

March 17, 2025

At a scheduled meeting of the Walker County Commission held in their offices in the Walker County Courthouse Annex, Jasper, Alabama, at 9:30 a.m. on the 17th day of March 2025, Chairman Miller gave the welcome and called the meeting to order.

After Chairman Miller gave the invitation for comment from citizens and other elected officials, County Administrator Amy Frederickson called the roll and Commissioners present were John Dunagan, Jeff Burrough, Jim Borden, and Steven Aderholt.

Commissioner Aderholt gave the invocation and Commissioner Dunagan led the pledge of allegiance.

AWARDS AND PRESENTATION:

- (1) Mrs. Renee Sides gave a Presentation on an America 250 Event "Two Lights for Tomorrow Day: April 18, 2025."

Chairman Miller read a Proclamation, which was presented to Ms. Sides, from the Walker County Commission, Proclaiming Friday, April 18, 2025, as Two Lights for Tomorrow Day in Walker County and Announced Walker County's Observance on Thursday, April 17, 2025.

- (2) A presentation was given by Mr. Johnny Sadberry of the Walker County Children's Advocacy Center. Commissioner Burrough read a Proclamation, which was presented to Mr. Sadberry from the Walker County Commission, Proclaiming April 2025 as Child Abuse Awareness and Prevention Month in Walker County.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Motion was made by Commissioner Burrough and seconded by Commissioner Dunagan to Approve the Agenda, to Approve the Past Meeting Minutes of the Regular Meeting of March 3, 2025 and the Special Meeting of March 10, 2025.

With no discussion, the vote taken resulted as follows: District One; Aye; District Two: Aye; District Three: Aye.; District Four: Aye.

With no opposition, the Chairman declared the motion carried.

REPORTS FROM STAFF:

County Administrator Amy Frederickson stated, "Good morning. At the request of the ACCA, I just wanted to go through key pieces of legislation that passed either the House, the Senate or at Governor Ivey's signature, this past month. First is Senate Bill #68: This is to recognize the expanded role of the Emergency Management Organizations and their increased importance. I think this is particularly needed for right now. It allows counties to work together to make sure that resources are properly allocated."

Second, Governor Ivey had signed into effect a law governing “the Board of Registrars that redefines or at least clarifies appointment procedures, as well as, operations.

And the third significant piece of legislation promulgated during the past month’s legislative sessions, “is the House Bill approving the State level prohibition on criminally modified, fully automatic pistols.”

County Engineer Glenn Peek stated, “The Gibson Hill Road Bridge was opened back up on Thursday. We’ve done some repair to it. It’s still a 13-ton bridge, but it is opened back up. And with that, we also last week submitted for a Grant, the Alabama Forestry Commission Logging Efficiency Grant, which is Four Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$400,000) for that bridge. We did some data collecting and asked some local timber companies which of the bridges they would like to have fixed so logging trucks would be legal to cross. That was one of them that came up every time. And Empire Road resurfacing project was actually going to end today, but they’ve pushed it back until next week. I got a text message Friday afternoon.”

OLD BUSINESS:

1. Motion was made by Commissioner Borden and seconded by Commissioner Dunagan to open for discussion the proposed Resolution Prohibiting the Use of Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (“ENDS”) Inside Walker County Facilities.

With support offered from Sheriff Nick Smith, input by Commissioner Aderholt and Commissioner Borden and a brief discussion, motion was subsequently made by Commissioner Borden and seconded by Commissioner Burrough, to approve, as proposed, the Resolution Prohibiting the Use of Electronic Nicotine Systems (“ENDS”) Inside Walker County Facilities.

With no further discussion, the vote taken resulted as follows: District One: Aye; District Two: Aye; District Three: Aye; District Four: Aye.

With no opposition, the Chairman declared the motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Motion was made by Commissioner Burrough and seconded by Commissioner Borden to open for discussion the Request Made to Seek Bids for Used but Reconditioned 2014 (or newer) Grapple Truck with Rotating Grapple and Ox Body Bed for District Two.

After explanation by Commissioner Burrough, and input from County Engineer Glenn Peek, and Commissioners Dunagan and Aderholt. At the suggestion of Commissioner Aderholt, motion was then made by Commissioner Aderholt and seconded by Commissioner Burrough to Modify the Request to Seek Bids to Purchase One or More Used but Reconditioned 2014 (or newer) Grapple Truck(s) with Rotating Grapple and Ox Body Bed for District Two and District Four.

