

MINUTES OF THE

COMMISSIONERS' COURT

REGULAR MEETING - JUNE 22, 2020

On the 22nd day of June, 2020, there was a Regular Meeting of the Commissioners' Court in the Commissioners' Courtroom, 2840 Hwy 35 N, Rockport, Aransas County, Texas, with the following members present: **C. H. "Burt" Mills, Jr.**, County Judge; **Jack Chaney**, Commissioner, Precinct 1; **Leslie "Bubba" Casterline**, Commissioner, Precinct 2; **Charles Smith**, Commissioner, Precinct 3; **Wendy Laubach**, Commissioner, Precinct 4; and **Valerie K. Amason**, County Clerk.

Other County Officers present in person, via Youtube, or via ZOOM were **Jerry Brundrett**, County Surveyor; **Kristen Barnebey**, County District Attorney; **Alma Cartwright**, Treasurer; **Pam Heard**, District Clerk; **Bill Mills**, Sheriff; **Tracy Orr**, Administrative Assistant to the County Judge; **Jacky Cockerham**, Interim County Auditor; **Tana Taylor**, First Assistant County Auditor; **David Reid**, Road Administrator/Drainage Engineer/Stormwater Management Engineer; **Michael Geer**, Airport Manager; **John Strothman**, Pathways Project Manager; **Collin Jackson**, IT Director; **Linda Doane**, Human Resources Director; **Michele Carew**, Elections Administrator; **John Gutierrez**, Chief Deputy Sheriff;

Long-Term Recovery Specialists: **Kim Foutz**;

Members of Local City Government, Community Groups and other Interested Parties present:

Aransas County Citizens: **Mark Wagnon**, Attorney at Law; **Pat Rousseau**, Aransas County Commissioner Elect, Pct. 3; **Robert Scott**;

Economic Development Corporation: Neill Anslar, President/CEO;

Friends of the History Center: Pam Wheat Stranahan, President;  
Kathryn Morrow, Secretary;

Rockport-Fulton Chamber of Commerce: Diane Probst,  
President/CEO;

Rockport Center for the Arts: Luis Puron, Executive Director;

GSM Insurors: Travis McDavid, Vice President;

The Rockport Pilot Newspaper: Mike Probst, Editor and Publisher;

Del Mar College: Lenora Keas, Executive Vice President of  
Workforce Development and Strategic Initiatives;

The Rockport Group at Morgan Stanley: John Jackson, Certified  
Investment Management Analyst/Senior Vice President;

J. Schwarz & Associates, Inc.: Brandi Karl, Project Engineer;

Quick Ventures LLC: Jatin Patel, President/Director;

Coastal Bend Business Innovation Center: Russell Franques,  
Director;

The Meeting was convened at 9:00 a.m. at which time a quorum was declared by Judge Mills, WHEREUPON, the following proceedings were had and done to wit:

CITIZENS TO BE HEARD

Mark Wagnon - Item #5 (will wait for this item to be considered)

Pat Rousseau - Items #5, 11 & 14 (will wait for these items to be considered)

PRESENTATIONS

Cont'd from 8:30 A.M. Workshop Meeting

**Kim Foust:** So we talked about a number of initiatives that seem to be converging. First, we heard from Mike Geer concerning some of the needs and plans in the Master Plan at the Airport. Secondly, we talked about the TEAM Concept and the Workforce Development and Entrepreneurship Programs that are being studied right now which was brought up in this presentation because one of the locations that they are considering is at the Airport. Third, there have been some discussions that have been happening about Business Park opportunities and we are going to ask Neill Amsler, who is the new Director for the Economic Development Corporation, to talk about some of the discussions that he's had with Mike Geer and then finally, I'm going to talk very briefly about a Grant Project that has been on the Commissioners Court Agenda for quite some time, which is the Hurricane Dome.

