “yes”, the motion was passed. The meeting was adjourned at 10:05 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

Craig Inzer, Jr., Commissioner, District 6