

June 29, 2020

MOBILE COUNTY COMMISSION

The Mobile County Commission met in special session in the Government Plaza Auditorium, in the City of Mobile, Alabama, on Monday, June 29, 2020 at 9:00 A. M. The following members of the Commission were present: Jerry L. Carl, President, Merceria Ludgood and Connie Hudson, Members. Also present were Glenn L. Hodge, County Administrator/Clerk of the Commission, Jay Ross, County Attorney, and W. Bryan Kegley II, County Engineer. President Carl chaired the meeting.

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INVOCATION

The invocation was given by Glenn L. Hodge, County Administrator.

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AGENDA #1

HOLD PUBLIC HEARING/CONSIDER RECOMMENDATION/  
SMALL BUSINESS RELIEF GRANT PROGRAM  
COMMITTEE/AWARD GRANTS TO LOCAL  
BUSINESSES EXPERIENCING FINANCIAL HARDSHIP  
WITH COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS

President Carl asked if any citizen of the County wanted an opportunity to be heard, for or against, the recommendation from the Small Business Relief Grant Program Committee to award grants to nine (9) local businesses that are experiencing financial hardship with the COVID-19 Public Health Crisis located within Mobile County, Alabama for the purpose of promoting the economic and industrial development of the County in accordance with Amendment No. 772 of the Constitution of Alabama.

**David Rodgers, Vice President of Economic Development, Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce:** Thank you all, Commissioners, for allowing me to be here today. I am here to speak for these companies here today. With the leadership of this Commission, this program has been extremely successful thus far. Today marks the first day of recommendations from the volunteer committee for the first nine (9) recommendations of the applications that have been brought to the committee. Just a little insight on these, the first nine (9) represent over forty-two (42) jobs that will be held right here in Mobile County. They are given the opportunity to stay in employment because of the funds of this program. To date, we have received over one hundred twenty-five (125) applications online. Now

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that is not inclusive of the financial paperwork to help out with their claims. We are still working through those applicants. We are working through those with the committee. As you can imagine, every application is very different in the amount of information we receive. We have to work each application individually to make sure they are meeting the recommendations based on this Commission and the resolution passed on June 8, 2020. With that, I am here to take any questions. I do want to publicly commend this Commission and your leadership to have the foresight to do something like this for the community. We are truly seeing the impacts right now. If these recommendations are approved by the Commission today, we will begin sending the funds to these companies early this week. These companies are seeing an immediate impact because of your leadership and what you are able to do. Again, I commend the Commission and I am here to take any questions you may have.

**Jay Ross, County Attorney:** Can you tell the Commissioners if as of yet, how the applicants will receive funding? How it will be applied, a little bit about the criteria and why there are only nine (9).

**David Rodgers:** Yes. A little bit about what the committee wanted to do with this process. There were some applications that came out during this process and the committee asked for a little bit more detail on their financial information. We have not declined them. What we have done is taken the applications, kept them in order of where they are, and they are in a queue or a holding pattern as we go back and request more information. There are some which will be coming up next week that came back and provided the additional financial information that we needed. The way the committee is doing this is by time stamp of the application. The order of these is by the completion of the application.

**Commissioner Connie Hudson:** If I may, Mr. Rodgers, thank you. I want to express appreciation to you, Bill Sisson, President and CEO of Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce, and the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce for being a partner, helping to establish the criteria in every step of the way, and administering the grant. Also, to the members of the volunteer committee and Dana Foster-Allen, Finance Director, who represents the County Commission's part of the committee. I know there has been a lot of time and effort spent on their behalf on evaluating the applications. I do have one question. Initially the discussion was to cap the amount received at ten thousand dollars (\$10,000.00) and we increased it to twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000.00) with the idea that additional funds may be available from business and industry or by some of the banking institutions. Is this a cap we should continue or should we come back down from the cap? The

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idea here is to help as many businesses as we can. If you could explain that.

**David Rodgers:** Absolutely. Bill Sisson, President and CEO of Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce, has continued to reach out to many of our partners and expressed we have created this program in partnership with the Commission. To date, we have not received any additional funds from the private industries. I will tell you if you look at these applications and the recommendation of these applications, not every company is asking for the full amount. They are also having to prove what they are requesting in the application, whether through proof of revenue or any expenditures they have during this time. It is not a situation where we are only going to be able to help out forty (40) companies because that would be your twenty-five thousand dollar (\$25,000.00) max to the one million dollars (\$1,000,000.00) total. There is certainly an opportunity here to continue to help out these companies because they are not all asking for the maximum amount. They are asking for what their amounts are.

