



HOUSTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT MINUTES REGULAR MEETING OCTOBER 28, 2025

The Commissioners' Court of Houston County met in a regular, called meeting on October 28, 2025 in **person and via zoom**, with the following members present, to wit:

The Court

Jim Lovell	County Judge	ABSENT
Gary Lovell	Commissioner, Precinct #1	PRESENT
Willie Kitchen	Commissioner, Precinct #2	PRESENT
Gene Stokes	Commissioner, Precinct #3	PRESENT
Jimmy Henderson	Commissioner, Precinct #4	PRESENT
Terri Meadows	County Clerk	PRESENT

County Officials/Employees in person:

Zak Bengé	Sheriff	Present
Alice Bittner	Admin Assistant to County Treasurer	Zoom
Hugh Coleman	Assistant County Attorney	Present
Missy D'Angelo	Assistant Auditor	Zoom
Walter Denman	Bailiff	Present
Kris Dyches	Insurance Coordinator	Present
Melissa Jeter	County Auditor	Present
Carl Johnson	Facilities Administrator	Zoom
Al Kreger	Historical Commission	Present
Donavan Mahan	Jail Administrator	Present
Mike Maiden	VA Officer	Present
Ryan Martin	Chief Deputy Sheriff	Present
Kristina Massey	County Attorney	Present
Todd McConnell	IT	Present
Jan Pigford	Assistant to County Judge	Present
Darrellyn Smith	Assistant to the County Commissioners	Present
Brittani Womack	Tax Assessor-Collector	Zoom

Media: Greg Ritchie (Zoom)

Visitors: John Angerstein (City of Crockett)

(1) Welcome, Invocation and Pledges:

Commissioner Kitchen called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m., Commissioner Lovell voiced the opening prayer followed by Commissioner Kitchen leading the Pledge to the American Flag and the Texas Flag.

(2) Recognition and comments from guests. (For informational purposes only, with no deliberation and no action taken, except that the Court may discuss whether to include any matter on a future agenda for deliberation and/or action.) **NONE**

(3) Consider approval of prior Commissioners Court minutes. **Commissioner Lovell made a motion to approve the Commissioners Court minutes for October 14, 2025. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 4 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 Henderson. The Motion carried 4 to 0.

(6) Receive information, announcements and reports from County Departments:

- a. County Treasurers Report
- b. Compensatory Report
- c. Veterans Service Report

Jan Pigford shared an announcement from Mission Texas State Park concerning their Grand Re-Opening on November 8, 2025 from 10 am to 2 pm. Everyone is invited.

Commissioner Stokes made a motion to receive as information the Reports as presented. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.

(7) Consider approving salaries for new and/or transfer employees.

Commissioner Lovell moved to approve the salaries for new and/or transfer employees as follows. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.

Kane Leos as Temporary Part-time Jailer at the Houston County Sheriff's Office at hourly pay of \$18.78 (County \$17.74 and SB22 \$1.04) in Pay Grade SO4 effective October 24, 2025.

Kane Leos as Temporary Full-time Temporary Uncertified Jailer at the Houston County Sheriff's Office at bi-weekly pay of \$42,000 (County \$39,676.00 and SB22 \$2,324.00) in Pay Grade SO4 effective October 28, 2025.

Aneisha Cooksey moving from Full-time Dispatcher to Full-time Temporary Jailer at the Houston County Sheriff's Office at bi-weekly pay of \$42,000 (County \$39,676.00 and SB22 \$2,324.00) in Pay Grade SO4 effective October 28, 2025.

Marvin Ackley at HCSO moving from Jail Sgt to Jail Utility Officer in Pay Grade SO7.

Matthew Van Egmond at HCSO moving from Sgt Investigator to Lt Investigator in Pay Grade SO14.

Steven Countz at HCSO moving from Investigator to Sgt Investigator in Pay Grade SO13

Les Neeley at HCSO moving from Investigator to Sgt Investigator in Pay Grade SO13

Roch Hoch at HCSO moving from Transport Officer to Corporal – Transport in Pay Grade SO11

Daisy Castillo at HCSO from Admin Assistant to Chief Admin Assistant in Pay Grade SO9
Liliana Gonzales at HCSO from Clerk to Admin Assistant in Pay Grade SO1

Promotion of Oulwafeyikemi “Kemi” Raufu from Full-time Assistant DA Legal Intern to Full-time Assistant District Attorney at bi-weekly pay of \$87,000.00 paid from SB22 Supplement in Pay Grade 32 effective October 27, 2025.

Cameron Burch as Full-time Temporary Jailer at Houston County Sheriff’s Office at bi-weekly pay of \$42,000 (County \$39,676.00 and SB22 \$2,324.00) in Pay Grade S04 effective October 6, 2025.

