



HOUSTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT MINUTES REGULAR MEETING JULY 23, 2024

The Commissioners' Court of Houston County met in a regular, called meeting on July 23, 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:

Kris Dyches	Insurance Coordinator
Melissa Jeter	County Auditor
Carl Johnson	Facilities Administrator
Sheila Johnson	Grants Administrator
Donna Kaspar	DA
Sharon Luker	Administrative Assistant to the Commissioners
Kristina Massey	ADA
Todd McConnell	IT
Janis Omelina	Treasurer
Jan Pigford	Administrative Assistant to the County Judge
Daphne Session	County Attorney
Traci Whitehead	Investigator for the DA

County Officials/Employees by Zoom:

Cynthia Lum	Elections Administrator
Heath Murff	Emergency Management
Laronica Wooten-Smith	County Tax Assessor-Collector
Matthew Van Egmond	HCSO
Brittani Womack	1 st Assistant Auditor

Media: Greg Ritchie - Messenger

Visitors: James Angerstein

(1) Welcome, Invocation and Pledges:

Judge Lovell called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m. Commissioner Stokes 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.) **None**
- (3) Consider approval of prior Commissioners Court minutes. **Commissioner Lovell made a motion to approve the Commissioners Court minutes for June 25, 2024 (Public Hearing) and Commissioners Court Minutes for July 9, 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 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 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 Stokes. The Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (6) Receive information, announcements and reports from County Departments:
 - a. County Treasurer's Report
 - b. Compensatory Report**Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to approve the County Treasurer's Report for May 2024 and June 2024 and the Compensatory Report. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (7) Consider approving salaries for new and/or transfer employees.
 - a. Part-time Heavy Equipment Operator Precinct 1 - **Commissioner Lovell made a motion to approve the salary of Ben Cutler as Part-time Heavy Equipment in Precinct 1 at hourly pay of \$17.50 in Pay Grade 17, effective July 23, 2024. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
 - b. 2 Part-time Heavy Equipment Operators in Precinct 2 – **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to approve the salary of Daron Wayne Webb as Part-time Heavy Equipment Operator in Precinct 2 at hourly rate of \$17.39 in Pay Grade 17, effective July 15, 2024. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0. Commissioner Stokes made a motion to approve the salary of Darrell Nealy as Part-time Heavy Equipment Operator in Precinct 2 at the hourly rate of \$17.50 in Pay Grade 17, effective July 23, 2024. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Commissioner Stokes came back and amended the motion to set the hourly pay for Darrell Nealy at \$17.39 per hour. Commissioner Henderson seconded the amended motion. Amended Motion carried 5 to 0.**
 - c. Full-time Jailer – **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to approve the bi-weekly salary of Tresa Masters, as Full-time Jailer at the Houston County Jail at \$1,626.92 in**

Pay Grade 17, effective July 23, 2024. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.

- d. Six Month increase for Assistant Auditor – **Commissioner Henderson made a motion to approve the six month increase for Sarah Bergman, Assistant Auditor, moving her from \$1,381.12 to \$1,450.18 plus \$18.46 cell phone allowance bi-weekly in Pay Grade 16, effective July 23, 2024. Commissioner Kitchen seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
 - e. Promotion of Deputy Clerk II to Chief Deputy Clerk – **Commissioner Stokes made a motion to approve the salary increase for the promotion of Shelby Kazmierczak from Deputy Clerk II to Chief Deputy Clerk in the County Clerk’s Office from \$1,391.18 + \$18.46 cell phone allowance bi-weekly to \$1,530.30 + \$18.46 bi weekly in Pay Grade 18, effective July 23, 2024. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
 - f. Part-time Deputy Clerk – **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to approve the salary of Kimberly Kessler as Part-time Deputy Clerk in the County Clerks Office at hourly wage of \$13.62 in Pay Grade 13, effective July 22, 2024. Commissioner Lovell 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 and Commissioner Stokes seconded to approve compensatory payment to Elizabeth Bridges, former Dispatcher, in the amount of \$2,205.12; Klinesha Fransaw, Dispatcher, in the amount of \$84.84; Jennefer Cruz, Dispatcher, in the amount of \$189.24; Ryan Hutcherson, Deputy, in the amount of \$15.76; Matthew Van Egmond, Deputy, in the amount of \$146.34; J’Darius Pruitt, Dispatcher in the amount of \$198.24; Matthew Graham, Jailer, in the amount of \$291.75; Jaycob Elliott, Jailer, in the amount of \$268.35; Theresa Hayes, Jailer, in the amount of \$291.75; Joshua Provins, Jailer, in the amount of \$597.63; Carl Smotherman, Jailer, in the amount of \$946.56; Johnny Romo, Jailer, in the amount of \$597.63; and Dustin Brown, Jailer, in the amount of \$283.80. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (9) Discuss and consider declaring received information as surplus inventory and approving transfers between departments. **None**
- (10) Receive as information Houston County Emergency Services District (ESD) #2 Independent Audit as of September 30, 2023. **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to receive as information Houston County Emergency Services District (ESD) #2 Independent Audit as of September 30, 2023. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (11) Discuss and consider approving District Attorney Donna Kaspar to attend the 2024 Annual Criminal & Civil Law Conference September 17-20th in Galveston Texas and necessary budget amendments. **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to approve District Attorney Donna Kaspar to attend the 2024 Annual Criminal & Civil Law Conference September 17-20· 2024 in Galveston Texas and necessary budget amendments. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (12) Discuss and consider appointing a representative for Burke Center for Houston County. **Commissioner Lovell made a motion to re-appoint Lois Ball as representative for Burke Center for Houston County. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

