

STATE OF ALABAMA )  
COLBERT COUNTY )

# Minutes of a Regular Meeting

## of the

## Colbert County Commission

### 07/21/2026

The Colbert County Commission met today in regular session at the Colbert County Courthouse. Chairman Isom called the work session to order at 5:00 p.m., with the regular meeting following at 5:39 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. Reverend Gatus Cheatham offered the prayer and led the Pledge of Allegiance. Chairman Isom declared that a quorum was present for the purpose of the transaction of business.

### PUBLIC COMMENTS

Karen Crow, of the Auburn Extension Office, announced that on Friday, July 31, the office will host its annual “Tomato Sandwich Day” for the first 200 people beginning at 11:00 A.M.

Kenneth Smith addressed the Commission regarding the resurfacing of Ricks Cemetery Road. He stated that a part of Ricks Cemetery Road was resurfaced, but the resurfacing did not extend to the church and cemetery, and he asked whether the remaining portion could be paved, noting that services have been conducted at the church since 1832 and that it is one of the oldest churches in Alabama. County Engineer Jeremy Robison stated that the Commission paved the road past the last house some time ago, and that the remaining portion leading to the cemetery is a narrow gravel road, approximately ten to twelve feet wide, in fairly good condition. He noted that the road can wash out when it floods and that funds have not been budgeted to pave a road serving no houses and little traffic other than that going to the cemetery. Chairman Isom asked that the matter be included in the budget for next year.

Gatus Cheatham, as spokesman for the Cheatham family, addressed the Commission with the request that a portion of Milk Springs Road be dedicated as a memorial drive for his father, Amos Cheatham. Mr. Amos Cheatham was one of the early residents of the community that would become Colbert Heights. He donated property to the County for the construction of New Cut Road and Darrol Drive. The Cheatham family feels that it is appropriate to memorialize his long service to his community by designating a portion of Milk Springs Road in his honor.

### BOARD APPOINTEE REPORTS

None

### AWARDS AND PRESENTATIONS

None

### PUBLIC HEARING

None

### CONSENT AGENDA

Chairman Isom 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 Gardiner. Chairman Isom 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 the July 7, 2026 meeting minutes.
2. Approved the July 21, 2026 bills as presented by the County CFO.
3. Approved setting a public hearing for Mud Creek Mart 911 – Lounge Retail Liquor / Class II Package Store for August 4, 2026 at 5:00 P.M.
4. Adopted the following resolution reappointing April Eaton to the Board of Directors of the Alabama Mountain Lakes Association:

---

**RESOLUTION NUMBER 2026-0037**

**A RESOLUTION REAPPOINTING APRIL EATON TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE ALABAMA MOUNTAIN LAKES ASSOCIATION**

WHEREAS, the Colbert County Commission is entitled to appoint a representative to the Board of Directors of the Alabama Mountain Lakes Association (the “Association”); and

WHEREAS, the term of April Eaton, the County’s current representative on the Board, has expired or is expiring; and

WHEREAS, April Eaton was the sole applicant and nominee for the position and is willing to continue serving; and

WHEREAS, the Commission finds that the reappointment of April Eaton serves the best interests of the County and the Association.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Colbert County Commission that April Eaton is hereby reappointed to the Board of Directors of the Alabama Mountain Lakes Association, to serve for the term prescribed by the bylaws of the Association, and until her successor is duly appointed and qualified.

