



## HOUSTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT

### MINUTES

### REGULAR MEETING

### SEPTEMBER 23, 2025

The Commissioners' Court of Houston County met in a regular, called meeting on September 23, 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:

Jennifer Aulds	CCL Court Reporter	Present
Zak Bengé	Sheriff	Present
Sarah Bergman	First Assistant Auditor	Present
Sarah Clark	CCL Judge	Present
Missy D'Angelo	Assistant Auditor	Zoom
Kris Dyches	Insurance Coordinator	Zoom
Laura Goolsby	District Clerk	Zoom
Melissa Jeter	County Auditor	Present
Carl Johnson	Facilities Administrator	Zoom
Sheila Johnson	Grants Administrator	Zoom
Ronnie Jordan	JP 2	Zoom
Tresea Land	JP 1 Coordinator	Zoom
Maria Lopez	CCL Coordinator	Present
Cynthia Lum	Elections Administrator	Present
Ryan Martin	Chief Deputy Sheriff	Present
Kristina Massey	County Attorney	Zoom
Todd McConnell	IT	Present
Mike McCreight	JP 1	Zoom
Heath Murff	Emergency Management	Present
Jan Pigford	Assistant to County Judge	Present
Darrellyn Smith	Assistant to the County Commissioners	Present
Sabrina Smith	Elections	Present
Matthew Van Egmond	Sgt HCSO	Zoom
Brittani Womack	First Assistant Auditor	Present

Media: Greg Ritchie (Zoom)

Visitors: Claire Stewart (4-H), Brayden Barron (4-H), Jo Smith (Extension Agent), Jennifer Allen (4-H), Cleavie Allen (4-H), Tami Barugh (Democratic Chair), Tony Cervantes (Vista – Item 24), David Jarvis (Vista – Item 24), Kallie Stephens (4-H), Landry Beavers (4-H), Rebecca Bockart (4-H), Cindy Doran (FUMC), Patrick Wener (Knowink, Item 24 – Zoom), Madison McFarland (Knowink, Item 24 – Zoom), Jacob Jones (Knowink, Item 24 – Zoom)

- (1) Welcome, Invocation and Pledges:

**Judge Lovell called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m., Cindy Doran, FUMC Minister, 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 September 9, 2025 and September 18, 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 Kitchen 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 Lovell made a motion to receive as information the County Treasurers Report and the Compensatory Report. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

**In other County Department Announcements, Judge Sarah Clark, CCL Judge, announced her retirement at the end of her term – December 31, 2026. Judge Lovell thanked her for the job that has performed in this position since 1/1/1999.**

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

**Commissioner Kitchen moved to approve the promotion of Maria Horn from Part-time JP 2 Clerk to Full-time JP 2 Clerk (new FT position in FY26) at bi-weekly pay of \$1,327.20 in Pay Grade 16 effective October 1, 2025. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

**Commissioner Lovell moved to approve new hire Sabrina Smith replacing Kendal Adair as Part-time Office Clerk in Elections Administration at \$13.45 hourly in Pay Grade 13 effective September 15, 2025. Commissioner Kitchen seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

Commissioner Henderson moved to approve the new hire Jessica Cornelius as Deputy Clerk in JP 2 (new FT position in FY26) at \$1,245.50 bi-weekly in Pay Grade 16 effective October 13, 2025. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.

Commissioner Lovell moved to approve the promotion of Sarah Bergman to First Assistant auditor replacing Brittani Womack at \$1,681.66 in Pay Grade 18 effective September 23, 2025 and the new hire Shelby Best as Assistant Auditor-A/P replacing Sarah Bergman at bi-weekly salary of \$1,579.13 in Pay Grade 18 effective September 23, 2025. 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 Henderson made a motion to approve the payment of compensatory and vacation time for County employees and necessary budget amendments as provided in the packet. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0. (list provided in packet that can be viewed in County Clerk's Office)**
- (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 as provided in the packet. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (10) Discuss and consider proclaiming October 5-11, 2025 as National 4-H week. ***Jo Smith took a minute to brag on the 4-H program and to thank the Commissioners Court for their support of the program. The members/students that were present each gave a short presentation: Claire Stewart, Brayden Barron, Cleavie Allen, Kallie Stephens, Landry Beavers, and Rebecca Bockart.*** Commissioner Henderson made a motion to proclaim October 5-11, 2025 as National 4-H week. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.
- (11) Discuss and consider authorizing the County Judge to accept a grant awarded to Houston County from the Office of the Governor's Public Safety Office in the amount of \$18,150 to purchase Rifle Resistant Body Armor for Houston County Peace Officers as a no match grant. **Commissioner Lovell moved to authorize the County Judge to accept a grant awarded to Houston County from the Office of the Governor's Public Safety Office in the amount of \$18,150 to purchase Rifle Resistant Body Armor for Houston County Peace Officers as a no match grant. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (12) Discuss and consider authorizing the County Judge to accept a grant awarded to Houston County from the Office of the Attorney General for the Statewide Automated Victim Notification Service (SAVNS) grant in the amount of \$5,452.24 as a no match grant. **Commissioner Henderson moved to authorize the County Judge to accept a grant awarded to Houston County from the Office of the Attorney General for the Statewide Automated Victim Notification Service (SAVNS) grant in the amount of \$5,452.24 as a no match grant. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

