

MINUTES OF THE ARANSAS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT

REGULAR MEETING - MAY 10, 2021

BE IT REMEMBERED that on the 10th day of May, 2021, the Honorable Commissioners Court of Aransas County, Texas, met in Regular Session, at the Aransas County Courthouse, 2840 Hwy 35 N, Rockport, Texas, with the following members present in person, via Zoom, or via YouTube: **C. H. "Burt" Mills, Jr.**, County Judge; **Jack Chaney**, Commissioner Precinct 1-1A; **Leslie Casterline**, Commissioner, Precinct 2; **Pat Rousseau**, Commissioner, Precinct 3; **Wendy Laubach**, Commissioner, Precinct 4; and **Carrie Arrington**, County Clerk.

Other County Officials/Department Heads/Staff Members present in person or via Zoom were: **Alma Cartwright**, Treasurer; **Pam Heard**, District Clerk; **Tracy Orr**, Administrative Assistant to County Judge; **Jaime Blackburn**, Executive Assistant to County Judge; **Jennifer O'Steen**, Assistant County Attorney; **Jacky Cockerham**, County Auditor; **Tana Taylor**, First Assistant County Auditor; **Latisha Murphy**, Assistant Auditor; **Linda Doane**, HR Director; **Elizabeth Guerra**, HR Assistant; **Gayle Otto**, **Crystal Powell**, and **Nita Solis**, County Clerk's Office; **Bill Mills**, Sheriff; **Doc Thomas**, Constable Pct. 1; **Richard Bianchi**, County Court at Law Judge; **Collin Jackson**, IT Director; **Jerry Brundrett**, County Surveyor; **David Reid**, County Engineer; **Valerie Gonzalez**, Environmental Health Director; **Mike Geer**, Airport Manager; **John Strothman**, Project Manager; **Kim Foutz**, Long-Term Recovery; and **Lori Cesar**, Animal Control Director.

Members of Other Governmental Entities or Community Groups and Interested Parties present in person or via Zoom were: **Betty Stiles**, **Pam Stranahan**, and **Cheryl Livingston**, Aransas County Historical Commission; **Landyn Barton (singer)**, **Joe Fox (singer)**, **Laralee List**, **Kristin Barton**, and **Henry Barton**, Rockport Little Theatre; **Ginger**

Easton Smith and Megan Glidden, Texas A&M Agri-Life Extension; **John Steelhammer**, San Patricio and Aransas Counties Agricultural & Homemakers Show; **Patricia Arnold**, ACMSI; **Norma Broadhurst and Lory Hosea**, RNs; **Jennifer Day**, Rockport Cultural Arts District; **Allen Lea**, Fulton Mansion State Historic Site; **Mayor Ram Gomez**, Aransas Pass; **Randall Freeze**, Texas GLO; **Eric Villarreal**, LNV, Inc.; **Paul Bonnette**, PGAL; and **Mike Probst**, Editor and Publisher, The Rockport Pilot.

Aransas County Citizens present in person or via Zoom were: **Mike Soto**; **Michael Bishop**; **John Jackson**; **Mike Fields**; **Allan Smith**; **Amy Biddle**.

The Meeting was duly convened at 9:00 a.m., followed by pledges to the American and Texas flags and an invocation given by County Surveyor Jerry Brundrette. Roll call was taken and a quorum was declared by Judge Mills, WHEREUPON, the following proceedings were had and done, to wit:

CITIZENS TO BE HEARD

Mike Soto voiced his concerns about Agenda item #14 - the County's potential purchase of 103 S. Magnolia for the purpose of developing a parking lot in the downtown area. Mr. Soto and his wife Nichole Soto own Rockport Eye Associates, the property next door, and they are concerned about future security, vagrancy, and trespass onto their property. They are not in favor of the proposed parking lot.

PRESENTATIONS

1. **John Steelhammer**, Board President, Aransas/San Patricio Counties Agriculture and Homemaking Show, thanked the Commissioners Court for what they do for the County Fair every year and gave a report about the 2020 virtual County Fair auction last year in which they

sold 204 projects. Fifty of those lots were Aransas County projects and those kids brought home \$96,000.

