



## HOUSTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT

### MINUTES

### REGULAR MEETING

### AUGUST 13, 2024

The Commissioners' Court of Houston County met in a regular, called meeting on August 13, 2024 **in person and via zoom**, with the following members present, to wit:

The Court

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>PRESENT</b>
Jimmy Henderson	Commissioner, Precinct #4	<b>PRESENT</b>
Terri Meadows	County Clerk	<b>PRESENT</b>

County Officials/Employees in person:

Mike Cochran	Bailiff
Kris Dyches	Insurance Coordinator
Laura Goolsby	District Clerk
Lawson Hamilton	Assistant County Attorney
Melissa Jeter	County Auditor
Carl Johnson	Facilities Administrator
Sheila Johnson	Grants Administrator
Ronnie Jordan	JP Precinct 2
Sharon Luker	Administrative Assistant to the Commissioners
Todd McConnell	IT
Mike McCreight	JP Precinct 1
Lois Netardus	Assistant County Treasurer
Jan Pigford	Administrative Assistant to the County Judge
Daphne Session	County Attorney
Laronica Wooten-Smith	County Tax Assessor-Collector

County Officials/Employees by Zoom:

Meagan Frizzell	9-1-1 Addressing
Heath Murff	Emergency Management
Jerrold Vickers	HCSO
Brittani Womack	1 <sup>st</sup> Assistant Auditor

Media: Greg Ritchie - Messenger

Visitors: James Angerstein, Justin Ibanaz (Todd/Hamaker/Johnson, CPA), Joe Hatten (Live Oak Sanitation), Sonny Hubbard (Live Oak Sanitation), Cindy Doran (FUMC, Crockett), Marleen (Zoom)

- (1) Welcome, Invocation and Pledges:  
**Judge Lovell called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. Reverend Cindy Doran of the Crockett First United Methodist Church 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 Henderson made a motion to approve the Commissioners Court minutes for July 23, 2024. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (4) Consider approving budget amendments. **None**
- (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 Henderson. 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 made a motion to receive as information the Community Service/Environmental Report, District Clerk Report, County Clerk Report, Tax Assessor Report, and Hotel Occupancy Tax Fund Tourism Payments Report. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (7) Consider approving salaries for new and/or transfer employees.
  - a. Full time Deputy Clerk II County Clerk Office – **Employee resigned. No action necessary.**
  - b. Part time Deputy Clerk County Clerk Office – **Commissioner Lovell made a motion to approve the salary of Kayla Walker as Part-time Deputy Clerk in the County Clerk's Office at hourly rate of \$13.62 in Pay Grade 13, effective August 12, 2024. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
  - c. 2 Full time Dispatchers – **Commissioner Henderson made a motion to approve the bi-weekly salary of Jaclyn Thomas and Aneisha Cooksey, as Full-time Dispatchers at the Houston County Sheriff's Office at \$1,260.00 in Pay Grade 16, effective August 13, 2024. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
  - d. Full time Jailer – **Commissioner Henderson made a motion to approve the bi-weekly salary for Richard Omelina, Jailer at the Houston County Jail at \$1626.92 in Pay Grade 17, effective August 16, 2024. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

