



HOUSTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT

MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING

FEBRUARY 25, 2025

The Commissioners' Court of Houston County met in a regular, called meeting on February 25, 2025 **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:

James Angerstein	Tax Assessor-Collector
Zak Bengé	Sheriff
Laura Goolsby	District Clerk
Melissa Jeter	County Auditor
Sheila Johnson	Grants Administrator
Wanda Jordan	Historical Commission
Al Kreger	Historical Commission
Donavan Mahan	HCSO/Jail Administrator
Joel Martin	Bailiff
Ryan Martin	Chief Deputy Sheriff
Kristina Massey	County Attorney
Mike McCreight	JP 1
Heath Murff	Emergency Management
Janis Omelina	Treasurer
Jan Pigford	Administrative Assistant to the County Judge
Darrellyn Smith	Assistant to the County Commissioners
Jo Smith	Extension Office
Red Smith	Constable Precinct 2
Brittani Womack	First Assistant Auditor

County Officials/Employees by Zoom:

Missy D'Angelo	Assistant Auditor
Carl Johnson	Facilities Administrator

Media: Greg Ritchie Messenger (by Zoom)

Visitors: Suzan Knox (DCA), Ronnie Omelina (Citizen), John Angerstein (Crockett City Manager), Lee Stanley (City of Crockett), Gail Thompson (Zoom), Rebecca Huffman (DCA), Jo Denman (Crockett Community Empowerment)

- (1) Welcome, Invocation and Pledges:

Judge Lovell called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m. He voiced the opening prayer and then led 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 February 11, 2025. Commissioner Kitchen 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. County Treasurers Report
- b. Compensatory Report

Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to receive as information the County Treasurers Report and the Compensatory Report as presented. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.

- (7) Consider approving salaries for new and/or transfer employees.

- a. Court Security Bailiff from Part-time to Full-time
- b. Bailiff to Investigator
- c. Jailer to Sgt Jailer
- d. Part-time to Full-time Jailer
- e. Full-time Jailer (corrected to be Full-time Dispatcher)
- f. Full-time Jailer (corrected to be Full-time Dispatcher)
- g. Part-time Dispatcher

Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to approve all of the following and Commissioner Stokes seconded. The motion carried 5 to 0.

Move Mike Cochran from Part-time Court Security Bailiff to Full-time Court Security Bailiff at bi-weekly salary of \$1,850.26 (includes cell phone allowance and SB22 supplement) in Pay Grade 20 effective 2/25/25; Move Stephen Countz from Full-time Court Security Bailiff to Investigator at bi-weekly salary of \$2,018.46 (includes cell phone allowance and SB22 supplement) in Pay Grade 21 effective 2/25/25; Move Brandon Waldrep from Full-time Jailer to Full-time Jail Sergeant at bi-weekly salary of \$1,749.23 (includes cell phone allowance and SB22 supplement) in Pay Grade 19 effective 2/25/25; Hire new employee

Jonathon Strong as Part-time Jailer at hourly pay of \$18.37 in Pay Grade 17 effective 2/25/25; Promote Jonathon Strong from Part-time Jailer to Full-time Jailer at bi-weekly salary of \$1,626.92 (includes SB22 supplement) in Pay Grade 17 effective 3/17/25; Hire new employee Lacy Ortiz-Moreau as Full-time Dispatcher at bi-weekly salary of \$1,310.47 in Pay Grade 16 effective 2/25/25; Hire new employee Alycia Gonzales as Full-time Dispatcher at bi-weekly salary of \$1,310.47 in Pay Grade 16 effective 2/25/25; and hire new employee Taylor Chavers as Part-time dispatcher at hourly pay of \$17.49 in Pay Grade 16 effective 2/25/25.