2. After presenting Rockport Little Theatre members (**Joe Fox and Landyn Barton**) who performed a quick sesquicentennial-themed musical skit, **Pam Stranahan and Betty Stiles** talked about upcoming Aransas County Sesquicentennial events.
3. **County Clerk Carrie Arrington** recognized her Vital Statistics Staff: **Deputy Nita Solis, Senior Deputy Crystal Powell, and Chief Deputy Gayle Otto** (in particular) for achieving the Texas Department of State Health Services 2020 5-Star Award for Excellence in the Vital Registration Process. This award is given to local registrars who consistently meet or exceed stringent criteria across each of 5 areas: Training, Assessment, Customer Service, Security, and Maintenance. Of the 254 counties in Texas, Aransas County was one of only fourteen counties to receive this award in 2020.

CONSENT AGENDA

There were five items under the Consent Agenda; Judge Mills asked that items 6 and 7 be read and handled separately.

4. Minutes from the April 26, 2021 Regular Meeting.
5. Minutes from the May 3, 2021 Special Meeting.
8. State of Texas Western Surety Bond for Chief Deputy Tax Assessor-Collector Lupita Wells.

A motion was made by Commissioner Chaney and seconded by Commissioner Rousseau to approve the above Consent Agenda items. Question. A roll call vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

It is so ordered.

6. **Tracy Orr** read Proclamation #P-07-2021 proclaiming May as National Preservation Month, to honor historic preservation and the people who make it possible.

A motion was made by Commissioner Rousseau and seconded by Commissioner Casterline to approve Proclamation #P-07-2021.

Question. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

It is so ordered.

7. **Tracy Orr** read Joint Proclamation #JP-08-2021 between Aransas County, City of Rockport, and Town of Fulton proclaiming May 10-May 16 as Community Health Care Worker Week in honor of all the doctors, nurses, vaccine givers, staff, and volunteers that have given their time and energy in the COVID vaccination effort. The Court also recognized Aransas County Medical Services Inc (ACMSI) Executive Director Patricia Arnold along with Norma Broadhurst, RN and Lory Hosea, RN for their hard work and dedication to this effort.

A motion was made by Commissioner Casterline and seconded by Commissioner Chaney to approve Joint Proclamation #JP-08-2021.

Question. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

It is so ordered.

COUNTY REPORTS

9. A motion was made by Commissioner Casterline and seconded by Commissioner Chaney to approve the 1st Quarter 2021 Report for Rockport Cultural Arts District. Executive Director **Jennifer Day** gave the report presentation.

Question. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

It is so ordered.

10. A motion was made by Commissioner Rousseau and seconded by Commissioner Chaney to approve the 1st Quarter 2021 Report for the Fulton Mansion State Historic Site. Executive Director **Allen Lea** gave the report presentation.

Question. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

It is so ordered.

11. A motion was made by Commissioner Casterline and seconded by Commissioner Laubach to approve Accepting a Temporary Construction Easement from Phil McPherson on 0.439 Acres of Land out of 35.81 Acres of Land in Portions of Tracts 1, 2, 3, 22 and 23, CH Moore Subdivision, Joseph Fessenden Survey, A-65 and authorizing Judge Mills to execute necessary documents.

Question. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

It is so ordered.

COUNTY SHERIFF

12. A motion was made by Commissioner Casterline and seconded by Commissioner Chaney authorizing County Sheriff to seek bids for six (6) patrol units. **Sheriff Mills** clarified that the units were for next year's budget.

Question. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

It is so ordered.

13. A motion was made by Commissioner Chaney and seconded by Commissioner Laubach authorizing County Sheriff to seek Bids for the

Jail to purchase a transport van. **Sheriff Mills** clarified that the van is for next year's budget.

Question. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

It is so ordered.

CONTRACTS, AGREEMENTS, GRANTS & LEASES

14. A motion was made by Commissioner Laubach and seconded by Commissioner Chaney to approve entering into a Real Estate Purchase and Sale Agreement between Aransas County and Willis David Beckham for the purchase of a .557 acre tract of land in Lot 2 of Block 1, RCAD Depot Subdivision, with a street address of 103 South Magnolia, Rockport, Texas, for the purpose of developing a parking lot in the downtown area, in the amount of \$350,000.00 and authorizing Judge Mills to execute all necessary documents (CDBG-DR Funding - GLO Contract #20-065-098-C270). **Kim Foutz** gave the history of the project - including the notices and public hearings - and entertained questions. She clarified that it would be a public parking lot, that the grant funding covers 100% of the project (both property and improvements), that the County would receive the grant funds then construct the parking lot, and that, after construction, it would be passed to the City of Rockport through an MOU for the City to then own and operate.