With no further discussion, the vote taken resulted as follows: District One: Aye; District Two: Aye; District Three: Aye; District Four: Aye.

With no opposition, the Chairman declared the motion to Modify carried.

Motion then was made by Commissioner Burrough and seconded by Commissioner Aderholt to approve the receipt of bids for District 2 and 4's purchase of one or more used, reconditioned, 2014 or newer grapple truck(s) with rotating grapple and an ox-body-bed .

Without further discussion, the vote taken resulted as follows: District One: Aye; District Two: Aye; District Three: Aye; District Four: Aye.

Without opposition, the Chairman declared the motion carried.

2. Motion was made by Commissioner Burrough and seconded by Commissioner Dunagan to open discussion of the request to approve bid to Purchase and Install a 2-Ton Unit with Heat Pump at Justice Center.

After explanation by Chairman Miller, Motion was made by Commissioner Burrough and seconded by Commissioner Borden to approve the lowest bid received for the purchase and installation of a 2-Ton Unit with heat pump at the Justice Center.

Without further discussion, the vote taken resulted as follows: District One: Aye; District Two: Aye; District Three: Aye; District Four: Aye.

Without opposition, the Chairman declared the motion carried.

3. Motion was made by Commissioner Borden and seconded by Commissioner Aderholt to open for discussion the June 2025 Special Election Polling Location #36 (National Guard Armory) Change Due to Unavailability and to Authorize the Chairman and Judge Tucker to Remedy, if possible.

After explanation by Judge of Probate Lee Tucker and much discussion, motion was made by Commissioner Borden and seconded by Commissioner Dunagan to approve the June 2025 special election polling location #36 (National Guard Armory) change due to unavailability and to give Chairman Miller and Judge Tucker the authority to relocate the polling place, if possible.

With no discussion, the vote taken resulted as follows: District One: Aye; District Two: Aye; District Three: Aye; District Four: Aye.

With no opposition, the Chairman declared the motion carried.

4. Motion was made by Commissioner Aderholt and seconded by Commissioner Burrough to

open for discussion the request to Give Judge Tucker the Required Authority to Complete Election Returns at Probate Office on June 24, 2025, for the General Election.

After explanation by Judge of Probate Lee Tucker, motion was made by Commissioner Aderholt and seconded by Commissioner Burrough to approve to give Judge Tucker the authority to complete election returns at the Probate Office on June 24, 2024, for the General Election.

With no further discussion, the vote taken resulted as follows: District One: Aye; District Two: Aye; District Three: Aye; District Four: Aye.

With no opposition, the Chairman declared the motion carried.

5. Motion was made by Commissioner Burrough and seconded by Commissioner Dunagan to open discussion of the proposed One-Year Lease of Lots 2 and 4 in Block 244 in the City of Jasper, Alabama with Consideration in the Amount of \$8,400.00 where lease begins April 1, 2025 and ends March 31, 2026.

After explanation by Chairman Miller and a brief discussion, motion was made by Commissioner Burrough and seconded by Commissioner Aderholt to approve a one-year lease of Lots 2 and 4 in Block 244 in the City of Jasper, Alabama in the amount of \$8,400.00, beginning April 1, 2025 and ending March 31, 2026.

With no further discussion, the vote taken resulted as follows: District One: Aye; District Two: Aye; District Three: Aye; District Four: Aye.

With no opposition, the Chairman declared the motion carried.

6. Motion was made by Commissioner Borden and seconded by Commissioner Burrough to open discussion of the Cattleman's Association Request to Reserve the Old Fairgrounds on June 13 & 14, 2025 for the Cattleman's Association Spring Rodeo.

After explanation by Chairman Miller and a brief discussion, Motion was made by Commissioner Burrough and seconded by Commissioner Borden to Approve the Cattleman's Association's request to reserve the Old Fairgrounds on June 13th & 14th, 2025, for the Association's Spring Rodeo.

With no further discussion, the vote taken resulted as follows: District One: Aye; District Two: Aye; District Three: Aye; District Four: Aye.

With no opposition, the Chairman declared this motion tabled.

7. Motion was made by Commissioner Borden and seconded by Commissioner Aderholt to open for discussion the proposed Policy on Underground Utilities Located Within Walker County

Right of Way.

After explanation by County Engineer Glenn Peek and much discussion, Motion was made by Commissioner Dunagan and seconded by Commissioner Borden to Approve the proposed Policy on Underground Utilities Located within Walker County Right of Way.

