



**HOUSTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT
MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
SEPTEMBER 28, 2021**

The Commissioners' Court of Houston County met in a regular, called meeting on September 28, 2021, **in person and via zoom due to Covid**, with the following members present, to wit:

Jim Lovell	County Judge
Gary Lovell	Commissioner, Precinct #1
Willie Kitchen	Commissioner, Precinct #2
Gene Stokes	Commissioner, Precinct #3
Jimmy Henderson	Commissioner, Precinct #4 (via ZOOM)

Also present:

Jo Smith	Houston County Extension Agent
Melissa Jeter	County Auditor
Sharon Luker	Administrative Assistant to the Commissioners
Jan Pigford	Administrative Assistant to County Judge
Cynthia Lum	Elections Administrator
Todd McConnell	IT
Brittani Womack	First Assistant Auditor (Zoom)
Laronica Wooten-Smith	Tax Assessor Collector (Zoom)
Heath Murff	Emergency Management (Zoom)
Terri Meadows	County Clerk
Sheila Johnson	Grants Administrator
Randy Hargrove	Sheriff (Zoom)
Jennifer Kulms	911 Addressing (Zoom)
Corey Hicks	Agri-Life Extension Agent

Media:

Will Johnson	The Messenger (Zoom)
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Visitors:

Brian Fiolek (4-H), Brian Fiolek (4-H Shooting Sports), Tommy Hutto (dog shelter), Doris Hutto (dog shelter), Patsy Reichl (dog shelter), Coy Smith (Kennard 4-H), Laney Smith (Kennard 4-H), Landry Beaver (Homestead 4-H), Riley Beaver (Homestead 4-H), Carrie Beaver (Homestead 4-H Volunteer), Gerald Reichl (dog shelter)

- (1) Welcome, Invocation and Pledges:
Judge Lovell called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m. Judge Lovell led the opening prayer and then led the Pledge to the American flag and to the Texas Flag.
- (2) Recognition and comments from guests: None
- (3) **Commissioner Lovell moved to approve the Commissioners Court minutes from September 14, 2021 and September 17, 2021. Commissioner Kitchen seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (4) Consider approving budget amendments. **Commissioner Stokes made a motion to approve the budget amendments and Commissioner Kitchen seconded the motion. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (5) Consider payment of bills and expenses:
 - a. Accounts payable
 - b. Fund transfers
 - c. Ratify Salary expenses**Commissioner Lovell made a motion to pay all the bills and expenses for a. (Accounts payable), b. (Fund transfers), and c. (Ratify Salary expenses). The motion was seconded by Commissioner Kitchen. The motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (6) Receive information, announcements and reports from County Departments:
 - a. Environmental Report
 - b. Community Service Report (not provided)
 - c. County Treasurers Report
 - d. Compensatory ReportAnd Sheila Johnson, Grants Administrator, handed out an Update on DR-4416 and gave an oral report.
Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to receive the reports as information. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.
- (7) Consider approving salaries for new and/or transfer employees:
 - a. **Commissioner Stokes made a motion to approve the hiring of Jeffery Bankston as part-time Heavy Equipment Operator – R & B-Precinct 3 at an hourly rate of \$16.15 in pay grade 17 from 9/28/21 to 10/1/21 and then move to full time at bi-weekly salary of \$1291.72 in pay grade 17. Commissioner Kitchen seconded the motion. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
 - b. **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to approve Irene Brantner as part-time File Clerk in the County Clerk's Office at an hourly rate of \$11.55 in pay grade 13. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
 - c. **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to approve Bonita Newman as temporary part-time clerk in the Elections Admin Office at an hourly wage of \$12.50 in pay grade 13. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
 - d. **Commissioner Lovell made a motion to approve Candi Reid as part-time dispatcher at the HCSO at an hourly wage of \$13.38 in pay grade 15. Commissioner Kitchen seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

- e. **Commissioner Stokes made a motion to approve Mary Harrington and MaLinda Ehlers as part-time cooks at the Senior Citizen's Center at an hourly wage of \$10.75 in pay grade 10. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (8) **Discuss and consider approving payment of compensatory, and vacation time for County employees and necessary budget amendments. Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to pay Sandra Rodriguez, Dispatcher at HCSO, vacation pay in the amount of \$388.26 and approve necessary budget amendments. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (9) **Commissioner Kitchen moved to approve the signing of a proclamation proclaiming October 3-9, 2021 as National 4-H week. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (10) **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to accept a donation of \$500.00.00 from Fred K. Sims for improvements to CR 2210 in Precinct 2. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (11) **Commissioner Stokes made a motion to accept donation of two Safe Life Defense bullet proof vests from Houston County Law Enforcement Association with a value of \$1600.00 for the Sheriff's Department. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (12) **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to approve distribution of votes to candidates for Board of Directors to Houston County Appraisal District (Kathi Calvert, Dick Bridges, Tod English, W.F. (Red) Kitchen, and Tommy Lundy). Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