Question. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

It is so ordered.

15. A motion was made by Commissioner Chaney and seconded by Commissioner Laubach to authorize the County Judge to sign Amendment #2 to the Interagency Cooperation Contract and Agreement between Aransas County and the Texas A&M University Health Science Center on behalf of the Texas A&M Health Science Center Rural and

Community Healthy Institute, for assistance with the medical facility operator RFP process, reducing the contract amount from \$40,000 to a maximum of \$15,750. **Kim Foutz** clarified that the reduction represents the difference between the actual cost and the estimated cost.

Question. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

It is so ordered.

16. A motion was made by Commissioner Casterline and seconded by Commissioner Laubach to approve an Annual Agreement with Valley Solvent & Chemicals for Universal Waste Hauling and Disposal for approximately \$22,248. **Valerie Gonzalez** clarified that it is basically a same-price renewal of a budgeted annual contract.

Question. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

It is so ordered.

17. A motion was made by Commissioner Laubach and seconded by Commissioner Casterline to approve the budget based on the Final Schematic Design of the Courthouse prepared by Broaddus & Associates, Inc., the Construction Manager Agent for the Downtown Anchor Project.

Question. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

It is so ordered.

18. A motion was made by Commissioner Chaney and seconded by Commissioner Casterline to approve Exercising the County's Option to Purchase Real Estate with the Rockport Land Trust by entering into a Real Estate Purchase and Sale Agreement to purchase the North Building of the former Little Bay Primary School and the associated real property comprised of Lots 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 of

Block 1, Jackson Bay subdivision, in Aransas County, Texas, with a street address of 2020, 2100, 2104, 2200, and 2208 HWY 35 N, Rockport, TX, for use as a Workforce Development Center, Authorizing Payments in the amount of \$1,075,000.00 for the purchase and \$20,000.00 for the Option Contract, Authorizing \$10,000 in earnest money, and Authorizing Judge Mills to Execute Necessary Documents (Economic Development Administration Funding -EDA Federal ID #08-01-05487). **Kim Foutz** asked that on the motion on this, if approved, is that you include the words at the end of the motion "contingent upon EDA authorization of the purchase." And the reason for this is that we have to go through all of these activities before we can submit the final request by EDA to move forward with the purchase. We anticipate after today's action that EDA will approve that and they're very aware of our deadline of this Friday to execute the option contract and make the deposits that are required at the title company in order to do that. So, after today, we will be in immediate contact with them to get that authorization. This contract will not be signed until we receive that authorization. Commissioner Chaney amended his motion to approve the Option Contract with Rockport Land Trust and all stated items contingent upon the Economic Development Administration authorizing the acquisition. Commissioner Casterline seconded the amended motion.

Question. A roll call vote was taken and the amended motion passed unanimously.

It is so ordered.

19. A motion was made by Commissioner Casterline and seconded by Commissioner Chaney to approve Resolution #R-08-2021, a Resolution supporting the State of Texas' request for Federal Funds to Reimburse the State and Local Governments for Expenses incurred because of the Federal Government's Border Policies. Commissioner

Chaney stated he'd like to make a public comment: I appreciate the Governor's position on this. This is not just a Texas problem. This is a national problem.

Question. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

It is so ordered.

20. A motion was made by Commissioner Casterline and seconded by Commissioner Chaney authorizing Engineer LNV, LLC to Solicit Bids for Construction of Eleven (11) first-time sewer connections in the Doughty-Mathis Colonia pursuant to the TxCDBG Contract No. 7219490, administered by Texas Department of Agriculture. Commissioner Casterline clarified that this grant is for first-time sewer off of Corpus Christi Street and that the County match for the grant is all in-kind.

Question. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

It is so ordered.

21. A motion was made by Commissioner Laubach and seconded by Commissioner Casterline to approve a Memorandum of Understanding between Aransas County and the Meadows Center at Texas State University, acting as the GLO representative for the Clean Coast Texas Program, related to the Little Bay Restoration initiative, for the Meadows Center to provide services to Aransas County, which may result in improvements to floodplain management, storm water management, water pollution management, and more, at no cost to Aransas County.