**Neill Amsler:** Thank you, I hope this is the first of many opportunities to be here and I hope in the future we'll be bringing businesses here. Mike Geer presented virtually everything that I think, site-wise, that we would be looking at in the short term. I have been asked to talk about long-term and I want to start out with a few remarks, I have a challenge coming to work here in Aransas County. We are wanting diversification, we're wanting to be more insulated against some of the disasters that we have incurred over the last few years, and that means bringing small, light, clean, manufacturing into the county. You wonder, when we have a single realty industry here of tourism, second homes, fishing, etc., but we do not have a skilled workforce that is

going to be needed to attract the kind of people in jobs that I've been asked to do and so I started looking at, "What do I have to compete with?" In other cities in our region they all have various kinds of incentives, they usually put those up front in their presentations to the clients that they look at. We don't know if we can do tax abatements or not here because we have not had any reason to look at those, we do not have an Economic Development Sales Tax, which most parties do, so how do we attract the businesses that are like what we want to get? I was pulled towards the airport after some conversations with Mike Geer and he talked about the piece upon the highway (about five acres) and then the piece behind it (about fifteen acres depending on the buffer zone), that's what we have in the short-term future. If you look to the west we have a road there that serves the old subdivision that was there when the Air Force was here and if you extend that road down to 1781 we have property there that requires little pieces of infrastructure improvement, one little step at a time, not much money each time. We can put a business park in, we can grow it, we can actually lease to individual companies and build something for them, or they can build, depending on what the court wants to do. Where is the incentive in that? Well, I look at this TEAM Center with all of the Entrepreneurial aspects of that. People figure out, and I look next door to San Patricio County and the billions and billions of dollars of heavy industry we don't want, that's going on over there, but what they purchase is massive and they have products to sell that can be made into other kinds of plastics. What I think we have a shot at is to find people, train them locally coming straight out of the high school, and then let them find a little niche, and we help them - what are they going

to be missing, what incentive do they need to actually get in business? Well it's cash, people starting a new business rarely have cash to speak of, and so if we can lease them the land that is the way we create the people that we want that are home-grown, they hopefully will get married, they would come out and have a job and make a lot of money, buy houses, and they contribute to the entire community. I think that's what my job is. So it's exciting and I hope we can make all of this work. Thank you for your time.

**Kim Foust:** The final topic is something that we are going to talk about in Agenda Item #5. It has been discussed in the last couple of years that a Hurricane Dome project for our first responders and equipment that we want to protect is needed and we have been researching and looking for a funding source that will do that. We may have a couple of options, the reason why I mention this during this presentation is that I have heard that the preferable site has always been the airport since it has the highest ground, it's a compatible use, so I just wanted to bring it up at this time and we will talk about that further when we are talking about the new funding cycle that's coming up under CDBG Mitigation. Questions?

**Judge Mills:** That was a very nice presentation, I'm excited to see something possibly going on out there. I know there's a lot of property out there that needs to be utilized.

**Commissioner Chaney:** Kim, whenever we first started getting things together after the hurricane there was mention that FEMA was willing to build us a dome, is that off of the table now?

**Kim:** It is not off of the table, we are doing some evaluations right now. On your agenda there is an item to get a Grant Administrator on board that specializes in the new funding. If you will recall we are going into our last cycle of funding, CDBG Mitigation, and that is one of the projects that we want to try very hard to pre-qualify. However, we have also found another program called BRICK that I will be going over, when we get to Agenda Item #5, and that is the program that has traditionally been used to get the FEMA Dome. The other reason we brought up this FEMA Dome in the first place is, the exploratory committee is very open in looking at different ideas, brand new construction, existing buildings, also "is there any leveraging that makes sense for use of buildings"? So, one of the things that we vetted early on, with just our regular vetting process, for the Economic Development Administration Grant that is coming up is, if it is possible to have a duo-purpose type building, are there efficiencies, is there sufficient funding within that grant in order to be able to accomplish that? We did get the nod that this is something that they would entertain so we are looking at all possibilities to put together the best funding options and also the best operational scenarios for those individual needs.

1. Presentation on "Aransas County Airport History" by Kathryn Morrow from the History Center.

**Pam Stranahan** announced that Kathryn was supposed to be here to go over a report that she had prepared but she was not present and stated that she would get copies of the report to the court.

CONSENT ITEMS

Motion was made by Commissioner Smith and seconded by Commissioner Chaney to approve:

2. Minutes from the Regular Meeting of June 8, 2020.
3. Official Public Bond Rider - Job Description Change on policy for Aransas County Court Clerk, JP #1, Emma Thomas. Question. Motion carried unanimously.

It is so ordered.

COUNTY REPORTS

4. Motion was made by Commissioner Smith and seconded by Commissioner Casterline to approve 1st Quarterly Report from the Friends of the History Center. Question. Motion carried unanimously.

It is so ordered.

5. **Discuss, and prioritize** upcoming CDBG-Mitigation grant funding opportunity (final round of Hurricane Harvey funding) and new grant funding sources.

