



## HOUSTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT MINUTES REGULAR MEETING MARCH 11, 2025

The Commissioners' Court of Houston County met in a regular, called meeting on March 11, 2025 in **person and via zoom**, with the following members present, to wit:

### The Court

Jim Lovell	County Judge	<b>PRESENT</b>
Gary Lovell	Commissioner, Precinct #1	<b>PRESENT</b>
Willie Kitchen	Commissioner, Precinct #2	<b>PRESENT</b>
Gene Stokes	Commissioner, Precinct #3	<b>PRESENT</b>
Jimmy Henderson	Commissioner, Precinct #4	<b>PRESENT</b>
Terri Meadows	County Clerk	<b>PRESENT</b>

### County Officials/Employees in person:

James Angerstein	Tax Assessor-Collector
Zak Bengé	Sheriff
Kris Dyches	Insurance Coordinator
Laura Goolsby	District Clerk
Melissa Jeter	County Auditor
Sheila Johnson	Grants Administrator
Cynthia Lum	Elections Administrator
Ryan Martin	Chief Deputy Sheriff
Kristina Massey	County Attorney
Todd McConnell	IT
Heath Murff	Emergency Management
Jan Pigford	Administrative Assistant to the County Judge
Darrellyn Smith	Assistant to the County Commissioners
Jo Smith	Extension Office
Red Smith	Constable Precinct 2
Brittani Womack	First Assistant Auditor
Kayla Walker	County Clerk Deputy

### County Officials/Employees by Zoom:

Carl Johnson	Facilities Administrator
Brittani Womack	First Assistant Auditor

Media: Greg Ritchie                      Messenger (by Zoom)

Visitors: Cameron Morgan (Samsung), Cameron Labat (KEAndrews), Caroline Namazi (Samsung), Cindy Doran (FUMC), Celeste Tanner, Joy Tanner, Amber Stelly (Consolidated), Matt Winchester (Oncor), Michael Smith, Queen Handy (American Red Cross)

- (1) Welcome, Invocation and Pledges:  
**Judge Lovell called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m. Rev. Cindy Doran 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.) **Will be called on at the appropriate business item.**
- (3) **PUBLIC HEARING:** to discuss and consider designating Reinvestment Zone the Project for Dionysus Solar.

**Public Hearing Began at 9:03 a.m.**

**Cameron Morgan, with Dionysus Solar, spoke and shared the financial gains and losses with and without the Tax Abatement. The Commissioners and Judge asked questions, and Cameron Morgan responded.**

- (4) **RECONVENE – the Commissioners Court reconvened at 9:15 a.m.**
- (5) Discuss and consider approving to designate Reinvestment Zone for the Project for Dionysus Solar. **Commissioner Stokes made a motion to deny designating Reinvestment Zone for the Project for Dionysus Solar. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (6) Consider approval of prior Commissioners Court minutes. **Commissioner Lovell made a motion to approve the Amended Commissioners Court minutes for January 28, 2025 and Regular Commissioners Court minutes for February 25, 2025. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (7) Consider approving budget amendments. **None**
- (8) 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 5 to 0.**
- (9) Receive information, announcements and reports from County Departments:
  - a. County Clerk Report
  - b. District Clerk Report
  - c. Community Service/Environmental Report
  - d. Tax Assessor-Collector Report**Commissioner Henderson made a motion to receive as information the County Clerk Report, District Clerk Report, Community Service/Environmental Report, and Tax Assessor-Collector Report as presented. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

**Sheila Johnson, Grants Administrator, shared a Grant Report with the Commissioners to show all the grants and amounts that have been applied for and received since she has been with our county.**

