



## HOUSTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT MINUTES REGULAR MEETING AUGUST 12, 2025

The Commissioners' Court of Houston County met in a regular, called meeting on August 12, 2025 **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:

James Angerstein	Tax Assessor-Collector	Present
Kris Dyches	Insurance Coordinator	Present
Laura Goolsby	District Clerk	Present
Melissa Jeter	County Auditor	Present
Carl Johnson	Facilities Administrator	Present
Sheila Johnson	Grants Administrator	Present
Kristina Massey	County Attorney	Present
Todd McConnell	Information Technology	Present
Mike McCreight	JP 1	Present
Heath Murff	Emergency Management	Zoom
Daphne Session	District Attorney	Present
Darrellyn Smith	Assistant to the County Commissioners	Present
Matthew Van Egmond	Sgt HCSO	Zoom
Brittani Womack	First Assistant Auditor	Zoom

Media: Greg Ritchie (Zoom)

Visitors: Matt Winchester (Oncor), John Angerstein (City of Crockett), Gary Keeling (Lincoln Lumber), Jim Kelly (Lincoln Lumber), Jess Foshee (Lincoln Lumber), Cindy Doran (FUMC Minister)

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

**Judge Lovell called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. Reverend Cindy Doran voiced 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 made a motion to approve the Commissioners Court minutes for July 18, 2025, July 29, 2025 and August 5, 2025. Commissioner Henderson 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 Kitchen. 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. Sheriff's Report **(NOT AVAILABLE)**

**Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to receive as information the Community Service/Environmental Report, District Clerk Report, County Clerk Report, and the Tax Assessor Report. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

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

**Commissioner Kitchen moved to approve the salary of Sherri Taylor as Full-time Jailer replacing Alex Long at bi-weekly pay of \$1,538.46 in Pay Grade 17 effective August 12, 2025. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

**Commissioner Lovell made a motion to approve the salary of Reginald Avery as Part-time Custodian at \$14.95 hourly in Pay Grade 13 effective August 11, 2025. Commissioner Kitchen 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 Henderson made a motion to approve the payment of compensatory and vacation time for County employees and necessary budget amendments: Jaidan Jones-Dispatcher-\$238.55; Dwayne Hughes-RH Pct 3-\$273.36; Neil Westerfield-RH Pct 3-\$115.76; Thomas Phillips-Jailer-\$427.73; Julia Evans-Dispatcher-\$280.00; Carl Smotherman-Jailer-\$291.75; Jdarius Pruitt-Dispatcher-\$174.33; Dustin Brown-Jailer-\$109.05. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

(9) Discuss and consider declaring received information as surplus inventory and approving transfers between departments. **Commissioner Lovell made a motion to declare received**

information as surplus inventory and approving transfers between departments as presented. Commissioner Kitchen seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.

- (10) Discuss and consider action on setting Texas Department of Motor Vehicles Imposition of Optional Fees for Calendar Year 2026. **Commissioner Kitchen moved to continue with the same fees on Texas Department of Motor Vehicle Imposition of Optional Fees for Calendar Year 2026. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (11) Receive as information Houston County Emergency Services District (ESD) #2 Independent Audit as of September 30, 2024. **Commissioner Lovell moved to receive as information Houston County Emergency Services District (ESD) #2 Independent Audit as of September 30, 2024. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (12) Discuss and take action on the Order of Election to be held on November 4, 2025 in Houston County Texas. **Commissioner Kitchen moved to adopt Order of Election to be held on November 4, 2025 in Houston County Texas. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (13) Discuss and consider taking action to create the new position of Legal Intern for the District Attorney's Office to be funded by the SB 22 grant. ***\*\*Daphne Session, DA, was present to present this new position. The person hired will be under her direct supervision and will either be in their last year of law school or waiting for their bar results. Some expense to the county may include setting up a work station, email, LGS user, and phone. It was suggested that forfeiture money could be used for the set-up expenses. Salary will be paid from SB 22 funds.*** Commissioner Kitchen moved to create the new position of Legal Intern in Pay Grade 30 for the District Attorney's Office to be funded by the SB 22 grant. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.
- (14) Discuss and consider approval for the District Attorney's Office and/or Grant Administrator to apply for the County Essential Services Grant through the Office of the Governor pertaining to financial assistance for the investigation or prosecution of capital murder cases. ***\*\*Daphne Session, DA, said that this grant will assist with some capital murder cases that are pending.*** Commissioner Kitchen moved for the District Attorney's Office and/or Grant Administrator to apply for the County Essential Services Grant through the Office of the Governor pertaining to financial assistance for the investigation or prosecution of capital murder cases. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.
- (15) Discuss and consider the installation of new flooring in Justice of the Peace 1 office and necessary budget amendments. **Commissioner Kitchen made the motion to approve the installation of new flooring in Justice of the Peace 1 office at a cost of \$4,850.00 and necessary budget amendments. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (16) Discuss and consider action to authorize the Grant Administrator Sheila Johnson as Alternate Signature Authority on the Department of Family and Protective Services quarterly financial vouchers. ***\*\*Sheila Johnson said this will be helpful for her to be able to sign as necessary in the absence of the Court.*** Commissioner Henderson moved to authorize the Grant Administrator Sheila Johnson as Alternate Signature Authority on the Department of Family and Protective Services quarterly financial vouchers. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.

