



HOUSTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT MINUTES REGULAR MEETING SEPTEMBER 9, 2025

The Commissioners' Court of Houston County met in a regular, called meeting on September 9, 2025 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	ABSENT
Jimmy Henderson	Commissioner, Precinct #4	PRESENT
Terri Meadows	County Clerk	PRESENT

County Officials/Employees in person:

James Angerstein	Tax Assessor-Collector	Present
Missy D'Angelo	Assistant Auditor	Zoom
Donavan Mahan	Jail Administrator	Present
Kris Dyches	Insurance Coordinator	Present
Meagan Frizzell	9-1-1 Addressing	Present
Laura Goolsby	District Clerk	Zoom
Melissa Jeter	County Auditor	Present
Sheila Johnson	Grants Administrator	Present
Wanda Jordan	Historical Commission	Present
Al Kreger	Historical Commission	Present
Cynthia Lum	Elections Administrator	Zoom
Kristina Massey	County Attorney	Present
Heath Murff	Emergency Management	Present
Delman Orme	Environmental	Present
Jan Pigford	Assistant to County Judge	Present
Daphne Session	District Attorney	Zoom
Darrellyn Smith	Assistant to the County Commissioners	Present
Matthew Van Egmond	Sgt HCSO	Present
Brittani Womack	First Assistant Auditor	Present

Media: Greg Ritchie (Zoom)

Visitors: Matt Winchester (ONCOR), Peggy Steadman (DAR), Michelle Chaisson (Agenda Item 10), Brad Chaisson (Agenda Item 10), Kathie Prestera (DAR), Pat Hicks (DAR), Sherry Culp (DAR), Tami Barugh (Zoom)

(1) Welcome, Invocation and Pledges:

Judge Lovell called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m., he voiced the opening prayer followed by 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.) **Will speak at the appropriate Agenda Item**

- (3) Consider approval of prior Commissioners Court minutes. **Commissioner Lovell made a motion to approve the Commissioners Court minutes for August 26, 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 Kitchen. The Motion carried 4 to 0.

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

- a. Community Service/Environmental Report
- b. District Clerk Report
- c. County Clerk Report
- d. Tax Assessor Report
- e. Sheriff's Report (not provided)

Commissioner Henderson made a motion to receive as information the Community Service/Environmental Report, District Clerk Report, County Clerk Report, and Tax Assessor Report. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.

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

Commissioner Kitchen moved to approve the 6-month raise of Darrelyn Smith as Full-time Commissioner's Assistant raising the bi-weekly pay from \$1,329.66 to \$1,395.22 in Pay Grade 13 effective September 9, 2025. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.

Commissioner Lovell moved to approve the promotion of Kasey Witherspoon from Full-time Deputy to Patrol Sergeant at HCSO at \$1,973.19 bi-weekly in Pay Grade 23 (\$1,852.46 County Base, \$102.27 SB22 Supplement, and \$18.46 Allowance) effective September 9, 2025. Commissioner Kitchen seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.

Commissioner Kitchen moved to approve the salary of Oluwafeyikemi "Kemi" Raufu as Assistant District Attorney Legal Intern at \$2,409.63 bi-weekly in Pay Grade 30 effective September 15, 2025. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.

Commissioner Lovell moved to approve the salary of Michael Perez Jr as Patrol Deputy at HCSO at \$1,860.76 (\$1,726.58 County Base, \$18.46 Allowance, \$115.72 Supplement) in Pay Grade 20 effective September 9, 2025. Commissioner Kitchen seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.

Commissioner Kitchen moved to approve the salary of Jennifer Aulds as Court Reporter in the CCL replacing Kristen Raiford (McConnell) beginning at annual salary of \$77,000 effective September 15, 2025 increasing to \$83,000 on October 1, 2025. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.

Commissioner Kitchen moved to accept the resignation of Kristen Raiford as CCL Court Reporter effective September 13, 2025. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.

- (8) Discuss and consider approving payment of compensatory, and vacation time for County employees and necessary budget amendments. **Commissioner Lovell made a motion to approve the payment of compensatory and vacation time for County employees and necessary budget amendments: Dwayne Hughes-RH Pct 3-\$478.38; Hunter Ballard – Jailer - \$172.89; Julia Evans-Dispatcher-\$140.00; Jdarius Pruitt-Dispatcher-\$220.20; Thomas Flowers – Jailer - \$184.66; Thomas Phillips – Jailer - \$285.15; Jaiden Jones – Dispatcher - \$247.73; Roger White – Assistant County Attorney - \$503.64; Zachary Allen – Deputy - \$3,490.25; Stacy Rojo – Jailer - \$492.69. Commissioner Kitchen seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**
- (9) Discuss and consider declaring received information as surplus inventory and approving transfers between departments. **NONE**

Commissioner Lovell stepped out of the Courtroom at 9:28 a.m.