- (8) Discuss and consider approving payment of compensatory, and vacation time for County employees and necessary budget amendments. **None**
- (9) Discuss and consider declaring received information as surplus inventory and approving transfers between departments. **None**
- (10) Discuss and consider action on the grant contract for the Victim Assistance grant through the Texas Attorney General FY 2026 and necessary budget amendments. **Melissa Jeter, County Auditor said the grant award received was \$10,730 less than the last year, and the difference can be made up with SB22 funds. Commissioner Lovell made a motion to approve the grant contract for the Victim Assistance grant through the Texas Attorney General FY 2026 and necessary budget amendments. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**
- (11) Discuss and consider authorizing the Houston County Grant Administrator to apply for grants related to updating the Hazard Mitigation plan for Houston County. **The Auditor said this is required to be updated every 5 years. Commissioner Henderson moved to authorize the Houston County Grant Administrator to apply for grants related to updating the Hazard Mitigation plan for Houston County. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**
- (12) Discuss and consider action authorizing requests from the Justice Center/Sheriff’s Office from CML Security for system and equipment replacements and necessary budget amendments:
 - a. Replacing nonworking intercoms - \$9,629.00
 - b. Replacing nonworking bypass/UPS system for the generators - \$36,519.88**Commissioner Lovell made a motion to authorize the requests from the Justice Center/Sheriff’s Office from CML Security system and equipment for replacements of nonworking intercoms at a cost of \$9,629.00 and nonworking bypass/UPS system for the generators at a cost of \$36,519.88 with a budget amendment to pay from Permanent Improvement. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**
- (13) Discuss and consider action on approving interlocal agreements for the Hotel Occupancy Tax fund.
 - a. Holiday Tour of Homes Saturday, December 6, 2025 noon to 4 pm
 - b. Christmas in Crockett Saturday, November 22, 2025
 - c. The Piney Woods Fine Arts Association, Ritz Theatre Christmas in Crockett Concert featuring Asleep at the Wheel Friday, November 21, 2025 at 7:30 pm
 - d. The Piney Woods Fine Arts Association, Ritz Theatre Family Christmas show featuring Michael Cavanaugh Merry Rockin’ Christmas Thursday, December 4, 2025 at 7:30 pm

Commissioner Henderson moved to approve Interlocal Agreements with Downtown Crockett Association for \$1,000.00 for Holiday Tour of Homes Saturday, December 6, 2025 noon to 4 pm, Crockett Area Chamber of Commerce for \$2,000.00 for Christmas in Crockett November 21-22, 2025, The Piney Woods Fine Arts for \$1,000.00 for Ritz Theatre Christmas in Crockett Concert featuring Asleep at the Wheel Friday, November 21, 2025, and The Piney Woods Fine Arts for \$1,000.00 for Ritz Theatre Family Christmas show featuring Michael Cavanaugh Merry Rockin' Christmas Thursday, December 4, 2025 at 7:30 pm. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.

(14) Discuss and consider action to accept the Contract Extension between Deep East Texas Council of Governments and Houston County Aging Services for the period of October 1, 2025 – March 31, 2026 and discuss budget. **Commissioner Lovell moved to accept the Contract Extension between Deep East Texas Council of Governments and Houston County Aging Services for the period of October 1, 2025 – March 31, 2026. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**

(15) Discuss and consider action on authorizing the salvaging of scrap metal from Precinct #3 and receiving proceeds. **Commissioner Stokes moved to authorize authorizing the salvaging of scrap metal from Precinct #3 and receiving proceeds. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**

(16) Discuss and consider action on an installment repayment plan with county employee to reimburse Houston County due to a payroll processing issue. **Commissioner Lovell moved to approve an installment repayment plan with county employee to reimburse Houston County due to a payroll processing issue. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**

(17) Discuss and consider authorizing the renewal for Houston County Airport Premises Liability Insurance for the period 11/14/25-11/13/26 through Old Republic Insurance. **Commissioner Stokes moved to authorize the renewal for Houston County Airport Premises Liability Insurance for the period 11/14/25-11/13/26 through Old Republic Insurance without any additions. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**

(18) Discuss and consider action on receiving an anonymous donation of \$18,800.00 for the Houston County Sheriff's Office to purchase 25 bullet proof vests and 12 inserts for law enforcement officers and necessary budget amendments. **Commissioner Henderson moved to receive an anonymous donation of \$18,800.00 for the Houston County Sheriff's Office to purchase 25 bullet proof vests and 12 inserts for law enforcement officers and necessary budget amendments. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**

(19) Discuss and consider action authorizing the engagement with Todd, Hamaker and Johnson CPAs as authorized under Government Code §2254.003 to perform the FY 2025 Audit and provide financial statements and compliance as required:

- a. Houston County Juvenile Probation Grant/Local funding
- b. Houston County, Texas

Commissioner Lovell moved to authorize the engagement with Todd, Hamaker and Johnson CPAs as authorized under Government Code §2254.003 to perform the FY 2025 Audit and provide financial statements and compliance as required for Houston County Juvenile Probation Grant/Local Funding and Houston County, Texas. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.

Commissioners Court took a brief recess at 9:48 a.m. and returned at 9:56 a.m.

(20)**Closed executive session** as authorized by Texas Government Code §551.071: Discuss and consider consulting with attorney concerning tax abatement with Lincoln Lumber.

Commissioners Court went into Closed executive session at 9:56 a.m. and returned into open session at 10:12 a.m.

(21)Discuss and consider taking necessary action regarding the Lincoln Lumber tax abatement contract to recapture incentives and tax abatement. **Commissioner Stokes moved to declare the tax abatement agreement with Lincoln Lumber Crockett, LLC and Lincoln Lumber Real Estate LLC terminated due to failure to cure default within the cure period. All previously abated taxes shall be recaptured in full per the agreement. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**

(22)Adjourn. **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion for the Commissioners Court Meeting to Adjourn. The motion carried by everyone rising and leaving the meeting at 10:17 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

Date Approved: November 12, 2025