



HOUSTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT

MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING

July 8, 2025

The Commissioners' Court of Houston County met in a regular, called meeting on July 8, 2025 **in person and via zoom**, with the following members present, to wit:

The Court

Jim Lovell	County Judge	ABSENT
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:

James Angerstein	Tax Assessor-Collector	Present
Andy Biscamp	Bailiff	Present
Missy D'Angelo	Assistant Auditor	Zoom
Kris Dyches	Insurance Coordinator	Present
Laura Goolsby	District Clerk	Present
Melissa Jeter	County Auditor	Present
Sheila Johnson	Grants Administrator	Present
Kristina Massey	County Attorney	Present
Todd McConnell	Information Technology	Present
Heath Murff	Emergency Management	Zoom
Jan Pigford	Admin Assistant to the County Judge	Present
Darrellyn Smith	Assistant to the County Commissioners	Present
Brittani Womack	First Assistant Auditor	Present

<u>Media:</u> Greg Ritchie	Messenger	Zoom
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Visitors: Gregory Miller (Bond Company), Justin Ibanez (Todd, Hamaker & Johnson CPA), Erick Macha (Hilltop), Joseph Palumbo - Zoom (Dealer Services Network, Inc)

(1) Welcome, Invocation and Pledges:

Commissioner Kitchen called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. Commissioner Stokes voiced the opening prayer followed by Commissioner Kitchen 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**

PUBLIC HEARING – Commissioner Kitchen opened the Public Hearing at 9:02 a.m.

- (3) Conduct public hearing on Tax Abatement Agreement between Houston County and the City of Crockett under the Tax Abatement Guidelines and Criteria Texas Tax Code Chapter 312, Sec. 312.002.
- (4) **CLOSE PUBLIC HEARING – After there were no questions or conversation Commissioner Kitchen closed the Public Hearing at 9:03 a.m.**
- (5) Discuss and consider approving to renew current guidelines or amend and adopt new guidelines for the Tax Abatement Agreement with the City of Crockett under the Tax Abatement Guidelines and Criteria Texas Tax Code Chapter 312, Sec. 312.002. **Commissioner Stokes made a motion to approve the Tax Abatement Guidelines and Criteria as presented in the packet for the Tax Abatement Agreement with the City of Crockett under the Tax Abatement Guidelines and Criteria Texas Tax Code Chapter 312, Sec. 312.002. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**
- (6) Consider approval of prior Commissioners Court minutes. **Commissioner Stokes made a motion to approve the Commissioners Court minutes for June 24, 2025 and June 30, 2025. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 4 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 Henderson 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 4 to 0.**
- (9) 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
- Commissioner Lovell made a motion to receive as information the Community Service/Environmental Report, District Clerk Report, County Clerk Report, and Tax Assessor Report as presented. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**
- (10) Consider approving salaries for new and/or transfer employees.
Commissioner Lovell made a motion to approve Mike Cochran transfer from full-time Courthouse Bailiff to part-time Deputy at hourly rate of \$21.16 in Pay Grade 20, effective June 30, 2025. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.

Commissioner Lovell made a motion to approve Cynthia Lee transfer from full-time Custodian to full-time Office Manager at Extension Office at bi-weekly salary of \$1,310.37 in Pay Grade 14, effective July 14, 2025, replacing Jessica Rosalie. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.

Commissioner Lovell approved a mid-year salary increase for Kristen Wells as VAC in the County Attorney's Office at bi-weekly salary of \$2,195.53 (includes allowance and supplement) in Pay Grade 17, effective July 14, 2025. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.

Commissioner Henderson approved a mid-year salary increase for Tracy Whitehead as Investigator in the County Attorney's Office at bi-weekly salary of \$2,489.72 (includes allowance and supplement) in Pay Grade 21, effective July 14, 2025. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.

