



**HOUSTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT
MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
AUGUST 23, 2022**

The Commissioners' Court of Houston County met in a regular, called meeting on August 23, 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 (came in at 9:09)
Gene Stokes	Commissioner, Precinct #3	PRESENT
Jimmy Henderson	Commissioner, Precinct #4	PRESENT

County Officials/Employees in person:

Todd McConnell	Information Technology
Jan Pigford	Administrative Assistant to County Judge
Terri Meadows	County Clerk
Sheila Johnson	Grants Administrator
Sharon Luker	Administrative Assistant to the Commissioners
Melissa Jeter	County Auditor
Joel Martin	Bailiff
Cynthia Lum	Elections Administrator
Randy Hargrove	Sheriff
Tom Streetman	Chief Juvenile Probation Officer
Red Smith	Constable Precinct 2
Roger Dickey	Chief Deputy Sheriff
Delman Orme	Sheriff Deputy
Ronnie Jordan	JP Precinct 2
Daphne Session	County Attorney

County Officials/Employees by Zoom:

Laronica Wooten-Smith	Tax-Assessor Collector
Carolyn Rains	District Clerk
Carl Johnson	Facilities Administrator
Brittani Womack	First Assistant Auditor
Laura Goolsby	Office Manager in DA Office
Heath Murff	Emergency Management Director
Jo Smith	Extension Office

Media:

Greg Ritchie
Jan White (Zoom)

Messenger
Courier

Visitors:

John Ulrich (Republican Precinct 4), Patti Ulrich (citizen), Hiep Vu (citizen), Meme Thomas (Perdue Brandon), Taylor Lewis (Perdue Brandon), Barbara LaRue (citizen),

- (1) Welcome, Invocation and Pledges:

Judge Lovell called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m. and he led the opening prayer followed by 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 moved to approve the Commissioners Court Minutes from August 9, 2022. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.

- (4) Consider approving budget amendments. **Commissioner Lovell made a motion to approve the Budget Amendments as presented. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**

- (5) Consider payment of bills and expenses:

- a. Accounts payable
- b. Fund transfers
- c. Ratify Salary expenses

Commissioner Stokes 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 Lovell. The Motion carried 4 to 0.

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

- a. County Treasurer's Report
- b. Compensatory Report

Commissioner Lovell moved to receive the County Treasurer's Report and the Compensatory Report as information. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.

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

- a. **Commissioner Lovell moved to approve the promotion of Arnita Cavender from Full-Time Victim Coordinator/Grand Jury Clerk to Full Time Office Manager, \$1410.56 bi-weekly in pay grade 18. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**
- b. **Commissioner Stokes made a motion to approve the hiring of Joshua Provins as Full-Time Deputy Clerk II in the County Clerks Office at bi-weekly salary of \$1203.22 in pay grade 16. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**

- c. **Commissioner Lovell made a motion to approve the transfer of Jennefer Cruz as Full-Time Dispatcher to Part-Time Dispatcher and setting her hourly pay at \$13.91 in pay grade 15. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**

****Commissioner Kitchen joined the Court at 9:09 a.m.**

Commissioner Henderson made a motion to approve the hiring of

- d. **Alexis Blane as Full-Time Dispatcher, bi-weekly salary \$1,059.56, pay grade 15**
- e. **Elizabeth Bridges as Full-Time Dispatcher, bi-weekly salary of \$1,059.56, pay grade 15**
- f. **Alexis Frias as Full-Time Dispatcher, bi-weekly salary \$1,059.56, pay grade 15**
Commissioner Stokes seconded the motion. Motion carried 5 to 0.
- g. **Commissioner Lovell made a motion to approve the hiring of Kristen Moore as Full-Time Jailer, bi-weekly salary of \$1,112.16, pay grade 15. Commissioner Kitchen seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- h. **Commissioner Lovell made a motion to approve the hiring of Brenda Christian as Part-Time Jailer, hourly pay \$13.24, pay grade 15. 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) Ratify Declaration of Disaster and Order prohibiting outdoor burning issued by County Judge on June 22, 2022 and extend until August 23, 2022. **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to LIFT the burn ban. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (10) Discuss and consider accepting donation from Morris Timber Holdings in the amount of \$10,207.12 for improvements to CR 1655 in Precinct 1 and necessary budget amendments. **Commissioner Lovell made a motion to accept the donation from Morris Timber Holdings in the amount of \$10,207.12 for improvements to CR 1655 in Precinct 1 and necessary budget amendments. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (11) Discuss and consider action setting Texas Department of Motor Vehicle Imposition. **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to continue to collect the \$10 Road and Bridge Fee (Option A – No change). Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
- (12) Discuss and consider application request of the Hotel Occupancy Tax Fund and Interlocal agreement with:
 - a. Pineywood Fine Arts Association for Diamond Rio Concert to be held on September 30, 2022
 - b. The Loft of Crockett for Luke Prater Band Concert to be held October 21, 2022.
Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to approve the above 2 requests at \$1000 each with necessary budget amendments. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.
- (13) Discuss and consider action on renewing the CountyChoice Silver Texas Association of Counties Retiree Medical Insurance policy pending funding from 2023 Budget. **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion that we keep the current plan. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

