



**HOUSTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT**  
**MINUTES**  
**REGULAR MEETING**  
**SEPTEMBER 12, 2023**

The Commissioners' Court of Houston County met in a regular, called meeting on September 12, 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>ABSENT</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
Randy Hargrove	Sheriff
Laura Goolsby	District Clerk
John Angerstein	Crockett City Administrator
Red Smith	Constable Precinct 2

County Officials/Employees by Zoom:

Laronica Wooten-Smith	Tax Assessor-Collector
Brittani Womack	First Assistant Auditor
Cynthia Lum	Elections Administrator

Media:

Zoom - Greg Ritchie (Messenger), Cheril Vernon (Messenger)

Visitors:

Gerald Reichl (Spay & Neuter Program)

(1) Welcome, Invocation and Pledges:

**Judge Lovell called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m., Commissioner Lovell 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.) **Gerald Reichl thanked the county for continuing to assist with the spay/neuter program for pets in Houston County.**
- (3) Consider approval of prior Commissioners Court minutes.  
**Commissioner Lovell moved to approve the Commissioners Court Minutes from August 22, 2023 and August 29, 2023. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 4 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 Henderson. The Motion carried 4 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
- Commissioner Henderson moved to receive the Community Service/Environmental Report, District Clerk Report, County Clerk Report, and Tax Assessor Report as information. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**
- (7) Consider approving salaries for new and/or transfer employees.
- a. District Attorney Investigator Full-Time
- a. **Commissioner Lovell made a motion to approve salary of Tracy Whitehead, District Attorney Investigator Full-Time at bi-weekly salary of \$1,730.00 in Pay Grade 21, effective 9/5/2023. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**
- (8) Discuss and consider approving payment of compensatory, and vacation time for County Employees and necessary budget amendments. **Commissioner Stokes made a motion to approve payment of compensatory and vacation time for Kasey Ballard at \$1922.70 and Detric Murray at \$2468.00 and necessary budget amendments. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**
- (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 4 to 0.**
- (10) Receive as information the salary orders and Budget for FY 2024 for:

- a. 3<sup>rd</sup> Judicial District Court Reporters
- b. 349<sup>th</sup> District Court Reporters
- c. County Court at Law Court Reporters
- d. County Auditor

**Commissioner Henderson made a motion to receive as information the salary orders and Budget for FY 2024 for 3<sup>rd</sup> Judicial District Court Reporter at \$111,182.00 with Houston County's part being \$15,131.87; 349<sup>th</sup> District Court Reporter at \$98,527.56 with Houston County's part being \$33,516.67; County Court at Law Reporter at \$72,162.58 plus longevity pay; County Auditor at \$86,278.72. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**

(11) Discuss and consider action on the waiver with Texas Department of Health and Human Services Commission for Home Delivered Meals Program. **Commissioner Lovell made a motion to approve waiver with Texas Department of Health and Human Services Commission for Home Delivered Meals Program. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**

(12) Discuss and consider proclaiming October 1-7, 2023 as National 4-H Week. **PASS**

(13) Discuss and consider action on contract with Intrensic for Constable Precinct 2 Body Camera & Service Contract for 10/2023-9/2027. **Commissioner Lovell made a motion to approve contract with Intrensic for Constable Precinct 2 Body Camera & Service Contract for 10/2023-9/2027 at a cost of \$3,690.00. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**

(14) Discuss and consider recommendations from Human Resource Committee to become effective 10-1-2023:

**Elections Administration Office**

- a. Assistant Elections Administrator move from #13 to #16 on pay scale. **Commissioner stokes made a motion to approve the Assistant Elections Administrator move from #13 to #16 on pay scale.**
- b. Create New Position – Equipment Support Technician as #15 on pay scale. **Commissioner Lovell made a motion to approve the creation of a new position of an Equipment Support Technician as #15 on pay scale in the Elections Administration Office. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**

**Sheriff's Office**

- c. Create new positions – Records Custodian/Dispatcher as #16 on Pay Scale. **Commissioner Lovell made a motion to create the new position of Records Custodian/Dispatcher at #16 on the Pay Scale at Sheriff's Office. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**
- d. Remove Dispatch Supervisor from Pay Scale. **Commissioner Henderson made a motion and Commissioner Stokes seconded to remove Dispatch Supervisor at Sheriff's Office from Pay Scale. Motion carried 4 to 0.**
- e. Create new Position – Deputy/Training and TCOLE/Evidence Technician as #20 on pay scale. **Commissioner Henderson made a motion to create a new position at the Sheriff's Office – Deputy/Training and TCOLE/Evidence Technician and approve at #20 on pay scale. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**
- f. Move Deputy Bailiffs from #17 to #20 on Pay Scale.
- g. Move Sergeant Bailiff from #18 to #23 on Pay Scale. **Commissioner Henderson made a motion to move Deputy Bailiffs at Sheriff's Office from #17 to #20 on Pay Scale and move Sergeant Bailiff at Sheriff's Office from #18 to #23 on Pay Scale. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**

