

MINUTES OF THE ARANSAS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT

REGULAR MEETING - AUGUST 2, 2021

BE IT REMEMBERED that on the 2nd day of August, 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; Patricia Randall, Chief Deputy Treasurer; Pam Heard, District Clerk; Jaime Blackburn, Executive Assistant to County Judge; Tracy Orr, Administrative Assistant to County Judge; Amanda Oster, County Attorney; Jacky Cockerham, County Auditor; Tana Taylor, First Assistant Auditor; Latisha Murphy, Assistant Auditor; Linda Doane, HR Director; Elizabeth Guerra, HR Assistant; Anna Marshall, Tax Assessor-Collector; Bill Mills, Sheriff; Collin Jackson, IT Director; David Reid, County Engineer; Kat Comeaux, Development Services Coordinator; Mike Geer, Airport Manager; Lori Cesar, Animal Control Director; Iris Sanchez, Library Director; Rene Butler, Facilities Director; Misty K., Collections Specialist; John Strothman, Long-Term Recovery; and Kim Foutz, Long-Term Recovery.

Members of Other Governmental Entities or Community Groups and Interested Parties present in person or via Zoom were: Members of the Aransas County Historical Commission, including Vineeta Ram, Executive Vice President/Broadband Service Line Lead, Cobb, Fendley & Associates, Inc.; Patricia Arnold, Executive Director, Aransas

County Medical Services, Inc. (ACMSI); **Randall Freeze**, Texas GLO; and **Mike Probst**, Editor and Publisher, The Rockport Pilot.

**Aransas County Citizens present** in person or via Zoom were: **Carolyn Smith** and **Tom Rodino**.

**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 Commissioner Jack Chaney. 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**

Commissioner Laubach read the following letter submitted by Aransas County resident **Kathy Kane**:

*I would like to speak to you today about the safety of North Fulton Beach Road. In the past month we've had two separate instances that negatively impacted FBR.*

*The first instance was a vehicle reportedly driving at a high speed that misjudged the S-curve and hit an unoccupied vehicle. The person driving ended up in the water. Thankfully there were no fatalities. The S-curve is not marked on the northbound side of the road and is poorly marked on the southbound side. The road is uneven and slopes.*

*The second instance regarded an accident on Highway 35 blocking north and south bound traffic for an extended period of time. This caused drivers to seek alternative routes. Many chose FBR - including 18-wheelers. I was one who took to FBR via Bay Rd when I saw the emergency*

vehicles. I can tell you my speed of under 25 mph was not loved by those behind me.

I walk FBR all the time as do many residents of this County. Cars drive too fast on it! I hope they are uninformed and don't realize the speed limit is 25 mph. Unfortunately, I don't think that is the case. At a minimum, I am asking the County to install signs stating the speed limit, to share the road, and prohibit large tractor trailers. I am asking the County to erect warning signs for the S-curve. Today there are 3 southbound and only 2 northbound speed limit signs in this almost 3 mile stretch of our beautiful scenic route. There are 10 entrance points between Mesquite St and Highway 35. Additional signs are needed at the various entrances in both directions.

When my family drove to our vacation home in the mid-70s, we asked my dad to take the first road that took us by the water. Once we crossed the causeway our vacation started!

Please protect this scenic route and the people who enjoy it by making it safe.

#### PRESENTATION

1. **Kim Foutz** gave some background information on the update for the Regional Broadband Plan, which was sponsored by the General Land Office (GLO) and funded through Community Development Block Grant - Disaster Recovery funds. The focus of the study was emergency management and the need for it emerged from the loss of communication we experienced after Hurricane Harvey. We wanted to see if we could outline a plan for developing a fiber optic network that would be resilient to natural disasters. **Vineeta Ram**, of Cobb, Fendley & Associates, Inc., **presented the Fiber**

**Optic Feasibility Study for the Community Development Block Grant  
- Disaster Recovery Project 20-065-098-C270.**

If developed, this fiber optic network - which covers area across both the Coastal Bend and Golden Crescent Regions - will assist local, state, and federal officials communicate under extreme emergency conditions. It will also have secondary benefits that will assist the local economies. The hope is that this regional project will be fully funded, but right now this is just a study to determine the feasibility of designing the network.

