



## HOUSTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT MINUTES REGULAR MEETING JUNE 24, 2025

The Commissioners' Court of Houston County met in a regular, called meeting on June 24, 2025 in **person and via zoom**, with the following members present, to wit:

### The Court

Jim Lovell	County Judge	<b>ABSENT</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:

James Angerstein	Tax Assessor-Collector	Present
Zak Bengé	Houston County Sheriff	Present
Missy D'Angelo	Assistant Auditor	Zoom
Kris Dyches	Insurance Coordinator	Present
Laura Goolsby	District Clerk	Present
Carl Johnson	Facilities Administrator	Present
Sheila Johnson	Grants Administrator	Present
Al Kreger	Historical Commission	Present
Cynthia Lum	Elections Administrator	Zoom
Kristina Massey	County Attorney	Present
Todd McConnell	Information Technology	Present
Heath Murff	Emergency Management	Zoom
Janis Omelina	County Treasurer	Present
Jan Pigford	Admin Assistant to the County Judge	Present
Darrellyn Smith	Assistant to the County Commissioners	Present
Brittani Womack	First Assistant Auditor	Present

<u>Media:</u> Greg Ritchie	Messenger	Zoom
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Visitors: Gary White (A A Capital), John Angerstein (City Administrator)

### (1) Welcome, Invocation and Pledges:

**Commissioner Kitchen called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m. Commissioner Lovell voiced the opening prayer followed by Commissioner Kitchen 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 Stokes made a motion to approve the Commissioners Court minutes for June 10, 2025 and June 13, 2025. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 4 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 4 to 0.**

(6) Receive information, announcements and reports from County Departments:

- a. County Treasurers Report
- b. Compensatory Report

**Commissioner Lovell made a motion to receive as information the County Treasurers Report and the Compensatory Report as presented. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**

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

**Commissioner Lovell made a motion to approve the following salary/promotions. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**

**Jonathon Strong promotion from Jailer to Jail Sergeant at bi-weekly salary of \$1,749.23 (includes allowance and supplement) in Pay Grade 19, effective June 24, 2025, replacing Dustin Brown Sergeant Position.**

**Hunter Ballard promotion from Jailer to Jail Sergeant at bi-weekly salary of \$1,749.23 (includes allowance and supplement) in Pay Grade 19, effective June 24, 2025, replacing Brandon Waldrep Sergeant Position.**

**Phelesia Mitchell promotion from Jailer to Jail Sergeant at bi-weekly salary of \$1,749.23 (includes allowance and supplement) in Pay Grade 19, effective June 24, 2025, replacing Teresa Hayes Sergeant Position.**

**Kirby Whittmore as Jailer at bi-weekly salary of \$1,626.92 (includes supplement) in Pay Grade 17, effective June 24, 2025, replacing Jonathon Strong Jailer Position.**

**Patrick Burran as Jailer at bi-weekly salary of \$1,538.46 (includes supplement) in Pay Grade 17, effective June 24, 2025, replacing Jonathon Strong Jailer Position.**

**Kasia Elliott as Part-Time Jailer at hourly wage of \$17.75 (includes supplement) in Pay Grade 17, effective June 24, 2025, replacing Jonathon Strong Jailer Position.**

**Alicia Bitner as Chief Deputy Treasurer at bi-weekly salary of \$1,543.04 in Pay Grade 18, effective June 30, 2025.**

**Hazel Van Sickle as Part-Time Office Assistant at the Home Delivered Meals Program at \$14.84, hourly, in Pay Grade 12, effective June 11, 2025.**

- (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 payment of compensatory, and vacation time and necessary budget amendments to Jaidan Jones, Dispatcher, in the amount of \$146.80; Julia Evans, Dispatcher, in the amount of \$140.00; Theresa Hayes, Jail Sgt, in the amount of \$4,915.20; Dwayne Hughes, Precinct 3 Road Hand, in the amount of \$17.09 and Neil Westerfield, Precinct 3 Road Hand, in the amount of \$534.71. Motion carried 4 to 0.**
- (9) Discuss and consider declaring received information as surplus inventory and approving transfers between departments. **None**
- (10) Discuss and consider approving Entrust Solutions Group (Spectrum) to install:
- a. Spectrum proposes to install 2,435' of Fiber Optic Cable through 2" & 4" HDPE Conduit via Directional Bore for CR 1680 East of CR 1750, Precinct 1
  - b. Spectrum proposes to install 2,704' of Fiber Optic Cable through 2" HDPE Conduit via Directional bore between two poles for CR 2300 South of CR 2330, Precinct 2
- Commissioner Lovell made a motion to approve Entrust Solutions Group (Spectrum) to install: a. 2,435' of Fiber Optic Cable through 2" & 4" HDPE Conduit via Directional Bore for CR 1680 East of CR 1750, Precinct 1 and b. 2,704' of Fiber Optic Cable through 2" HDPE Conduit via Directional bore between two poles for CR 2300 South of CR 2330, Precinct 2. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**
- (11) Receive as information Dionysus Solar, LLC (Houston County) Road Use Permit for CR 3052 and CR 2967 for Precinct 2. **Commissioner Stokes made a motion to receive as information Dionysus Solar, LLC (Houston County) Road Use Permit for CR 3052 and CR 2967 for Precinct 2. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**
- (12) Discuss and consider approving the County and District Attorney's agreement with LGS to integrate with the booking information on eForce with a one-time cost of \$1000 with no recurring charges. **Commissioner Lovell made a motion to approve the County and District Attorney's agreement with LGS to integrate with the booking information on eForce with a one-time cost of \$1000 with no recurring charges. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**
- (13) Discuss and consider accepting a financial donation from 2P Logging for CR 2125. **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to accept a financial donation of \$800.00 from 2P Logging for CR 2125. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**
- (14) Discuss and consider action on renewing the liability and auto coverage insurance with the Texas Association of Counties Risk Management Pool for the period of 10/01/2025 through 10/01/2026. **Commissioner Stokes made a motion to approve the liability and auto coverage insurance with the Texas Association of Counties Risk Management Pool for the period of 10/01/2025 through 10/01/2026. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**

