



**HOUSTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT  
MINUTES  
REGULAR MEETING  
AUGUST 27, 2019**

The Commissioners' Court of Houston County met in a regular, called meeting on August 27, 2019 with the following members present, to wit:

Jim Lovell	County Judge
Gary Lovell	Commissioner, Precinct #1
Willie Kitchen	Commissioner, Precinct #2
Pat Perry	Commissioner, Precinct #3
Jimmy Henderson	Commissioner, Precinct #4

Also present:

Melissa Jeter	County Auditor
Brittani Womack	First Assistant County Auditor
Jennifer Kulms	County Auditor's Office
Sharon Luker	Assistant to the County Commissioners
Jan Pigford	Administrative Assistant to the County Judge
Janis Omelina	County Treasurer
Justin Killough	Chief Deputy at S/O
Cynthia Lum	Election's Administrator
Roger Dickey	HCFM/EMC
Danette Millican	Tax Assessor Collector
Ryan Martin	HCSO
Michael Molnes	HCSO/Chief Bailiff
Brenda Hinson	HC Aging Services
Terri Meadows	Houston County Clerk

Media:

Alton Porter	Houston County Courier
Will Johnson	The Grapeland Messenger

Visitors: Jason Frizzell (Crockett FD), Alesha Bucker and Tab Beall (Perdue Brandon Law Firm), George Crowson, Jr. and Bobby W. Hutcherson and Peggy Patrick and William Money (ESD #2), Bob Van Voast (Latexo VFD), Butch Calvert (Crockett City Council), John Angerstein (Crockett City Admin), Gwendolyn Scott, Wilford Scott, George Crowson, Sr., Denny Wheeler (Piney Woods Sanitation), Justin Brent and Chris Jimenez and N. Key (Crockett FD), Clayton Smith (CPD Chief)

- (1) Welcome, Invocation and Pledges:  
Judge Lovell called the meeting to order and Commissioner Lovell gave the opening prayer. Judge Lovell led the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag and the Texas Flag.
- (2) Recognition and comments from guests:  
Judge Lovell recognized the guests and asked if there were any comments. Gwendolyn Scott spoke about the need for a place to dump garbage and large items since Waste Connections is no longer in operation. She asks Commissioner's Court to consider a solution.
- (3) Consider approval of prior Commissioners Court Minutes:  
Commissioner Lovell made a motion to approve the Commissioners Court minutes from August 13, 2019 and August 20, 2019. Commissioner Henderson seconded the motion. Motion carried 5 to 0.
- (4) Consider approving budget amendments:  
None at this time
- (5) Consider payment of bills and expenses:
  - a. Accounts payable
  - b. Fund transfers
  - c. Ratify Salary expensesCommissioner Kitchen made a motion to pay the all of the bills and expenses for a. (Accounts payable), b. (Fund transfers), and c. (Ratify Salary expenses). The motion was seconded by Commissioner Lovell. The motion carried 5 to 0.
- (6) Receive information, announcements and reports from County Departments:
  - a. Treasurer's Report
  - b. Compensatory ReportCommissioner Kitchen moved to receive the reports as information. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.
- (7) Consider approving salaries for new and/or transfer employees:  
Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to approve the hiring of Cynthia Farek as temporary part-time Senior Citizen Cook at Pay Grade #10 and \$10.24 an hour. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.
- (8) Discuss and consider approving payment of compensatory, vacation and holiday time for County employees and necessary budget amendments.  
Commissioner Kitchen moved to approve the request to pay Aaron Burch (HCSO) \$717.25. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.
- (9) Commissioner Lovell made a motion to cancel the contract with Polk County for the purchase of home delivered meals for Houston County clients. Commissioner Kitchen seconded the motion. Motion carried 5 to 0.  
Melissa Jeter, County Auditor, said that Brenda Hinson (Director for the Aging Services) has worked very hard to look for a new program that would provide everything necessary for the meals and settled on Traditions. The cost is 10 cents more per meal, but it includes delivery.