- (17) Discuss and consider approval to trade 2019 Chevrolet 1500, LP 140-7585, vin# 46731GUYDED7KZ214673 for \$5000.00 to be applied to purchase a 2025 Chevy Silverado, VIN 1GCPABEKXSZ319986. **Commissioner Lovell moved to approve the trade of 2019 Chevrolet 1500, LP 140-7585, vin# 46731GUYDED7KZ214673 for \$5000.00 to be applied to purchase a 2025 Chevy Silverado, VIN 1GCPABEKXSZ319986. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (18) Discuss and consider action on declaring the 2022 Dodge Ram 1500 (4693) patrol truck at the Sheriff's Office as a total loss and accepting the insurance's offer proposed. **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion for the County to release the 2022 Dodge Ram 1500 (4693) patrol truck at the Sheriff's Office as a total loss and accept the insurance's offer of \$32,601.17. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (19) Discuss and consider action on approving the FY 2026 calendars for:
- a. County Holidays for officers and employees
  - b. Pay Day calendar
- No Action Taken**
- (20) Discuss and consider accepting a donation from the Crockett Elks Lodge for \$4500.00 earmarked for the Office of Emergency Management for the purchase of 2 additional handheld portable radios, accessories and necessary budget amendments. **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to accept a donation from the Crockett Elks Lodge for \$4500.00 earmarked for the Office of Emergency Management for the purchase of 2 additional handheld portable radios, accessories and necessary budget amendments. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (21) Discuss and consider approving all insurance deductions to be on a 26 bi-weekly schedule. **Commissioner Stokes moved to approve all insurance deductions to be on a 26 bi-weekly schedule. Commissioner Kitchen seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (22) Receive as information the filed FY2026 Proposed Budget. **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to receive as information the filed FY2026 Proposed Budget. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

***\*\*Items 23-25 were moved to end of Agenda after Items 26-30.***

- (23) Budget Workshop – FY2026 Budget. **Began the Budget Workshop at 10:12 a.m. and ended at 11:06 a.m. During the workshop several things were discussed. Judge Lovell mentioned that a \$2,000.00 COLA raise to all full time employees and \$1,000.00 to all part time employees is on the proposed budget. There was discussion about the duties on constables and possible solutions to some issues. Commissioner Kitchen asked the Auditor to figure how much the county would save if cell phone allowances were removed from employee pay and bring the savings back to the next Budget Workshop.**
- (24) Discuss and consider setting proposed tax rate and dates for hearing. **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to approve setting the proposed tax rate at 42.300 and to set the hearing date on August 26, 2025 at 9:00 a.m. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

(25)Discuss and consider action on proposing elected officials' salaries for FY 2026, per LGC 152.013.  
**No Action Taken**

**\*\*Commissioners Court Entered into Closed Executive Session at 9:26 a.m.**

(26)**Closed Executive Session** as authorized by Texas Government Code §551.071: Discuss and consider consulting with attorney for contemplated litigation pertaining to the easement of property located on Hurricane Bayou.

(27)**Closed Executive Session** as authorized by Texas Government Code §551.071: Consult with attorney regarding Lincoln Lumber recapture of incentives and tax abatements.

(28)Reconvene **Commissioners Court reconvened at 10:12 a.m.**

(29)Discuss and consider taking action regarding the easement of property located on Hurricane Bayou. **No Action Taken**

(30)Discuss and consider taking action regarding Lincoln Lumber Tax Abatement. **No Action Taken**

(31)Adjourn. **Judge Lovell made a motion for the Commissioners Court Meeting to Adjourn. The motion carried by everyone rising and leaving the meeting at 11:09 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 26, 2025