- (10) Consider approving salaries for new and/or transfer employees.
  - a. Sheriff's Office – Full time Jailer **Commissioner Stokes made a motion to approve the bi-weekly salary of Dennis Poteet as Full-time Jailer at the HCSO at \$1,645.38 (includes base rate \$1,526.00, Allowance \$18.46, and Supplement \$100.92) in Pay Grade 17, Effective March 11, 2025. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (11) Discuss and consider approving payment of compensatory, and vacation time for County employees and necessary budget amendments. **Commissioner Lovell made a motion and Commissioner Kitchen seconded to approve payment of compensatory, and vacation time and necessary budget amendments to Jaidan Jones, Dispatcher, in the amount of \$137.63; J'darius Pruitt, Dispatcher, in the amount of \$220.20; and Rocky Hoch, Deputy, in the amount of \$325.20. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (12) Discuss and consider declaring received information as surplus inventory and approving transfers between departments. **Judge Lovell announced that there will be a workshop at the next meeting to discuss future plans for the bank building. Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to receive as information the surplus inventory and approving transfers between departments as presented. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (13) Discuss and consider accepting Lawrence Minter III as volunteer road hand for Road and Bridge Precinct 1. **Commissioner Lovell moved to accept Lawrence Minter III as volunteer road hand for Road and Bridge Precinct 1. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (14) Consider adopting proclamation designating the month of April as "Sexual Assault Awareness Month". **Commissioner Henderson made a motion to adopt a proclamation designating the month of April as "Sexual Assault Awareness Month". Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (15) Consider adopting proclamation of designating the month of April as "Fair Housing Month". **Commissioner Stokes made a motion to adopt a proclamation designating the month of April as "Fair Housing Month". Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (16) Consider adopting proclamation designating the month of April as "County Government Month" and set date for County Picnic. 4-18 **Commissioner Stokes made a motion to adopt a proclamation designating the month of April as "County Government Month" and setting the date for the County Picnic on April 17, 2025. Commissioner Kitchen seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

(17) Discuss and consider approving Order allowing retail fireworks permit holders to sell fireworks to the public in celebration of San Jacinto Day. **Commissioner Henderson made a motion to approve an Order allowing retail fireworks permit holders to sell fireworks to the public in celebration of San Jacinto Day. Commissioner Stokes seconded the motion. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

(18) Discuss and consider adopting Resolution Opposing the Elimination of the Countywide Polling Place Program, Electronic Poll Books and Electronic Marking Devices. ***Cindy Lum, Elections Administrator, spoke about this issue, and the necessity of adopting this Resolution.*** Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to adopt the Resolution Opposing the Elimination of the Countywide Polling Place Program, Electronic Poll Books and Electronic Marking Devices. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.

(19) Discuss and consider approval for the District Attorney's Office to apply for the Other Victim Assistant Grants (OVAG)/Victim Coordinator Liaison Grants (VCLG) grant through the Office of the Attorney General. ***Commissioner Kitchen made comments on his feelings about creating any new positions. He stated that we are serving less people than we were, and we are employing more employees than we ever have. He does not want to see us create any new positions. Melissa Jeter, County Auditor, pointed out that with a new employee also comes the added expenses of phones, emails addresses, desks, computers, etc. After some discussion, Kristina Massey, County Attorney, stated that this is only a request to apply for the grant, and this must be done by March 14, 2025, or they will have to wait 2 years to apply again. She said they can consider whether or not to approve a new position if the grant is approved.*** Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to approve for the District Attorney's Office to apply for the Other Victim Assistant Grants (OVAG)/Victim Coordinator Liaison Grants (VCLG) through the Office of the Attorney General. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.

***\*\*Commissioner Lovell left the Courtroom at 9:43 a.m.***

(20) Discuss and consider action on increasing the number of email accounts by 22 to include all employees at the Sheriff's Office and necessary budget amendments. ***Commissioner Kitchen asked if the additional email addresses were necessary. The Sheriff explained that not all positions at the Sheriff's Office have had emails and that it makes it difficult to communicate with them because they work shift work (especially the Jailers).*** Commissioner Stokes made a motion to approve increasing the number of email accounts by 22 to include all employees at the Sheriff's Office and necessary budget amendments. Commissioner Kitchen seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.