**Commissioner Hudson:** Right. Regardless of what amount they ask for it doesn't necessarily mean they can't use it. They can certainly demonstrate the need for it.

**David Rodgers:** Absolutely.

**Commissioner Hudson:** When you consider the number of applications you have now or anticipate going forward, if each receives less than the twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000.00), can we help more businesses as opposed to helping just a finite number?

**David Rodgers:** Absolutely. Potentially that would be at the discretion of the leadership here. If that is something the Commission would like to do, there is certainly an opportunity for us to go back and look at that with everybody.

**Commissioner Hudson:** I think the idea set was it would be flexible with one hundred (100) or less employees per business. I know there is a lot taken into consideration. I have discussed it with Dana Foster-Allen, Finance Director, and she has explained it to me. It has a lot to do with what each company is producing, the revenues, and so forth. I guess the concern is we can help as many as possible. If that means the cap needs to be lowered to do that, then that is a potential option.

**David Rodgers:** If that is what the leadership here would like for us to do, then we are more than happy to go back and make the adjustments.

**Commissioner Hudson:** Okay.

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**President Jerry L. Carl:** I would like for us to do that. Let me express my thoughts and then we can decide as a group. I would like to go back to the ten thousand dollar (\$10,000.00) cap until we can get other partners to participate in this. Then we can revisit this and try it again. At ten thousand dollars (\$10,000.00) we are looking at helping fifty (50) businesses. I want to thank y'all for what you have done here. I am looking at these addresses and I do not necessarily know all of these businesses. Most of them I have never heard of. With that said, they are from all over the place. You have Chunchula, West Mobile, and downtown Mobile. That is encouraging. That was my biggest fear that this would be targeted in just one (1) particular area. Just for the record, given the public atmosphere that I am having to live in right now, did I have anything to do with picking any of these from the list?

**David Rodgers:** No, not at all. This came by the advertising that was done and again, these are based on the time stamp of the electronic application.

**President Carl:** Okay. Thank you.

**Commissioner Hudson:** When would be the next group to be reviewed for allocation of funds? When will that occur?

**David Rodgers:** This morning at 11:00 A.M. The volunteer committee meets on Mondays and Wednesdays at 11:00 A.M. virtually by Zoom.

**Commissioner Hudson:** Okay.

**David Rodgers:** There will be some reviews today at 11:00 A.M.

**Jay Ross:** If I can, Commissioners, regarding from last Monday to last Wednesday to select additional businesses, they have already selected the businesses for approval.

**Commissioner Hudson:** Right. I think in light of Commissioner Carl's comments I do not disagree with it at this point until we can get additional revenues. Maybe some of the State of Alabama's funding will filter down this way.

President Carl moved, seconded by Commissioner Hudson that the Board approve the second amendment to the agreement with the Mobile County Chamber of Commerce Foundation, Inc. to administer the County's Small Business Relief Grant Program adopted by the County Commission on

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June 8, 2020, to lower the maximum amount allotted from \$25,000.00 to \$10,000.00 effective June 29, 2020, and authorize the President of the Commission to execute the amendment on behalf of Mobile County.

Commissioner Ludgood abstained.

Motion carried.

**David Rodgers:** Through next week, it is over four hundred fifty thousand (\$450,000.00) dollars. I do not have that number in front of me. I am sorry. Obviously that would go down significantly with reducing the cap. Some of these were larger companies that will be recommended for next week. They have a little bit more on the payroll side of things. If we reduce the cap down to ten thousand dollars (\$10,000.00), that four hundred fifty thousand (\$450,000.00) dollars would go down as well I am sure.

**President Carl:** Thank you.

**Commissioner Hudson:** Again, thank you very much.

**David Rodgers:** Thank you again for your leadership. If you have any questions at all through this process, please reach out to me and I can help answer anything you have.

**President Carl:** Thank you, sir.

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AGENDA #2

AWARD GRANT FUNDS/BUSINESSES  
EXPERIENCING FINANCIAL HARDSHIP/  
COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS

**President Jerry L. Carl:** The only change I would caution us on is changing anything over ten thousand dollars (\$10,000.00) back to ten thousand dollars (\$10,000.00).

**Commissioner Connie Hudson:** For the future. Not these. These have already been approved and advertised.

**President Carl:** Okay. I thought we addressed that a while ago.

**Jay Ross, County Attorney:** Just so we are clear, there is a whole group of others who are expecting up to twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000.00).

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**Commissioner Hudson:** Yep. There are fourteen (14) more.