- (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 payment of compensatory, and vacation time and necessary budget amendments to Jaidan Jones, Dispatcher, in the amount of \$220.20; J'darius Pruitt, Dispatcher, in the amount of \$302.78; Matthew VanEgmond, Deputy, in the amount of \$143.10; Matthew Graham, Jailer, in the amount of \$2,112.53; and Joshua Provins, Jailer, in the amount of \$3,975.28. 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 receive as information the surplus inventory and approving transfers between departments as presented. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (10) Discuss and consider declaring surplus inventory items for auction and salvage inventory items for disposal. **Commissioner Kitchen moved to approve the Sheriff's Office turning over a red Chevrolet step side and a white Chevy ½ ton as surplus and salvage and approve those items along with the list presented by the Auditor's Office to either be auctioned off, salvaged, or disposed. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (11) Discuss and consider action to authorize and accept as a donation the Volunteer services of a High School student (Marisol Tovar) within the District Attorney's Office from January 1, 2025 through December 31, 2025. **Commissioner Lovell made a motion to authorize and accept as a donation the Volunteer services of a High School student (Marisol Tovar) within the District Attorney's Office from January 1, 2025 through December 31, 2025. Commissioner Kitchen seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (12) Receive as information: 40 Continuing Education Hours as required for James Angerstein, County Tax Assessor-Collector. **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to receive as information the 40 Continuing Education Hours as required for James Angerstein, County Tax Assessor-Collector. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (13) Receive as information 2024 Annual Report from Houston County Historical Commission. **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to receive as information 2024 Annual Report from Houston County Historical Commission. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0. *Wanda Jordan and Al Kreger were present to share about all the activities the Historical Commission was involved in this past year and the activities they have coming up. They also shared statistics on the number of volunteers and the hours they served.***

(14)Receive as information the Racial Profiling reports.

- a. Sheriff Office
- b. Constable 1
- c. Constable 2
- d. Fire Marshal
- e. District Attorney
- f. County Attorney

Commissioner Lovell made a motion to receive the Racial Profiling Reports as presented for the Sheriff Office, Constable 1, Constable 2, Fire Marshal, District Attorney, and County Attorney. Commissioner Kitchen seconded the motion. Motion carried 5 to 0.

(15)Receive as information the FY 2024 Hotel Occupancy Tax Collections and Expense report.

Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to receive as information the FY 2024 Hotel Occupancy Tax Collections and Expense report as presented by the Auditor. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.

(16)Receive as information the FY 2024 Lateral Road Report. **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to receive as information the FY 2024 Lateral Road Report. Commissioner Henderson seconded. *Melissa Jeter, County Auditor, went over the report in the packet with the Court.* Motion carried 5 to 0.**

(17)Discuss and consider renewal of lease agreement between Brenda Stubblefield and Houston County Road and Bridge Precinct #4. **Commissioner Henderson made a motion to renew the lease agreement between Brenda Stubblefield and Houston County Road and Bridge Precinct #4. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

(18)Discuss and consider action on Applications to the Hotel Occupancy Tax Fund and Interlocal agreements for events:

- a. Houston County Fair & Youth Livestock Show – HCF Board
- b. Crockett Community Empowerment Pop Up Market – Jo Denman
- c. Camp Street Blues & Arts Fest – Downtown Crockett Association

Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to approve the application for Hotel Occupancy Tax Fund and Interlocal agreements for: Houston County Fair & Youth Livestock Show – HCF Board - \$3000, Crockett Community Empowerment Pop Up Market – Jo Denman - \$1000, and Camp Street Blues & Arts Fest – Downtown Crockett Association - \$1000. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.

(19)Discuss adopting a Resolution for the Body worn Camera grant awarded by the Office of the Governor and discuss a change to the original request to apply and necessary budget amendments. **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to adopt a Resolution for the Body worn Camera grant awarded by the Office of the Governor and discuss a change to the original request to apply, designate Jim Lovell, County Judge as the grantee's authorized official and necessary budget amendments. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Sheila Johnson, Grants Administrator, advised the Court about the costs involved and that this is a matching funds grant. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

- (20) Discuss and consider requests by the Houston County Child Welfare Board and Kalin's Center to:
- Adopting a proclamation designating the month of April as "Child Abuse Awareness Month"
 - Approving Houston County Event and display permit for Flag Raising Ceremony "Go Blue Day" to be held on April 4, 2025

Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to approve a proclamation designating the Month of April as "Child Abuse Awareness Month", and approve Houston County Event and display permit for Flag Raising Ceremony "Go Blue Day" to be held on April 4, 2025. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.