- h. Approve updated job descriptions. **Commissioner Henderson made a motion to approve updated job descriptions at the Sheriff's Office as presented. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**

**County Attorney's Office**

- i. Approve updated job descriptions. **Commissioner Lovell made a motion to approve updated job descriptions at the County Attorney's Office as presented. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**

(15) Discuss and consider action on accepting the tax abatement application from A & A Texas Capital, L.P. and setting date for public hearing. **Commissioner Lovell made a motion to accept the tax abatement application from A & A Texas Capital, L.P. and set the date for public hearing on October 24, 2023 at 9:00 a.m. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**

(16) Discuss and consider action on accepting the tax abatement application from Stealth Vision, LLC and setting date for public hearing. **Commissioner Henderson made a motion to accept the tax abatement application from Stealth Vision, LLC and set the date for public hearing on October 24, 2023 at 9:00 a.m. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**

(17) Discuss and consider action on advertising to accept bids for road improvements within Precinct 2 to CR 2210 and CR 2205 using LATCF funding:

- a. 3100 tons of State Base Road Material to CR 2210.
- b. Hauling/Delivery of Road Material to CR 2210.
- c. 741 tons of Oil Sand to CR 2205
- d. Hauling/Delivery of Oil Sand to CR 2205

**Commissioner Lovell made a motion to approve advertising to accept bids for road improvements within Precinct 2 to CR 2210 and CR 2205 using LATCF funding:**

- a. **3100 tons of State Base Road Material to CR 2210.**
- b. **Hauling/Delivery of Road Material to CR 2210.**
- c. **741 tons of Oil Sand to CR 2205**
- d. **Hauling/Delivery of Oil Sand to CR 2205**

**Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**

(18) Discuss and consider approving a contract with Video Magistrate for Magistrations for FY 2024:

- a. JP #1 - \$1,800.00 per year
- b. JP #2 - \$1,800.00 per year

**Commissioner Lovell made a motion to approve contract with Video Magistrate for Magistrates for FY 2024 for JP #1 at \$1,800 per year and JP #2 at \$1,800 per year.**

**Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**

(19) Discuss and authorize Grant Administrator to apply for the following grants, funds to be used for costs related to operations at the Houston County Airport.

- a. TxDOT Aviation FY 2021 Airport Coronavirus Response Grant Program \$13,000
- b. TxDOT Aviation FY 2021 Airport Rescue Grant Program Funding \$32,000

**Commissioner Stokes made a motion to authorize Grant Administrator to apply for the following grants, funds to be used for costs related to operations at the Houston County Airport.**

- a. **TxDOT Aviation FY 2021 Airport Coronavirus Response Grant Program \$13,000**
- b. **TxDOT Aviation FY 2021 Airport Rescue Grant Program Funding \$32,000**

**Commissioner Henderson seconded the motion. Motion carried 4 to 0.**

(20) Discuss and consider action on authorizing the following items through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Grant Fund, Local Assistance and Tribal Consistency Fund (LATCF), and a maximum of \$40K through Lease Purchase agreement, zero % interest, 2-year term, and necessary budget amendments.

Approval to advertise for bids for the purchase of: 2016 or newer used Glider Haul Truck with a 13-speed transmission; 244" wheelbase; 500 hp Diesel engine; 11R245 tires; 355 rear-end dual tandem; not to exceed 600,000 miles.

**Commissioner Stokes made a motion to advertise for bids for the purchase of: 2016 or newer used Glider Haul Truck with a 13-speed transmission; 244" wheelbase; 500 hp Diesel engine; 11R245 tires; 355 rear-end dual tandem; not to exceed 600,000 miles for hauling rock and authorize purchase through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Grant Fund, Local Assistance and Tribal Consistency Fund (LATCF), and a maximum of \$40K through Lease Purchase agreement, zero % interest, 2-year term, and necessary budget amendments. Commissioner Lovell seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**

(21) Discuss and consider action to accept the FY 2024 VCLG (Victim Coordinator and Liaison Grant) from the Office of the Attorney General. **Commissioner Henderson made a motion to accept the FY 2024 VCLG (Victim Coordinator and Liaison Grant) from the Office of the Attorney General for the benefit of salary in the County Attorney's Office. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**