Commissioner Lovell made a motion to approve Sheila Sims as part-time Delivery Driver for Home Delivered Meals Program at hourly rate of \$14.84 in Pay Grade 12, effective July 7, 2025. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 4 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 Henderson seconded to approve payment of compensatory, and vacation time and necessary budget amendments to Jaidan Jones, Dispatcher, in the amount of \$55.05; Dwayne Hughes, Precinct 3 RH, in the amount of \$1,213.04; Neil Westerfield, Precinct 3 RH, in the amount of \$545.74; Thomas Phillips, Jailer, in the amount of \$613.07; Brandon Waldrep, Jailer, in the amount of \$2,434.29; and Addie Hicks, Tax Office, in the amount of \$1,916.36. Motion carried 4 to 0.**

(12) Discuss and consider declaring received information as surplus inventory and approving transfers between departments. **Commissioner Stokes made a motion to declare received information as surplus inventory and approving transfers between departments: 49 Phones – Land Line Phones – from Sheriff Department – from System Swap as surplus/salvage. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**

(13) As the Houston County Judge has been appointed as receiver for the Estate of Christine Davis Cauthan Loveland, discuss and consider entering into an Oil and Gas lease to receive the mineral interest from Kodiak Oil & Gas, and render the interests for taxation purposes as they become due. **Commissioner Lovell made a motion to receive as information the appointment of Houston County Judge as receiver for the Estate of Christine Davis Cauthan Loveland and entering into an Oil and Gas lease to receive mineral interest from Kodiak Oil & Gas, and render the interests for taxation purposes as they become due. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**

(14) Discuss and consider action on accepting the FY 2024 Independent Audit as prepared by Todd, Hamaker & Johnson, CPA. *****Justin Ibanez with Todd, Hamaker & Johnson, CPA was here to go over the Audit their company performed for Houston County. It was a great report with no negative findings.*** Commissioner Lovell made a motion to accept the FY 2024 Independent Audit as prepared by Todd, Hamaker & Johnson, CPA. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.

- (15) Discuss and consider approving entering into agreement with Dealer Services Network, Inc. to act as a Full Service Deputy in the manner and authority of the County Tax Assessor-Collector as per Section 217.163 of the Texas Administrative Code. *****Joseph Palumbo was on Zoom from Dealer Services Network, Inc. to present this program and answer any questions.*** Commissioner Stokes made a motion to approve entering into agreement with Dealer Services Network, Inc. to act as a Full Service Deputy in the manner and authority of the County Tax Assessor-Collector as per Section 217.163 of the Texas Administrative Code and add a clause to the contract that this is only a trial basis and we can terminate the contract at any time. It was added that our County Attorney can look over the contract for accuracy. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.
- (16) Discuss and consider allowing the County and District Attorney's to enter an agreement with EForce to integrate their booking information with LGS for one-time cost of \$1500 with no recurring charges payable to EForce. **Commissioner Lovell made a motion to allow the County and District Attorney's to enter an agreement with EForce to integrate their booking information with LGS for one-time cost of \$1500 with no recurring charges payable to EForce.** Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.
- (17) Discuss and consider extending the 30-day Cure Period of the Lincoln Lumber Tax Abatement agreement. ***Commissioner Kitchen asked that a representative from Lincoln Lumber come to the first Commissioners Court Meeting in August.*** Commissioner Stokes made a motion to extend the 30-day Cure Period of the Lincoln Lumber Tax Abatement agreement. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.
- (18) Discuss and consider approving a resolution authorizing an agreement to engage public finance counsel on a contingent fee basis. ***Greg Miller was present to speak as a representative of Bickerstaff. After some question and answer Commissioner Stokes made a motion to authorize an agreement to engage public finance counsel (Bickerstaff) on a contingent fee basis.*** Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.
- (19) Discuss and consider approving an order authorizing the issuance and sale of the Houston County Tax Note, Series 2025. ***Erik Macha (Hilltop) was present to speak on this item and he advised that Crockett Bank was the lowest at 3.95%. He noted the tax note will remain unchanged when we pay off the current note in 2026.*** Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to approve an order authorizing the issuance and sale of the Houston County Tax Note, Series 2025 as recommended by Erik Macha to Crockett Bank at rate of 3.95%. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.

(20)Adjourn. **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion for the Commissioners Court Meeting to Adjourn. The motion carried by everyone rising and leaving the meeting at 10:06 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: July 18, 2025