



HOUSTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT
MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
MARCH 26, 2024

The Commissioners' Court of Houston County met in a regular, called meeting on March 26, 2024 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

County Officials/Employees in person:

Kris Dyches	Insurance Coordinator
Randy Hargrove	Sheriff
Melissa Jeter	Auditor
Carl Johnson	Facilities Administrator
Sharon Luker	Administrative Assistant to the Commissioners
Joel Martin	Bailiff
Todd McConnell	IT
Terri Meadows	County Clerk
Heath Murff	Emergency Management
Janis Omelina	County Treasurer
Jan Pigford	Administrative Assistant to the County Judge
Daphne Session	County Attorney
Laronica Wooten-Smith	County Tax Assessor Collector

County Officials/Employees by Zoom:

Brittani Womack	1 st Assistant Auditor
Laura Goolsby	District Clerk
Sheila Johnson	Grants Administrator

Media:

Greg Ritchie (Messenger) – Zoom

Visitors: Ronnie Omelina, Michael Smith (TDEM), Whitney Burran (Executive Director of Family Crisis Center of East Texas), Brittany Hiser (Family Crisis Center of East Texas)

(1) Welcome, Invocation and Pledges:

Judge Lovell called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. Sheriff Hargrove gave 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.) **Ronnie Omelina – spoke on handling of his livestock in the roadway**

(3) Consider approval of prior Commissioners Court minutes. **Commissioner Lovell made a motion to approve the Commissioners Court minutes for March 12, 2024. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

(4) Consider approving budget amendments. **Commissioner Henderson made a motion to approve the Budget Amendments as presented. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 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). The motion was seconded by Commissioner Henderson. The Motion carried 5 to 0.

(6) Receive information, announcements and reports from County Departments:

- a. Treasurer Report
- b. Compensatory Report
- c. Financial Report - Auditor

Commissioner Kitchen moved to receive the Treasurer Report, Compensatory Report, and the Auditor's Financial Report as information. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.

****Heath Murff, Emergency Management, introduced Michael Smith (new TDEM).***

****Commissioner Kitchen shared about people wanting better roads because of the taxes they pay, and he broke down the money that is paid in taxes and exactly how little of the taxes collected goes to roads.***

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

- a. District Attorney Investigator – Six-month Salary Raise: **Commissioner Lovell made a motion to approve the six-month salary increase for Tracy Whitehead, increasing the bi-weekly pay of \$1,730.88 in Pay Grade 21 to \$1,817.42, effective 3/26/24. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- b. Part time R & B truck driver/heavy equipment operator (CDL) Pct. #4: **Commissioner Henderson made a motion to approve the salary of Road and Bridge Truck Driver/Heavy Equipment Operator (CDL), Roy Tims, at hourly wage of \$16.56 in Pay Grade 17, Effective 3/26/24. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- c. Full time Jailer: **Commissioner Stokes made a motion to approve the salary of Full-time Jailer, Heather Davidson, at \$1538.46 bi-weekly in Pay Grade 17, Effective 3/27/24. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

- (8) Discuss and consider approving payment of compensatory, and vacation time for County employees and necessary budget amendments. **NONE**
- (9) Discuss and consider declaring received information as surplus inventory and approving transfers between departments. **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to declare received information as surplus inventory and approve transfers between departments. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (10) Consider adopting proclamation designating the month of April as “Sexual Assault Awareness Month”. **Commissioner Lovell 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. **Whitney Burran, Executive Director for the Family Crisis Center of East Texas was present to thank the Court for the proclamation and the support given in Houston County. She stated there were 1700 units of service in 2023. Ms. Burran invited us to attend the Start by Believing Campaign 2024 at their come and go breakfast on April 17, 2024.***
- (11) Consider adopting proclamation designating the month of April as “Fair Housing Month”. **Commissioner Lovell made a motion to adopt a proclamation designating the month of April as “Fair Housing Month”. Commissioner Kitchen seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (12) Consider adopting proclamation designating the month of April as “County Government Month” and set date for County Picnic. **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to adopt a proclamation designating the month of April as “County Government Month” and set date for County Picnic on April 26, 2024. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (13) Discuss and consider requests by the Houston County Child Welfare Board and Kalin’s Center to:
- a. Adopting proclamation designating the month of April as “Child Abuse Awareness Month”
 - b. Approving Houston County Event and display permit for Flag Raising Ceremony to be held on April 5, 2024
- Commissioner Lovell made a motion to adopt a proclamation designating the month of April as “Child Abuse Awareness Month” and approve Houston County Event and display permit for Flag Raising Ceremony to be held on April 5, 2024 requested by the Houston County Child Welfare Board and Kalin’s Center. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (14) Discuss and consider action on application for the Hotel Occupancy Tax Fund and agreement with Piney Woods Fine Arts for the Blackhawk concert on April 13, 2024 at the Crockett Civic Center. **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to approve the application for the Hotel Occupancy Tax Fund and agreement with Piney Woods Fine Arts for the Blackhawk concert on April 13, 2024 at the Crockett Civic Center in the amount of \$1,000. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (15) Discuss and consider approving orders allowing retail fireworks permit holders to sell fireworks to the public in celebration of San Jacinto Day. **Commissioner Lovell made a motion to approve orders allowing retail fireworks permit holders to sell fireworks to the public in celebration of San Jacinto Day. Commissioner Kitchen seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

