



**HOUSTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT
MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
SEPTEMBER 8, 2020**

The Commissioners' Court of Houston County met in a regular, called meeting on September 8, 2020, **via Zoom due to Covid 19**, with the following members present, to wit:

Jim Lovell	County Judge	
Gary Lovell	Commissioner, Precinct #1	
Willie Kitchen	Commissioner, Precinct #2	(Joined after agenda item 6)
Pat Perry	Commissioner, Precinct #3	
Jimmy Henderson	Commissioner, Precinct #4	

Also present:

Jan Pigford	Administrative Assistant to the County Judge
Sharon Luker	Assistant to the Commissioners
Melissa Jeter	County Auditor
Justin Killough	Sheriff
Daphne Session	County Attorney
Danette Millican	County Tax Assessor Collector
Janis Omelina	County Treasurer
Roger Dickey	Emergency Management Coordinator
Bonita Newman	911 Addressing
Ronnie Jordan	JP Precinct 2
Cynthia Lum	Elections Administrator
Terri Meadows	County Clerk

Media:

Will Johnson	The Messenger
Alton Porter	Houston County Courier

Visitors:

Liza Clark – Crockett Area Chamber Director

(1) Welcome, Invocation and Pledges:

Judge Lovell called the meeting to order and Sheriff Killough led the opening prayer. Following the Prayer Judge Lovell led the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag and the Texas Flag.

- (2) Recognition and comments from guests: None
- (3) **Commissioner Henderson moved to approve the Commissioners Court minutes from August 25, 2020. Commissioner Lovell 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 of the bills and expenses for a. (Accounts payable), b. (Fund transfers), and c. (Ratify Salary expenses). The motion was seconded by Commissioner Henderson. The motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (6) Receive information, announcements and reports from County Departments:
- a. Environmental Report
 - b. Community Service Report **(Not Available)**
- Commissioner Lovell made a motion to receive as information the Environmental Report. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- Sheriff Killough announced that the Medical Contract with Alto would have to be renegotiated or the county would have to find another medical contract. He said the county jail is covered until November 1, 2020.**
- (7) Consider approving salaries for new and/or transfer employees:
- (a) Commissioner Lovell made a motion to approve the six month raise for Pamela Fannett, Home Delivered Meal Program Director at a 3% increase from \$12.05 an hour to \$12.41 an hour in Pay Grade 11. Henderson 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 Henderson made a motion to pay Martha Jackson, HCSO, \$154.39 for 9.38 hours of comp time and necessary budget amendments. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (9) Conduct Public Hearing to rename Randall Road to County Road 4030A. **The Public Hearing began at 10:11 a.m. Commissioner Perry was asked to describe what part of the road will be considered 4030A. He responded that it will be to the left and to the right is a Private Road called Randall Road. The length of proposed County Road 4030A is 1.04 miles and that will be maintained by the county.**
- (10) Close Public Hearing. **The Public Hearing ended at 10:22 a.m.**
- (11) **Commissioner Perry made a motion to adopt Order to change name of the left end of Randall Road in Precinct 3 to County Road 4030A. Commissioner Kitchen seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

- (12) Conduct Public Hearing on proposed Houston County Budget for Fiscal Year 2021. **Public Hearing began at 10:23 a.m. County Auditor answered some questions that were asked about the proposed budget.**
- (13) Close Public Hearing. **The Public Hearing was closed at 10:44 a.m.**
- (14) Conduct Public Hearing on Proposed Tax Rate for Fiscal Year 2021. **The Public Hearing began at 10:44 a.m.**
- (15) Close Public Hearing. **The Public Hearing closed at 10:45 a.m.**
- (16) **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to adopt Houston County Budget for Fiscal Year 2021. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (17) Discuss and consider action on adopting FY 2020 County Tax Rate of \$0.532 cents
- a. Maintenance and operations tax rate of \$0.45734
 - b. Interest and sinking tax rate of \$0.07466
- Commissioner Henderson moved to adopt the FY 2020 County Tax Rate of \$0.532 cents and Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (18) **Judge Lovell moved that the property tax rate increase be ratified on the adoption of the tax rate of 0.532 cents per one hundred collars of value this is effectively a 4.62494% increase in tax revenue. Commissioner Kitchen seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- AT THIS TIME A BREAK WAS TAKEN FROM 10:48 A.M. TO 10:55 A.M.**
- (19) **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to grant discretionary exemptions for purchases of goods and services related to the COVID-19 pandemic pursuant to Local Government Code §262.024 under the CARES Act/Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF). Commissioner Perry seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (20) **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to approve that the Sheriff look for vendors for a contract from proposals for armed uniformed security screeners necessary under the COVID-19 Operating Plan for the Courts of Houston County. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Sheriff Killough said that with the current operating plan for the courts that additional screeners are needed to assist with the duties outlined in the plan. He also suggested the county contract with a security company since this is probably temporary. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (21) **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to allow relocating the office of the Justice of the Peace Precinct 2 and Constable Precinct 2 to the Houston County Courthouse First Floor and approve additional fax line. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Judge Jordan said that making this move to the Courthouse will put him in his precinct and that is what he has been trying to do for several years. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (22) **Commissioner Henderson made a motion to adopt Order for the November 3, 2020 General Election. Commissioner Kitchen seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