5. Adopted the following resolution designating a portion of Milk Springs Road as “Amos L. Cheatham Memorial Drive” and authorizing the installation of appropriate signage:

---

**RESOLUTION NUMBER 2026-0038**

**A RESOLUTION DESIGNATING A PORTION OF MILK SPRINGS ROAD AS  
“AMOS L. CHEATHAM MEMORIAL DRIVE”**

WHEREAS, Milk Springs Road is an established public roadway located in Colbert County, Alabama, and under the jurisdiction of the Colbert County Commission; and

WHEREAS, Amos L. Cheatham was one of the early residents of the community that would become Colbert Heights and, during his lifetime, donated property to Colbert County for the construction of New Cut Road and Darrol Drive; and

WHEREAS, the family of Amos L. Cheatham, through its spokesman Gatus Cheatham, has requested that a portion of Milk Springs Road be designated as a memorial drive honoring his long service to his community; and

WHEREAS, the Commission finds that memorializing the contributions of Amos L. Cheatham by designating a portion of Milk Springs Road in his honor is appropriate and serves a valid public purpose; and

WHEREAS, the Commission further finds that the designation will not create confusion for emergency services, postal delivery, or county operations, and that all required notifications to affected agencies will be provided following adoption of this Resolution.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Colbert County Commission as follows:

1. Designation. The portion of Milk Springs Road [described as: from its intersection with \_\_\_\_\_ to its intersection with \_\_\_\_\_] is hereby designated and named “Amos L. Cheatham Memorial Drive.”

2. Signage. The County Engineer and the Colbert County Road Department are authorized and directed to install appropriate signage reflecting this designation.

3. Notification to Agencies. The County Administrator is directed to provide notice of this designation to the Colbert County E-911 Board, the Colbert County Revenue Commissioner, the United States Postal Service, local utility providers, and any other agencies as may be necessary to ensure an orderly transition.

4. Effective Date. This Resolution shall become effective immediately upon its adoption.

6. Approved the FY 2027 County Rebuild Alabama Annual Contractor Report.
7. Approved the FY 2027 County Rebuild Alabama Transportation Plan.
8. Approved Resolution STPSU-1716 for the MPO project.
9. Adopted the following resolution authorizing the construction or improvement of certain roads in the Colbert County Road System and application for Federal Aid funds:

---

**RESOLUTION NUMBER 2026-0039**

**A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CONSTRUCTION OR IMPROVEMENT  
OF CERTAIN ROADS IN THE COLBERT COUNTY ROAD SYSTEM AND  
APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL AID FUNDS**

WHEREAS the Colbert County Commission, is desirous of constructing or improving, by force account, by contract, or both, a section of road included in the Colbert County Road System and described as follows:

River Rd. from SR-133 to Ford Rd., County Line Rd. from SR-20 to Crockett Ln., Sockwell Ln. from SR-157 to SR-20, Spring Valley Rd. from 3 Mile Ln. to Lagrange Rd., River Rd. from Ford Rd. to Brick School Rd., and County Line Rd. from SR-184 to River Rd.

WHEREAS, the county agrees to all of the provisions of the County-wide agreement executed between the State and the County covering preliminary engineering by State forces and equipment on the project, and

WHEREAS, the county intends to apply for Federal Aid funds for the construction of the above referenced project, and

WHEREAS, the County agrees to all of the provisions of any agreement which has been executed or will be executed covering the construction of the project.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Colbert County Commission that the County hereby agrees to the construction or improvement of the above-described project; agrees to all provisions of the County-wide agreement and any other agreement heretofore executed or hereafter to be executed with the State of Alabama covering the project; and authorizes and directs the Chairman of the Colbert County Commission to execute, on behalf of the County, any and all agreements, documents, and assurances necessary to apply for and obtain Federal Aid funds for, and to carry out the construction or improvement of, the project.

