



**HOUSTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT
MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
OCTOBER 12, 2021**

The Commissioners' Court of Houston County met in a regular, called meeting on October 12, 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

Also present:

Sharon Luker	Administrative Assistant to the Commissioners
Jan Pigford	Administrative Assistant to County Judge
Todd McConnell	IT
Brittani Womack	First Assistant Auditor
Belinda Hinson	Second Assistant Auditor (Zoom)
Laronica Wooten-Smith	Tax Assessor Collector (Zoom)
Heath Murff	Emergency Management (Zoom)
Terri Meadows	County Clerk
Sheila Johnson	Grants Administrator (Zoom)
Jennifer Kulms	911 Addressing (Zoom)
Sarah Clark	CCL Judge
Daphne Session	County Attorney

Media:

Will Johnson	The Messenger (Zoom)
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Visitors:

Gerald Reichl (dog shelter), John Angerstein (City Manager), January, Gwen

(1) Welcome, Invocation and Pledges:

Judge Lovell called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. Commissioner Stokes led the opening prayer and then Judge Lovell led the Pledge to the American flag and to the Texas Flag.

- (2) Recognition and comments from guests: Gerald Reichl spoke about the number of stray dogs and cats in Houston County and the need for an Animal Shelter.
- (3) **Commissioner Lovell moved to approve the Commissioners Court minutes from September 28, 2021. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (4) Consider approving budget amendments. **NONE**
- (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)**Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to receive the Environmental Report as information. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (7) Consider approving salaries for new and/or transfer employees:
 - a. **Commissioner Lovell made a motion to approve the pay increase of Thomas Morgan Phillips, now a Certified Jailer at the HCSO. His pay is increased from \$1059.56 to \$1112.54 bi-weekly in Pay Grade 16. Commissioner Kitchen seconded the motion. 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 G. Ard, HCSO, comp time pay in the amount of \$786.99 and approve any necessary budget amendments. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (9) **Commissioner Stokes moved to LIFT the burn ban that Houston County is currently under. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (10) **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to adopt the Order setting dates of regular Commissioners Court meetings during FY 2022 keeping them at 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month, but moving the time of meetings up to 9:00 a.m. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (11) **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to adopt the Order for Disbursement of Salaries and Routine Expenses for FY 2022 as authorized under LGC §154.0235. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (12) **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to adopt a Proclamation designating October as Domestic Violence Awareness Month in Houston County. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Daphne Session, County Attorney and Sarah Clark, CCL Judge both spoke about the seriousness of domestic violence and the rise they have seen during the pandemic. They**

invited everyone to attend the domestic violence awareness event tomorrow in the downtown city/farmer's market park at noon. Motion carried 5 to 0.

- (13) **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to approve the Cooperative Agreement with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service through August 31, 2026 for county support staff, office space, furnishings, equipment, telephone, fax and travel and support of Extension Agent salaries. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (14) **Commissioner Lovell moved to approve Hotel Occupancy Tax Fund Application and Interlocal Agreement for Pineywoods Fine Arts Association for Pat Green Concert to be held on November 19, 2021. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (15) Discuss and consider approving proposed recommendations by the Human Resource Committee:
- (a) **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to adopt the Proposed 2022 Houston County Holidays. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
 - (b) Commissioners Court **PASSED** on the policy for quarantine leave for peace officers, detention officer employed by Houston County as required by HB 2073.
 - (c) Commissioners Court **PASSED** on the Facilities Administrator job description and placement on pay scale to allow HR to review.
 - (d) **Commissioner Kitchen moved to allow the County Judge's Administrative Assistant to begin looking for a company to conduct a Salary Study for Houston County. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (16) **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to receive as information FY 2021 Seizure and Forfeiture Audit Reports for District Attorney, County Attorney, Sheriff's Department, Constables Precinct 1 and Precinct 2. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (17) **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion and Commissioner Henderson seconded to submit application for renewal of liability insurance at Houston County airport. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (18) **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to Adopt Order to retain existing political boundaries following publication of 2020 Census Data. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (19) Closed executive session as authorized by Texas Government Code §551.072 to discuss the county's potential purchase, lease, sale, or exchange of real estate and/or the value of the real estate and contemplated litigation per Local Government Code §551.071. **Court went into closed session at 10:55 a.m. and returned to open court at 11:29 a.m.**

(20)Adjourn. **Judge Lovell moved to adjourn the meeting and Commissioner Kitchen seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0 and the meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.**

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