



HOUSTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT

MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING

OCTOBER 14, 2025

The Commissioners' Court of Houston County met in a regular, called meeting on October 14, 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	ABSENT
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	Present
Missy D'Angelo	Assistant Auditor	Zoom
Giancarlo Guma De La Vega	Assistant County Attorney	Present
Kris Dyches	Insurance Coordinator	Present
Melissa Jeter	County Auditor	Zoom
Carl Johnson	Facilities Administrator	Zoom
Sheila Johnson	Grants Administrator	Present
Cynthia Lum	Elections Administrator	Zoom
Donavan Mahan	Jail Administrator	Present
Ryan Martin	Chief Deputy Sheriff	Present
Kristina Massey	County Attorney	Zoom
Todd McConnell	IT	Present
Mike McCreight	JP 1	Present
Heath Murff	Emergency Management	Present
Jan Pigford	Assistant to County Judge	Present
Darrellyn Smith	Assistant to the County Commissioners	Present
Matthew Van Egmond	Sgt HCSO	Zoom
Brittani Womack	Tax Assessor-Collector	Present

Media: Greg Ritchie (Zoom)

Visitors: Kelly Nicol (Messenger), Whitney Burran (Domestic Violence Awareness), Brittney Hiser (Domestic Violence Awareness), Cindy Doran (FUMC Minister), Michael Smith

(1) Welcome, Invocation and Pledges:

Commissioner Kitchen called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m., Cindy Doran, FUMC Minister, 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 September 23, 2025 and October 7, 2025. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 3 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 3 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 – Brittani explained the confusion with the tax statements and encouraged anyone that has questions to please contact her office.

Commissioner Henderson made a motion to receive as information the Community Service/Environmental Report, District Clerk Report, County Clerk Report, and Tax Assessor Oral Report. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 3 to 0.

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

Commissioner Henderson moved to approve part-time salary of Tena Smith as Senior Clerk in Tax Assessor-Collector Office at hourly pay of \$18.80 in Pay Grade 17 effective October 14, 2025. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 3 to 0.

Commissioner Lovell moved to approve promotion of the promotion of Liliana Gonzalez from Part-time Admin Assistant to Full-time Admin Assistant at the Houston County Sheriff's Office at bi-weekly salary of \$1,346.15 in Pay Grade SO1 effective October 6, 2025. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 3 to 0.

Commissioner Lovell moved to approve new hire Spencer Lightfoot as Basic Certified Jailer at requested pay of \$44,000 (county base rate \$39,676.00 and supplement \$4,324) in Pay Grade SO5 effective October 16, 2025 and new hire Cameron Burch as Temporary Jailer at requested pay of \$42,000.00 (county base rate \$39,676.00 and supplement \$2,324.00) in Pay Grade SO4 effective October 6, 2025. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 3 to 0.

Commissioner Lovell moved to approve the cellular phone allowance of Sarah Bergman, First Assistant Auditor at \$18.46 bi-weekly. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 3 to 0.

Commissioner Henderson moved to approve the cellular phone allowance of Shelby Best, Assistant Auditor A/P at \$18.46 bi-weekly. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 3 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 approve the payment of compensatory and vacation time for County employees and necessary budget amendments: Kristen Raiford, Court Reporter for CCL in the amount of \$977.33 and Brittani Womack, Tax Assessor-Collector in the amount of \$20.43. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 3 to 0.**
- (9) Discuss and consider declaring received information as surplus inventory and approving transfers between departments. **Commissioner Lovell made a motion to declare received information as surplus inventory and approving transfers between departments as provided in the packet. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 3 to 0.**
- (10) Discuss and consider adopting a Proclamation designating October as Domestic Violence Awareness Month in Houston County. *Whitney Burran was present to present information and statistics on domestic violence. She ended her talk by stating that "domestic violence will not be tolerated in Houston county!"* Commissioner Lovell made a motion to issue a Proclamation designating October as Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 3 to 0.
- (11) Discuss and consider approving to purchase replacement cameras for Jail and necessary budget amendments. *Donavan Mahan, Jail Administrator, shared about the problems with the cameras.* Commissioner Henderson moved to approve the purchase of replacement cameras and necessary budget amendments. Commissioner Lovell seconded. (it was discussed where the budget amendment would come from and Donovan Mahan said that the Auditor said there was a building fund it could come from) Motion carried 3 to 0.
- (12) Discuss and consider reviewing and setting Sheriff and Constable Fees effective January 1, 2026 per Texas Local Government Code §118.131(d). **No Action Necessary**
- (13) Discuss and consider approving Interlocal Agreement with Downtown Crockett Association and agents for installation of Christmas lights to County owned property around the square. **Commissioner Henderson moved to approve Interlocal Agreement with Downtown Crockett Association and agents for installation of Christmas lights to County owned property around the square. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 3 to 0.**
- (14) Discuss and consider designation to apply for the SB22 Rural Law Enforcement Grant:
 - a. Authorize the County Judge, Jim Lovell, to apply on behalf of the Houston County Sheriff's Office.
 - b. Authorize the County Attorney Kristina Massey to apply on behalf of the Houston County Attorney's Office.