- (16) Discuss and consider accepting a financial donation from Morse & Kelly Craig for the Houston County Senior Citizens Center. **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to accept a financial donation from Morse & Kelly Craig for the Houston County Senior Citizens Center in the amount of \$325.00. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (17) Discuss and consider action on requested budget amendment/line item transfer from the Sheriff's Office from full time to part time salaries. **Commissioner Lovell made a motion to approve requested budget amendment/line item transfer from the Sheriff's Office with \$15,000 to be moved from line item 010-560-475 full-time employees to line item 010-560-475 part-time employees. Commissioner Kitchen seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (18) Discuss and consider approval for the payment of Police Academy tuition invoice for Cadet Weston Reeves. Requested funds are requested to be taken from our existing operational budget. **Commissioner Henderson made a motion to approve the payment of \$2075 for Police Academy tuition invoice for Cadet Weston Reeves and requested funds are to be taken from the full-time employee salary line item 010-560-475. Commissioner Kitchen seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (19) Discuss and consider action on re-keying and designating as "Emergency Exit Only" four doors at the Houston County Courthouse at the request of the Houston County Sheriff's Office. **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to approve re-keying and designating as "Emergency Exit Only" four doors at the Houston County Courthouse at the request of the Houston County Sheriff's Office. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (20) Discuss and consider approving received bids to repair plaster and repaint interior walls at the Courthouse in need of repair and necessary budget amendments. **Commissioner Henderson made a motion to approve the bid of Piney Woods Painting in the amount of \$7,900.00 to repair plaster and repaint interior walls at the Courthouse in need of repair and necessary budget amendments. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (21) Discuss and receive as information the LATCF Grant Annual Report as submitted to the US Treasury. **Commissioner Lovell made a motion to receive as information the LATCF Grant Annual Report as submitted to the US Treasury. Commissioner Kitchen seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (22) Discuss and consider action on the Resolution Authorizing Signatories for the Local Hazard Mitigation Plans Program from the General Lane Office. **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to approve the Resolution Authorizing Signatories for the Local Hazard Mitigation Plans Program from the General Lane Office. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (23) Discuss and consider approving an agreement between Road and Bridge Precinct #2 and Tommy Sprinkle to grant permission for Pct. #2 to enter his property located on CR 2215 to retrieve donated road materials. **Commissioner Kitchen moved to approve an agreement between Road and Bridge Precinct #2 and Tommy Sprinkle to grant permission for Pct. #2 to enter his property located on CR 2215 to retrieve donated road materials. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

(24) Discuss and consider adopting a policy for driveway culverts. **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to adopt the Order of the Commissioners' Court of Houston County, Texas Setting Policy for Culverts in County Right-Of-Way. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

(25) Discuss and consider renewal of lease agreement between Brenda Stubblefield and Houston County Road and Bridge Precinct #4. **Commissioner Henderson made a motion to approve renewal of lease agreement between Brenda Stubblefield and Houston County Road and Bridge Precinct #4. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

(26) Discuss and consider action on advertising to accept bids or extending contracts with current vendors for the period May 1, 2024 through April 30, 2025:

- a. Delivery of Road Materials to County Precincts Barns and road locations.
- b. Gas and Diesel for county vehicle and equipment
- c. Airport fuel (AV Gas)

Commissioner Lovell made a motion to re-advertise for delivery of road materials to county precincts barns and road locations covering the period of May 1, 2024 through April 30, 2025 for Precinct 1. Commissioner Kitchen seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.

Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to re-advertise for delivery of road materials to county precincts barns and road locations covering the period of May 1, 2024 through April 30, 2025 for Precinct 1 and 2. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.

Commissioner Stokes made a motion to re-advertise for delivery of road materials to county precincts barns and road locations covering the period of May 1, 2024 through April 30, 2025 for Precinct 3. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.

Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to extend contracts with current vendors for the period of May 1, 2024 through April 30, 2025 for (b) Gas and Diesel for county vehicle and equipment and (c) Airport fuel (AV Gas). Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.

(27) Receive as information installation of pole-mounted power supply cabinets as part of the deployment of fiber based broadband service offered by Spectrum brand to be located in Precinct 2 at :

- a. CR 3200 West of SH 21
- b. CR 3095 North of FM 132
- c. CR 3120 East of CR 3125
- d. CR 3120 West of CR 3125

Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to receive as information installation of pole-mounted power supply cabinets as part of the deployment of fiber based broadband service offered by Spectrum brand to be located in Precinct 2 at : (a) CR 3200 West of SH 21 (b) CR 3095 North of FM 132 (c) CR 3120 East of CR 3125 and (d) CR 3120 West of CR 3125. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.

(28)Receive as information installation of pole-mounted power supply cabinets as part of the deployment of fiber based broadband service offered by Spectrum brand to be located in Precinct 3 at :

- a. CR 3490 2,596' South of CR 3495
- b. CR 3480 North of CR 3470
- c. CR 3485 North of CR 3470
- d. CR 3455A South of FM 2915

Receive as information installation of pole-mounted power supply cabinets as part of the deployment of fiber based broadband service offered by Spectrum brand to be located in Precinct 3 at : (a) CR 3490 2,596' South of CR 3495 (b) CR 3480 North of CR 3470 (c) CR 3485 North of CR 3470 and (d) CR 3455A South of FM 2915. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.

(29)Adjourn. **Judge Lovell made a motion for the Commissioners Court Meeting to Adjourn. Commissioner Kitchen seconded. The motion carried by everyone rising and leaving the meeting at 10:11 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 9, 2024