- e. 6 month raise for Dispatcher – **Commissioner Lovell made a motion to approve the six month raise for Jaidan Jones, Dispatcher at the HCSO from \$1,224.00 to \$1,321.36 bi-weekly in Pay Grade 16, effective August 13, 2024. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
  - f. Full-time Dispatcher to Part-time Dispatcher – **Commissioner Lovell made a motion to approve the salary of Jennefer Cruz, moving from Full-time Dispatcher to Part-time Dispatcher at HCSO at hourly wage of \$15.77 in Pay Grade 16, effective August 2, 2024. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
  - g. Full time Deputy to Part time Deputy – **Commissioner Henderson made a motion to approve the salary for Jeffery Dean moving from Full-time Deputy Sheriff to Part-time Deputy Sheriff at the HCSO at hourly wage of \$20.80 in Pay Grade 20, effective August 13, 2024. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
  - h. Patrol Deputy to Patrol Sergeant – **Commissioner Stokes made a motion to approve the salary of Curtavious Watts moving from Patrol Deputy to Patrol Sergeant at bi-weekly pay of \$1,864.61 + \$18.46 cell phone allowance in Pay Grade 23, effective August 13, 2024. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
  - i. 2 Heavy Equipment Operators Part time to Full Time, Precinct 1 – **Commissioner Lovell made a motion to approve bi-weekly salary of Ben Cutler at \$1,440.00 + \$18,46 cell phone allowance, moving from Part-time to Full-time Heavy Equipment Operator in Pay Grade 17 for Precinct 1 Road and Bridge, effective August 13, 2024. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**  
**Commissioner Lovell made a motion to approve bi-weekly salary of Gregg McKinney at \$1,469.56 + \$18,46 cell phone allowance, moving from Part-time to Full-time Heavy Equipment Operator in Pay Grade 17 for Precinct 1 Road and Bridge, effective August 13, 2024. Commissioner Henderson 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 Lovell made a motion and Commissioner Kitchen seconded to approve compensatory payment to Donya Duke, Jailer, in the amount of \$132.58; Jennefer Cruz, Dispatcher, in the amount of \$189.24; J'Darius Pruitt, Dispatcher in the amount of \$223.02; Matthew Graham, Jailer, in the amount of \$328.32; Jaycob Elliott, Jailer, in the amount of \$590.37; Theresa Hayes, Jailer, in the amount of \$291.75; Joshua Provins, Jailer, in the amount of \$923.61; Johnny Romo, Jailer, in the amount of \$271.65; Dustin Brown, Jailer, in the amount of \$283.80; and Kevin Goolsby, RH Precinct 1, in the amount of \$1,587.64. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (9) Discuss and consider declaring received information as surplus inventory and approving transfers between departments. **Commissioner Henderson made a motion to declare received information as surplus inventory and approving transfers between departments. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (10) Discuss and consider accepting the Submission of the 2024 Certification of Appraisal Roll for Houston County. **Commissioner Lovell made a motion to accept the Submission of the 2024 Certification of Appraisal Roll for Houston County. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (11) Discuss and consider accepting submission of the 2024 Tax Rate Calculation. **Commissioner Henderson made a motion to accept submission of the 2024 Tax Rate Calculation. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

(12)Receive as information the 2025-2026 Reappraisal Plan. **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to receive as information the 2025-2026 Reappraisal Plan. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

(13)Discuss and consider action on accepting the FY 2023 Independent Audit as prepared by Todd, Hamaker & Johnson, CPA. **Commissioner Lovell made a motion to accept the FY 2023 Independent Audit as prepared by Todd, Hamaker & Johnson, CPA. Commissioner Kitchen seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

(14)Discuss and consider action on the 2025 Adopted Budget for the Houston County Appraisal District. **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to accept the 2025 Adopted Budget for the Houston County Appraisal District. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

(15)Discuss and consider designations to apply for the SB 22 Rural Law Enforcement Grant:  
a. Authorize the County Judge to apply on behalf of the Houston County Sheriff's Office.  
b. Authorize the County Attorney, Daphne Session, to apply on behalf of the Houston County Attorney's Office.  
c. Authorize the District Attorney, Donna Kaspar, to apply on behalf of the Houston County District Attorney's Office.  
**Commissioner Stokes made a motion to designate these to apply for the SB 22 Rural Law Enforcement Grant: a. Authorize the County Judge to apply on behalf of the Houston County Sheriff's Office, b. Authorize the County Attorney, Daphne Session, to apply on behalf of the Houston County Attorney's Office, and c. Authorize the District Attorney, Donna Kaspar, to apply on behalf of the Houston County District Attorney's Office. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

(16)Discuss and consider action on approving the Texas County & District Retirement System plan and contribution rate for 2025. **Commissioner Stokes made a motion to approve the Texas County & District Retirement System plan and contribution rate for 2025 at 160% with 2% COLA. Commissioner Kitchen seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

***\*\*9:45 a.m. Commissioners Court took a brief recess and reconvened at 9:55 a.m.***

(17)Hear presentation from Representatives with Live Oak Environmental Services/ Pinewoods Sanitation. **\*\*Sonny Hubbard spoke about some of the issues that Live Oak Environmental Services/Pinewoods Sanitation have been facing with the bad weather and no pick up. Joe Hubbard also spoke about the same issue.**

(18)Receive as information the addition of Private Road 8161 in Precinct 4 to the official Houston County Map. **Commissioner Henderson made a motion to receive as information the addition of Private Road 8161 in Precinct 4 to the official Houston County Map. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

(19)Discuss and consider approving Co-Sponsor for Healthy County Wellness Program and approving Houston County to enroll in the County Specific Incentive Program sponsored by Healthy County for 2024-2025. **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion approving Co-Sponsor, Kris Dyches, for Health County Wellness Program and approving Houston County enroll in the County Specific**

