



**HOUSTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT**  
**MINUTES**  
**REGULAR MEETING**  
**AUGUST 22, 2023**

The Commissioners' Court of Houston County met in a regular, called meeting on August 22, 2023 in person and via zoom due to Covid, 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>

County Officials/Employees in person:

Terri Meadows	County Clerk
Todd McConnell	IT
Sharon Luker	Administrative Assistant to the Commissioners
Melissa Jeter	County Auditor
Jan Pigford	Administrative Assistant to the County Judge
Kris Dyches	Insurance Coordinator
Janis Omelina	County Treasurer
Daphne Session	County Attorney
Sheila Johnson	Grants Administrator
Randy Hargrove	Sheriff
Andy Biscamp	Bailiff
Laura Goolsby	District Clerk

County Officials/Employees by Zoom:

Laronica Wooten-Smith	Tax Assessor-Collector
Brittani Womack	First Assistant Auditor
Cynthia Lum	Elections Administrator
Carl Johnson	Facilities Administrator
Matt VanEgmond	Sheriff's Office
Meagan Frizzell	9-1-1 Addressing

Media:

Zoom - Greg Ritchie (Messenger)

Visitors:

Ronnie Omelina (Roads/Dead Trees), Tami Bruner (Houston Child Welfare Board), Tim Allen (Houston County Child Welfare Board), John Angerstein (City Administrator), Jason Frizzell (Crockett Fire Chief), Brandon Rose (Purple Wave Auction), James Guest (Linebarger Law Firm)

- (1) Welcome, Invocation and Pledges:  
**Judge Lovell called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m., Commissioner Stokes led 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.) **Ronnie Omelina addressed the court about his concern for the dead trees on the county roads**
- (3) Consider approval of prior Commissioners Court minutes.  
**Commissioner Lovell moved to approve the Commissioners Court Minutes from August 8, 2023 and August 11, 2023. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (4) Consider approving budget amendments. **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to approve the Budget Amendments as presented. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 5 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. County Treasurer Report
  - b. Compensatory Report**Commissioner Kitchen moved to receive the County Treasurer Report and Compensatory Report as information. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (7) Consider approving salaries for new and/or transfer employees.
  - a. Senior Citizens Center Part-Time Driver
  - b. Full-Time Legal Assistant
    - a. **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to approve salary of Christy Atkins, Senior Citizens Center Part-Time Delivery Driver at hourly wage of \$12.13 in Pay Grade 12, effective 8/7/2023. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
    - b. **Commissioner Lovell made a motion to approve salary of Judith Chavez, Full-Time Legal Assistant in the County Attorney's Office at bi-weekly salary of \$1,180.30 in Pay Grade 15, effective 8/14/2023. 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. **NONE**
- (9) Discuss and consider declaring received information as surplus inventory and approving transfers between departments. **Commissioner Henderson made a motion to approve the**

**surplus/salvage inventory and transfers as presented. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

- (10) Discuss and consider extending Burn Ban Order issued on July 25, 2023 thru September 26, 2023. **Commissioner Lovell moved to extend the Burn Ban Order issued on July 25, 2023 thru September 26, 2023. Commissioner Kitchen seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (11) Discuss and consider accepting a donation from Susan Young to the Houston County Child Welfare Board as a memorial for Wanda Nichols, long-time board member. **Judge Lovell made a motion to accept a donation from Susan Young to the Houston County Child Welfare Board as a memorial for Wanda Nichols, long-time board member. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (12) Discuss and consider to approve the adjustment of the Poll Worker Salary Rate due to SB1052 amending 32.091(b) changing the maximum number of payable election day hours from 15 to 16 hours of pay for a judge or a clerk. **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to approve the adjustment of the Poll Worker Salary Rate due to SB1052 amending 32.091(b) changing the maximum number of payable election day hours from 15 to 16 hours of pay for a judge or a clerk. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (13) Discuss and consider approving the Order of Election for the November 7, 2023 Special Election. **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion and Commissioner Lovell seconded to approve the Order of Election for the November 7, 2023 Special Election. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (14) Discuss and consider the appointment of the Early Voting Ballot Board Judges/Alternate Judges for the November 7, 2023 Election and approving them for a one-year term beginning September 1, 2023 through August 31, 2024. **Commissioner Lovell made a motion to approve the appointment of the Early Voting Ballot Board Judges/Alternate Judges for the November 7, 2023 Election and approving them for a one-year term beginning September 1, 2023 through August 31, 2024. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (15) Discuss and consider setting the maximum number of polling location workers for the November 7, 2023 Election. **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to set the maximum number of polling location workers for the November 7, 2023 Election, as presented by the Elections Administrator, Cynthia Lum. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (16) Receive information, the list of designated Deputy Early Voting Clerks for the November 7, 2023 Election. **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to receive as information, the list of designated Deputy Early Voting Clerks for the November 7, 2023 Election. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (17) Discuss and consider approving recommendations from Human Resource Committee:
- a. Law Enforcement Comp time change. **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to approve the recommendation from Human Resource Committee concerning the Law Enforcement Comp time change to a minimum of 80 hours, with hours 81-86 going to a straight time bank beginning October 1, 2023. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

- b. Travel Policy changes. **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to approve the recommendation from Human Resource Committee on Travel Policy changes as presented in the packet. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- c. 2024 Holiday Schedule. **Commissioner Lovell moved to approve the recommendation from the Human Resource Committee of the 2024 Holiday Schedule. Commissioner Kitchen seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- d. Job description for Elections – Equipment Support Tech **PASS TO NEXT COURT**