- c. Authorize the District Attorney Daphne Session, to apply on behalf of the Houston County District Attorney's Office.

Commissioner Henderson moved to designate and authorize the County Judge, Jim Lovell, to apply on behalf of the Houston County Sheriff's Office, the County Attorney Kristina Massey to apply on behalf of the Houston County Attorney's Office, and the District Attorney Daphne Session, to apply on behalf of the Houston County District Attorney's Office, for the SB 22 Rural Law Enforcement Grant. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 3 to 0.

- (15) Discuss and consider changing the first Commissioners Court date in November due to Veterans Day Holiday. **Commissioner Lovell moved to change the first Commissioners Court date in November to Wednesday, November 12, 2025 at 9:00 a.m., due to Veterans Day Holiday. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 3 to 0.**

- (16) Discuss and consider action on adopting an order for Disbursement of Salaries and Routine Expenses for FY 2026 as authorized under LGC 154.0235. **Commissioner Henderson moved to adopt an order for Disbursement of Salaries and Routine Expenses for FY 2026 as authorized under LGC 154.0235. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 3 to 0.**

- (17) Discuss and consider ratifying agreement with Vyve for additional Static IP service at the Houston County Extension Office/Senior Center. **Commissioner Lovell moved to ratify agreement with Vyve for additional Static IP service at the Houston County Extension Office/Senior Center. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 3 to 0.**

- (18) Receive as information the Continuing Education Hours for Brittani Womack, County Tax Assessor Collector. **Commissioner Lovell moved to receive as information the Continuing Education Hours for Brittani Womack, County Tax Assessor Collector. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 3 to 0.**

- (19) Discuss and consider accepting donation of \$5,760.00 from Lundy Ranch & 3L Cattle LLC for CR 3200 in Precinct 2. **Commissioner Kitchen moved to accept donation of \$5,760.00 from Lundy Ranch & 3L Cattle LLC for CR 3200 in Precinct 2. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 3 to 0.**

- (20) Discuss and consider the installation of new flooring for the front entry and hallway of Justice of the Peace 1 Office and necessary budget amendments. **Commissioner Lovell made a motion to approve the installation of new flooring for the front entry and hallway of Justice of the Peace 1 Office and necessary budget amendments. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 3 to 0.**

- (21) Discuss and consider accepting anonymous donations for the Houston County Sheriff's Office:

- a. 25 Fire blankets
- b. 28 fire extinguishers

Commissioner Lovell moved to accept anonymous donations for the Houston County Sheriff's Office of 25 Fire Blankets and 28 Fire Extinguishers. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 3 to 0.