- (13) Discuss and consider action on continuing the Houston County Spay and Neuter Program for FY 2026. **Commissioner Kitchen moved to continue the Houston County Spay and Neuter Program for FY 2026 and keep the same program amount of \$5000. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (14) Discuss and consider accepting a donation in the amount of \$2,400 from Consolidated Water Supply Corporation for improvement to CR 2125 Pipeline Rd Crossing the Woodyard. **Commissioner Kitchen moved to accept a donation in the amount of \$2,400 from Consolidated Water Supply Corporation for improvement to CR 2125 Pipeline Rd Crossing the Woodyard. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (15) Discuss and consider ratifying agreement with Vyve for additional Static IP service at the Houston County Justice Center. **Commissioner Kitchen moved to ratify agreement with Vyve for additional Static IP service at the Houston County Justice Center. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (16) Discuss and consider accepting the 2025 Help America Vote Act Election Security grant from the Secretary of State Federal Share \$42,500 and required matching funds of \$8,500. **Commissioner Kitchen moved to accept the 2025 Help America Vote Act Election Security grant from the Secretary of State Federal Share \$42,500 and required matching funds of \$8,500 and the matching funds will be taken from Contract Surplus Fund. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (17) Receive as information the Joint Special Election contract with Houston County, the City of Lovelady, and Groveton ISD. **Commissioner Kitchen moved to receive as information the Joint Special Election contract with Houston County, the City of Lovelady, and Groveton ISD. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (18) Receive as information the appointment of the Central Counting Station for the November 4, 2025 Special Election. **Commissioner Kitchen moved to receive as information the appointment of the Central counting Station for the November 4, 2025 Special Election. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (19) Receive as information the appointment of the presiding judge and alternate judge for the Early Voting Ballot Board by the County Elections Board for the November 4, 2025 Special Election. **Commissioner Kitchen moved to receive as information the appointment of the presiding judge and alternate judge for the Early Voting Ballot Board by the County Elections Board for the November 4, 2025 Special Election. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (20) Discuss and consider approving the Notice of Special Election on November 4, 2025. **Commissioner Lovell made a motion to approve the Notice of Special Election on November 4, 2025. Commissioner Kitchen seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (21) Discuss and consider approving the list of designated deputy early voting clerks by the Early Voting Clerk/EA for November 4, 2025 Special Election. **Commissioner Henderson moved to approve the list of designated deputy early voting clerks by the Early Voting Clerk/EA for November 4, 2025 Special Election. Commissioner Kitchen seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

(22) Discuss and consider action on setting the maximum number of workers to 4 in locations 1-7 and 19 and 3 workers in all other consolidated polling locations for the November 4, 2025 Joint Special Election. **Commissioner Lovell moved to set the maximum number of workers to 4 in locations 1-7 and 19 and 3 workers in all other consolidated polling locations for the November 4, 2025 Joint Special Election. Commissioner Kitchen seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

(23) Receive the party recommended names that appear on the Order of appointment for Election Judges and Alternate Judges and consider action on retroact appointments for one-year term beginning September 1, 2025 through August 31, 2026. **Commissioner Lovell moved to receive the party recommended names that appear on the Order of appointment for Election Judges and Alternate Judges and approve retroact appointments for one-year term beginning September 1, 2025 through August 31, 2026. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

(24) Hear virtual presentation from Knowink LLC, on the new election Poll Print for ballot on demand and Vista Solution on Voter Registration and other election reports and records. ***Patrick Werner, Jacob Jones, and Madison McFarland were on Zoom representing Knowink LLC, and they made a presentation on the all-in-one cabinet Poll Print Ballot and said the cost is \$7,260. Tony Cervantes and David Jarvis were in person with Vista Solution to present their product with a one-time cost of \$9,850 and annual fee of \$2,750. No Action Taken.***

