



**HOUSTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT
MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
MARCH 23, 2021**

The Commissioners' Court of Houston County met in a regular, called meeting on March 23, 2021, **in person and via zoom due to Covid**, with the following members present, to wit:

Jim Lovell	County Judge
Gary Lovell	Commissioner, Precinct #1
Willie Kitchen	Commissioner, Precinct #2
Gene Stokes	Commissioner, Precinct #3
Jimmy Henderson	Commissioner, Precinct #4

Also present:

Jan Pigford	Administrative Assistant to the County Judge
Sharon Luker	Assistant to the Commissioners
Janis Omelina	Treasurer
Randy Hargrove	Sheriff
Roger Dickey	Chief Deputy
Daphne Session	County Attorney
Heath Murff	Emergency Management Coordinator
Melissa Jeter	County Auditor
Roxan Long	District Chief Deputy Clerk
Sheila Johnson	Grants Administrator
Red Kitchen	Constable Precinct 2
Cynthia Lum	Elections Administrator
Jennifer Kulms	9-1-1 Addressing
Arnita Cavender	Administrative Assistant to the District Attorney
Ronnie Jordan	JP Precinct 2
Brittani Womack	First Assistant Auditor
Laronica Smith	Tax Assessor Collector
Terri Meadows	County Clerk

Media:

Will Johnson	The Grapeland Messenger
Alton Porter	Houston County Courier

Visitors:

Mike Deckard, Trooper Prater

- (1) Welcome, Invocation and Pledges:
Judge Lovell called the meeting to order. Commissioner Kitchen led the opening prayer. Following the prayer Judge Lovell led the Pledge to the American flag and to the Texas Flag.
- (2) Recognition and comments from guests: **NONE**
- (3) **Commissioner Lovell moved to approve the Commissioners Court minutes from March 9, 2021 and March 16, 2021. 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 Kitchen made a motion to pay all of the bills and expenses for a. (Accounts payable), b. (Fund transfers), and c. (Ratify Salary expenses). The motion was seconded by Commissioner Lovell. The motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (6) Receive information, announcements and reports from County Departments:
 - a. County Treasurers Report
 - b. Compensatory Report**Commissioner Lovell made a motion to receive as information the County Treasurers Report and the Compensatory Report. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

****In other office reports Jan Pigford, the Administrative Assistant to the County Judge reminded us that there is a new Healthy County Challenge that began on March 22, 2021. She challenged us all to walk 6000 steps for at least 30 of 45 days to earn "boomer bucks".**
- (7) Consider approving salaries for new and/or transfer employees:
 - (a) **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion and Commissioner Henderson seconded to approve the salary of Paul Andrew Biscamp as Part-time Deputy for the HCSO in the amount of \$12.74 an hour. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
 - (b) **Commissioner Lovell moved to approve the six-month pay raise for Assistant District Attorney Kristen Massey from bi-weekly salary of \$2685.40 to \$2819.67. Commissioner Kitchen seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
 - (c) **Commissioner Henderson made a motion to approve salary of Perry Cooper as Full-time Jailer at bi-weekly salary of \$1018.81 in Pay Grade #15. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 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 payment to the following: K. Cook with HCSO \$264.00; J. Hallmark with HCSO \$398.19; C. English with HCSO \$80.78; Z. Reed with HCSO \$2052.23. Commissioner Lovell seconded this motion. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

