



HOUSTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT MINUTES REGULAR MEETING JUNE 11, 2024

The Commissioners' Court of Houston County met in a regular, called meeting on June 11, 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
Terri Meadows	County Clerk	PRESENT

County Officials/Employees in person:

Andy Biscamp	Bailiff
Kris Dyches	Insurance Coordinator
Laura Goolsby	District Clerk
Randy Hargrove	Sheriff
Melissa Jeter	County Auditor
Sheila Johnson	Grants Administrator
Wanda Jordan	Historical Commission
Al Kreger	Historical Commission
Sharon Luker	Administrative Assistant to the Commissioners
Mike Maiden	VA Officer
Todd McConnell	IT
Heath Murff	Emergency Management
Jan Pigford	Administrative Assistant to the County Judge
Daphne Session	County Attorney

County Officials/Employees by Zoom:

Laronica Wooten-Smith	County Tax Assessor-Collector
Brittani Womack	1 st Assistant Auditor

Media:

Visitors: Ashley Owens (Nucor/Vulcraft), James Angerstein, Dr. John McCall, Jr. (Treehouse Academy), Natrenia Hicks

(1) Welcome, Invocation and Pledges:

Judge Lovell called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m. Commissioner Lovell gave the Invocation 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.) **Public Participation Participants will be heard during Item 16 and Item 17 on this Agenda.**
- (3) Consider approval of prior Commissioners Court minutes. **Commissioner Lovell made a motion to approve the Commissioners Court minutes for May 14, 2024 and May 28, 2024. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (4) Consider approving budget amendments. **Commissioner Lovell made a motion to approve the Budget Amendments for June 11, 2024 as presented. Commissioner Kitchen 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 Stokes. The Motion carried 5 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. Veterans Service Officer Report
 - f. Treasurer's Report**Commissioner Henderson moved to receive the Community Service/Environmental Report, District Clerk Report, County Clerk Report, Tax Assessor Report, Veterans Service Officer Report (oral report given by Mike Maiden, VA Officer), and Treasurer's Report as information. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (7) Consider approving salaries for new and/or transfer employees.
 - a. Part-time Sr. Citizen Center Custodian - **Commissioner Stokes made a motion to approve the salary of Darnell Robbins as Part-time Sr Citizen Center Custodian replacing Jesse Johnson, at the hourly rate of \$13.88 in Pay Grade 13, effective June 4, 2024. Commissioner Kitchen 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 Kitchen made a motion and Commissioner Lovell seconded to approve compensatory payment to Jerrod Vickers, Comm Supervisor, in the amount of \$287.77; Adrian Buckner, Jailer, in the amount of \$47.05; Jennefer Cruz, Dispatcher, in the amount of \$189.24; Dustin Brown, Jailer, in the amount of \$283.80; Joshua Provins, Jailer, in the amount of \$407.48; and J'Darius Pruitt, Dispatcher, in**

the amount of \$210.63, because they are over the accrued compensatory limit. Motion carried 5 to 0.

- (9) Discuss and consider declaring received information as surplus inventory and approving transfers between departments. **Commissioner Lovell made a motion to receive as information surplus inventory and approving transfers between departments. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Commissioner Kitchen asked if a value could be added to the items on the forms and the response was “yes”. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

- (10) Presentation to Houston County Historical Commission with the 2023 Distinguished Service Award. **Judge Lovell presented the Texas Historical Commission 2023 Distinguished Service Award to the representatives, Wanda Jordan and Al Kreger, of the Houston County Historical Commission. A picture of the Court and the representatives of the Historical Commission was taken.**

*****At 9:14 a.m. Judge Lovell skipped down to Items 16 and 17 and then returned later to Item 11.***

- (11) Consider approving Jakob Derscheid as a Volunteer with the County Attorney’s Office for the week of June 24, 2024. **Commissioner Lovell made a motion approving Jakob Derscheid as a Volunteer with the County Attorney’s Office for the week of June 24, 2024. Commissioner Kitchen seconded. Daphne Session, County Attorney, mentioned that this young man is the Assistant County Attorney’s grandson. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

- (12) Discuss and consider taking action to adopt a policy for the public use of the Community Room now owned by Houston County. **After some discussion it was suggested that the Court look at the policy for the Sr. Citizen Center and see if it can be tweaked to work for the Community Room. No Action Taken.**

- (13) Discuss and consider approving dates and locations for County Wide Trash Cleanup for 2024. **Commissioner Lovell made a motion to approve dates and locations for County Wide Trash Cleanup for 2024.**

Precinct 1 and 2 will be on July 6, 2024 at Pineywoods Sanitation Transfer Station

Precinct 3 will be on July 13, 2024 at Precinct 3 Barn

Precinct 4 will be on July 20, 2024 at Precinct 4 Barn.

Commissioner Kitchen seconded the motion. Motion carried 5 to 0

- (14) Discuss and consider action to approve the U.S. Forest Service and Houston County Cooperative Road Agreement. **Commissioner Henderson made a motion to approve the U.S. Forest Service and Houston County Cooperative Road Agreement. Commissioner Kitchen seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

****At 10:03 a.m. Commissioner Lovell left the Courtroom.***

- (15) Discuss and consider taking action to continue the Disaster Declaration issued on May 7, 2024 due to excessive rainfall beginning April 28th, 2024 which caused flood damage to streets and roadways and drainage infrastructure. **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to continue the Disaster Declaration issued on May 7, 2024 due to excessive rainfall beginning April 28, 2024 which caused flood damage to streets and roadways and drainage infrastructure. There was discussion raised about the need for Pre-disaster contracts for TDEM/FEMA reimbursements.**

Commissioner Kitchen asked if we could hire consultants to deal with the PW's and get the money. No decision was made. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.