**Incentive Program sponsored by Healthy County for 2024-2025. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

- (20) Discuss and consider taking action on Rental and Use Policies of Houston County Community Room. **After some discussion on this item the Court decided to pass at this time and allow the County Attorney to work on some new language for the Policy.**
- (21) Discuss and consider action on authorizing the following items through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Grant Fund and necessary budget amendments:
- a. Authorize the purchase and installation of an Air Conditioning system and an ice machine for the Community Room in the Houston County Armory from received quotes. **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to approve the purchase and installation of a mini split system Air Conditioning system and a Manitowoc Indigo NXT Series ice machine for the Community Room in the Houston County Armory from C & C Hearing & Air, LLC at a total cost of \$11,450.00, and authorize this purchase through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
  - b. Authorize the purchase and installation of an Overhead door for the Bay at the Houston County Armory from received quotes. **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to authorize the purchase and installation of an overhead door for the bay at the Houston County Armory from Overhead Door of Greater Lufkin at a cost of \$1,918.00, and authorize this purchase through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (22) Discuss and consider approving the contract amendment between Houston County and Texas Department of Public Safety for office space for Driver License and Texas Highway Patrol services located at 112 East Houston Avenue for a 5 year extension effective 5/7/2025 thru 5/6/2030 in the amount of \$2,000/month. **Commissioner Henderson made a motion to approve the contract amendment between Houston County and Texas Department of Public Safety for office space for Driver License and Texas Highway Patrol services located at 112 East Houston Avenue for a 5 year extension effective 5/7/2025 thru 5/6/2030 in the amount of \$2,000/month. Commissioner Kitchen seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (23) Discuss and take action on paying the invoice for HCEC to move the power line at Hurricane Bayou for the new bridge project and necessary budget amendments. **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to table paying the invoice for HCEC to move the power line at Hurricane Bayou for the new bridge project. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (24) Discuss and consider approving an interlocal agreement between Houston County Sheriff Department and San Jacinto County Housing of Inmates. **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to approve an interlocal agreement between Houston County Sheriff Department and San Jacinto County Housing of Inmates. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (25) Discuss and consider authorizing the Grant Administrator to apply for the Basic Peace Officers Class for LET Grant #1429918 from DETCOG, pending required documentation from Sheriff's Office. **Commissioner Henderson made a motion to authorize the Grant Administrator to apply for the Basic Peace Officers Class for LET Grant #1429918 from DETCOG, pending required documentation from Sheriff's Office. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

(26)Discuss and take action on the Order of Election to be held on November 5, 2024 in Houston County Texas. **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to approve the Order of Election to be held on November 5, 2024 in Houston County, Texas. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

**\*\*At 10:50 a.m. the Commissioners Court took a brief recess and reconvened at 10:56 a.m.**

(27)Discuss and consider action on the following for room 201 in the District Attorney office: Computer and telephone cables. Estimated cost \$1115.00. **Commissioner Lovell made a motion to approve the purchase and installation of Computer and telephone cables in Room 201 in the District Attorney Office at an estimated cost of \$1115.00. Commissioner Kitchen seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

(28)Discuss and consider action on advertising to sale a 2007 Chevy pickup (# 5575) and a 1991 ¾ ton Dodge (# 8301) from Precinct # 2. **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to approve advertising to sale a 2007 Chevy pickup (# 5575) and a 1991 ¾ ton Dodge (# 8301) from Precinct # 2. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

(29)Receive as information Proposed Budget FY 2025. **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to receive as information Proposed Budget FY 2025. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

(30)Budget Workshop - FY 2025 Budget. **Judge Lovell opened the Budget Workshop at 11:00 a.m. and closed the Budget Workshop at 11:04 a.m.**

(31)Discuss and consider setting proposed tax rate and dates for hearing. **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to set the proposed tax rate at 0.423000. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0. Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to set the date for the hearing on proposed tax rate on September 10, 2024 at 9:00 a.m. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

(32)Discuss and consider action on proposing elected official salaries for FY 2025, per LGC 152.013. **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to set the elected official salaries for FY 2025, per LGC 152.013, as presented. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

**\*\*At 11:21 a.m. the Commissioners Court entered to Closed Executive Session:**

(33)**Closed executive session** as authorized by Texas Government Code §551.071 for a consultation with the attorney for the county and legal representatives about pending litigation, a settlement offer, claims, legal issues, potential liabilities, or other matters for which the attorney's duties to the client under the Texas State Bar Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct conflicts with the Open Meetings Act.

(34)**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 per Texas Local Government Code §551.071.

(35)Reconvene **The Court reconvened in open session at 11:39 a.m.**

(36)Discuss and consider taking action to make an offer in the Hurricane Bayou Bridge project and to appoint Judge Lovell to negotiate on behalf of the county. **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion that we offer \$3000-\$4000 on the Hurricane Bayou Bridge project and to appoint Judge Lovell and Commissioner Lovell to negotiate the offer for temporary access for bridge construction on behalf of Houston County. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

(37)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 11:41 a.m.**

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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**

**Date Approved: August 27, 2024**