With no further discussion, the vote taken resulted as follows: District One: Aye; District Two: Aye; District Three: Aye; District Four: Aye.

With no opposition, the Chairman declared the motion carried.

8. Motion was made by Commissioner Borden and seconded by Commissioner Dunagan to Open for discussion the request to "In-Service Transfer, from the Eligible Register, Mr. Manual Ruiz into the Position of Full-time Deputy Sheriff, effective March 19, 2025."

After explanation by Sheriff Nick Smith, motion was made by Commissioner Borden and seconded by Commissioner Burrough to approve the request to in-service transfer, from the eligible register, Mr. Manual Ruiz to the full-time Deputy Sheriff position, on March 19, 2025.

With no additional discussion, the vote taken resulted as follows: District One: Aye; District Two: Aye; District Three: Aye; District Four: Aye.

With no opposition, the Chairman declared the motion carried.

9. Motion was made by Commissioner Burrough and seconded by Commissioner Dunagan to open discussion of the "Request to Promote Investigator Antonio Reid into the Position of Captain within the Sheriff's Department," effective March 17, 2025.

After explanation by Sheriff Nick Smith, Motion was made by Commissioner Aderholt and seconded by Commissioner Burrough to approve the request to promote Investigator Antonio Reid to the Rank of Captain, effective March 17, 2025.

Without additional discussion, the vote taken resulted as follows: District One: Aye; District Two: Aye; District Three: Aye; District Four: Aye.

With no opposition, the Chairman declared the motion carried.

10. Motion was made by Commissioner Aderholt and seconded by Commissioner Burrough to open for discussion the "Request to Hire, from the Eligible Register, Mr. Jason Darty as a Full-Time Deputy Sheriff," with an expected start date of March 19, 2025, pending Mr. Darty's successful completion of the Walker County Civil Service Board[, hereinafter WCCSB,] drug-test and hiring paperwork.

After explanation by Sheriff Nick Smith, motion was made by Commissioner Aderholt and

seconded by Commissioner Dunagan to approve the request to hire Mr. Darty, from the eligible register, as a full-time Deputy Sheriff, effective March 19, 2025.

Without further discussion, the vote taken resulted as follows: District One: Aye; District Two: Aye; District Three: Aye; District Four: Aye.

Without opposition, the Chairman declared the motion carried.

11. Motion was made by Commissioner Aderholt and seconded by Commissioner Dunagan to open discussion of the "Request to Hire, from the Eligible Register, Mr. Jonathan Edwards and Mr. Chris Ray Fike as Full-Time Jailers for the Walker County Jail," with an expected start date of March 19, 2025, and conditional upon their successful completion of the WCCSB drug-test and hiring paperwork.

After explanation by Sheriff Nick Smith, Motion was made by Commissioner Aderholt and seconded by Commissioner Dunagan to approve the request to hire, effective March 19, 2025, Mr. Jonathan Edwards and Mr. Chris Ray Fike as full-time Jailers conditioned upon their successful completion of the WCCSB drug-test and hiring paperwork.

Without further discussion, the vote taken resulted as follows: District One: Aye; District Two: Aye; District Three: Aye; District Four: Aye.

Without opposition, the Chairman declared the motion carried.

12. Motion was made by Commissioner Dunagan and seconded by Commissioner Aderholt to open discussion of Discussion and Approval to Hire Tianna Sheperd-Ollie as a Full-Time Probate Clerk in the Probate Office, with an expected start date of April 2, 2025, conditional upon her successful completion of the WCCSB drug-test and hiring paperwork.

Motion was made by Commissioner Borden and seconded by Commissioner Aderholt to approve the hiring of Ms. Tianna Sheperd-Ollie as a full-time Probate Clerk in the Probate Office, pending her successful completion of the WCCSB drug test and hiring paperwork.

Without discussion, the vote taken resulted as follows: District One: Aye; District Two: Aye; District Three: Aye; District Four: Aye.

Without opposition, the Chairman declared the motion carried.

13. Motion was made by Commissioner Borden and seconded by Commissioner Dunagan to open for discussion the "Request to In-Service Transfer, from the Eligible Register, Both Mr. Justin Curington and Mr. Benjamin Holmes into the Full-Time Position of Driver/Operator for the Solid Waste Department, Effective March 17, 2025."

After explanation by Solid Waste Director, Rodney Cain, motion was made by Commissioner

Aderholt and seconded by Commissioner Borden to approve the In-Service Transfer of both Mr. Justin Curington and Mr. Benjamin Holmes into the position of Driver/Operator within the Solid Waste Department, effective March 17, 2025.

