

MINUTES OF THE ARANSAS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT

REGULAR MEETING - OCTOBER 11, 2021.

BE IT REMEMBERED that on the 11th day of October, 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 were: Alma Cartwright, County Treasurer; Patricia Randall, Chief Deputy County Treasurer; Tracy Orr, Administrative Assistant to County Judge; Jennifer O'Steen, Assistant County Attorney; Sara Bill, Victim Assistance Coordinator; Tana Taylor, First Assistant Auditor; Bill Mills, Sheriff; Collin Jackson, IT Director; David Reid, County Engineer; Valerie Gonzalez, Environmental Health Director; Jerry Brundrett, County Surveyor; Mike Geer, Airport Manager; Rene Butler, Facilities Director; Iris Sanchez, Library Director; and John Strothman, Long-Term Recovery.

Members of Other Governmental Entities or Community Groups and Interested Parties present in person: Betty Stiles, Chair, Aransas Historical Commission and potential Airport Advisory Board Appointee; Luis Puron, Executive Director, Rockport Center for the Arts; Rick Smith, potential Airport Advisory Board Appointee. J. Shelly, Texas Sea Grant; and Mike Probst, Editor and Publisher, The Rockport Pilot.

Aransas County Citizens present in person: Carolyn Smith.

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 Brundrett. 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

There were none.

PRESENTATIONS

There were none.

CONSENT AGENDA

There were six items under the Consent Agenda:

1. Minutes from the September 27, 2021 Regular Meeting
2. Minutes from the October 7, 2021 Workshop Meeting
3. Keeping Aransas County Public library open to the public until 7:30 p.m. on October 29, 2021, for "Halloween Night at the Library"
4. Donation in the amount of \$6,810 from the Friends of the Aransas County Public Library to the Aransas County Library for library improvements
5. Re-appointment of Travis McDavid to the Aransas County Appraisal District Board for a two (2) year term expiring October 2023
6. Re-appointment of Larry Ward to the Aransas County Appraisal District Board for a two (2) year term expiring October 2023

Commissioner Rousseau asked that items 5 and 6 be discussed and voted on separately.

A motion was made by Commissioner Rousseau and seconded by Commissioner Chaney to approve Consent items 1, 2, 3, and 4.

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

It is so ordered.

5. A motion was made by Commissioner Chaney and seconded by Commissioner Casterline to re-appoint Travis McDavid to the Aransas County Appraisal District Board for a two-year term expiring in October 2023.

Commissioner Rousseau stated that - although she knows Travis McDavid and has worked with him on several boards and thinks a lot of him - she also thinks that available appointments such as these should be publicized in the paper or on our website or both rather than just re-appointing people. Commissioner Laubach concurred. Judge Mills stated that these appointments needed to be done this month.

Commissioner Laubach thought we could put off the decision until next meeting and she moved to table item 5, but her motion received no second.

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

It is so ordered.

6. Commissioner Laubach moved to table item 6 until next meeting and to post the available appointment in the interim, but her motion died for lack of a second.

A motion was made by Commissioner Chaney and seconded by Commissioner Casterline to re-appoint Larry Ward to the Aransas County Appraisal District Board for a two-year term expiring in October 2023.

Question. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed on a 4:1 vote with Commissioner Rousseau dissenting.

It is so ordered.

COUNTY REPORTS

7. A motion was made by Commissioner Rousseau and seconded by Commissioner Casterline to approve Proclamation #P-15-2021 Recognizing October 2021 as Domestic Violence Awareness and Prevention Month.

Tracy Orr read the proclamation and Sara Bill - the County Attorney's new Victim Assistance Coordinator (VAC) - was introduced to the court by Assistant County Attorney Jennifer O'Steen.

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

It is so ordered.

8. A motion was made by Commissioner Rousseau and seconded by Commissioner Chaney to approve the 3rd Quarter 2021 Report for the Aransas County Historical Commission.

Chair Betty Stiles gave the report which included timeline information about the evolution of our causeway between Lamar Peninsula and Live Oak Point (originally built in 1930-31, replaced in 1966-67, now a four-lane causeway built in 2017) and the Copano Fishing Pier (originally the 1930s bridge) that was damaged during Hurricane Harvey, then deemed unsafe and demolished in 2019-20. Superintendent for Russell Marine LLC, Richard Prince, was contacted to save some remnants of the pier as it was being demolished. In response to this request, he brought pilings, roadway, railing, and lights and built a rendition of the pier at the History Center for Aransas County. Additionally, the

Historical Commission is adding three VIP Markers (Visionaries in Preservation Markers) - two at the old Copano Pier and one at The History Center.

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

It is so ordered.

9. A motion was made by Commissioner Rousseau and seconded by Commissioner Laubach to approve the 3rd Quarter Report for the Rockport Center for the Arts.

Executive Director Luis Puron gave the tourism report which included information about the 53rd Annual Rockport Art Festival held this year, July 3-4, then compared key tourism indicators for the Art Festival over the last six years, 2015-2021.

He also spoke about the Birds in Art exhibit that was already on its way here in late September of 2017 but which he helped move to the Art Museum of South Texas in Corpus Christi since Hurricane Harvey destroyed the Rockport venue. That exhibit was visited by 18,000 people over the course of two months.

Puron stated that they wanted to bring Birds in Art back to Rockport, to their new building, and that it will be here in Rockport, Texas, January through March, 2023. It will be the first major blockbuster exhibit in the galleries of their new facility. He asked the Court to consider giving the Rockport Center for the Arts \$7,500-\$10,000 of additional HOT allocations for the year 2023 to bolster the advertising for this important event.