- (10) Discuss and consider ratifying the geographical point at which CR 2155 ends and PR 6030 begins are the following: 31.405409-95.507751. ***Michelle and Brad Chassion, landowners on the road, spoke about concerns they have with another neighbor on the road. The Commissioners asked Meagan Frizzell, County 9-1-1 Addressing, what the map shows the ending of the road to be. She said CR 2155 ends at the T in the road and PR 6030 is to the right. Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to ratify the geographical point at which CR 2155 ends and PR 6030 begins as the following: 31.405409-95.507751 with the information provided. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 3 to 0.***

Judge Lovell called for a brief recess. The Court was recessed from 9:30 a.m. to 9:32 a.m.

- (11) Discuss and consider approving Memorandum of Understanding with Crockett Police Department and Houston County Sheriff's Office to establish a multi-agency Major Crimes Task Force. **Commissioner Henderson moved to approve Memorandum of Understanding with Crockett Police Department and Houston County Sheriff's Office to establish a multi-agency Major Crimes Task Force. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**

- (12) Discuss and consider approving road project agreement with USDA, Forest Service, National Forests & Grasslands in Texas for HC Road #1560 in Precinct 1 by providing work 1.64 miles South of FM 227 and 4.60 miles North of SH 21 to secure the integrity of the bridge and authorize Judge Lovell and Commissioner Lovell to execute the agreement. **Commissioner Lovell moved to approve road project agreement with USDA, Forest Service, National Forests & Grasslands in Texas for HC Road #1560 in Precinct 1 by providing work 1.64 miles South of FM 227 and 4.60 miles North of SH 21 to secure the integrity of the bridge and authorize Judge Lovell and Commissioner Lovell to execute the agreement. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**

(13)Receive as information the salary orders and Budget for FY 2026.

- a. 3rd Judicial District Court Reporters
- b. 349th District Court Reporters
- c. County Court at Law Court Reporter
- d. County Auditor

Commissioner Henderson moved to approve the salary orders and Budget for FY 2026 as follows: 3rd Judicial District Court Reporter at \$19,131.87 (Houston County's Portion), 349th Judicial Court Reporter \$40,131.82 (Houston County's Portion), County Court at Law Court Reporter \$83,000, and County Auditor at \$90,278.66. Commissioner Kitchen seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.

(14)Discuss and consider action to accept the FY 2026 RAMP Grant (Routine Airport Maintenance Program) from TxDOT. *Sheila Johnson, Grant Administrator, announced that they are reimbursing at 90%.* Commissioner Kitchen moved to accept the FY 2026 RAMP Grant (Routine Airport Maintenance Program) from TxDOT. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.

(15)Discuss and consider taking action to approve Regional Mutual Aid Agreement with Deep East Texas Council of Governments Jurisdictions for which DETCOG is a multiple agency coordinator during emergencies in the absence of a specified Mutual Aid Agreement or Interlocal Agreement. **Commissioner Kitchen moved to approve Regional Mutual Aid Agreement with Deep East Texas Council of Governments Jurisdictions for which DETCOG is a multiple agency coordinator during emergencies in the absence of a specified Mutual Aid Agreement or Interlocal Agreement. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**

(16)Discuss and consider approving Sheriff Office unit #9986 for approval for non-exempt (regular plates). **Commissioner Lovell moved to approve Sheriff Office unit #9986 for approval for non-exempt (regular plates). Commissioner Kitchen seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**

(17)Discuss and consider action on receiving reimbursement from DETCOG for the 911 Dispatch Console maintenance agreement for FY 2025. **Commissioner Lovell moved to receive reimbursement from DETCOG of \$3,000 for the 911 Dispatch Console maintenance agreement for FY 2025. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**

(18)Discuss and consider approving purchasing replacement cameras for jail and necessary budget amendments. *Donavan Mahan, Jail Administrator, talked about the problems with the current cameras and why new cameras are needed. The Judge and Commissioners asked if they have the money in their budget to purchase these. They do not. It was suggested that the Jail look and see if they can find the money in their budget to make this purchase. After much discussion he Commissioners Court did not take action on this item.*

(19)Discuss and consider action on an interlocal agreement and Hotel Occupancy Tax Application for Piney Woods Fine Arts to host a concert with Three Dog Night on October 10, 2025. **Commissioner Kitchen moved to approve an interlocal agreement and Hotel Occupancy Tax Application for Piney Woods Fine Arts for \$1,000 to host a concert with Three Dog Night on October 10, 2025. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**

(20)Discuss and consider action on authorizing the Houston County Historical Commission to use Community Development Funds for the Travis Plaque project, the placement of a large bronze

plaque containing Col. William Barrett Travis's Alamo "Victory or Death" letter, and necessary budget amendments. **Commissioner Lovell made a motion authorize the Houston County Historical Commission to use Community Development Funds for the Travis Plaque project, the placement of a large bronze plaque containing Col. William Barrett Travis's Alamo "Victory or Death" letter, and necessary budget amendments. Commissioner Kitchen seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**

(21) Discuss and consider action on accepting and approving the Architect Contract with GLS Texas for renovations to the bank buildings. **Commissioner Kitchen moved to accept and approve the Architect Contract with GLS Texas for renovations to the bank buildings. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**