Without discussion, the vote taken resulted as follows: District One: Aye; District Two: Aye; District Three: Aye; District Four: Aye.

Without opposition, the Chairman declared the motion carried.

PUBLIC HEARINGS: None.

DISCUSSION ITEMS BY COMMISSIONERS:

Commissioner Dunagan (District 1): Commissioner Dunagan thanked everybody for coming today and said he was sure that District Three and District Four Commissioners are thankful as their districts were hit heavily. He said he was praying for all the families that got damage and still going through it.

Commissioner Burrough (District 2): Commissioner Burrough made a motion to add item number 14 to the agenda. In particular, Commissioner Burrough explained that the County Extension Office was appropriated five thousand dollars (\$5,000) and based on their needs, he would like to appropriate an additional twenty-five hundred dollars (\$2500) to the Walker County Extension Office. This motion was seconded by Commissioner Aderholt

Without discussion, the vote taken resulted as follows: District One: Aye; District Two: Aye; District Three: Aye; District Four: Aye; Chairman Miller: Aye.

Without opposition, the Chairman declared the motion carried.

14. Motion was made by Commissioner Aderholt and seconded by Commissioner Burrough to open for discussion the appropriation of an additional Twenty-Five Hundred Dollars (\$2500) to the Walker County Extension Office.

Without discussion, motion was made by Commissioner Aderholt and seconded by Commissioner Burrough to close discussion and approve an additional appropriation of Twenty-Five Hundred Dollars (\$2500) to the Walker County Extension Office.

The vote taken resulted as follows: District One: Aye; District Two: Aye; District Three: Aye; District Four: Aye.

Without opposition, the Chairman declared the motion carried.

Commissioner Burrough continued his discussion items by thanking Engineer Glenn Peek and his office and all the people that worked on Gibson Hill. He said Glenn has given him some numbers on road projects that he can proceed forward to see what they can do and get them in

better shape this summer. Among these roads in consideration for improvements, Commissioner Burrough listed Nichols Road, Hillard Loop, Sherer Loop and the Beech Grove Road. Commissioner Burrough also reiterated that Spring Clean-Up Day was approaching on April 5th and asked that the Commission support a County-Wide Clean-up Day on April 5th, 2025. Commissioner Burrough also reported that the County does have a limited number of bags available to distribute to clean-up efforts and thanked everyone for attending.

Commissioner Borden (District 3): Commissioner Borden thanked everyone for coming. He gave an update of the damage on the Tutwiler Road in his District and asked that everyone slow down and be safe going through that area. He said he would have to get help for this project, since it's beyond his District's capability. He thanked the Volunteer Fire Departments down there and across the county, stating that they provide the citizens a valuable service. He said those guys were out there as soon as the storms came through, that they were there until midnight just to try to get the road open. He said they make sacrifices and you couldn't ask for anybody to work any harder. He thanked all of the First Responders for the jobs that they do.

Commissioner Borden stated, "I've been asked time and time again, 'Why don't we just go out and pave all the roads?' We have said the reasons why. Yes, the citizens of this county pay a two-cent County Sales Tax. It raises Twenty-One Million Dollars (\$21,000,000) a year. None of that money, except Six Thousand Dollars (\$6,000) a month, goes to work on your twelve hundred (312) miles of county roads. That's the reason we can't go out as a Commission or Commissioners in our individual districts and pave all of these roads. It's too large of a job. Our budgets this year will run as our monies we got this past month -- I think Mr. Burrough made the comment the other day, we may be lucky to reach \$900,000 this year. Nine Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$900,000) to keep up 355 miles of road." He noted that he buys the equipment, the road patching materials, pays for breakdowns and pays the utilities. He said everything that is involved in all four of the districts comes out of their budgeted money that they receive from the State of Alabama; that they want to do better, but they are limited due to the fact that they do not have the financial ability to do more than they're doing. He said he just wanted the people to understand that they do work, that they are trying everything that they can come up with. He said if there's a grant out there that they're applying for those grants.

Commissioner Borden then thanked everyone again for coming and asked that if they see any of the first responders; law enforcement, emergency medical people, volunteer fire department personnel to let them know how appreciated they are and thank them for the job that they do.

Commissioner Aderholt (District 4): Commissioner Aderholt began by stating that he would like to add something to the agenda. Motion was then made by Commissioner Aderholt and seconded by Commissioner Borden to add Number 15 to the agenda for discussion and approval of Commissioner Aderholt's request to post for the following three job-descriptions: Journeyman Mechanic, Equipment Operator and Truck Driver.