**(See Power Point attached)**

**Mark Wagnon - I just want to encourage the court, as your appointed representative of the EDC, to seriously consider allowing the EDC to move forward with the process and the committee that Mr. Jackson put together to study the TEAM project. We think that the Workforce Development Project is a wonderful opportunity to help Aransas County grow. We understand that there is a lot of work to be done, whether lease payments would fall into original grant spending money or operating expenses, that is part of the work that the**

**(Inserts)**



committee is going to do during this exploratory process. We will come back to the court with the application for your review prior to final submittal. As Kim pointed out the EDC would like to be a co-applicant with the County, the County being the lead applicant. EDC does not have the economic resources to act as the applicant by themselves, we need your support and participation.

(Pat Rousseau had no questions or comments)

COUNTY ROADS

6. Motion was made by Commissioner Chaney and seconded by Commissioner Casterline to TABLE and authorize the County Judge to sign Amended Order #0-03-2020, to amend the March 23, 2020 order for manufactured home and other rental communities in Aransas County, TX "amending road standards". Question. Motion carried unanimously.

It is so ordered.

CONTRACTS, AGREEMENTS, GRANTS & LEASES

7. Motion was made by Commissioner Casterline and seconded by Commissioner Chaney to approve Resolution #R-17-2020, a Resolution authorizing the dispersion of Cares Act Humanitarian Funds up to \$142,500 for humanitarian purposes to Hands of Hope, Good Samaritans, St. Vincent de Paul, and Children's Coalition.

(Insert)



Question. **Pat Rousseau:** Announced that she had filled out a Public Participation Sheet to speak on Item #5. I would like to know if a copy of the Power Point Presentation is available to the Public and I would like to get a copy.

**Judge Mills:** Yes, I will get that copy to you.

**Pat Rousseau:** The new Grant Administrator, mentioned by Kim Foust, is this Will Whitson or another county employee that has been added to the payroll.

**Kim Foust:** The Grant Administrator, that is later in this agenda, is not a staff member. This is a private contractor and they are only doing the CDBG Mitigation program. They have nothing to do with the program that is being discussed right now.

**Commissioner Chaney:** And they are paid for out of grant funds.

**Commissioner Casterline:** I had questioned if there were any other non-profit organizations that would be interested in the disbursement of the \$142,500 because I was worried that someone would come back later and inquire as to why they were not a recipient.

**Commissioner Laubach:** Suggested that they call in Lora Rios to attest to the details of how the recipients were chosen.

**Commissioner Laubach:** Lora, how did you narrow the list down to just four recipients.

**Lora Rios:** To be honest, Jennifer Heard contacted the organizations to see who would be interested in helping us help the families and so that's how she came up with the four.

**Commissioner Laubach:** Did she contact more than four, the others just weren't interested?

**Lora Rios:** I can't tell you for sure. I know we talked about it and she said she would handle it and talk to them and see if they would help us and these are the four that she came up with. There may have been five in all.

**Judge Mills:** She's pretty thorough.

Motion carried unanimously.

It is so ordered.

**(Item 10 taken at this time before Item #8)**

10. Motion was made by Commissioner Smith and seconded by Commissioner Casterline to approve and authorize the County Judge to eSign the 2020 Help America Vote Act (HAVA) Election Security Sub-Grant to Texas Counties, authorized by U.S. Congress under the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018 (Public Law 115-141) and U.S. Congress under the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2020 (Public Law 116-93), which will provide a maximum award of \$120,000 to "improve the administration of elections for Federal Office, including to enhance election technology and make election security improvements" to the systems, equipment, and processes used in federal elections (20% County match for awards in excess of \$40,000).

Question. Motion carried unanimously.

It is so ordered.

**(Insert)**

8. Motion was made by Commissioner Chaney and seconded by Commissioner Smith to approve and authorize the County Judge to purchase Cyber Insurance for Aransas County for an annual premium of \$14,490. This will give the County \$5,000,000 in coverage for costs incurred due to hack attacks, ransom or data breach, and system failures. *[Tabled from 06/08/2020]*  
Question. Motion carried unanimously.

It is so ordered.

9. Motion was made by Commissioner Smith and seconded by Commissioner Casterline to approve Resolution #R-18-2020, a Resolution needed to accept Help America Vote Act (HAVA) funds awarded to Aransas County.

Question. Motion carried unanimously.

It is so ordered.