(21) Discuss and consider accepting a financial donation of \$4,100.00 from Daniel and Morgan Gullo for improvements to CR 4030 in Precinct 3. **Commissioner Stokes made a motion to accept a financial donation of \$4,100.00 from Daniel and Morgan Gullo for improvements to CR 4030a, in Precinct 3, corrected from what was named in Agenda Item as CR 4030. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**

***\*\*Commissioner Lovell returned to the Courtroom at 9:47 a.m.***

- (22) Discuss and consider accepting a financial donation of \$17,100.00 from Chronos Energy for improvements to CR 2120 in Precinct 2. **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to accept a financial donation of \$17,100.00 from Chronos Energy for improvements to CR 2120 in Precinct 2. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (23) Discuss and consider accepting a financial donation from 2P Logging LLC of \$400.00 for improvements to CR 2125 in Precinct 2. **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to accept a financial donation from 2P Logging LLC of \$400.00 for improvements to CR 2125 in Precinct 2. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (24) Discuss and consider approving Memorandum of understanding between U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Galveston, Texas (Government) and Texas Department of Emergency Management and Office of Emergency Management, Houston County, Texas. ***Heath Murff, Emergency Management, explained that last year in the "rain event" we experienced there was a need for sand bags. After some research he discovered that we need to enter into this Memorandum so we can get necessary sand bags for future events.*** Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to approve Memorandum of Understanding between U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Galveston, Texas (Government) and Texas Department of Emergency Management and Office of Emergency Management, Houston County, Texas. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.
- (25) Discuss and consider awarding contract from received bids for 2025 ½ ton pickup truck for Sheriff's Office and necessary budget amendments. **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to award contract from received bids for 2025 ½ ton pickup truck to Cutshaw Chevrolet, Inc. in the amount of \$55,880.00 for the Sheriff's Office and necessary budget amendments. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (26) Discuss and consider action on authorizing a lease purchase with Citizens National Bank for 3 Sheriff Patrol trucks using SB 22 funds. ***Melissa Jeter, County Auditor, explained that the Sheriff's Office is trying to build their fleet back up, and that if this is approved we can piggyback off of the bid from Cutshaw in Item 25 for these 3 leases at 2% interest.*** Commissioner Henderson made a motion to authorize a lease purchase with Citizens National Bank for 3 Sheriff Patrol trucks using SB 22 funds. Commissioner Kitchen seconded the motion. Motion carried 5 to 0.
- (27) Receive as information the Juvenile Probation Audit. ***Melissa Jeter, County Auditor, presented the report provided by Todd, Hamaker & Johnson, LLP.*** Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to receive as information the Juvenile Probation Audit. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.
- (28) Discuss and consider action on Applications to the Hotel Occupancy Tax Fund and Interlocal agreements for events:
- Piney Woods Fine Arts Texas Tenors/Ritz Grand Opening March 28, 2025
  - Piney Woods Fine Arts Tracy Byrd Concert Crockett Civic Center April 12, 2025
  - Latexo Athletic Boosters Club Harlem Wizards Latexo High School Gym February 26, 2025
  - Crockett Lions Club Rodeo Porth Ag Arena May 8, 9 & 10, 2025. **Commissioner Lovell made a motion to approve the Applications to the Hotel Occupancy Tax Fund and**

**Interlocal agreements for Piney Woods Fine Arts Texas Tenors/Ritz Grand Opening March 28, 2025 - \$1,000.00; Piney Woods Fine Arts Tracy Byrd Concert Crockett Civic Center April 12, 2025 - \$1,000.00; Latexo Athletic Boosters Club Harlem Wizards Latexo High School Gym February 26, 2025 - \$1,000.00; and Crockett Lions Club Rodeo Porth Ag Arena May 8, 9 & 10, 2025 - \$3,000.00. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

**(29)Adjourn. Judge Lovell made a motion for the Commissioners Court Meeting to Adjourn. The motion carried by everyone rising and leaving the meeting at 9:57 a.m.**

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Jim Lovell, County Judge

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Gary Lovell, Commissioner, Precinct #1

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Willie Kitchen, Commissioner, Precinct #2

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Gene Stokes, Commissioner, Precinct #3

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Jimmy Henderson, Commissioner, Precinct #4

Attest:

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Terri Meadows, County Clerk

Date Approved: March 25, 2025