- (13) Discuss and consider action on the Senate Bill 22 Rural Law Enforcement Grant:

- a. Receive as information submitted forms review. **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to receive as information submitted forms review on Senate Bill 22 Rural Law Enforcement Grant. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
 - b. Request changes to the verification form and policy. **Commissioner Henderson made a motion to leave the form for Senate Bill 22 Rural Law Enforcement Grant like it was previously adopted. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (14) Discuss and consider the acceptance of TDEM's Grant Terms and Conditions for Disaster DR 4781. **Commissioner Lovell made a motion to approve acceptance of TDEM's Grant Terms and Conditions for Disaster DR 4781. Commissioner Kitchen seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (15) Discuss and consider action on the Sheriff's Department to advertise for bids on tasers. **Commissioner Lovell made a motion to approve the Sheriff's Department to advertise for bids on tasers. Commissioner Kitchen seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (16) Discuss and consider accepting the Subrecipient Certification for Small Projects with Completed Work Category B - Emergency Protective Measures. **Commissioner Henderson made a motion to accept the Subrecipient Certification for Small Projects with Completed Work Category B - Emergency Protective Measures. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (17) Discuss and consider action on authorizing a budget amendment and transfer to Road and Bridge Funds up to \$550,000 from General Fund to reimburse for emergency repairs towards Flooding disaster declared May 7, 2024, pending reimbursement from FEMA grant. **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to authorize a budget amendment and transfer to Road and Bridge Funds up to \$550,000 from General Fund to reimburse for emergency repairs towards Flooding disaster declared May 7, 2024, pending reimbursement from FEMA grant. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (18) Discuss and consider action on ratifying a proposal with Hargrove-Neel, Inc to replace Air Conditioning unit at the Houston County Senior Center and necessary budget amendments. **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to ratify a proposal for \$21,995.00 with Hargrove-Neel, Inc to replace Air Conditioning unit at the Houston County Senior Center and necessary budget amendments.**
- (19) Discuss and consider action on designating Laronica Smith, Houston County Tax Assessor Collector, to calculate the no-new-revenue and voter-approval tax rate for 2023 tax year. **Commissioner Stokes made a motion to designate Laronica Smith, Houston County Tax Assessor Collector, to calculate the no-new-revenue and voter-approval tax rate for 2024 tax year. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (20) Discuss and consider approving a donation of 3000 yards of clay from Patty Seeley for CR 1630 W Precinct 1. **Commissioner Lovell made a motion to approve a donation of 3000 yards of clay from Patty Seeley for CR 1630 W Precinct 1. Commissioner Kitchen seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (21) Discuss and consider receiving as information the updated rate & employee contribution details for Gap Insurance from Manhattan Life. **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to receive as information the updated rate & employee contribution details for Gap Insurance from Manhattan Life. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

(22) Discuss and consider action on the following:

- a. Designating Room 252 on the second floor of the County Courthouse as office space for the County Attorney's Office;
- b. Authorizing necessary budget amendments for the purchase of equipment, office furniture, and a telephone for Room 252 on the second floor of the County Courthouse for County Attorney.

Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to designate Room 252 on the second floor of the County Courthouse as office space for the County Attorney's Office and authorize necessary budget amendments for the purchase of equipment, office furniture, and a telephone for the office. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.

- c. Designating Room 201 on the second floor of the County Courthouse as office space for the District Attorney's Office;
- d. Authorizing necessary budget amendments for the purchase of equipment, office furniture, and a telephone for Room 201 on the second floor of the County Courthouse for District Attorney.

Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to designate Room 201 on the basement floor of the County Courthouse as office space for the District Attorneys Office and authorize necessary budget amendments for the purchase of equipment, office furniture, and a telephone for the office. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.

(23) 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 10:02 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: August 13, 2024