**After noticing the time, Judge Mills halted the presentation to consult with County Attorney Amanda Oster to see if the Regular Meeting should be recessed so the Workshop Meeting could begin at 9:30 a.m. as scheduled.** At the advice of Oster, Judge Mills asked if there was anyone on Zoom specifically for the Workshop. No one responded. The decision was made to allow the presentation to continue and then, at the conclusion of the presentation, recess the Regular Meeting, switch over to the Workshop Meeting, and immediately recess the Workshop Meeting to a specific time so anyone on Zoom who wanted to view the live Workshop Meeting would know when to return.

**At 9:42 a.m., the Regular Meeting was recessed and the Workshop Meeting was opened.** Roll Call was taken and a quorum was declared by Judge Mills. **Judge Mills then recessed the Workshop Meeting until 11:00 a.m. and resumed the Regular Meeting.**

**CONSENT AGENDA**

There was one item under the Consent Agenda:

**2. Minutes from the July 26, 2021 Regular Meeting.**

A motion was made by Commissioner Laubach and seconded by Commissioner Rousseau to approve the Consent Agenda item.



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

It is so ordered.

CONTRACTS, AGREEMENTS, GRANTS & LEASES

3. A motion was made by Commissioner Laubach and seconded by Commissioner Casterline to approve authorizing the County Judge to sign a contract with Tetra Tech for additional preparation of Phase 2 Benefit Cost Analysis for The Little Bay Restoration Project, with a cost not to exceed \$13,500.00. Laubach asked John Strothman if this is the same project that the court saw a presentation on several months ago talking about which parts of Key Allegro we might cut a new channel to improve circulation? Strothman replied that it was but that the studies don't actually prove out what they were asking for. So, now this is a reduced project, mostly scouring and protection - things like that.

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

It is so ordered.

4. Commissioner Laubach stated that although she would like to hear about and discuss this item today, she doesn't think the court should vote on it immediately after hearing the information. Commissioner Casterline stated that he would move to discuss the item but postpone action until a future meeting. Laubach asked County Attorney Oster if they technically needed to state the motion and then move to table. Oster responded that they needed to read the whole line item out.

A motion was made by Commissioner Rousseau and seconded by Commissioner Casterline to approve Resolution #R-12-2021, a Resolution Selecting the Most Qualified Proposer(s) for the

Medical Facility Operator Services and Authorizing County Staff to Begin Negotiations for the Proposer(s) to Operate the Facility, or Facilities, which will be Built Utilizing Funds from the Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery Project (CDBG-DR) Number 20-065-098-C270.

**Kim Foutz presented the Evaluation Committee Recommendation on the results of our RFP for Medical Services Facility Operator** relating to a recovery grant that was approved for this purpose in October 2020, following the loss of area medical facilities caused by Hurricane Harvey, along with our identification of a local partner for the project, Aransas County Medical Services, Inc. (ACMSI) and resulting MOU cooperative agreement.

**The two (qualified) proposals received were from:**

**Amistad Community Health Center**, a federally qualified health center (FQHC), a 501(c)(3), founded in 2005, with locations in Corpus Christi and Robstown. Amistad proposed Adult Care, Pediatrics, Women's Health Care, Dental Care, Behavioral Health (including substance use disorder), and Other Service (Lab, X-ray, Emergency/After Hours, Enabling/Supportive Services, Non-Clinical Outreach, Health Ed) in 6,768sf of medical space. They accept all forms of public and private health insurance and they have and will maintain all required licensing and certifications.

**Bay Area Healthcare Group Ltd dba Corpus Christi Medical Center**, a subsidiary of HCA - the nation's largest healthcare provider and also the provider of the successful ER 24/7 in Rockport on this site. They are a for profit business. They accept all major insurance and government programs, including Medicare and Medicaid, and they will maintain all required licensing, certifications, and accreditation. They are proposing a 20,000sf

medical building with multi-specialty clinic space with procedure room (designed for future expansion, possibly with a surgery center), 6 additional ER beds and 1 treatment room, outpatient ancillary support services (such as major testing and radiology). They have indicated that they are amenable to having a Medical Operating Building together with the FQHC that proposed (Amistad) because they believe they would be a good partner.