He concluded his report with a construction update.

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

It is so ordered.

COUNTY SHERIFF

10. A motion was made by Commissioner Casterline and seconded by Commissioner Chaney to approve Order #O-12-2021, setting fees [no change] for Sheriff and Constable.
- Question. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.
- It is so ordered.

COUNTY AIRPORT

11. A motion was made by Commissioner Laubach and seconded by Commissioner Chaney to approve authorizing Judge Mills to appoint Jim Rester, Betty Stiles, and Rick Smith to the Airport Advisory Board each for a two (2) year term, expiring in October 2023.

Betty Stiles and Rick Smith were present and spoke to the court about their interest in and qualifications for such appointment. Airport Manager Mike Geer spoke on behalf of Jim Rester who was not in attendance.

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

It is so ordered.

12. A motion was made by Commissioner Rousseau and seconded by Commissioner Chaney to approve Amendment No. 01 to the Texas Department of Transportation Airport Project Participation Agreement, Contract No. 2116RCKPT, regarding a \$330,000.00 Airport Drainage (Sink Hole) Project, to adjust grant funding provisions to reflect the receipt of additional federal funding through the American Rescue Plan Act that will result in the project being completely grant funded and a refund to the Aransas County Airport of \$33,000.00 of local matching funds.

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

It is so ordered.

CONTRACTS, AGREEMENTS, GRANTS & LEASES

13. A motion was made by Commissioner Casterline and seconded by Commissioner Chaney to approve renewing a Lease between Aransas County and Albert Johnson for approximately Three Thousand and Twenty (3,020) square feet of storage space used by the Aransas County Clerk and the Aransas County District Court Clerk in a building located at 644 E. Market St., Rockport, Texas, 78382, for a term of two (2) years at the rate of Two Thousand Dollars (\$2,000) per month, with options to renew.

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

It is so ordered.

PLANNING & BUDGET OFFICE

14. A motion was made by Commissioner Casterline and seconded by Commissioner Rousseau to approve the September 2021 Indigent Health Care Report.

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

It is so ordered.

15. A motion was made by Commissioner Rousseau and seconded by Commissioner Chaney to approve the 2022 Environmental Health and Transfer Station Fees. (There was one change which dealt with a \$5 fee for an unsecured load.)

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

It is so ordered.

16. A motion was made by Commissioner Rousseau and seconded by Commissioner Chaney to approve the July 2021 Fee Report.

Commissioner Rousseau asked about the License and Weight line on both of the fee reports. She knew they were down because of previous discussion but wondered if there was any movement towards resolution with DPS to have an official here in our county to open the building for us. Sheriff Mills responded by citing legislation passed four years ago that requires a License and Weight Officer from DPS to turn the lights on to bring trucks into the station. He said that a lot of counties are encountering similar problems with all of the temporary reassignment of troopers due to the border surge effort. Calhoun County has the same problem as we do - although Refugio and San Patricio both have License and Weight troopers assigned to them. It would be nice if there would be an amendment passed that if troopers are not available or assigned to the county that the county would be able to do that. He said he would welcome support from the Court with our legislators on this.

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

It is so ordered.

17. A motion was made by Commissioner Rousseau and seconded by Commissioner Laubach to approve the August 2021 Fee Report.

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

It is so ordered.

18. A motion was made by Commissioner Casterline and seconded by Commissioner Chaney to approve Budget Line Item Transfers and Amendments. (There were none.)

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

It is so ordered.

19. A motion was made by Commissioner Casterline and seconded by Commissioner Rousseau to approve Accounts Payable and Payroll/Payroll Liabilities. (Per Auditor Cockerham, there is nothing unusual.)

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

Commissioner Chaney: I just wanted to bring up one thing. I had another report of a stray bullet lodging in one of the RV parks, and I don't know what we're going to do about it. This is really getting out of hand. I think that's six or seven actual bullets and holes that are from bullets. It's getting really really dangerous. So, I don't know what the answer is. I don't know what the court can do. I've asked Jennifer, sometime back, to look into it and I have not had the opportunity to get with her to see what she's found, but this is getting to be really serious.


Judge Mills: Yes, it is. The sheriff's trying but unless he catches somebody doing it

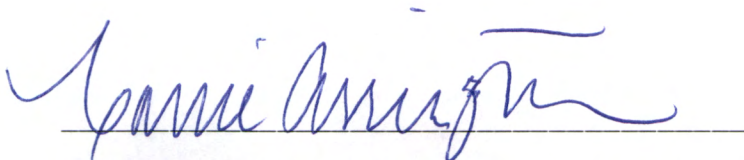
Commissioner Chaney: And, well, that's the thing I've told them. I've said, you know, this is one of those observation things like speeding. You know, you can't go and knock on somebody's door and tell them that they were alleged to be speeding - although you know doggone good and well they were - but I don't know what to do about this. It's really getting to be serious and I just hate to have to

be the one that brought to the court that somebody was injured or killed. Especially a child. So, it's getting to be really serious. Suggestions, anybody?

Judge Mills: All right. Any other thing to be brought up? If not, do I have a motion?

No further business presenting, the Court adjourned at 9:51 a.m. on a motion duly made by Commissioner Chaney and seconded by Commissioner Casterline.


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


CARRIE ARRINGTON, EX-OFFICIO CLERK
OF THE COMMISSIONERS COURT