Without discussion, the vote taken resulted as follows: District One: Aye; District Two:

Aye; District Three: Aye; District Four: Aye; Chairman Miller: Aye.

The Chairman declared the motion carried.

15. Motion was made by Commissioner Aderholt and seconded by Commissioner Borden to open for discussion and approval the request to post for a Journeyman Mechanic, Equipment Operator and Truck Driver.

Without further discussion, Commissioner Aderholt made, and Commissioner Borden seconded, a motion to approve the request to post for the following three positions: Journeyman Mechanic, Equipment Operator, and Truck Driver within the Districts.

With no discussion, the vote taken resulted as follows: District One: Aye; District Two: Aye; District Three: Aye; District Four: Aye.

With no opposition, the Chairman declared the motion carried.

Commissioner Aderholt stated, "Again, thank everybody for being here. Everybody knows the events that took place this past weekend the tornado coming through Sipsey in my district and also Jim's district. I actually got on Facebook and tried to thank all the people that actually responded or took part in what took place in Sipsey." He again, thanked all the first responders and renamed each of them. He stated that if your community is served by a volunteer fire department that you should consider paying \$35 a year to support them since they're risking their life for you to be there for you when these events occur. He read the names aloud of the responders he thanked on Facebook. He said one ministry that he got to meet was Chainsaws for Jesus. He said they brought their trailer down from Nashville, Tennessee and set up and did nothing but sharpen and fix chainsaws for everybody that's out there working all day long. He said they were covered up fixing chainsaws. He thanked everybody for their contributions.

Chairman Miller:

Chairman Miller stated, "I, too, would like to say it was truly amazing down in District Three when I arrived there. There was a lot going on. Mr. Borden, as he said, had all of the volunteer fire departments in that area. [And] they were cutting trees . . . with some of their own tractors there, [just] pushing stuff out of the road. It was just truly amazing." Chairman Miller relayed that when he arrived in Sipsey, what he witnessed was "again, truly amazing." In reflection, Chairman Miller reiterated that the County "do[es] have a lot of good fire departments and a lot of good individuals in churches and associations" and added that he was touched to watch "everybody coming to the aid of those in need." Emphasizing that "[t]hat is something awesome to see" and how much "we do appreciate each and every one of those volunteers and workers." On another topic, Chairman Miller offered optimistically that "[t]his county is poised to grow, grow, grow." Miller pointed to the impact of I-22 and its critical role in supporting the movement from and inclusion within the Birmingham Metro-Area.

Chairman Miller explained that "this county, with its existing industry and with the

opportunities for development,” is on the precipice of major changes. Reaffirming his continued and undying belief in this county, he emphasized that “this county is ready, it’s just time.” Chairman Miller closed out his comments by letting everyone present know that he “appreciate[s] each and every one of you for being here” in addition to “all the employees.”

Chairman closed out his discussion by taking a moment “to say thank you to the Sheriff’s Department because they were really on the scene, stepping up, and doing a great job in Sipsey.” Chairman Miller continued his accolades for Sheriff’s response and the Department’s employee’s contribution to the tornado relief efforts in Sipsey, adding, “what a wonderful job that [the Sheriff’s Department] were doing. My hat’s off to them.”


ADJOURN:

Motion was made by Commissioner Borden and seconded by Commissioner Aderholt that this meeting be adjourned to reconvene at the next regularly scheduled meeting or at the call of the Chairman.

With no discussion, the vote taken resulted as follows: District One: Aye; District Two: Aye; District Three: Aye; District Four: Aye.

With no opposition, the Chairman declared the motion carried.

Read and Approved:


Chairman
Attest

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March 17, 2025

Steve Miller
WALKER COUNTY COMMISSION

Re: COMMISSION MEETING/EXECUTIVE SESSION
3/17/25

Dear Chairman Miller:

A governmental body may enter into executive session under certain provisions provided in the Alabama Open Meetings Act. This includes the discussion of the general reputation and character, physical condition, professional competence, or mental health of individuals, or, subject to the limitations set out herein, to discuss the job performance of certain public employees. It is my opinion that the Walker County Commission should enter into executive session as the names, good character and reputation of certain individuals are to be discussed and the Walker County Commission desires to avoid any impropriety during said necessary discussion.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Charles R. Stephens, Jr.", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Charles R. Stephens, Jr.

CRSjr/sh/amf