- (23) Commissioner Lovell made a motion to move the polling location for Precinct 2 from the old J.P. Building to Grace Lutheran Church for the November 3, 2020 General Election upon the recommendation of the Elections Administrator Cynthia Lum. This move is necessary to be able to comply with COVID-19 restrictions. Commissioner Kitchen seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.
- (24) Commissioner Henderson moved to approve Joint election agreements between Houston County, Houston County Hospital District, Crockett ISD and Latexo ISD. Commissioner Kitchen seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.
- (25) Commissioner Lovell made a motion for appointment of election judges and alternate judges for a one-year term. (See Order of Appointment for Election Judges and Alternates list). Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.
- (26) Commissioner Kitchen moved to approve purchase of 26 poll pads from Knowink for the November 3, 2020 election under the HAVA Cares grant and necessary budget amendments. Commissioner Lovell seconded the motion. Motion carried 5 to 0.
- (27) Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to approve renewal contract with Pritchard & Abbott, Inc. for tax collection software from October 1, 2020 through September 30, 2021. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.
- (28) Commissioner Kitchen moved to set the salaries for all officers and employees of Houston County for Fiscal Year 2021. (See attached list). Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.
- (29) Commissioner Henderson made a motion to receive as information the Orders setting the Annual Salaries for:
- a. County Court at Law Court Reporter \$57,866.17.
 - b. 3rd Judicial District Court Reporter \$90,602.60 to be divided between Anderson, Henderson, and Houston Counties with Houston County portion being \$13,382.00.
 - c. 349th Judicial District Court Reporter \$79,737.90 to be divided between Anderson and Houston County with Houston County portion being \$26,131.72.
 - d. County Auditor and Assistants
 1. County Auditor \$71,221.33
 2. First Assistant County Auditor \$35,571.35
 3. Second Assistant County Auditor \$33,826.52
 4. Part Time Assistant County Auditors \$13.68 per hour
- Commissioner Lovell seconded the motion. Motion carried 5 to 0.
- (30) Commissioner Lovell made a motion to approve the purchase of and trade in of two defibrillators for the Annex Building and JP Office due to recalls. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.
- (31) Commissioner Henderson moved for Houston County to opt out of the Presidential Memorandum regarding deferral of payroll tax obligations in light of the ongoing Covid-19 disaster on the recommendation of the Houston County Treasurer. Commissioner Kitchen seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.

(32) Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to approve Interlocal Cooperation Contract Between The City of Crockett, Texas and Houston County, Texas for the Provision Telecommunication/Detention Services. Commissioner Henderson seconded the motion. Motion carried 5 to 0.

(33) Commissioner Lovell made a motion to table taking any action to make expenditure for roof replacement on the Department of Aging Services (Meals on Wheels) building to allow time to get the price for a full roof replacement to compare with the repair proposal. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.

(34) Adjourn. Judge Lovell made the motion to adjourn. Commissioner Kitchen seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.

Jim Lovell, County Judge

Gary Lovell, Commissioner, Precinct #1

Willie Kitchen, Commissioner, Precinct #2

Pat Perry, Commissioner, Precinct #3

Jimmy Henderson, Commissioner, Precinct #4

Attest:

Terri Meadows, County Clerk