



HOUSTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT
MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
APRIL 28, 2026

The Commissioners' Court of Houston County met in a regular, called meeting on April 28, 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
Gordon Denman	Bailiff	Present
Kris Dyches	Insurance Coordinator	Present
Laura Goolsby	District Clerk	Present
Melissa Jeter	County Auditor	Zoom
Carl Johnson	Facilities Administrator	Zoom
Sheila Johnson	Grants Administrator	Present
Cynthia Lum	Elections Administrator	Present
Ryan Martin	Chief Deputy Sheriff	Present
Kristina Massey	County Attorney	Present
Todd McConnell	IT	Present
Mike McCreight	JP1	Present
Heath Murff	Emergency Management	Present
Jan Pigford	Assistant to County Judge	Present
Darrellyn Smith	Assistant to the County Commissioners	Present
Matthew Van Egmond	S/O	Zoom
Brittani Womack	Tax Assessor-Collector	Present

Media: Greg Ritchie (Messenger on Zoom)

Visitors: Cather Woods (Murphy Cemetery), Gene Kellum (Houston County Search and Rescue)

(1) Welcome, Invocation and Pledges:

On Tuesday, April 28, 2026, Judge Lovell called the regularly scheduled Houston County Commissioners Court meeting to order at 9:00 a.m., Judge Lovell 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.) **NONE**

(3) Consider approval of prior Commissioners Court minutes. **Commissioner Lovell made a motion to approve the Commissioners Court minutes for April 14, 2026 and April 21, 2026. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 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 Stokes 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 Lovell seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.

*****Commissioner Kitchen asked the Court if any of the others have received complaints that the garbage is not being picked up. He stated he's had some roads say their garbage has not been picked up in 2-3 weeks. Others said they have received calls regarding the same. Commissioner Stokes asked that this issue be put on the next agenda.***

*****Judge Lovell shared that he was in Washington D. C. last week with DETCOG, and that they were in contact with several of our Congressmen and he said that his main talking point was the timber funds and how they are handled. He said they also addressed the issue concerning disasters and the length of time that it takes to get money for relief.***

*****Judge Lovell, reminded everyone that the County Employee Appreciation Picnic is tomorrow (April 29th).***

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

Commissioner Kitchen moved to approve the following salaries and Commissioner Stokes seconded. The motion carried 5 to 0.

***Approve 6 month raise for Shelby Best, as Full-Time Assistant Auditor, at bi-weekly salary of \$1,658.08, in Pay Grade 18, effective April 28, 2026**

***Accept the Resignation of Sabrina Smith from Part-Time EA Office Clerk in Election Administration**

***Approve salary of new hire, Richard Gattis, as Part-Time EA Office Clerk, hourly pay of \$13.45, in Pay Grade 13, effective April 23, 2026**

***Approve promotion salary of Noemi Nava, as Full-Time Senior Tax Clerk, bi-weekly salary of \$1,576.70, in Pay Grade 17, effective April 29, 2026**

***Approve promotion salary of Chenece Houston, as Full-Time Chief Deputy Tax Clerk, bi-weekly salary of \$1,734.40, in Pay Grade 19, effective April 29, 2026**

(8) Discuss and consider approving payment of compensatory, and vacation time for County employees and necessary budget amendments. **Commissioner Henderson moved to approve payment of compensatory, and vacation time for County employees and necessary budget amendments for Cindy Lee - \$696.40 – Senior Center; Marvin Ackley - \$102.55 – Jailer; Kemi Raufu - \$425.83 - ADA; and Brooke Fritz - \$318.06 – Jail Sgt. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

(9) Discuss and consider declaring received information as surplus inventory and approving transfers between departments. **NONE**

(10) Hear a presentation from Gene Kellum on the quarterly report for Houston County Search and Rescue. **Gene Kellum was present. He shared they have 28 active members and 2 reserve. The water team is fully trained. They have a new canine handler that is able to do “air scent”. They have added a nurse to the team, and currently have a full medical team. They also have a wilderness instructor, and 3 of their members have participated in behavior training.**

Judge Lovell thanked Gene Kellum and all the Houston County Search and Rescue Team for all they do in Houston County.

(11) Discuss and consider order allowing retail fireworks permit holders to sell fireworks to the public in celebration of the Memorial Day holiday beginning May 20, 2026 and ending at midnight May 25, 2026. **Commissioner Lovell moved to approve Order allowing retail fireworks permit holders to sell fireworks to the public in celebration of the Memorial Day holiday beginning May 20, 2026 and ending at midnight May 25, 2026. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

(12) Discuss and consider approving event permit (HC Courthouse grounds) and Proclamation declaring National Day of Prayer on May 7, 2026 as requested by Houston County Ministerial Association. **Commissioner Kitchen moved to approve event permit (HC Courthouse grounds) and Proclamation declaring National Day of Prayer on May 7, 2026 as requested by Houston County Ministerial Association. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

(13) Receive as information the Continuing Education hours as required for Brittani Womack, County Tax Assessor-Collector. (BW) **Commissioner Lovell moved to receive as information the Continuing Education hours as required for Brittani Womack, County Tax Assessor-Collector. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

- (14) Discuss and consider renewing the computer system lease/license agreement contract with Pritchard and Abbott for 2027-2028. (BW) **Commissioner Lovell moved to approve renewing the computer system lease/license agreement contract with Pritchard and Abbott for 2027-2028. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (15) Discuss and consider possible options for assuming the duties of the Commissioners Assistant during the month of June due to extended sick leave and necessary budget amendments. **Commissioner Stokes moved to hire Donna Jean Gordon as Part-Time Commissioners Assistant during the month of June due to extended sick leave of current Commissioners Assistant and to pay her \$15.47 hourly, in Pay Grade 13 and necessary budget amendments, effective April 28, 2026. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (16) Discuss and consider action to accept the Senate Bill & Sheriff Immigration Grant Program and necessary budget amendments. ****Sheila Johnson, Grants Administrator, said there is not information out on this, but she needs this approval.* Commissioner Lovell moved to accept the Senate Bill & Sheriff Immigration Grant Program and necessary budget amendments. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (17) Discuss and consider action to accept the DETCOG FY26 Solid Waste Grant Program and necessary budget amendments. ****Sheila Johnson, Grants Administrator, stated that we didn't get as much money as we hoped, but we will continue to try. We received \$8,086.36.* Commissioner Stokes moved to accept the DETCOG FY26 Solid Waste Grant Program and necessary budget amendments. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (18) Discuss and consider approving Spectrum to install 2234' fiber optic cable via directional bore along ROW of CR 3390 in Precinct #3. **Commissioner Stokes moved to approve Spectrum to install 2234' fiber optic cable via directional bore along ROW of CR 3390 in Precinct #3. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (19) **Closed executive session** as authorized by Texas Government Code §551.071(1)(B) – Consultation with Attorney in a closed meeting on a matter in which the duty of the attorney to the governmental body under the Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct of the State Bar of Texas conflicts with Texas Government Code §551. **PASSED ON HAVING AN EXECUTIVE SESSION.**

(20)Adjourn. **Judge Lovell made a motion for the Commissioners Court Meeting to Adjourn. The motion carried by everyone rising and leaving the meeting at 9:36 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: May 12, 2026