



HOUSTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT

MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING

JULY 9, 2024

The Commissioners' Court of Houston County met in a regular, called meeting on July 9, 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
Laura Goolsby	District Clerk
Randy Hargrove	Sheriff
Melissa Jeter	County Auditor
Sharon Luker	Administrative Assistant to the Commissioners
Todd McConnell	IT
Heath Murff	Emergency Management
Jan Pigford	Administrative Assistant to the County Judge
Daphne Session	County Attorney
Mike Cochran	Bailiff

County Officials/Employees by Zoom:

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 9:00 a.m. Judge Lovell gave the Invocation followed by 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 and Special Commissioners Court Minutes for July 28, 2024. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (4) Consider approving budget amendments. **Commissioner Lovell made a motion to approve the budget amendments as presented. Commissioner Henderson 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) with the additional 2012 Ford PK. 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. Hotel Occupancy Tax Fund Tourism Payments
 - f. Auditor's Report

Commissioner Kitchen moved to receive the Community Service/Environmental Report, District Clerk Report, County Clerk Report, Tax Assessor Report, Hotel Occupancy Tax Fund Tourism Payments and Auditor's Report as information. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.

- ***Heath Murff – Emergency Management – gave an update on Hurricane Beryl and the effects it has on Houston County***

- (7) Consider approving salaries for new and/or transfer employees.
- a. Full-time Assistant County Attorney - **Commissioner Lovell made a motion to approve the salary of Lawson Hamilton as Full-time Assistant County Attorney at bi-weekly pay of \$2,961.53 (per SB22 Grant) in Pay Grade 32, effective August 5, 2024. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
 - b. Two Full-time Jailers – **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to approve the salaries of Hunter Ballard and Ashley Fennell as Full-time Jailers at the HCSO at the bi-weekly rate of \$1,536.46 (per SB22 Grant) in Pay Grade 17, effective July 9, 2024. Commissioner Kitchen seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
 - c. 6 month raise for Part-time Kitchen Staff – Senior Citizen Center – **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to approve the 6-month raise of Elnoria Ellis, Part-time Kitchen Staff at the Senior Citizen Center to hourly wage of \$13.88 in Pay Grade 12, effective July 1, 2024. Commissioner Stokes 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 Henderson seconded to approve compensatory payment to Jerrod Vickers, Comm Supervisor, in the amount of \$152.35; Rocky Hoch, Transport Deputy, in the amount of \$436.38; Jennefer Cruz, Dispatcher, in the amount of \$248.38; Gordon Denman, Deputy, in the amount of \$93.33; Matthew Van Egmond, Deputy, in the amount of \$227.64; J'Darius Pruitt, Dispatcher in the amount of \$260.19; 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 \$271.65; Carl Smotherman, Jailer, in the amount of \$946.56; Ralph Brown, RH Pct. 1, in the amount of \$598.97; and Gwen Womack, Chief Deputy Clerk (Retired), in the amount of \$972.12. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (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 approving transfers between departments. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (10) Discuss and consider action on updating the Houston County Travel Policy to require Commissioners Court approval for any education expenses for Lame Duck elected officials. **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to approve updating the Houston County Travel Policy to require Commissioners Court approval for any education expenses for Lame Duck elected officials. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (11) Discuss and consider action on a budget amendment to provide funds for the Interlocal Agreement with the Crockett Police Department to reimburse for a portion of the software annual maintenance costs for Cellebrite, software used by HCSO and CPD for investigations. **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to approve budget amendment of \$6000, with \$3000 coming from DA Budget and \$3000 coming from County Attorney Budget to provide funds for the Interlocal Agreement with the Crockett Police Department to reimburse for a portion of the software annual maintenance costs for Cellebrite, software used by HCSO and CPD for investigations. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (12) Discuss and consider action on approving a budget amendment for the Houston County AgriLife Extension Office of \$2,500 for temporary/part time salary. **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to approve a budget amendment for the Houston County AgriLife Extension Office of \$2,500 for temporary/part time salary. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (13) Discuss and consider approving repairs to both Justice Center Chiller Units. **Commissioner Henderson made a motion to approve repairs to both Justice Center Chiller Units with a budget amendment for funding to come from the unused salaries in the Sheriff's Budget. The cost for these repairs is \$10,082.80. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (14) Discuss and consider action on renewing policies with MetLife for Supplemental Insurance for FY 2025. **Kris Dyches, our Insurance Coordinator, gave a presentation on all the options for FY 2025. Commissioner Kitchen made a motion that we make all the options available to employees for those renewing policies with MetLife for Supplemental Insurance for FY 2025. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

(15) Discuss and consider action on the following:

Designating Room 253 on the second floor of the County Courthouse as office space for the County Attorney's Office and Authorizing necessary budget amendments for the purchase of equipment, office furniture, and a telephone for Room 253 on the second floor of the County Courthouse.

Daphne Session, County Attorney, asked that the Court not take action on this item at this time because the wrong Room # is on the Agenda. No Action Taken.

(16) Discuss and consider action on advertising to accept bids for road materials. **Commissioner Kitchen announced that No Action is necessary.**

(17) Receive as information Installation of Official National Historic Trail Signs for El Camino Real De Los Tejas National Historic Trail [S]. **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to receive as information Installation of Official National Historic Trail Signs for El Camino Real De Los Tejas National Historic Trail [S].**

(18) Discuss and Authorize a representative with TxDOT to apply for one or more of the following grants on behalf of Houston County funds to be used for costs related to the Houston County Airport lighting improvement project:

BIL Infrastructure IJJA/AIG:

- FY22 \$159,000 (Set to expire if not under grant by September 2025)
 - FY23 \$145,000
 - FY24 \$145,000
 - FY25 to be announced in August 2024, should reflect previous years' values.
 - FY26 to be announced in August 2025, should reflect previous years' values.
- Non-Primary Entitlement (NPE):
 - \$150,000 a year, with roll over to 4 years for a max of \$600,000.
 - The project cost for the lighting improvement project would be:
 - Design: \$90,000 – 10% local match would be \$9,000.
 - Construction: \$1,100,000 – 10% local match would be \$110,000.

Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to authorize a representative (Christian Cox) with TxDOT to apply for one or more of the following grants on behalf of Houston County funds to be used for costs related to the Houston County Airport lighting improvement project:

BIL Infrastructure IJJA/AIG:

- FY22 \$159,000 (Set to expire if not under grant by September 2025)
 - FY23 \$145,000
 - FY24 \$145,000
 - FY25 to be announced in August 2024, should reflect previous years' values.
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- Non-Primary Entitlement (NPE):
 - \$150,000 a year, with roll over to 4 years for a max of \$600,000.
 - The project cost for the lighting improvement project would be:
 - Design: \$90,000 – 10% local match would be \$9,000.

- **Construction: \$1,100,000 – 10% local match would be \$110,000.**

Commissioner Henderson seconded the motion. Motion carried 5 to 0.

(19)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 9:52 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: July 23, 2024

Terri Meadows, County Clerk