(22) Discuss and consider action on the FY 2026 Resolution for the Texas Indigent Defense Commission Formula Grant for improved indigent defense services and to designate the County Judge as the Authorized Official to apply for and accept the award. **Commissioner Henderson moved to designate the County Judge as the Authorized Official to apply for and accept the award for FY 2026 Resolution for the Texas Indigent Defense Commission Formula Grant for indigent defense services. Commissioner Kitchen seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**

(23) Conduct Public Hearing on Proposed Budget for Fiscal Year 2026. **Judge Lovell opened the Public Hearing on Proposed Budget for Fiscal Year 2026 at 9:48 a.m. and after a few moments of silence he closed the hearing at 9:48 a.m.**

(24) Conduct Public Hearing on Proposed Tax Rate for Fiscal Year 2026. **Judge Lovell opened the Public Hearing on Proposed Tax Rate for Fiscal Year 2026 at 9:48 a.m. and after a few moments of silence he closed the hearing at 9:49 a.m.**

(25) Discuss and consider adopting the Houston County Budget for Fiscal Year 2026. **Commissioner Kitchen moved to adopt the Houston County Budget for Fiscal Year 2026. Commissioner Lovell seconded. The record vote was unanimous with Judge Lovell voting Aye, Commissioner Lovell voting Aye, Commissioner Kitchen voting Aye, and Commissioner Henderson voting Aye.**

(26) Discuss and consider action on adopting FY 2025 County Tax Rate of \$0.423000 cents

- a. 0.374523 for Maintenance and Operation
- b. 0.048477 for Interest and Sinking Tax Rate of
- c. 0.423000% Total Tax Rate

Judge Lovell moved that the property tax rate be the same as last year by the adoption of a tax rate of .423000, which is effectively a 4.93% increase in the tax rate. Commissioner Kitchen seconded. The motion carried unanimously with a Record Vote of Judge Lovell voting Aye, Commissioner Lovell voting Aye, Commissioner Kitchen voting Aye, and Commissioner Henderson voting Aye.

Commissioner Kitchen moved to adopt FY 2025 (a) 0.374523 for Maintenance and Operation (b) 0.048477 for Interest and Sinking Tax Rate of (c) 0.423000% Total Tax Rate. Commissioner Lovell seconded. The motion carried unanimously with a Record Vote of Judge Lovell voting Aye, Commissioner Lovell voting Aye, Commissioner Kitchen voting Aye, and Commissioner Henderson voting Aye.

- (27) Discuss and consider action on ratifying total tax rate for Fiscal year 2026 as \$0.4230 cents.
Commissioner Henderson moved to ratify total tax rate for Fiscal year 2026 as \$0.4230 cents. Commissioner Kitchen seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.
- (28) Discuss and ratify the increase of property tax revenue by 4.39% in the FY 2026 Budget.
Commissioner Lovell moved to ratify the increase of property tax revenue by 4.39% in the FY 2026 Budget. Commissioner Kitchen seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.
- (29) Discuss and consider action setting salaries for all the officers and employees of Houston County for the Fiscal Year 2026. **Commissioner Kitchen moved to set salaries for all the officers and employees of Houston County for the Fiscal Year 2026 as listed. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**
- (30) Discuss and consider action on County Employee Policies:
- a. Cell Phone Allowance Policy **Commissioner Kitchen moved to approve the Cell Phone Allowance Policy as presented with the addition of the survey/questionnaire. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**
 - b. Certificate Pay Policy
 - c. Retiree Medical Policy
 - d. FY 2026 Pay Scales
- Commissioner Kitchen moved to approve the Certificate Pay Policy and to clarify the change to begin October 1, 2025, Retiree Medical Policy, and FY 2026 Pay Scales. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**
- (31) Receive as information Cybersecurity Certification of Completion for officials/employees' security awareness training for FY 2025, as required under Texas Gov't Code 2054.5191.
Commissioner Henderson moved to receive as information Cybersecurity Certification of Completion for officials/employees' security awareness training for FY 2025, as required under Texas Gov't Code 2054.5191. Commissioner Kitchen seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.
- (32) Discuss and consider accepting a donation from Crockett Insurance Service to the Child Welfare Board in the amount of \$250.00. **Commissioner Henderson moved to accept a donation from Crockett Insurance Service to the Child Welfare Board in the amount of \$250.00. Commissioner Kitchen seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**
- (33) Discuss and consider proclaiming September 17-23, 2025 as National Constitution Week.
Commissioner Kitchen moved to proclaim the week of September 17-23, 2025 as National Constitution Week. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.
- (34) Discuss and consider approving the Benefits Data Collection Agreement with Metlife Group for FY 2026. **Commissioner Henderson moved to approve the Benefits Data Collection Agreement with Metlife Group for FY 2026 with the corrected and initialed change on page 4 of the document. Commissioner Kitchen seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**
- (35) Discuss and consider action on a contract with Ameriflex for required Affordable Care Act Reporting and Tracking Services. **Commissioner Kitchen moved to approve a contract with Ameriflex for required Affordable Care Act Reporting and Tracking Services. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**

(36)Adjourn. **Judge Lovell made a motion for the Commissioners Court Meeting to Adjourn. The motion carried by everyone rising and leaving the meeting at 10:05 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: September 23, 2025