*****At 9:32 Commissioner Kitchen stepped out of the Commissioners Court Meeting***

- (21) Discuss and consider taking action to authorize a budget amendment for the purchase of uniforms for the County Jail Staff. **Commissioner Lovell made a motion authorize a budget amendment of \$6,237.51 to cover the costs of jail uniforms from Galls. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**

*****At 9:35 Commissioner Kitchen returned to the Commissioners Court Meeting***

- (22) Discuss and consider action to accept donation from Splendora ISD Police Department for 20 (26P brand) tasers for use by the Houston County Sheriff's Office. **Commissioner Henderson made a motion to accept a donation from Splendora ISD Police Department for 20 (26P brand) tasers, with an estimated value of \$33,700, for use by the Houston County Sheriff's Office. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

- (23) Discuss and consider action to accept a Non-Financial Agreement with the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services for October 1, 2025 through September 30, 2032 to establish and maintain a child welfare board to meet the needs of the children in the county who are in need of protective services and authorize the County Judge Jim Lovell as the Signature Authority Designation. **Commissioner Lovell made a motion to accept a Non-Financial Agreement with the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services for October 1, 2025 through September 30, 2032 to establish and maintain a child welfare board to meet the needs of the children in the county who are in need of protective services and authorize the County Judge Jim Lovell as the Signature Authority Designation. Commissioner Stokes seconded the motion. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

- (24) Discuss and consider action to accept a Grant Contract with the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services for October 1, 2025 through September 30, 2032 to receive federal funds to increase the amount of legal staff and services available to process child welfare cases and authorize the County Judge Jim Lovell as the Signature Authority Designation for contract. **Commissioner Henderson made a motion to accept a Grant Contract with the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services for October 1, 2025 through September 30, 2032 to receive federal funds to increase the amount of legal staff and services available to process child welfare cases and authorize the County Judge Jim Lovell as the Signature Authority Designation for contract. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

(25) Discuss and consider action on an interlocal agreement between the County (Sheriff's Department) and City (Police Department) for use of the Houston County Gun Range. **Commissioner Henderson made a motion to approve an interlocal agreement between the County (Sheriff's Department) and City (Police Department) for use of the Houston County Gun Range. Commissioner Kitchen seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

(26) **Grant Workshop** to discuss Community Wildfire Defense Grant project plan and implementation. **The Grant Workshop to discuss Community Wildfire Defense project plan and implementation began at 9:42 a.m. The Grants Administrator went over all the particulars of the program; including, necessary personnel and equipment. The Grant Workshop ended at 9:54 a.m.**

****At 9:54 a.m. the Commissioners Court took a recess until 10:00 a.m.**

****Executive Session began at 10:00 a.m.**

(27) **Closed Executive Session per Local Government Code §157.071-157.073:** Discuss and consider personnel issues pertaining to the sick pool policy and its usage.

(28) **Closed Executive Session per Local Government Code §551.087** Deliberation regarding economic development negotiations with a business prospect.

(29) **Closed Executive Session per Local 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 (Two Agenda items concerning real estate)

(30) **Reconvene – The Court Reconvened from Executive Session at 10:40 a.m.**

(31) Discuss and consider approving to accept an application for a tax abatement using the parameters as discussed in executive session. **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion and Commissioner Henderson seconded to approve an application for a tax abatement using the parameters as discussed in executive session. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

(32) Discuss and consider to approve granting county owned (struck-off) property, Parcel 15340 to the City via a Special Warranty Deed and adopt resolution granting the property to the City to aid in a sanitary easement for proposed water well construction. **Commissioner Lovell made a motion to approve granting county owned (struck-off) property, Parcel 15340 to the City via a Special Warranty Deed and adopt resolution granting the property to the City to aid in a sanitary easement for proposed water well construction. Commissioner Kitchen seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

(33) Discuss and consider action on Permanent Construction Easement for right of way acquisition with property owners, Jacob Bitner and William Money for TXDOT Bridge Replacement Program on CR 4050 at Hartts Creek Tributary, authorize construction and necessary budget amendments. **Commissioner Stokes made a motion to authorize a Permanent Construction Easement for right of way acquisition with property owners, Jacob Bitner by authorizing and performing construction on Mr. Bitner's driveway, and William Money, by authorizing and performing construction on William Money's 2 approaching driveways for TXDOT Bridge**

Replacement Program on CR 4050 at Hartts Creek Tributary, and necessary budget amendments. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.

(34)Adjourn. Judge Lovell made a motion for the Commissioners Court Meeting to Adjourn. The motion carried by everyone rising and leaving the meeting at 10:48 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: March 11, 2025