10. Approved the request of Michael Gray for payment of unused annual leave in the amount of \$976.00.
11. Approved changing the regular Commission meeting from August 18 to August 25, 2026.
12. Adopted the following resolution approving a one-time appropriation of \$10,000.00 to the W. C. Handy Music Festival:

---

**RESOLUTION NUMBER 2026-0040**

**A RESOLUTION APPROVING A ONE-TIME APPROPRIATION TO THE W. C.  
HANDY MUSIC FESTIVAL**

WHEREAS, the W. C. Handy Music Festival (the "Festival") is an annual event celebrating the musical heritage of the Shoals area and W. C. Handy, the "Father of the Blues," and provides significant cultural, educational, and economic benefits to Colbert County and the surrounding region; and

WHEREAS, 2026 marks the forty-fifth (45th) anniversary of the Festival; and

WHEREAS, the organizers of the Festival have requested financial support from the Colbert County Commission; and

WHEREAS, the Commission finds that providing a one-time appropriation in support of the Festival serves a valid public purpose and benefits the citizens of Colbert County.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Colbert County Commission as follows:

1. The Commission hereby approves a one-time appropriation in the amount of Ten Thousand and No/100 Dollars (\$10,000.00) to the W. C. Handy Music Festival.

2. The appropriation shall be used to support the operations and programming of the Festival.

3. Nothing herein shall obligate the Commission to provide additional or recurring funding beyond the amount stated above.

4. This Resolution shall become effective immediately upon its adoption.

The motion carried, and the foregoing consent-agenda items were adopted and approved.

## **REPORTS FROM STAFF**

Chairman Isom 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 Creekmore reported as follows: Michael Gray has resigned from the Water Department effective July 16, 2026. Christopher Berry has resigned from the Household Garbage Department. The Sheriff's Department has hired Chloe Bennet as a full-time Corrections Deputy effective July 20, 2026, with a beginning salary of \$33,974.83. Ms. Bennet replaces Kevin Dury, who resigned effective July 2, 2026. The courthouse clock was struck by lightning and is ringing at incorrect times; a repairman from Atlanta has been called to repair it. Administrator Creekmore gave an update regarding the 250th birthday celebration on August 1, stating that it has grown into a large event, particularly the parade. The parade will begin at 10:00 A.M., with line-up at Deshler High School at 9:30 A.M., and will include at least three marching bands. He noted that any commissioner who would like to ride in the parade may ride in a fire truck of his or her choice. The event on the courthouse lawn should begin at 11:00 or 11:30 A.M., depending on when the parade ends. There will be patriotic music, and each commissioner, the City Councilmen, and the Mayor of Tuscumbia will have the opportunity to speak. Judge Rosser will deliver the keynote address on the U.S. Constitution. The Auburn Extension Director has arranged for the tent and tables to remain in place from Tomato Sandwich Day. Sheriff Balentine will be cooking hotdogs, and cooling fans will be placed on the lawn. TVA has donated several hundred bottles of water, and Helen Keller Hospital is sending its medical response trailer. There will also be two horse-drawn wagons and two cannons on the lawn.

### **County CFO:**

CFO Eaton reported as follows: Judge Smith is in the process of obtaining a Veterans Court grant, for which CFO Eaton will serve as administrator. A new bank account will need to be opened, which will require the commissioners' signatures and copies of their driver's licenses. CFO Eaton proposed budget-meeting dates of Tuesday, August 4 (to be held directly after the Commission's scheduled meeting), Thursday, August 6, and Monday, August 10, the latter two at 5:00 P.M.

### **County Attorney:**

No report.

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

No report.

### **County Engineer:**

County Engineer Jeremy Robison reported as follows: Mr. Robison thanked Administrator Creekmore for his assistance with the Alabama Fiber Network, which had caused problems for the Water Department and the Hawk Pride Mountain Water Department.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Chairman Isom announced that there were two applicants for the board seat previously held by Dr. Jack McClendon on the Board of Directors of the Colbert County Northwest Alabama Healthcare Authority. The applicants were Lucy Reed Swindle and Joe J. Hutchins. A motion was made by Commissioner Mansell and seconded by Commissioner Bendall to vote on the applicants. Chairman Isom asked the County Administrator to call the roll, and a roll-call vote was had as follows:

|            |          |
|------------|----------|
| District 1 | Hutchins |
| District 2 | Hutchins |
| District 3 | Hutchins |
| District 4 | Hutchins |
| District 5 | Hutchins |
| District 6 | Hutchins |

The Chair stated the result of the roll-call vote to be in favor of Joe J. Hutchins as the new appointee.