Question. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

It is so ordered.

22. A motion was made by Commissioner Laubach and seconded by Commissioner Chaney to approve a Memorandum of Understanding - Cooperation Agreement by and between the County of Aransas and Aransas County Medical Services, Inc. (ACMSI), for the Purpose of Constructing and Operating a Grant-Funded Healthcare Facility in Rockport, Texas.

Question. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

It is so ordered.

PLANNING & BUDGET

23. A motion was made by Commissioner Rousseau and seconded by Commissioner Casterline to approve the March 2021 Treasurer's Report as given.

Question. A roll call vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

It is so ordered.

24. A motion was made by Commissioner Rousseau and seconded by Commissioner Casterline to approve the Treasurer's 1st Quarter 2021 Investment Report.

Question. A roll call vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

It is so ordered.

25. A motion was made by Commissioner Casterline and seconded by Commissioner Chaney to approve the April 2021 Indigent Health Care Report. It was noted that this item on the agenda referenced the April 2020 Indigent Health Care Report - which was a typo.

Question. A roll call vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

It is so ordered.

26. A motion was made by Commissioner Laubach and seconded by Commissioner Chaney to approve the Reimbursement of Costs and Fees to Earl & Associates, P.C. listed in Invoice No. 12939 for Expenses in the Amount of \$21,074.20 incurred in the quo warranto case regarding annexation which is described as the State of Texas v. Aransas Pass, Cause No. A-19-0368-CV-C in the Aransas County District Court. **Assistant County Attorney O'Steen** reiterated that this was to reimburse Mr. Earl for out-of-pocket costs to Mr. Earl and not for legal fees.

Question. A roll call vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

It is so ordered.

27. A motion was made by Commissioner Rousseau and seconded by Commissioner Casterline to approve the Budget Line Item Transfers and Amendments. **Auditor Jacky Cockerham** stated there were none.

Question. A roll call vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

It is so ordered.

28. A motion was made by Commissioner Laubach and seconded by Commissioner Casterline to approve the Accounts Payable and Payroll/Payroll Liabilities. **Ms. Cockerham:** You all received your list of the normal ones. I would like to remind you all of the option fee and the escrow that you just approved. We'll cut a check for those as well. I also have an invoice from GrantWorks that we received on Friday. It's with the GLO grant so once we receive that reimbursement, we have to pay it within three days. So, I would like to get approval for that one too. It's for \$40,071.80. It's GrantWorks admin fees. We can wait on the check to Mr. Earl until next time but we will have those three extra checks that I would like to get in the motion for approval. She confirmed that all three of those checks are covered by outside

grant funds and, therefore, not a budget hit. Commissioner Laubach amended her motion to include the three additional checks. Commissioner Casterline seconded the amended motion.

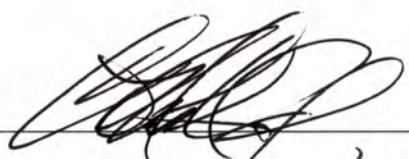
Question. A roll call vote was taken and the amended motion carried unanimously.

It is so ordered.

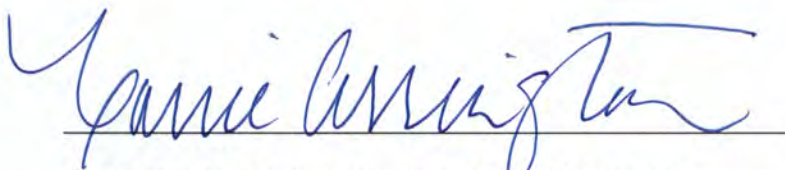
REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS, ELECTED OFFICIALS & DEPARTMENT HEADS
WHEREIN NO ACTION WILL BE TAKEN

Judge Mills called for reports from elected officials and department heads. Ms. Cockerham mentioned the fees report that was sent out earlier.

No further business presenting, the Court adjourned at 10:48 a.m. on a motion duly made by Commissioner Laubach and seconded by Commissioner Rousseau.



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



CARRIE ARRINGTON, EX-OFFICIO CLERK
OF THE COMMISSIONERS' COURT

