



**HOUSTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT  
MINUTES  
REGULAR MEETING  
SEPTEMBER 27, 2022**

The Commissioners' Court of Houston County met in a regular, called meeting on September 27, 2022 **in person and via zoom due to Covid**, with the following members present, to wit:

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>ABSENT</b>
Jimmy Henderson	Commissioner, Precinct #4	<b>PRESENT</b>

County Officials/Employees in person:

Todd McConnell	Information Technology
Jan Pigford	Administrative Assistant to County Judge
Terri Meadows	County Clerk
Sharon Luker	Administrative Assistant to the Commissioners
Melissa Jeter	County Auditor
Cynthia Lum	Elections Administrator
Janis Omelina	Treasurer
Joel Martin	Bailiff

County Officials/Employees by Zoom:

Sheila Johnson	Grants Administrator
Carl Johnson	Facilities Administrator
Brittani Womack	First Assistant Auditor
Heath Murff	Emergency Management
Brittani Womack	First Assistant County Auditor
Laronica Wooten-Smith	Tax Assessor Collector
Carolyn Rains	District Clerk

Media:

Jan White (Zoom)	Courier
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Visitors:

4-H Guests: Carrie Beaver, Coy Smith, Laney Smith, Jo Smith, Ava Burch, Riley Beaver, Tobi Curless, Landry Beaver, Tasha Brent; Daron Fredrickson (Merit Advisors), Brian Drinkwine (Zeus), Gene Caldwell

(The Loft of Crockett), Representatives from Perdue Brandon: Meme Thomas, Taylor Lewis, Patrick Woods

- (1) Welcome, Invocation and Pledges:  
**Judge Lovell called the meeting to order at 9:06 a.m. Commissioner Kitchen led 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.) **None**
- (3) Consider approval of prior Commissioners Court minutes.  
**Commissioner Lovell moved to approve the Commissioners Court Minutes from September 13, 2022. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**
- (4) Consider approving budget amendments. **Commissioner Henderson made a motion to approve the Budget Amendments as presented. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 4 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 Kitchen. The Motion carried 4 to 0.**
- (6) Receive information, announcements and reports from County Departments:
  - a. County Treasurer's Report
  - b. Compensatory Service**Commissioner Kitchen moved to receive available reports as information. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**
- (7) Consider approving salaries for new and/or transfer employees:  
**Commissioner Henderson moved to approve the following:**
  - a. Carlette Duncan as Full-Time Jailer, bi-weekly salary \$1,112.16 in pay grade 15
  - b. Darwin Gilmore as Full-Time Jailer, bi-weekly \$1,112.16 in pay grade 15**Commissioner Lovell seconded the motion. Motion carried 4 to 0.**
  - c. **Commissioner Lovell moved to approve NaTrenia L. Hicks as Part-Time Deputy Clerk in the Elections Office at \$12.00 per hour, pay grade. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**
- (8) Discuss and consider approving payment of compensatory, and vacation time for County employees and necessary budget amendments. **None**
- (9) Receive as information:
  - a. Current juror donor list **Commissioner Lovell made a motion to receive as information the current juror donor list as provided. Commissioner Kitchen seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**

- (10) Discuss and consider proclaiming October 2-8, 2022 as National 4-H week.  
**Commissioner Lovell made a motion to proclaim October 2-8, 2022 as National 4-H Week. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**
- (11) Discuss and consider action on a budget amendment request and receive as information the salary reduction affidavits:
- a. County Judge to Administrative Assistant **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to approve the budget amend request and receive as information the salary reduction affidavits from the County Judge to the Administrative Assistant. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**
  - b. District Judge to District Court Coordinator **This was not available**
- (12) Receive as information the Order setting the Annual Salary for County Court at Law Court Reporter and 349<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Court Reporter. **Commissioner Henderson made a motion to receive the Order setting the Annual Salary for County Court at Law Court Reporter and 349<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Court Reporter as information. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**
- (13) Discuss and consider accepting approving job description and placement on the pay scale for:
- a. Insurance Coordinator **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to approve the job description and set the pay scale at pay grade 17 for the Insurance Coordinator position. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0. After some further discussion Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to rescind the motion to approve the Insurance Coordinator job description and pay scale until the HR Committee meets on this job description. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion to rescind carried 4 to 0.**
  - b. Community Service – Work Program **This was passed for HR Committee to review and make a recommendation.**
- (14) Discuss and consider approving:
- a. Contribution to Texas County and District Retirement System (TCDRS) to pay employee-contributed retirement funds and employer-matching retirement funds in the amount of \$1472.88 since hire date for Houston County Employee.
  - b. A contract with Houston County Employee for an installment repayment plan in the amount of \$721.52 towards retirement contributions to TCDRS since hire date. **Commissioner Kitchen moved to approve contribution to Texas County and District Retirement System (TCDRS) to pay employee-contributed retirement funds and employer-matching retirement funds in the amount of \$1472.88 since hire date for Houston County Employee and contract with Houston County Employee for an installment repayment plan in the amount of \$721.52 towards retirement contributions to TCDRS since hire date. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**
- (15) Discuss and consider setting the FY 2023 pay scale for County Employees.  
**Commissioner Lovell made a motion to set the FY 2023 pay scale for County Employees as presented. Commissioner Kitchen seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**
- (16) Discuss and consider accepting donation on behalf of the Department of Aging (Meals on Wheels) from Crockett Elks Lodge in the amount of \$2000.00 and necessary budget

amendments. **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to accept a donation on behalf of the Department of Aging (Meals on Wheels) from Crockett Elks Lodge in the amount of \$2000.00 and necessary budget amendments. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