(25) Discuss and consider action on renewing lease agreements for copier rental for:

- a. Tax Assessor-Collector
- b. Sheriff's Department – Patrol Room
- c. County Attorney
- d. County Court at Law
- e. Emergency Management
- f. Justice of the Peace Precinct 2
- g. Home Delivered Meals Program
- h. District Court
- i. County Clerk

**Commissioner Kitchen moved to approve renewal of lease agreements for copier rental for Tax Assessor-Collector, Sheriff's Department – Patrol Room, County Attorney, County Court at Law, Emergency Management, Justice of the Peace Precinct 2, Home Delivered Meals Program, District Court, and County Clerk. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

(26) Discuss and consider purchase of refrigerator for the Senior Center and necessary budget amendments. **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to purchase a refrigerator from Katom in the amount of \$7,214.12 for the Senior Center and approve budget amendment for the purchase from Capital Improvements. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

(27) Discuss and consider action on a contract with Lexis Nexis for legal access and research through 9/30/28. **Commissioner Kitchen moved to approve contract with Lexis Nexis for legal access research through 9/30/28. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

- (28) Discuss and consider accepting donation of \$2250.00 from Mr. and Mrs. Mark Cerny for road material for CR 2290 in Precinct 2. **Commissioner Kitchen moved to accept a donation of \$2250.00 from Mr. and Mrs. Mark Cerny for road material for CR 2290 in Precinct 2. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (29) Discuss and consider accepting donation of \$1750.00 from Mr. and Mrs. John Funk for road material for CR 2290 in Precinct 2. **Commissioner Kitchen moved to accept a donation of \$1750.00 from Mr. and Mrs. John Funk for road material for CR 2290 in Precinct 2. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (30) Recognizing and proclaiming Tuesday, October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2024 as National Night Out in Houston County. **Commissioner Kitchen moved to proclaim Tuesday, October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2024 as National Night Out in Houston County. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (31) Recognizing and proclaiming the week of October 5<sup>th</sup> thru October 11<sup>th</sup> as Fire Prevention Week in Houston County. **Commissioner Stokes moved to proclaim the week of October 5<sup>th</sup> thru October 11<sup>th</sup> as Fire Prevention Week in Houston County. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (32) Discuss and consider action on declaring as surplus a 2003 Ford, 2004 Ford and 2012 Chevy Pickups in Precinct 3 and authorize trade in and payment towards the purchase of a 2025 Chevy Pickup from Cutshaw Chevrolet. **Commissioner Stokes moved to declare as surplus a 2003 Ford, 2004 Ford and 2012 Chevy Pickups in Precinct 3 and authorize trade in and payment towards the purchase of a 2025 Chevy Pickup from Cutshaw Chevrolet. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (33) Receive as information the appointment of the First Assistant for the County Auditor. **Commissioner Kitchen moved receive as information the appointment of Sarah Bergman as First Assistant County Auditor. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (34) Discuss and consider approving contract for annual maintenance with Leads Online investigation system effective October 15, 2025 through October 14, 2026 in the amount of \$3,106.00. **Commissioner Kitchen moved to approve contract for annual maintenance with Leads Online investigation system effective October 15, 2025 through October 14, 2026 in the amount of \$3,106.00. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (35) Discuss and consider approving contract for annual maintenance with Vistacom for dispatch recorder effective November 1, 2025 through October 31, 2026 in the amount of \$9,185.00. **Commissioner Henderson moved to approve contract for annual maintenance with Vistacom for dispatch recorder effective November 1, 2025 through October 31, 2026 in the amount of \$9,185.00. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (36) Discuss and consider action on a budget amendment request and receive as information the salary reduction affidavits for FY 2026.
- a. County Judge to Administrative Assistant
  - b. District Judges to District Court Coordinator.
- Commissioner Kitchen made the motion to approve a budget amendment request and receive as information the salary reduction affidavits for FY 2026 from Jim Lovell the amount of \$3,200.00 effective October 1, 2025 and Judge Mark Calhoon \$5,000.00 and Judge Pam Foster**

**Fletcher \$2399.28 effective October 1, 2025. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

**(37)Adjourn. Judge Lovell made a motion for the Commissioners Court Meeting to Adjourn. The motion carried by everyone rising and leaving the meeting at 10:11 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: October 14, 2025