- (22) Discuss and consider approving purchase of 2026 Chevy Trail Boss Vin #3GCUKCED4TG106363 with available grant funds and necessary budget amendments. **Commissioner Henderson moved to approve the purchase of 2026 Chevy Trail Boss VIN #3GCUKCED4TG106363 for Houston County Sheriff's Office with available grant funds and necessary budget amendments. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 3 to 0.**
- (23) Receive as information that the County Clerk of Houston County, Texas, pursuant to LGC 82.051(b), is designating the Houston County Public Website as the official location for the posting of all official and legal notices filed with her office effective October 15, 2025, and will remain in effect going forward. **Commissioner Lovell moved to receive as information that the County Clerk of Houston County, Texas, pursuant to LGC 82.051(b), is designating the Houston County Public Website as the official location for the posting of all official and legal notices filed with her office effective October 15, 2025, and will remain in effect going forward. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 3 to 0.**
- (24) Discuss and consider action on awarding the sale of Precinct 2 surplus property from received bids. **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to award the sale of Precinct 2 surplus property from received bids to Jeff Bailey for a 2008 Chevy Truck (0769) and 1993 Chevy Truck (8461). Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 3 to 0.**
- (25) Discuss and consider action on the purchase of a Komatsu Motor Grader GD655-6 for Precinct 4 from Waukesha-Pearce Industries under purchasing co-op Sourcewell and authorize a lease purchase with Citizens National Bank for the purchase in an amount not to exceed \$300,000.00. **Commissioner Henderson moved to approve the purchase of a Komatsu Motor Grader GD655-6 for Precinct 4 from Waukesha-Pearce Industries under purchasing co-op Sourcewell and authorize a lease purchase with Citizens National Bank for the purchase in an amount not to exceed \$300,000.00 with payment authorized to Waukesha-Pearce Industries, Inc., and authorize Commissioner Henderson and Judge Lovell as the signers. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 3 to 0.**
- (26) Discuss and consider action on an Interlocal Agreement with Grapeland Senior Center to support senior citizens services provided by the Center. **Commissioner Lovell made a motion to approve an Interlocal Agreement with Grapeland Senior Center to support Senior Citizens Services provided by the Center. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 3 to 0.**
- (27) Discuss and consider action on an annual contract with Thornberry Family Partnership for the rental of an LED Billboard located in New Waverly on I-45/FM 1374 area to advertise all Houston County events. ***Kelly Nicol with The Messenger/Nicol Media shared about this big advertising opportunity that all northbound traffic on I45 will be able to see. We will be able to change the billboard as our events in our county change. Approximately 50,000 cars a day will see the advertisements for Houston County Events.*** Commissioner Lovell moved to approve an annual contract with Thornberry Family Partnership for the rental of an LED Billboard located in New Waverly on I-45/FM 1374 area to advertise all Houston County events at an annual cost of \$6,000.00 to be paid from HOT Account. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 3 to 0.

- (28) Discuss and consider approving the creation and hiring of a part time Assistant County Attorney to be paid out of the SB22 grant and necessary budget amendments. ***Kristina Massey, County Attorney shared about creating this position. She was particularly excited that the person she is looking at has experience in eminent domain. She said that the SB22 funds will cover the salary, but she will need the county to pay for computer, software licenses, phone, etc.*** Commissioner Lovell moved to approve the creation and hiring of a part time Assistant County Attorney to be paid out of SB22 grant and necessary budget amendments. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 3 to 0.
- (29) Discuss and consider action on an addendum to the FI (Financial Intelligence software for the Auditor and Treasurer) to include a scanning module. **Commissioner Henderson moved to approve an addendum to the FI (Financial Intelligence software for the Auditor and Treasurer) to include a scanning module. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 3 to 0.**
- (30) Discuss and consider accepting as donation from Kalin's Center of \$2,685.00 for 3 County Employees to attend the 37th Annual Crimes Against Children Conference in August 2025 and necessary budget amendments:
- Houston County District Attorney's Office – Victim Assistance Coordinator (\$895)
 - Houston County Sheriff's Office - (2) Sergeant Investigators (\$895 each)
 - Consider action on authorizing additional travel expenses that were not preapproved for the conference. **Commissioner Lovell moved to accept a donation from Kalin's Center of \$2,685.00 for Houston County District Attorney's Office – Victim Assistance Coordinator, and Houston County Sheriff's Office - (2) Sergeant Investigators to attend the 37th Annual Crimes Against Children Conference in August 2025 and approve additional travel expenses that were not preapproved for the conference and necessary budget amendments. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 3 to 0.**
- (31) Discuss and consider contract with FirstNet/AT&T for the Houston County Sheriff's Department, County Jail and Courthouse Security to receive department issued cell phones. **Commissioner Lovell moved to approve a contract with FirstNet/AT&T for the Houston County Sheriff's Department, County Jail and Courthouse Security to receive department issued cell phones. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 3 to 0.**
- (32) Discuss and consider action on the FY2026 Houston County Retiree Health insurance program through 12/31/2026. **Commissioner Henderson moved to approve the renewal of the Silver County Choice Retiree Insurance Program through 12/31/2026 at a premium of \$592.84 per retiree. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 3 to 0.**

Commissioners Court took a brief recess at 9:44 a.m. and returned at 9:48 a.m.

(33) **Closed executive session** as authorized by Texas Government Code §551.071: Discuss and consider consulting with attorney concerning pending litigation.
Commissioners Court went into Closed executive session at 9:49 a.m. and returned into open session at 10:00 a.m.

- (34) Discuss and consider taking action to approve easement agreement. **No action was taken because there was nothing to sign.**

(35)Adjourn. **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion for the Commissioners Court Meeting to Adjourn. The motion carried by everyone rising and leaving the meeting at 10:01 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: October 28, 2025