



**HOUSTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT
MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
MARCH 8, 2022**

The Commissioners' Court of Houston County met in a regular, called meeting on March 8, 2022 **in person and via zoom due to Covid**, with the following members present, to wit:

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

Also present:

Sharon Luker	Administrative Assistant to the Commissioners
Jan Pigford	Administrative Assistant to County Judge
Todd McConnell	IT
Terri Meadows	County Clerk
Janis Omelina	County Treasurer
Melissa Jeter	County Auditor
Randy Hargrove	Sheriff
Brittani Womack (Zoom)	First Assistant County Auditor
Laronica Wooten-Smith (Zoom)	Tax Assessor Collector
Heath Murff (Zoom)	Emergency Management Director
Andy Biscamp	Bailiff
Milton Ladnier	VA Service Officer
Cindy Lum	Elections Administrator
Daphne Session	County Attorney
Roger Dickey (Zoom)	Chief Deputy Sheriff
Donna Kaspar (Zoom)	District Attorney

Media:

Will Johnson (Zoom)	The Messenger
Jan White (Zoom)	Houston County Courier

Visitors:

Jack Clements (Pennington Water), Todd English (Pennington Water), Gene Caldwell (The Loft), Courtney Stevenson (The Loft), Jason Frizzell

- (1) Welcome, Invocation and Pledges:
Judge Lovell called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. Commissioner Kitchen 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) **Commissioner Lovell moved to approve the Commissioners Court minutes from February 22, 2022. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (4) **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to approve the Budget Amendments as presented. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**
- (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. Environmental Report (not available)
 - b. Community Service Report (not available)
 - c. County Clerk's Fine Report (Feb. 2022)**Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to receive as information the County Clerk's Fine Report. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

County Auditor, Melissa Jeter, made an announcement that she has had telephone calls from road material haulers requesting to re-bid because of drastically increased fuel prices.
- (7) Consider approving salaries for new and/or transfer employees:
 - a) **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion and Commissioner Stokes seconded to approve the hiring of Irene Brantner as Full-Time Deputy Clerk 2 in the County Clerk's Office (replacing Brittany Wars) at a bi-weekly salary of \$1,203.22 in pay grade 16 effective 3/21/22 and Brittany Wars as Full-Time Deputy Clerk 2 in the County Clerk's Office (replacing Debbie Williamson) at a bi-weekly salary of \$1,226.58 in pay grade 16 effective 3/21/22. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (8) Discuss and consider approving payment of compensatory, and vacation time for County employees and necessary budget amendments. **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to approve compensatory payout through March 11, 2022 in the amount of \$4,005.58. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

- (9) Commissioner Henderson made a motion to approve Hotel Occupancy Tax Fund and Interlocal Agreement for (a) The Loft of Crockett for Moe Bandy/Jack Nelson Band Concert to be held on June 10, 2022 at the Crockett Civic Center in the amount of \$1,000.00 AND (b) The Loft of Crockett for CTS Band-Queen of Tejano & Latin Tribute to be held on May 7, 2022 at the Crockett Civic Center in the amount of \$1,000.00. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.

Commissioner Henderson made a motion to approve Hotel Occupancy Tax Fund and Interlocal Agreement for (c) Pineywoods Fine Arts Association for the Celtic Angels Concert to be held on April 1, 2022 at the Crockett Civic Center in the amount of \$1,000.00 AND (d) Pineywoods Fine Arts Association for the Mark Chesnutt Concert to be held on April 23, 2022 at the Crockett Civic Center in the amount of \$1,000.00. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.

- (10) Commissioner Lovell made a motion to approve TAC CIRA services agreement for Website Hosting and Website Content Management. Commissioner Kitchen seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.

- (11) Discuss and consider taking action to approve Pennington Water supply request from County ARPA funds to:
- a. Replace two waterlines on CR 4200, 4190, 4180 & 4160 for \$50,000
 - b. Fire Hydrants \$3300
 - c. Two Pressure tanks FM 2781
 - d. New well \$275,000

After the Commissioners heard from Jack Clements with Pennington Water about the improvements Judge Lovell told him that we need to put this on hold until we see if we can use the money for this work. He also said that the county is still trying to figure out how we can use the ARPA funds. The item was PASSED at this time.

- (12) Commissioner Stokes made a motion to declare scrap metal from Precinct 3 as salvage and receive proceeds of sale and necessary budget amendments. Commissioner Kitchen seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.

- (13) Commissioner Kitchen made a motion for Sheriff Randy Hargrove to enter into contract negotiations with Vyve for telephone system upgrade at the Justice Center in order for the service to comply with Kari's Law. Commissioner Lovell seconded. County Auditor Melissa Jeter said that when the jail was built in 2010 the county spent \$29,000 on the system, but because of Kari's Law we have to do away with dialing "9" to get out to make a call. Also, Windstream is no longer supporting the current system at the Justice Center. Motion carried 5 to 0.

- (14) Discuss and consider removal of exempt plates and decal from District Attorney's Office truck due to difficulty in serving subpoenas. **Item died for lack of a motion**

- (15) Commissioner Kitchen moved to approve ordering 2022 Constitutional Amendment Special Election to be held on May 7, 2022. Commissioner Stokes seconded the motion. Motion carried 5 to 0.

- (16) Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to approve joint election agreement between Houston County and Kennard ISD for 2022 Constitutional Amendment Special Election & Kennard ISD School Board election to be held on May 7, 2022. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.
- (17) Jan Pigford made a recommendation from the Human Resource Committee to appoint Dwayne Hughes to a vacancy on the Committee. Commissioner Kitchen made this motion. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.
- (18) Commissioner Kitchen made a motion and Commissioner Henderson seconded to approve renewal of contact extension for the Houston County Aging Senior Center Grant. Motion carried 5 to 0.
- (19) Commissioner Lovell moved to approve addendum agreement with NCIC inmate phone services to provide scanned emails and updated law/legal library to the inmates at no charge to them with extension to the contract for three years. Commissioner Kitchen seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.
- (20) Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to approve Mutual Aid Agreement between Houston County Sheriff's Office and Nacogdoches Police Department. This renews every 4 years. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.
- (21) Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to approve the Cadet Program within the Sheriff's Office as presented by Sheriff Hargrove. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.

The other items up for approval were passed at this time to the HR Committee for job description review and placement on the pay scale. (a. Job description for Cadet position and placement on Pay Scale – b. Approval to move over two patrol deputy positions to Cadet positions – c. Request budget amendment for Academy tuition payment).

- (22) Discuss and consider approving credit card bill for hotel expense incurred by Jailer Dustin Lawson after being exposed to COVID in the Houston County Jail. **County Attorney, Daphne Session** said, "that he was NOT on leave so he was not on policy. He was around others and should not have been. Policy is to cover employee that is on leave." The Court was unable to approve this request.
- (23) Commissioner Kitchen made the motion to approve purchase and implementation of Employee ID card/badge system and necessary budget amendments. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.
- (24) Commissioner Lovell made a motion to place Veterans Services Officer to establish a General Assistance Program for eligible Veterans from juror donations through GC §61.003 and other donations as received. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.
- (25) Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to approve posting a Request for Proposals to conduct a salary study on Houston County Employees. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.

(26)At 9:52 a.m. Judge Lovell made the motion for Commissioners Court to adjourn. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.

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