- (9) Commissioner Lovell made a motion to approve a \$1000.00 donation to the Houston County Sheriff's Office from an anonymous donor for Drug Awareness Resistance Education (DARE) expenses. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.
- (10) Commissioner Kitchen made a motion and Commissioner Lovell seconded to approve a budget amendment request from Houston County Sheriff's Office for vehicle replacement not to exceed \$17,000.00 and to move the needed funds from contingency. Motion carried 5 to 0.
- (11) Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to approve selecting the entire fleet of Houston County vehicles, excluding dump trucks, to determine costs for a lease program with Enterprise Fleet Management." Commissioner Lovell seconded the motion. Motion carried 5 to 0.
- (12) Commissioner Lovell moved to approve Hotel Occupancy Tax Application and Interlocal Agreement with Pineywoods Fine Arts Association Texas Tenors Concert in the amount of \$1000.00 to be held on Saturday, April 16, 2021. Commissioner Kitchen seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.
- (13) Commissioner Henderson nominated Greg Brooks to replace Bobby Hutcherson, who resigned from the ESD #2 Board of Directors. Commissioner Henderson said that Greg Brooks lives in Belott and that qualifies him to serve, and he is willing to accept the nomination. Commissioner Kitchen moved the nominations cease and that Greg Brooks be appointed to the Board of Directors for ESD #2. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.
- (14) Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to adopt Resolution of the Houston County Commissioners Court Opposition to S.B. 10 S.B. 234 and H.B. 749 Efforts to Silence County Officials. Commissioner Henderson seconded this motion. Motion carried 5 to 0.
- (15) Commissioner Lovell made a motion and Commissioner Stokes seconded to adopt Official Proclamation designating April as "County Government Month" and set the date for the County Picnic on April 29, 2021. Motion carried 5 to 0.
- (16) Commissioner Kitchen moved to adopt Proclamation of April as Fair Housing Month. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.
- (17) Commissioner Kitchen moved to approve Houston County Event and display permit for Houston County Child Welfare Board and Kalin's Center Program on April 9, 2021 and adopt Proclamation Designating April as Child Abuse Prevention Month. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.
- (18) Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to accept a donation of road materials in the amount of \$9284.47 to Precinct 2 and Commissioner Henderson seconded the motion. Motion carried 5 to 0.
- (19) Commissioner Kitchen moved to declare as surplus 2005 Dodge Ram pickup from Precinct 2 and authorize advertisement for sale. Commissioner Lovell seconded this motion. Motion carried 5 to 0.

- (20) Commissioner Kitchen moved to approve District Clerk's request for \$100 change fund. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.
- (21) Commissioner Henderson made a motion and Commissioner Stokes seconded to designate the former office of Courthouse Security as additional space for Constable Precinct 2 and necessary budget amendments. Motion carried 5 to 0.
- (22) Commissioner Lovell made a motion to approve participation on the Right of Way/Utility on SH 7 at Trinity River with Texas Department of Highways by signing: a. Affidavit b. Agreement to contribute right of way funds and c. Resolution authorizing the Houston County Judge to execute the agreement to contribute funds to the state for proper development and construction of state highway system. Commissioner Kitchen seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.
- (23) Discuss and consider approving Customer Service Agreement with UniFirst for Houston County Pct. 2 Uniforms. **PASSED**
- (24) Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to advertise for bids for Contract hauling/Delivery of road materials for Precinct(s) 1 and 3 only. Precinct(2) 2 and 4 are not included. Commissioner Lovell seconded the motion. Motion carried 5 to 0.
- (25) Commissioner Kitchen made a motion that Precinct 2 Road and Bridge be reimbursed \$24,210.54 for capital improvements to Precinct 2 Office located at 601 Cedar Street in Crockett. The reimbursement should come from General Funds – Contingency. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.
- (26) Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to receive as information Preservation/Environmental Testing Report on the Houston County Courthouse from G & H Environmental Consulting, LLC and authorize County Judge to act on recommendations. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.
- (27) Commissioner Kitchen moved to authorize County Judge to make negotiations for possible real estate purchase. County Judge is to come back to Commissioners Court with progress of negotiations. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.
- (28) Discuss and consider action on a contract with Northland for cable for the Highway Patrol and Drivers License office within the County Building located at 110 East Houston Ave and necessary budget amendments. **Commissioners Court requested that someone from "upper" DPS come talk to the Court about this request. Commissioner Stokes made a motion NOT to enter into a contract. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (29) Commissioner Kitchen made a motion and Commissioner Henderson seconded to submit with Texas Association of Counties insurance for rates on renewal policy for property and mobile equipment. Motion carried 5 to 0.
- (30) Closed executive session as authorized by Texas Government Code §551.071 for a consultation with the County Attorney about contemplated litigation, claims, legal issues, potential liabilities, or other matters for which the attorney's duties to the client under the Texas State

Bar Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct conflicts with the Open Meetings Act. **Meeting not needed.**

(31) Judge Lovell made the motion to adjourn. Commissioner Kitchen seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.

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