- (15) Discuss and consider accepting a donation from Creek Lock Service valued at \$249.00 for latch guards & sliding doors at Houston County Jail. **Commissioner Henderson made a motion to accept a donation from Creek Lock Service valued at \$249.00 for latch guards & sliding doors at Houston County Jail. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**
- (16) Receive as information the FY 2024 Emergency Services District #1 financial statement and audit report. **Commissioner Lovell made a motion to receive as information the FY 2024 Emergency Services District #1 financial statement and audit report. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**
- (17) Discuss and consider action on moving forward with the Texas Historical Commission Courthouse Renovation Grant project and begin exploring the renovation of the former First National Bank buildings for office areas needed. **Commissioner Henderson made a motion to move forward with the Texas Historical Commission Courthouse Renovation Grant project and begin exploring the renovation of the former First National Bank buildings with the intent of it being a Courthouse Facility. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**
- (18) Receive as information the Request for Qualifications for Architect/Engineer Services to design, renovate and evaluate former bank buildings and take action to select evaluation committee for project. **Commissioner Stokes made a motion to approve the Request for Qualifications for Architect/Engineer Services to design, renovate and evaluate former bank buildings. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0. Commissioner Stokes made a motion to appoint Commissioner Kitchen, Carl Johnson (Facilities Administrator), and Melissa Jeter (Auditor) as the Evaluation Committee for the project. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0**
- (19) Discuss and consider action on transferring the shortfall from the FEMA DR-4223 Grant (2015 flooding event) from General Fund to the Road and Bridge Funds, and necessary budget amendments. ***\*\*Sheila Johnson, Grants Administrator, announced we are finally getting the 2015 disaster cleared off the books, but Precinct 4 still has 1 project pending.*** Commissioner Lovell made a motion to transfer the shortfall from the FEMA DR-4223 Grant (2015 flooding event) of \$206,518.08 from General Fund to the Road and Bridge Funds, and necessary budget amendments. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.
- (20) Ratify Disaster Declaration issued by County Judge dated June 18, 2025 and discuss and consider adopting order for extension of the Disaster Declaration. **Commissioner Stokes made a motion to ratify the Disaster Declaration issued by County Judge dated June 18, 2025. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0. Commissioner Lovell made a motion to issue an Order to extend the Disaster Declaration for Houston County, on the recommendation of Heath Murff, Emergency Management Coordinator. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**
- (21) Discuss and consider future plans for development of groundwater conservation district for Houston County and possible appointment of a committee to oversee the district and discuss engagement of counsel for assistance. ***The Court had some discussion on this matter. Commissioner Kitchen said that we need an outside group to take this project and run with it. Commissioner Stokes believes this is the biggest issue we are going to face and we need a lot of thought put into this Groundwater Conservation District (GCD). We need careful planning and much thought on how it will be governed and funded. Commissioner Stokes believes that***

*we need a GCD, and it needs to be our own and not piggy-backed off of surrounding counties that already have a GCD. It was discussed that without a GCD we have no one designated to notify that anything is taking place and without the GCD we have little water allocated to us because we don't have a planning committee. Basically, we're begging another water district that we are a party. We need to work with our other local entities (City of Crockett, City of Grapeland, City of Lovelady, and Consolidated Water). Commissioner Kitchen suggested that the Court come back next week and that each Commissioner have a name of a person in their precinct that is willing to be appointed to serve on this committee to get a GCD designated. He also suggested that one of the Commissioners serve on this committee. There was no action taken on this item.*

**\*\*The Court took a brief recess from 9:51 a.m. to 9:58 a.m.**

(22)Closed executive session as authorized by Texas government code §551.071: To discuss contemplated litigation and/or a settlement offer with Larry Simmons, attorney representing Houston County.

**\*\*The Commissioners Court entered into Executive Session at 9:58 a.m. and returned to Open Session at 10:32 a.m.**

(23)Discuss and consider approving recommendation from Larry Simmons, attorney representing Houston County. **No Action Taken**

(24)Adjourn. **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion for the Commissioners Court Meeting to Adjourn. The motion carried by everyone rising and leaving the meeting at 10:33 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: July 8, 2025