



**HOUSTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT
MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
MAY 26, 2026**

The Commissioners' Court of Houston County met in a regular, called meeting on May 26, 2026 in **person and via zoom**, with the following members present, to wit:

The Court

Jim Lovell	County Judge	PRESENT
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
Sarah Bergman	First Assistant Auditor	Zoom
Hugh Coleman	Assistant County Attorney	Zoom
Kris Dyches	Insurance Coordinator	Present
Laura Goolsby	District Clerk	Present
Donna Gordon	PT Assistant to Commissioners	Present
Melissa Jeter	County Auditor	Zoom
Carl Johnson	Facilities Administrator	Zoom
Sheila Johnson	Grants Administrator	Present
Ryan Martin	Chief Deputy Sheriff	Present
Todd McConnell	IT	Present
Mike McCreight	JP1	Zoom
Heath Murff	Emergency Management	Present
Jan Pigford	Assistant to County Judge	Present
Daphne Session	DA	Present
Darrellyn Smith	Assistant to the County Commissioners	Present
Matthew Van Egmond	S/O	Zoom

Media:

Visitors: April Lovelady, Henry Lovelady, Jason Frizzell (Fire Chief), Bobby Tillman (candidate for State Senate)

(1) Welcome, Invocation and Pledges:

On Tuesday, May 26, 2026, Judge Lovell called the regularly scheduled Houston County Commissioners Court meeting to order at 9:01 a.m., Commissioner Henderson voiced the

opening prayer followed by Judge Lovell 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.) ***April Lovelady spoke about grants. She would like to talk to someone in the county about grants we could apply for. The County Judge directed her to speak with Sheila Johnson, our Grants Administrator.***
- (3) Consider approval of prior Commissioners Court minutes. **Commissioner Lovell made a motion to approve the Commissioners Court minutes for May 12, 2026. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (4) Consider approving budget amendments. **Commissioner Kitchen moved to approve the budget amendments as presented. Commissioner Lovell seconded. 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). Commissioner Henderson seconded. The Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (6) Receive information, announcements and reports from County Departments:
 - a. County Treasurers Report
 - b. Compensatory Report**Commissioner Kitchen moved to receive as information the County Treasurers Report and the Compensatory Report. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

*****Judge Lovell announced that we received a flyer announcing the 189th birthday celebration of Houston County on 6/12/26 at 10 am at The Moosehead.***

*****Commissioner Kitchen welcomed Donna Gordon back to the County. She is filling in for Darrelyn Smith while she is out of the office for health reasons.***

*****Melissa Jeter, County Auditor, announced that we received about \$25,000 for the 2025 Timber Funds that can be used for law enforcement.***
- (7) Consider approving salaries for new and/or transfer employees.
Commissioner Lovell moved to approve the salary of Perry Henderson as part-time Precinct 1 Heavy Equipment Operator/CDL Driver at hourly pay of \$18.80 in Pay Grade 17 effective May 18, 2026. Commissioner Kitchen seconded. Commissioner Henderson abstained. Motion carried 4 to 0.
- (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 purchase of gym equipment for the Crockett DPS Office and necessary budget amendments. **Melissa Jeter, Auditor, announced that Cathy Minchew from the DPS Office called to let her know that all of the Troopers are out of town and no one can be present at this meeting. Commissioner Kitchen moved to approve the purchase of gym equipment for the Crockett DPS Office and necessary budget amendments in the amount of \$847.19. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (11) Discuss and consider adopting proclamation declaring June as Elder Abuse Prevention Awareness Month. **NO ACTION- NEED UPDATED PROCLAMATION**
- (12) Discuss and consider approving dates and locations for County Wide Trash Cleanup for 2026. **Commissioner Kitchen moved to set the County Wide Trash Cleanup for 2026 for Precinct 1 and 2 on July 11, 2026 at the yard, Precinct 3 on July 18, 2026 at the Precinct 3 barn, and Precinct 4 on July 25, 2026 at the Precinct 4 barn. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (13) Discuss and consider making more public parking available at the Houston County Courthouse. (GS). ***After much discussion the following motion was made: Commissioner Stokes made a motion to remove all of the reserved parking around the Courthouse with the exception of the handicap spots, the maintenance spot and the inmate loading/unloading dock. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (14) Discuss and consider action on the Houston County Jail safety hazards and equipment needs: (SO).
- a. Hear discussion of the failure of the kitchen equipment ****Sheriff Bengé shared that all of the appliances have become faulty and are dangerous. They are required to meet requirements laid out in statutes.**
 - b. Issuing an order to authorize an exemption to competitive bidding due to Local Government Code 271.056(3) **Commissioner Kitchen moved to issue an order to authorize an exemption to competitive bidding for equipment needs at the jail due to Local Government Code 271.056(3). Commissioner Henderson seconded. Judge Lovell called for a record vote: Commissioner Lovell (precinct 1) voted "I", Commissioner Kitchen (precinct 2) voted "I", Judge Lovell voted "I", Commissioner Stokes (precinct 3) voted "I" and Commissioner Henderson (precinct 4) voted "I". Motion carried unanimously.**
 - c. Approve necessary budget amendments for the jail equipment needs from the Construction Fund under the Tax Note 2025. **Commissioner Kitchen moved to approve necessary budget amendments for the jail equipment needs from the Construction Fund under the Tax Note 2025. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (15) Discuss and consider accepting the corrected estimated values from the Houston County Appraisal District for Tax Year 2026, Budget Year 2027. (MJ) **Commissioner Lovell moved to accept the corrected estimated values from the Houston County Appraisal District for Tax Year 2026, Budget Year 2027. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (16) Discuss and consider action on Resolution to request State Officials to pause any pending data center projects and adopt comprehensive, uniform state standards for data centers to ensure water supplies, power grids, road and drainage systems can be reviewed and protected. ***There was a lot of discussion on the negative impact this could have on our county. There was**

mention that all of this is moving so fast. Commissioner Henderson moved to adopt a Resolution to request State Officials to pause any pending data center projects and adopt comprehensive, uniform state standards for data centers to ensure water supplies, power grids, road and drainage systems can be reviewed and protected. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.

(17)Discuss and consider action on a Petition for Data Center considerations including fire department equipment, environmental mitigations, required permitting in unincorporated areas, road planning and cost as well as drainage engineering for non-subdivision/unplatted developments to be submitted to the State of Texas Governor and other appropriate elected officials and associated State Department Heads. **Commissioner Stokes moved to sign a Petition for Data Center considerations including fire department equipment, environmental mitigations, required permitting in unincorporated areas, road planning and cost as well as drainage engineering for non-subdivision/unplatted developments to be submitted to the State of Texas Governor and other appropriate elected officials and associated State Department Heads. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

(18)Discuss and consider actions on approving contracts with dealerships to become deputy dealers under the Houston County Tax Office. (BW) **Commissioner Kitchen moved to approve contracts with dealerships to become deputy dealers under the Houston County Tax Office. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

(19)Adjourn. **Judge Lovell made a motion for the Commissioners Court Meeting to Adjourn. The motion carried by everyone rising and leaving the meeting at 10:13 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: June 9, 2026