****At this time the internet went down and Commissioners Court took a short recess. Following the recess Commissioner Henderson was not able to rejoin the meeting via Zoom.**

- (13) **Commissioner Stokes made a motion to approve the request of the Hotel Occupancy Tax Fund and Interlocal Agreement with Grapeland Chamber of Commerce for the Peanut Festival to be held on October 21-23, 2021 in the amount of \$3000.00. . Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**
- (14) **Commissioner Kitchen moved to continue the Burn Ban that was issued 9/22/21 due to fire danger for unincorporated areas of Houston County. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**
- (15) **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to set the Sheriff and Constable fees effective October 1, 2021 as presented. Commissioner Stokes seconded the motion. After some discussion Commissioner Stokes amended the motion to amend the mileage requested to IRS rates and Commissioner Lovell seconded. The Motion with the Amendment carried 4 to 0.**
- (16) **Discuss and consider approving the following items for the November 2nd 2021 Special Election:**
 - a. **Signing Notice of Election with consolidated polling locations. Commissioner Kitchen so moved. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**
 - b. **Approving number of clerks to hire for each polling location. Commissioner Kitchen so moved and Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**

- c. Approving Grace Lutheran Church, located @ 925 W Loop 304, Crockett, TX 75835 as the official polling location for precinct 2. **Commissioner Lovell so moved with Commissioner Stokes seconding. Motion carried 4 to 0.**
 - d. Approving Crockett I.S.D. Administration Building Cafetorium, located @ 1400 W. Austin, Crockett, TX 75835 as the official polling location for precinct 3. **Commissioner Lovell made the motion to do so and Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**
 - e. Receive as information the list of Designated Early Voting Clerks from the Elections Administrator. **Commissioner Kitchen so moved to receive as information. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**
- (17) Discuss and consider action on a budget amendment request and receive as information the salary reduction affidavits:
- a. County Judge to Administrative Assistant
 - b. District Judges to District Court Coordinator
- Commissioner Kitchen moved to approve the amend requests on both a and b. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**
- (18) **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to amend the FY 2022 pay scale for County Employees. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**
- (19) Discuss and consider action on a policy for quarantine leave for peace officers, detention officers employed by Houston County as required by HB 2073. **PASS**
- (20) **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to set the reimbursement of expenses for jurors and prospective jurors for FY 2022 per Government Code 61.001 (b). The rate for first day is set at \$6.00 and the rate for each subsequent day of service is \$40.00. Commissioner Lovell seconded this motion. Motion carried 4 to 0.**
- (21) **Commissioner Lovell made a motion to update the juror donation options to include the Veterans County Service Office as required under SB 456. Commissioner Kitchen seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**
- (22) **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to apply for and approve a Resolution for the 2022 Indigent Defense Formulary Grant Program through TIDC. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**
- (23) **Commissioner Lovell made a motion to approve Houston County airport hangar lease agreement with Mark Whitfill for Hangar #1. Commissioner Kitchen seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**
- (24) **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to renew contract with Lexis Nexis for legal research services for the County and District Attorney offices for FY 2022. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**
- (25) **Commissioner Lovell moved to amend the contract with Turn Key Medical Services for inmate health to clarify responsibility of radiology and laboratory services provided by subcontractors. Commissioner Kitchen seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**

(26)Gerald Reichl was present to speak about the issue of stray dogs/cats and the need for spay/neutering and an animal shelter in the county. **Commissioner Kitchen moved for the county to partner with Dehart Veterinary Mobile Services to provide low-cost spay/neuter clinics in Houston County with a max program support of \$5000 for up to 100 dogs/cats for FY 2022. This clinic will be held on October 28, 2021. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0**

(27)Adjourn. **Judge Lovell moved to adjourn the meeting and everyone agreed by standing and vacating the building.**

Jim Lovell, County Judge

Gary Lovell, Commissioner, Precinct #1

Willie Kitchen, Commissioner, Precinct #2

Gene Stokes, Commissioner, Precinct #3

Jimmy Henderson, Commissioner, Precinct #4

Attest:

Terri Meadows, County Clerk