- (10) Commissioner Lovell made a motion to enter into a contract with Traditions Meal Solution for the purchase of home delivered meals for Houston County clients beginning October 1, 2019. Commissioner Kitchen seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.
- (11) Commissioner Kitchen moved to approve contract with Hyper-Reach Services Agreement for FY 2020. Roger Dickey (HCFM) said this program is already in place and is in the county budget. He also stated that he has it set up where there will be some reimbursement. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.
- (12) Cynthia Lum, Elections Administrator, said that Commissioners Court needs to vote on name/location change of Precinct 7 polling place at the Lovelady Community Center located at 124 E. Cox St., Lovelady, TX. She said it is still the same polling location as before, but the building on the property that housed the boy scouts is being remodeled and will be used during elections as the permanent polling location. It will be called Lovelady Community Center II. Commissioner Kitchen moved to approve Precinct 7 polling place at Lovelady Community Center II, 124 E. Cox St., Lovelady, TX. Commissioner Henderson seconded the motion. Motion carried 5 to 0.
- (13) Elections Administrator, Cynthia Lum, said that this November 5, 2019 will be Constitutional Amendment Election and she suggests that we combine polling places with a minimal inconvenience to the voters. This will be cost saving for the county due to the light turnout in this type of election. Commissioner Kitchen moved to approve combining polling locations. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.
- (14) Roger Dickey (HCFM) spoke about the current drought and fire danger and said that he has been in contact with the Forestry Service and they recommend a Burn Ban. Commissioner Kitchen made a motion that we initiate a Burn Ban until the next meeting of Commissioners Court. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.
- (15) Commissioner Kitchen moved to adopt the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of each month as regular Commissioners Court meetings during FY 2019-2020. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.
- (16) Commissioner Kitchen moved to set the Official holiday schedule for calendar year 2020. January 1, 2020, January 20, 2020, February 17, 2020, April 10, 2020, May 25, 2020, June 19, 2020, July 3, 2020, September 7, 2020, October 12, 2020, November 11, 2020, November 26 and 27, 2020, December 24 and 25, 2020. Commissioner Henderson seconded the motion. Motion carried 5 to 0.
- (17) Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to receive as information the annual road reports. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Commissioner Perry said that he had met with the state on Monday, August 26, 2019, and they are going to put 5 bridges in his precinct beginning in April 2020. Motion carried 5 to 0.
- (18) Tab Beall from Perdue, Brandon, Fielder, Collins and Mott, LLP gave the report on the county's delinquent tax situation. He stated that we are in overall pretty good shape. He said we do not have any "black holes" or "red flag" problems. He also said that they do everything that they can to work with the taxpayer before filing suit, but will file suit when it becomes necessary. He

asks for the Commissioners Court help in identify persons with a hardship so that his office can work patiently with those people to get their taxes paid without filing suit.

(19) Judge Lovell recognized George Crowson, Jr., President of the Emergency Services District No. 2 Board, and asked him to explain the reason for the cancellation of a contract with the City of Crockett's Volunteer Fire Department. Mr. Crowson stood up and came to the podium to address the Commissioners Court. He began by saying, "Today is a shameful day. With a little leadership from any member of this court, this could have been resolved. This is not the time or the place for the discussion about what went on in the ESD #2 meeting. Instead, a group of the finest citizens in this county have had their names dragged through the mud today. It shouldn't happen," he said. He further indicated the court did not have the decency, respect or the common courtesy to seek out the ESD board members to find out what had occurred. This type of commenting went on for several more minutes. At the end of Mr. Crowson's address Judge Lovell sought clarification to several of his talking points. He asked him what was the difference between cancelling and letting the contract expire (with the city) to which Crowson replied if they had cancelled it, the contract would have ended when the ESD meeting did. Judge Lovell inquired if there was any discussion or negotiation to try and come to an agreement other than to let it expire. Mr. Crowson blamed the city council members that were in the meeting for not attempting to negotiate. Precinct 2 Commissioner Kitchen questioned Crowson about what would happen now to which Crowson responded the ESD would re-allocate funds away from Crockett and re-claim equipment housed at the Crockett FD. There was discussion about the new fire department that the ESD #2 is building in the Ratcliff area. Judge Lovell questioned if this was in the best interest of the taxpayers to build a new fire station that is 3 miles or less from an existing fire station. Crowson stated, "Absolutely." The Crockett Fire Chief, Jason Frizzell spoke, and said that he thought there was still room to negotiate. Peggy Patrick and William Money briefly addressed the Court about their feelings on all that has transpired. This portion of discussion was ended with the Judge asking the parties if they are willing to continue negotiations. No one said they were against it.

(20) Given the outcome of item number 19 Judge Lovell suggested that the Court give the city and ESD #2 board members time to reach an agreement and not ask for the for resignation of George Crowson, Jr., Peggy Patrick and Bobby Hutcherson which is the content of agenda item 20. Commissioner Kitchen moved to table this item indefinitely. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.

(21) Conduct Public hearing on Proposed FY 2020 Ad Valorem Tax Rate of \$.5400 per \$100 of value. There was no discussion.

(22) Adjourn:

Judge Lovell said that the Public Hearing is closed and asked for a Motion to Adjourn. Commissioner Kitchen moved for Commissioners Court to adjourn. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried with everyone standing. The meeting was adjourned.

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Jim Lovell, County Judge

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Gary Lovell, Commissioner, Precinct #1

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Willie Kitchen, Commissioner, Precinct #2

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Pat Perry, Commissioner, Precinct #3

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Jimmy Henderson, Commissioner, Precinct #4

Attest:

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Terri Meadows, County Clerk