- (16) Discuss and consider taking action to grant Tax Exemption for Qualifying Childcare providers, per Texas Tax Code Section 11.36. ***Dr. John McCall, Jr. was present to speak about the tax exemption for Treehouse Academy on behalf of his daughter/owner of the facility, Lyndsey Rice. Commissioner Lovell made a motion to grant a 100% Tax Exemption for Treehouse Academy, A Qualifying Childcare provider, per Texas Tax Code Section 11.36. Commissioner Kitchen seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.***

****Commissioner Lovell returned to the Courtroom at 10:05 a.m.***

- (17) Discuss and consider taking action to contribute to a Community Development project with Nucor-Vulcraft and the City of Grapeland and necessary budget amendments. ***Ashley Owens was here as a representative of Nucor-Vulcraft to speak on the project. Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to contribute \$5,000 to the project with Nucor-Vulcraft with a budget amendment to take the money from the Community Development Fund. Commissioner Henderson seconded. After some discussion it was decided that this project might not qualify for the funds. Commissioner Kitchen withdrew his motion and Commissioner Henderson withdrew his second to the original motion. Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to table this item to get clarification on whether or not the designated funds could be used for the project. Commissioner Henderson seconded to table. Motion carried 5 to 0.***

- (18) Discuss and consider action on approving a policy to pay out comp time hours earned by County Jailers and necessary budget amendments. ***Commissioner Stokes made a motion to amend the current Overtime Compensation Policy to pay out comp time hours earned by County Jailers with the pay down moved from 40 hours to 80 hours and that the money to pay the comp time come from unoccupied positions within the Sheriff's Budget until money runs out with necessary budget amendments. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.***

- (19) Receive as information close out documents from Texas Department of Transportation Aviation Division for the Pavement Runway Improvement project. ***Commissioner Kitchen made a motion and Commissioner Henderson seconded to receive as information close out documents from Texas Department of Transportation Aviation Division for the Pavement Runway Improvement project. Motion carried 5 to 0.***

****At 10:16 a.m. Judge Lovell left the Courtroom.***

- (20) Discuss and approve reimbursement of overpayment determined after final close out Direct Administrative Costs (DAC) made by Texas Department of Emergency Management for DR-4416/PW469. ***Commissioner Henderson made a motion to approve the reimbursement of overpayment of \$59,539.42, determined after final close out Direct Administrative Costs (DAC) made by Texas Department of Emergency Management for DR-4416/PW469. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.***

Judge Lovell returned to the Courtroom at 10:19 a.m.

(21) Discuss and consider taking action to schedule a public hearing on renaming County Road 3512 to Prison Road 3. **Commissioner Stokes made a motion to set the Public Hearing on renaming County Road 3512 to Prison Road 3 on June 25, 2024 at 9:00 a.m. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

(22) Discuss and consider awarding bids for the purchase of road materials for CR 2205 from ARPA grant funds Precinct 2. **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion and Commissioner Lovell seconded to award the bid for the purchase of road materials for CR 2205 from ARPA grant funds Precinct 2 to Bryan & Bryan. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

****Commissioner Kitchen left the Courtroom at 10:25 a.m. and did not return for the remainder of the meeting.***

(23) Discuss and consider action to approve installation of Fiber Optics along County Roads as part of their deployment of fiber-based broadband services to residents of Houston County with Services offered under the Spectrum brand to be located in Precinct 1 Houston County:

- a. CR 1805 East of US 287

Commissioner Lovell made a motion to approve installation of Fiber Optics along County Roads as part of their deployment of fiber-based broadband services to residents of Houston County with Services offered under the Spectrum brand to be located in Precinct 1 Houston County – (a)CR 1805 East of US 287. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.

(24) Discuss and consider action to approve installation of pole-mounted power supply cabinets as part of their deployment of fiber-based broadband and other services to residents of Houston County with Services to be offered under the Spectrum brand to be located in Precinct 4 Houston County. Each power supply cabinet is 24.25" X 36.75" X 14".

- a. CR 1170 East of FM 227
- b. CR 4700 East of SH 7

Commissioner Henderson made a motion to approve installation of pole-mounted power supply cabinets as part of their deployment of fiber-based broadband and other services to residents of Houston County with Services to be offered under the Spectrum brand to be located in Precinct 4 Houston County. Each power supply cabinet is 24.25" X 36.75" X 14" – (a)CR 1170 East of FM 227 and (b)CR 4700 East of SH 7. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.

(25) Discuss and consider action to approve installation of Fiber Optics along County Roads as part of their deployment of fiber-based broadband services to residents of Houston County with Services to be offered under the Spectrum brand to be located in Precinct 4 Houston County:

- a. CR 1050 North of CR 1060
- b. CR 1050 North of CR 1040
- c. CR 1040 South of CR 1050

Commissioner Henderson made a motion to approve installation of Fiber Optics along County Roads as part of their deployment of fiber-based broadband services to residents of Houston County with Services to be offered under the Spectrum brand to be located in Precinct 4 Houston County – (a)CR 1050 North of CR 1060, (b)CR 1050 North of CR 1040, (c)CR 1040 South of CR 1050. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.

(26) Discuss and consider action to approve installation of Fiber Optics along County Roads as part of their deployment of fiber-based broadband services to residents of Houston County with Services offered under the Spectrum brand to be located in Precinct 2 Houston County:

- a. CR 2300 South of CR 2320
- b. CR 2300 West of FM 2968

Commissioner Lovell made a motion to approve installation of Fiber Optics along County Roads as part of their deployment of fiber-based broadband services to residents of Houston County with Services offered under the Spectrum brand to be located in Precinct 2 Houston County – (a)CR2300 South of CR 2320 and (b)CR 2300 West of FM 2968. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.

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

Date Approved: June 25, 2024

Terri Meadows, County Clerk