(18) Ratify the agreement of Amendment No. 12 for FY 2024 between the Health and Human Services Commission and Houston County for Home Delivered Meals Contract No. 001020008. **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to ratify the agreement of Amendment No. 12 for FY 2024 between the Health and Human Services Commission and Houston County for Home Delivered Meals Contract No. 001020008. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

(19) Consider authorizing Houston County to continue participation in the Texas County and District Retirement System (TCDRS) and setting the contribution rate for 2024. **Commissioner Lovell made a motion and Commissioner Kitchen seconded. Authorize Houston County to continue participation in the Texas County and District Retirement System (TCDRS) and setting the contribution rate for 2024 at the same. County Attorney, Daphne Session, questioned the Court about increasing the contribution rate because she thought they mentioned last budget year they would look at increasing. Commissioner Lovell and Commissioner Kitchen rescinded the motion and passed on the item until a future date.**

(20) Discuss and consider approving purchase of a Mobile Counter-Storage Cabinet for County Clerk's Office in the amount of \$381.78 from Home Depot and necessary budget amendments. **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to approve purchase of a Mobile Counter-Storage Cabinet for County Clerk's Office in the amount of \$381.78 from Home Depot. No budget amendment necessary because it will come from the County Clerk's Office Supply and DOE budget. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

(21) Discuss and consider approving renovations for the relocation of the District Clerk's Offices to the 1<sup>st</sup> floor of the Courthouse and approving the necessary budget amendments.

- a. Piney Woods Painting for \$7,800.00
- b. Knox's Carpet Installation for \$3,960.00
- c. Office Depot for \$3,371.21

**Commissioner Stokes made a motion to approve the renovations for the relocation of the District Clerk's Offices to the 1<sup>st</sup> floor of the Courthouse and to approve a budget amendment to pay for Piney Woods Painting for \$7,800.00, Knox's Carpet Installation for \$3,960.00, and Office Depot for \$3,371.21 from Repairs for Courthouse. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

(22) Discuss and consider receiving as information the addition of Private Road 8155 in Precinct 4 to the Houston County Map. **Commissioner Henderson made a motion to receive as information the addition of Private Road 8155 in Precinct 4 to the Houston County Map. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

(23) Discuss and consider action on renewing contract with Lexis Nexis for legal research services for the County and District Attorney Offices for FY 2024. **Commissioner Lovell made a motion to**

**renew contract with Lexis Nexis for legal research services for the County and District Attorney offices for FY 2024. Commissioner Kitchen seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

(24) Discuss and consider approving repairs to de-escalation room in Houston County Jail by Royalty Padding Repair for \$4,800.00 and necessary budget amendments. **Commissioner Henderson made a motion to approve repairs to de-escalation room in Houston County Jail by Royalty Padding Repair for \$4,800.00 (no budget amendment necessary). Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

**\*At 9:58 a.m. Judge Lovell announced that the Court would take a brief recess.**

**\*Court reconvened at 10:10 a.m.**

(25) Hear a presentation from Purple Wave Auction. **Brandon Rose from Purple Wave Auction gave the presentation.**

**\*At 10:27 a.m. Judge Lovell announced that we would skip items 26 – 27 and come back to them later.**

**\*Returned to Items 26-27 at 10:44 a.m.**

(26) Receive as information Proposed Budget for FY 2024. **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to receive the Proposed Budget for FY 2024 as Information. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

(27) Budget Workshop – FY 2024 Budget.

(28) Discuss and consider setting proposed tax rate and dates for hearing. **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to set Proposed Tax Rate at \$0.448000 per \$100 and set the Public Hearing on September 12, 2023 at 9:00 a.m. Commissioner Stokes seconded the Motion. Motion carried unanimously 5 to 0:**

**Judge Lovell voted FOR  
Commissioner Lovell voted FOR  
Commissioner Kitchen voted FOR  
Commissioner Stokes voted FOR  
Commissioner Henderson voted FOR**

(29) Public Hearing on the Proposed Reauthorization of Tax Abatement Guidelines and Criteria. **Judge Lovell opened the Public Hearing at 10:28 a.m. after there was no response Judge Lovell closed the Public Hearing at 10:29 a.m.**

(30) Discuss and consider to approve Adoption of Joint Tax Abatement Guidelines and Criteria with the City of Crockett, Texas. **Commissioner Henderson made a motion to approve Adoption of Joint Tax Abatement Guidelines and Criteria with the City of Crockett, Texas. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

(31) Discuss and consider action on proposing elected officials' salaries for FY2024. **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to approve proposed elected officials' salaries for FY2024. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

(32) **Closed Executive session** as authorized by Texas 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. **Closed Executive Session began at 11:14 a.m.**

(33) Reconvene. **The Court reconvened in Open Session at 11:46 a.m.**

(34) Discuss and consider action on approving a contract for the purchase of property located at 415 E. Goliad, Crockett, Texas. **Commissioner Lovell made a motion to approve a contract for the purchase of property located at 415 E. Goliad, Crockett, Texas. Commissioner Kitchen seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

(35) Adjourn. **Judge Lovell made a motion for the Commissioners Court Meeting to Adjourn. The motion carried by everyone rising and leaving the meeting at 11:47 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