- (17) Discuss and consider adopting a Proclamation designating October as Domestic Violence Awareness Month in Houston County. **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to adopt a Proclamation designating October as Domestic Violence Awareness Month in Houston County. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**
- (18) Discuss and consider reviewing and setting Sheriff and Constable fees effective January 1, 2023 Texas Local Government Code §118.131(D). **Commissioner Lovell made a motion to approve setting Sheriff and Constable fees effective January 1, 2023 Texas Local Government Code §118.131(D) as presented, with no changes from 2022. Commissioner Kitchen seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**
- (19) Discuss and consider action on application request and possible budget amendments for the Hotel Occupancy Tax Fund and Interlocal Agreement with:
- a. Grapeland Chamber of Commerce for the 77<sup>th</sup> Annual Peanut Festival to be held at the Grapeland City Park on October 13, 14, & 15, 2022.
  - b. The Loft of Crockett Curtis Grimes Concert to be held on November 4, 2022.  
**Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to approve the request for Hotel Occupancy Tax Fund and Interlocal Agreement with any necessary budget amendments for \$3000 to the Grapeland Chamber of Commerce for the 77<sup>th</sup> Annual Peanut Festival to be held at the Grapeland City Park on October 13, 14 & 15, 2022 AND \$1000 to The Loft of Crockett Curtis grimes Concert to be held on November 4, 2022. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**
- (20) Consider adopting Order setting day of week of regular Commissioners Court meetings during FY 2023 Texas Local Government Code §81.005(a). **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to set regular Commissioners Court meetings on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesdays of each month at 10:00 a.m.. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**
- (21) Discuss and consider increasing employee life insurance coverage with Lincoln Financial Group with no additional cost to County. **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to increase the employee life insurance coverage with Lincoln Financial group to \$50,000 at no extra cost to the county. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**
- (22) Discuss and consider signing “Notice of Election” for the November 8, 2022 General Election. Note: Notice includes the dates, times and locations for Early Voting set forth per commissioners’ court on 9/13/22. **Commissioner Kitchen moved to sign the “Notice of Election” for the November 8, 2022 General Election. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**
- (23) Discuss and consider approving “Replacement Appointments for Election Judges and Alternates” for the November 8, 2022 General Election. **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to approve “Replacement Appointments for Election Judges and Alternates” as presented by the Elections Administrator. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**

- (24) Discuss and consider action on FY 2023 Resolution for the Texas Indigent Defense Commission FY 2023 Formula Grant for improved indigent defense services and to designate the County Judge as the Authorized Official to apply for and accept the award. **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to approve FY 2023 Resolution for the Texas Indigent Defense Commission FY 2023 Formula Grant for improved indigent defense services and to designate the County Judge as the Authorized Official to apply for and accept the award. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**
- (25) Discuss and consider accepting the Byrd Anti-Lobbying Addendum to Houston County's Contract with H2O Hazard Mitigation Plan Update. **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to the Byrd Anti-Lobbying Addendum to Houston County's Contract with H2O Hazard Mitigation Plan Update. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**
- (26) Discuss and consider to rescind and ratify the timber funding allocation election to the mandatory minimum for Title II – Forest Service RAC Projects for 2023. **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to rescind and ratify the timber funding allocation election; “basically, undo what we did”. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0. Commissioner Kitchen moved to adopt allocation in front of us. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**
- (27) Discuss and consider action on authorizing the following items through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Grant Fund and necessary budget amendments:
- a. Purchase: 2022 16' Bumper-pull Hydraulic Dump Trailer  
**Commissioner Lovell made a motion to authorize the purchase of 2022 16' Bumper-pull Hydraulic Dump Trailer through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Grant Fund and necessary budget amendments. Commissioner Kitchen seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**
- (28) **PUBLIC HEARING** at 10:20 a.m. the Court entered into a public hearing. At this time Brian Drinkwine of Zeus and Daron Fredrickson of Merit Advisors addressed the Court and answered questions concerning Renewable Energy. The Court ended the Public Hearing at 10:38 a.m.
- (29) To adopt guidelines and criteria governing tax abatement agreements and the designation of reinvestment zones in areas of the county by Houston County as authorized by under Chapter 312 of the Texas Tax Code. **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to renew Guidelines and Criteria for Creating Tax Abatement In a Reinvestment Zones that we already have in place. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**
- (30) Discuss and consider the adoption of guidelines and criteria governing tax abatement agreements and the designation of reinvestment zones in areas of the county by Houston County as authorized by under Chapter 312 of the Texas Tax Code. **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to renew adoption of guidelines and criteria governing tax abatement agreements and the designation of reinvestment zones in areas of the county by Houston County as authorized by under Chapter 312 of the Texas Tax Code for 2 years. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**
- (31) Closed executive session as authorized by Texas Government Code §551.072 to discuss the county's potential purchase, lease, sale, or exchange of real estate and/or the value of the real estate and contemplated litigation per Local Government Code §551.071. **The Court entered the closed executive session at 10:43 a.m. They came back into Open Court at 11:12 a.m.**

(32)Adjourn. **Judge Lovell made a motion for the Commissioners Court Meeting to Adjourn at 10:12 a.m. Commissioner Kitchen seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**

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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