(22) Discuss and consider action to accept the FY 2024 SAVNS Grant (Statewide Automated Victim Notification Service) No C-01122 from the Office of the Attorney General. **Commissioner Henderson made a motion to accept the FY 2024 SAVNS Grant (Statewide Automated Victim Notification Service) No C-01122 from the Office of the Attorney General. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**

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

- a. Approve purchase for (1) Wireless HDMI presentation system for County Courtroom. (in addition to he previously approved upgraded sound system for \$4,894.75) \*Total \$1,525.00
- b. Approve purchase for additional mics & power upgrades for the District Courtroom. (in addition to the previously approved upgraded sound system for \$24,784.00) \*Total \$5,208.00

**Commissioner Henderson made a motion to authorize the following items through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Grant Fund and necessary budget amendments:**

- a. **Approve purchase for (1) Wireless HDMI presentation system for County Courtroom. (in addition to the previously approved upgraded sound system for \$4,894.75) \*Total \$1,525.00**
- b. **Approve purchase for additional mics & power upgrades for the District Courtroom. (in addition to the previously approved upgraded sound system for \$24,784.00) \*Total \$5,208.00**

**Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**

(24) Discuss and consider action on renewing the liability and auto coverage insurance with the Texas Association of Counties Risk Management Pool for the period 10/1/2023 through

9/30/2024. **Commissioner Lovell made a motion to renew the liability and auto coverage insurance with the Texas Association of Counties Risk Management Pool for the period 10/1/2023 through 9/30/2024. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**

- (25) **Receive as information the FY 2023 Loss Claims Report. Commissioner Henderson made a motion to receive as information the FY 2023 Loss Claims Report. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**
- (26) **Discuss and consider action on budget amendment transfer from General Funds to Precinct 2 \$30,000. Commissioner Stokes made a motion to approve budget amendment transfer of \$30,000 from Contingency to Precinct 2 for shortfall. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**
- (27) **Consider authorizing Houston County to continue participation in the Texas County and District Retirement System (TCDRS) and setting the contribution rate for 2024. Commissioner Stokes made a motion to continue participation in the Texas County and District Retirement System (TCDRS) and setting the contribution rate for 2024 at 150% matching funds for future. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**
- (28) **Budget Workshop Judge Lovell opened the Workshop at 10:06 a.m. after a short time and no one said anything Judge Lovell closed the Workshop at 10:06 a.m.**
- (29) **Conduct Public Hearing on Proposed Budget for Fiscal Year 2024. Judge Lovell opened the Public Hearing on Proposed Budget for Fiscal Year 2024 at 10:06 a.m. Judge Lovell closed the Public Hearing on Proposed Budget for Fiscal Year 2024 at 10:07 a.m.**
- (30) **Conduct Public Hearing on Proposed Tax Rate for Fiscal Year 2024. Judge Lovell opened the Public Hearing at 10:07 a.m. after there was no response Judge Lovell closed the Public Hearing at 10:08 a.m.**
- (31) **Discuss and consider adopting the Houston County Budget for Fiscal Year 2024. Commissioner Lovell made a motion to adopt the Houston County Budget for Fiscal Year 2024. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Roll call vote:**
- Commissioner Jimmy Henderson - Aye**  
**Commissioner Gene Stokes - Aye**  
**Judge Jim Lovell - Aye**  
**Commissioner Gary Lovell - Aye**  
**Commissioner Willie Kitchen was Absent**
- The motion passed.**
- (32) **Discuss and consider action on adopting FY 2023 County Tax Rate of \$0.4488000 cents:**
- a. **Maintenance and Operations Tax Rate of \$0.394448**
  - b. **Interest and Sinking Tax Rate of \$0.053552**
- Commissioner Henderson made a motion to adopt FY 2023 County Tax Rate of \$0.448000 that includes the Maintenance and Operations Tax Rate of \$0.394448 and Interest and Sinking Tax Rate of \$0.053552. Commissioner Stokes seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**
- (33) **Discuss and ratify the increase of property tax revenue by 6.84% in the FY 2024 Budget. Judge Lovell moved that the property tax rate be increased by the adoption of a tax rate of .448000,**

**which is effectively a 6.84% increase in the tax rate. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 4 to 0.**

(34) Discuss and consider setting salaries for all officers and employees of Houston County for Fiscal Year 2024. **Commissioner Lovell made a motion to set salaries for all officers and employees of Houston County for Fiscal Year 2024 as presented. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Motion carried 4 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 10:17 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