**(Item #10 taken for discussion and approval before Item #8)**

11. Motion was made by Commissioner Chaney and seconded by Commissioner Casterline to approve Resolution #R-19-2020, a Resolution authorizing to accept CDBG-DR grant funds in the amount of \$43,000,000 and continue pursuit of grant application process for the creation of a micro-hospital to serve the medical needs of Aransas County.

Question.

**Pat Rousseau:** No questions.

Motion carried unanimously.

It is so ordered.

**(Inserts)**

12. Motion was made by Commissioner Chaney and seconded by Commissioner Casterline to approve Resolution #R-20-2020, a Resolution authorizing the award of a recovery grant to program management and administration services contract for Aransas County for various Community Development Block Grant-Mitigation (CDBG-MIT) programs and supplemental Hazard Mitigation Programs administered by the General Land Office (GLO).

Question.

**NOTE: Awarded to Tetra Tech.**

Motion carried unanimously.

It is so ordered.

**PLANNING & BUDGET OFFICE**

13. Motion was made by Commissioner Smith and seconded by Commissioner Chaney to approve the May 2020 Treasurer's Report.

Question. Motion carried unanimously.

It is so ordered.

14. Motion was made by Commissioner Smith and seconded by Commissioner Casterline to approve the updated Job Description for Indigent Health Care Claims Specialist, placing the position into a Supervisory Group 16 instead of Group 13. There are no other changes to the position and no changes in budgeted amounts.

Question.

**Pat Rousseau:** Did the hourly rate change and did it add supervisory responsibilities since it is being moved into a higher group?

**(Inserts)**

**Alma Cartwright:** The position already had supervisory in the job description.

**Commissioner Chaney:** It just allows you to bring the new person in at a step one for that position.

**Commissioner Casterline:** I think Pat also had a question about the hourly rate.

**Alma Cartwright:** The hourly rate was at \$21.72 for the previous employee and so a 16-1 is \$18.27.

**Commissioner Laubach:** So you're going to replace a very experienced supervisor, who has retired, and bring in someone who is more of a trainee, therefore they need to be at a lower hourly rate.

**Alma Cartwright:** Twenty nine years of tenure, you have that advantage of getting more money than the person that I will probably offer this position to, she has been in training for the last two years.

**Commissioner Laubach:** Pat, does this address your question?

**Pat Rousseau:** Yes, it addresses it very well. Thank you.

Motion carried unanimously.

It is so ordered.

15. Motion was made by Commissioner Casterline and seconded by Commissioner Chaney to approve and authorize the County Judge to sign "Fixed Account Amendment" with Nationwide. Court approved the amended change on the Commissioner's Court agenda dated 01-28-2019, item #26 (see attached) however, Nationwide had provided the incorrect amendment to be signed. Question. Motion carried unanimously.

It is so ordered.

**(Insert)**

16. Motion was made by Commissioner Smith and seconded by Commissioner Casterline to approve Budget Line Item Transfers and Amendments of which there were NONE.

Question. Motion carried unanimously.

It is so ordered.

17. Motion was made by Commissioner Casterline and seconded by Commissioner Chaney to approve Accounts Payable and Payroll/Payroll Liabilities.

Question. Motion carried unanimously.

It is so ordered.

REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS, ELECTED OFFICIALS &

DEPARTMENT HEADS WHEREIN NO ACTION WILL BE TAKEN

**Jacky Cockerham** read the fee report. I do want to remind you that the budget workshop will be Monday morning on the 29<sup>th</sup>.

**Michele Carew** - Early voting for the Democratic Primary Runoff starts Monday at 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., for two weeks at our office at 602 E. Concho, from June 29 through July 10 and Election Day is July 14<sup>th</sup>.

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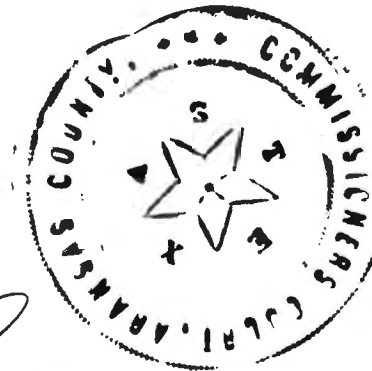
*No further business presenting, the Court adjourned at 10:32 a.m. on a motion made by Commissioner Smith and seconded by Commissioner Casterline.*

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(Insert)



June 22, 2020



C. H. "BURT" MILLS, JR., COUNTY JUDGE



VALERIE K. AMASON,  
EX-OFFICIO CLERK OF THE  
COMMISSIONERS' COURT