**The Committee:**

- **scored both proposals as responsive and qualified**
- **believes all services proposed are needed**
- **recommends that the Commissioners Court approve BOTH proposers to move forward to contract negotiation**

At the conclusion of the presentation and discussion, a motion to table the item until next Regular Meeting was made by Commissioner Laubach and seconded by Commissioner Casterline.

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

It is so ordered.

5. A motion was made by Commissioner Rousseau and seconded by Commissioner Chaney to approve the request to renew the contract with Thompson Consulting for Disaster Debris Monitoring for a period of one (1) year, beginning September 1, 2021 through September 1, 2022.

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

It is so ordered.

6. A motion was made by Commissioner Chaney and seconded by Commissioner Casterline to approve the selection of Option A - No Change, on the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles Imposition of

Optional Fees form, to continue the \$1.50 Child Safety Fee on local vehicle registrations (per Transportation Code 502.403) for calendar year 2022. (This fee is used for child safety measures in Aransas County.)

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

It is so ordered.

7. A motion was made by Judge Mills and seconded by Commissioner Laubach to approve the Budget Lite Item Transfers and Amendments. (Per Auditor Jacky Cockerham, there were none.)

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

It is so ordered.

8. A motion was made by Commissioner Laubach and seconded by Commissioner Casterline to approve authorizing the County Judge to sign the Renewal of the County's Adoption Agreement and Certificate of Resolutions (#R-14-2021) for the Section 125 Premium Only Plan. (This plan is offered to all eligible County Employees as a benefit to reduce their tax liability on payment of health, dental, and qualifying life insurance premiums.)

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

It is so ordered.

9. A motion was made by Commissioner Laubach and seconded by Commissioner Rousseau to approve Accounts Payable and Payroll/Payroll Liabilities. (Per Cockerham, we had one payroll but no Accounts Payable.)

Question. A roll call vote was taken and the 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.

**County Clerk Carrie Arrington** expressed that she was pleased to hear about the most-qualified medical services proposers, that this is an exciting time for the county, and that she looks forward to learning more about what one or both of them will be offering this community and how it fits with the medical we currently have in place.

**Sheriff Mills** announced that they completed a successful audit last week from ICE (U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement). ICE performs this audit every two years to check for deficiency in their 287G Program.

**Commissioner Casterline** asked the sheriff if, at the time of the census, whether they got numbers from you about the inmates in the jail and if they were included in the census count for that particular precinct and would count towards the calculation of monies we might receive based on LMI and things like that. He said he thought he saw something to that effect recently, that the people in the jail would be considered residents. **Sheriff Mills** replied that there was no collection of census data on the inmates they had. **Judge Mills** said that the paper that Commissioner Casterline was referring to was regarding incarcerated felons.

**County Attorney Amanda Oster** gave the court an update on something she came to the court on a few months ago when she requested approval for her office to be able to apply for TCOLE (Texas Commission on Law Enforcement) licensing for their investigator. They were able to get the \$1,000 fee waived and, in July, their application was approved, so now their investigator, Andrew Duncan, has his own TCOLE

licensing and is, technically, his own agency and is able to assist in investigating with some of our local agencies, and within the jail, and the sheriff at their request. Mr. Duncan now has some independent abilities that he was not able to have while being licensed under the sheriff. She also thanked the Sheriff for allowing them (Mr. Duncan) the use of one of his vehicles until they are able to purchase one of their own.

**No further business presenting, the Court adjourned at 10:21 a.m.** on a motion duly made by Commissioner Rousseau and seconded by Commissioner Casterline. Judge Mills then reminded the Court to return by 11:00 a.m. for the Workshop Meeting.



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



CARRIE ARRINGTON, EX-OFFICIO CLERK  
OF THE COMMISSIONERS COURT