**Jay Ross:** There are some that come up next Monday, July 6, 2020, with the next selection. I do not know how many others are over ten thousand dollars (\$10,000.00).

**Commissioner Hudson:** It is today forward. Everything that happened up until today was by where we were previously with the twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000.00) cap.

**Jay Ross:** Dana Foster-Allen, Finance Director, may have the list for next week. I do not have the list with me.

**President Carl:** Come on down, Dana. You know it all. Give it to us.

**Dana Foster-Allen, Finance Director:** The question I need for clarity as we have ones we approved in last and previous meeting. We are saying that the ones we approved previously that Jay Ross advertised but have not come before you, we are going to keep those at the requested amounts and effective with the meeting and the decisions we have today at today's meeting. Are they going at the cap of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000.00)?

**President Carl:** Are you asking if these will be at a cap of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000.00)?

**Commissioner Hudson:** No.

**President Carl:** No, I am just asking.

**Dana Foster-Allen:** No. We know those aren't. Are these at a cap of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000.00)?

**President Carl:** No. That's what I am asking and we are trying to figure out.

**Commissioner Hudson:** Everything that has been advertised is going to stay where it is.

**Dana Foster-Allen:** Right. Okay.

**Commissioner Hudson:** It is today forward.

**Dana Foster-Allen:** Okay. Today forward.

**Jay Ross:** There are another fifteen (15) or eighteen (18) Commissioner Carl has addressed.

**President Carl:** I see where you are going.

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**Jay Ross:** I do not know how many, but some of those are over the ten thousand dollars (\$10,000.00).

**Dana Foster-Allen:** Yes.

**President Carl:** We have advertised those in what way?

**Jay Ross:** We place those recommendations in the paper for general circulation and al.com, the fifteen (15) that were approved last Wednesday.

**President Carl:** Why do we not use a local newspaper saying we are trying to help local businesses?

**Jay Ross:** That is fair. We try to reach a larger audience.

**President Carl:** We have Call News, Lagniappe, and some local newspapers that need our business. We are trying to give local businesses money and we are sending our money to Birmingham.

**Jay Ross:** The theory at the time was to get as broad of a reach as possible.

**President Carl:** Okay. Thank you.

**Dana Foster-Allen:** Thank you for the clarification.

**President Carl:** Glenn, we are back to you.

Commissioner Hudson moved, seconded by President Carl, that the Board award grant funds to the following nine (9) businesses in the following amounts that are experiencing financial hardship with the COVID-19 Public Health Crisis within Mobile County for the purpose of promoting the economic and industrial development of the County in accordance with Amendment No. 772 of the Constitution of Alabama:

- ATMackie Consulting, LLC in the amount of \$11,000.00, to be used for payroll expenses for one (1) employee for the next five (5) months.
- Kalioki, LLC in the amount of \$21,540.00, to be used for rent, utilities, and payroll expenses for four (4) to five (5) employees for the next three (3) months.
- Play Café, LLC in the amount of \$10,000.00, to be used for rent, loans, and payroll expenses for five (5) to six (6) employees for the next three (3) months.

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- 19 Ventures, LLC in the amount of \$16,600.00, to be used for rent, franchise fees, payroll, and operating expenses for five (5) to six (6) employees for the next three (3) months.
- Perdido Queen Cruises, LLC in the amount of \$25,000.00, to be used for payroll expenses for ten (10) to eleven (11) employees for the next six (6) weeks.
- The Cheese Cottage, LLC in the amount of \$10,000.00, to be used for payroll for three (3) to four (4) employees for the next three (3) months.
- Coastal Makers, LLC in the amount of \$10,000.00, to be used for payroll and operating expenses for one (1) to two (2) employees for the next eight (8) months.
- GBM3, Inc. in the amount of \$4,000.00, to be used for utilities, payroll, and operating expenses for three (3) to four (4) employees for the next two (2) months.
- Lupercalia Art Society LLC in the amount of \$10,000.00, to be used for rent, utilities, maintenance, and payroll expenses for two (2) to three (3) employees for the next three (3) months.

Commissioner Ludgood abstained.

Motion carried.

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AGENDA #3

COMMISSION ANNOUNCEMENTS  
AND/OR COMMENTS

There were none.

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AGENDA #4

ADJOURN

Commissioner Hudson moved, seconded by Commissioner Ludgood, that the Board approve a request for motion to adjourn until July 6, 2020.

Motion carried unanimously.

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Jerry L. Carl, President

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Merceria Ludgood, Member

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Connie Hudson, Member

ATTEST:

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Glenn L. Hodge, County Administrator