



HOUSTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT
MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
APRIL 14, 2026

The Commissioners' Court of Houston County met in a regular, called meeting on April 14, 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	ABSENT
Terri Meadows	County Clerk	PRESENT

County Officials/Employees in person:

Sarah Bergman	First Assistant Auditor	Zoom
Hugh Coleman	Assistant County Attorney	Zoom
Kris Dyches	Insurance Coordinator	Present
Laura Goolsby	District Clerk	Present
Melissa Jeter	County Auditor	Present
Carl Johnson	Facilities Administrator	Zoom
Sheila Johnson	Grants Administrator	Zoom
Todd McConnell	IT	Present
Mike McCreight	JP1	Present
Cathy Minchew	DPS Administrative Assistant	Present
Jan Pigford	Assistant to County Judge	Present
Darrellyn Smith	Assistant to the County Commissioners	Present
Brittani Womack	Tax Assessor-Collector	Present

Media: Greg Ritchie (Messenger on Zoom)

Visitors: Clayton and Ruenette Starr (Sons of the Republic), Sgt. Brian Ford (DPS Hwy Patrol), Trooper Omar Jaber (DPS), Trooper Adrian Salazar (DPS), William McKnight (Murphy Cemetery), Sheneica Harris Rodgers (Murphy Cemetery)

(1) Welcome, Invocation and Pledges:

On Tuesday, April 14, 2026, Judge Lovell called the regularly scheduled Houston County Commissioners Court meeting to order at 9:01 a.m., Commissioner Lovell 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.) ***William McKnight was present to speak about the ongoing problems with the Murphy Cemetery and the unwillingness of the landowner to unlock the gate to the property and allow access. Hugh Coleman, County Attorney, suggested that this be placed on the next agenda in an executive session.***

(3) Consider approval of prior Commissioners Court minutes. **Commissioner Lovell made a motion to approve the Commissioners Court minutes for March 24, 2026, March 30, 2026, and April 2, 2026. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**

(4) Consider approving budget amendments. **Commissioner Kitchen moved to approve the budget amendments as presented. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**

(5) Consider payment of bills and expenses:

- a. Accounts Payable
- b. Fund Transfers
- c. Ratify Salary expenses

Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to pay all the bills and expenses for a. (Accounts payable), b. (Fund transfers), and c. (Ratify Salary expenses). Commissioner Stokes seconded. 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. Auditor's Office

Commissioner Lovell moved to receive as information the Community Service/Environmental Report, District Clerk Report, County Clerk Report, Tax Assessor Report, and Auditor's Office Report. Commissioner Kitchen seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.

*****Judge Lovell, announced that the County Employee Appreciation Picnic has been rescheduled to April 29, 2026.***

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

Commissioner Lovell moved to approve the salary for Matte Hartt, as Jailer with Temporary License at the HCSO, at annual salary of \$42,000.00 (\$39,676.00 base and \$2,324.00 supplement), in Pay Grade SO4, effective April 7, 2026 AND Mikenna Moreton, as Dispatcher with Temporary License at the HCSO, at annual salary of \$38,000.00 in Pay Grade SO2, effective April 7, 2026. Commissioner Kitchen seconded. Motion carried 3 to 0 with Commissioner Stokes abstaining.

Commissioner Kitchen moved to approve the 6 month raise for Jessica Cornelius, as Justice of the Peace Precinct 2, at bi-weekly pay of \$1,327.20, in Pay Grade 16, effective April 14, 2026. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 3 to 0 with Commissioner Stokes abstaining.