The following resolution was thereupon adopted appointing Joe J. Hutchins to the Board of Directors of the Colbert County Northwest Alabama Healthcare Authority:

RESOLUTION NUMBER 2026-0036

A RESOLUTION APPOINTING JOE J. HUTCHINS TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE COLBERT COUNTY NORTHWEST ALABAMA HEALTHCARE AUTHORITY

WHEREAS, the Colbert County Commission is authorized to appoint members to the Board of Directors of the Colbert County Northwest Alabama Healthcare Authority (the “Authority”); and

WHEREAS, a vacancy existed on the Board of Directors of the Authority in the seat previously held by Dr. Jack McClendon; and

WHEREAS, the Commission received applications from Lucy Reed Swindle and Joe J. Hutchins to fill the vacancy; and

WHEREAS, at its regular meeting held July 21, 2026, the Commission conducted a roll-call vote on the applicants, and Joe J. Hutchins received six (6) votes and Lucy Reed Swindle received zero (0) votes; and

WHEREAS, the Commission finds that Joe J. Hutchins is qualified and willing to serve and that his appointment serves the best interests of the Authority and the citizens of Colbert County.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Colbert County Commission that Joe J. Hutchins is hereby appointed to the Board of Directors of the Colbert County Northwest Alabama Healthcare Authority, to serve for the term prescribed by law and the bylaws of the Authority, and until his successor is duly appointed and qualified.

The junk-ordinance violation against James P. South at 8225 2nd Street, Leighton, Alabama, has been withdrawn. Jake Flannagan, of the Household Garbage Department, stated that the property is substantially cleaned up.

DISCUSSION ITEMS BY COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Gardiner announced that the Saddle Up for St. Jude event had a strong weekend and thanked everyone for supporting it. He noted that he has been involved with the event for thirty years and thanked the volunteers and the many supporters, including first-time attendees from across the country. Commissioner Gardiner said that he met people who traveled from Chattanooga, Tennessee; Starkville, Mississippi; Little Rock, Arkansas; Dallas, Texas; and Shreveport, Louisiana, among other places. He stated that the event set a goal of \$500,000.00 and that he is cautiously optimistic the goal was reached. Commissioner Gardiner thanked Household Garbage Director Jake Flannagan for garbage pick-up, E-911/EMA’s Jody Hitt and Keith Reeves

for weather updates, and Sheriff Balentine and his department, stating that their work makes the County look great. He shared that he received many positive comments and thanked the Commission for its support.

Commissioner Bailey thanked Administrator Creekmore for assisting former Mayor William Foster with the removal of a tree that threatened to block a road. She thanked the Commission for its continued support of the W. C. Handy Music Festival, noting that this is the Festival's 45th year and her 22nd year as chair, and that it has been a labor of love. Commissioner Bailey stated that many events are taking place across Colbert County. Avalon Avenue, in front of the Police and Fire Departments, will be closed for a street dance, and events will also take place in Sheffield and Tuscumbia. Two former Mayors and the current Mayors are excited about the events planned at Riverfront Park. Commissioner Bailey announced that the headliner is free for the first time and that mini-concerts are being taken to assisted-living facilities in Sheffield, Muscle Shoals, and Tuscumbia for seniors who cannot attend the Festival. She asked that anyone with questions please call, thanked everyone for their support, and asked that they keep her in their prayers.

Being no further business before the Commission, the meeting was duly adjourned.

---

COMMISSIONER BARNES, DIST. 1

---

COMMISSIONER MANSELL, DIST. 2

---

COMMISSIONER GARDINER, DIST. 3

---

COMMISSIONER BAILEY, DIST. 4

---

COMMISSIONER BENDALL, DIST. 5

---

CHAIRMAN ISOM, DIST. 6