(14) Discuss and consider approval of contract with Election Systems & Software for the purchase of the Express Vote machines approved on 7/12/22 to be paid from ARPA funds.

***At this time there was a public comment from James Ulrich about the Election Systems & Software.*

Commissioner Kitchen moved to approve contract with Election Systems & Software for the purchase of the Express Vote machines approved on 7/12/22 to be paid from ARPA funds. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.

(15) Discuss and consider action on authorizing the following items through the American Rescue Plan (ARPA) Grant Fund and necessary budget amendments.

To be purchased from Collins Tractor Equipment, Inc.:

- a. 2022 New Holland Tractor Model WM 75 \$45,070.57
- b. 2022 Modern Heavy-Duty Root Grappel Model YRK072 \$4,200.00
- c. 2022 Modern 15' Raptor Cutter Model 001-1503 \$19,638.59

Commissioner Lovell made a motion to approve the purchase from ARPR Grant Fund with necessary budget amendments the:

- a. **2022 New Holland Tractor Model WM 75 \$45,070.57**
- b. **2022 Modern Heavy-Duty Root Grappel Model YRK072 \$4,200.00**
- c. **2022 Modern 15' Raptor Cutter Model 001-1503 \$19,638.59**

Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.

(16) Discuss and consider taking action to renew copier leases with Texas Document Solutions for offices of:

- a. County Judge
- b. District Attorney
- c. County Clerk
- d. District Clerk
- e. Texas Agri-Life Extension Office
- f. District Courtroom
- g. Elections Administrator
- h. Historical Commission

Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to approve the renewal of copier leases with Texas Document Solutions for offices of: County Judge, District Attorney, County Clerk, District Clerk, Texas Agri-Life Extension Office, District Courtroom, Elections Administrator, and Historical Commission. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.

(17) Discuss and consider action to submit application for liability insurance at Houston County airport. **Commissioner Henderson made a motion to approve submission of application for liability insurance at Houston County airport with Old Republic Insurance Company. Commissioner Kitchen seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

(18) Consider authorizing Houston County to continue participation in the Texas County and District Retirement System (TCDRS) and setting the contribution rate for 2023. **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion that Houston County continue to participate in the Texas County and District Retirement System (TCDRS) and keeping the contribution rate at 140% for 2023 Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

(19) Budget Workshop – FY 2023 Budget. **The Budget Workshop began at 9:35 a.m. During the Budget Workshop Commissioner Stokes made a motion to make the Commissioners Administrative Assistant job full-time instead of the current part-time with necessary budget amendments to pull excess funds back from commissioners to fund the position. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0. The Budget Workshop ended at 9:59 a.m.**

(20) Discuss and consider action on proposing elected officials’ salaries for FY2023. **Commissioner Kitchen made a motion to adopt the Proposed Officer Salaries & Allowances for Fiscal Year 2023 as presented. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

(21) Discuss and consider setting proposed tax rate and dates for hearing.

Commissioner Henderson made a motion to set proposed tax rate at .47470 for the Fiscal Year ending September 30, 2023. Commissioner Kitchen seconded the motion. Motion carried 5 For 0 Against.

Commissioner Lovell made a motion to set the hearing for the proposed tax rate on September 13, 2022 at 9:00 a.m. Commissioner Kitchen seconded the motion. Motion carried 5 For 0 Against.

(22) 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 and contemplated litigation per Local Government Code §551.071. **The Court entered the closed executive session at 10:05 a.m. They came back into Open Court at 10:39 a.m.**

(23) Adjourn

Judge Lovell made the motion for Commissioners Court to adjourn. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0. Court adjourned at 10:38 a.m.

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