- (8) Discuss and consider approving payment of compensatory, and vacation time for County employees and necessary budget amendments. **Commissioner Lovell moved to approve payment of compensatory, and vacation time for County employees and necessary budget amendments for Kathren Burran - \$281.70 – Jailer; Dennis Poteet - \$274.75 – Jailer; Jaclyn Thomas - \$1,009.78; and Brooke Fritz - \$73.70. Commissioner Kitchen seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**
- (9) Discuss and consider declaring received information as surplus inventory and approving transfers between departments. **NONE**
- (10) Discuss and consider proclaiming April 21, 2026 as “San Jacinto Day” and special recognition of the Sons of the Republic of Texas. **Commissioner Kitchen moved to proclaim April 21, 2026 as “San Jacinto Day” and special recognition of the Sons of the Republic of Texas. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**
- (11) Discuss and consider approving the HIPPA Business Associate Agreement between Houston County and 1921 Consultants effective 10/01/2025. (HR) **Commissioner Lovell moved to approve the HIPPA Business Associate Agreement between Houston County and 1921 Consultants effective 10/01/2025. Commissioner Kitchen seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**
- (12) Discuss and consider approving the relocation of existing fences and construction of necessary new fencing along the county property line at the old food stamp office and now Precinct 2 barn with funding to be allocated from general fund, estimated cost \$5,000 including clearing and disposal of debris. (WK) *****Commissioner Kitchen said he would like this to be a 6’ chain link fence with privacy netting, and that he will keep the cost as minimal as possible.*** **Commissioner Lovell moved to approve the relocation of existing fences and construction of necessary new fencing along the county property line at the old food stamp office and now Precinct 2 barn with funding to be allocated from general fund, estimated cost \$5,000 including clearing and disposal of debris. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**
- (13) Discuss and consider purchase of gym equipment for the Crockett DPS Office and necessary budget amendments. **Commissioner Stokes moved to table the purchase of gym equipment for the Crockett DPS Office pending further investigation into options by DPS. Commissioner Kitchen seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**
- (14) Discuss and consider action on approving an additional opioid litigation settlement and accept Houston County’s allocation to be approximately \$3,612.00. **Commissioner Kitchen moved to approve an additional opioid litigation settlement and accept Houston County’s allocation to be approximately \$3,612.00. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**
- (15) Receive as information the FY 2026 LEOSE (Law Enforcement Officer Standards and Education Funds) usage report. **Commissioner Stokes moved to receive as information the FY 2026 LEOSE (Law Enforcement Officer Standards and Education Funds) usage report. Commissioner Kitchen seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**
- (16) Discuss and consider action on renewing the membership with Anderson-Houston Soil & Water Conservation District. **Commissioner Lovell made the motion to renew the membership with**

Anderson-Houston Soil & Water Conservation District. Commissioner Kitchen seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.

(17)Receive as information the reappointment of Melissa Jeter as County Auditor for the term April 16, 2026 through April 15, 2028. **Commissioner Lovell moved to receive as information the reappointment of Melissa Jeter as County Auditor for the term April 16, 2026 through April 15, 2028. Commissioner Kitchen seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**

(18)Discuss and consider action on authorizing the Outfitting of (3) 2026 Sheriff’s Patrol pickups through the Secure Rural Schools Act – Title III Funds and necessary budget amendments. **Commissioner Kitchen moved to authorize the Outfitting of (3) 2026 Sheriff’s Patrol pickups through the Secure Rural Schools Act – Title III Funds and necessary budget amendments. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**

(19)Discuss and consider proclaiming the week of April 26, 2026 as “Soil & Water Stewardship Week”. **Commissioner Stokes moved to approve proclaim the week of April 26, 2026 as “Soil & Water Stewardship Week”. Commissioner Kitchen seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**

(20)Discuss and consider action on an interlocal agreement and Hotel Occupancy Tax Application for Houston County News, a free online program promoting local news interviews, events and happenings of Houston County. **Commissioner Lovell moved to approve an interlocal agreement and Hotel Occupancy Tax Application for Houston County News in the amount of \$1,470.50, a free online program promoting local news interviews, events and happenings of Houston County. Commissioner Kitchen seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**

(21)Adjourn. **Judge Lovell made a motion for the Commissioners Court Meeting to Adjourn. The motion carried by everyone rising and leaving the meeting at 9:50 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: April 28, 2026