



MINUTES

Aransas County Commissioners Court

9:00 AM – Monday, February 12, 2024

The Aransas County Commissioners Court met on Monday, February 12, 2024, at 9:00 AM, in the Aransas County Courthouse, 2840 Hwy 35 N, Rockport, Texas. Aransas County Commissioner's Court meeting video recordings are available by following this link: [Commissioners Court Minutes and Agendas \(aransascountytexas.gov\)](https://www.aransascountytexas.gov/minutes), then scroll to the bottom of the page and select the date you wish to view.

Present: **Ray A. Garza**, County Judge
Jack Chaney, Commissioner Precinct 1-1A
Leslie Casterline, Commissioner, Precinct 2
Pat Rousseau, Commissioner, Precinct 3
Robert Dupnik, Commissioner, Precinct 4-4A

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. INVOCATION

III. PLEDGES

IV. ROLL CALL AND CONFIRMATION OF QUORUM

V. CITIZENS TO BE HEARD

- **Miracle Jimenez** 905 Steart St. Rockport TX 78382- There were cops last night surrounding the house, I can't sleep at night I am terrified and I don't want Rockport to turn into that. I am from the Seattle area and that area was destroyed due to homeless encampments. I came here to get away from this problem. Now there is a homeless encampment right in front of my house. I pleaded with code enforcement to do something when it started in September right before I had my baby. I have had horrible postpartum depression from this. It is the view from my kitchen window. I have this beautiful front yard but now I can't let my children play outside due to this issue. Now I feel unsafe, now I am constantly worried about this issue. The cops were there the other day we asked what the issue was but did not get a response. We need help from code enforcement. I beg you to look into this issue. I have an ordinance here in my hand that I pulled from code enforcement. There is a dilapidated trailer right in front of my house.

VI. PRESENTATIONS AND PROCLAMATIONS

1. Presentation regarding Risk Management Services (RMS) from the Texas Association of Counties (TAC) – Lisa McCaig
 - Presenter was not present so there was no presentation.

VII. CONSENT AGENDA

2. Discuss, approve or disapprove Minutes from the January 19, 2024 Workshop Meeting – Misty Kimbrough/Judge Garza
3. Discuss, approve or disapprove Minutes from the January 22, 2024 Regular Meeting – Misty Kimbrough/Judge Garza

4. Discuss Texas Commission on Jail Standards letter dated 1/29/2024 acknowledging the excellent work of the Aransas County Sheriff's Office with a Certificate of Compliance for the Aransas County Jail – Sheriff Mills/Judge Garza

Donations

5. Acknowledge and Accept donations from the following:
 - a) Andrew Kane in the amount of \$200
Caitlan Frazier/Judge Garza

Motion to accept the consent agenda: by Commissioner Casterline, motion was seconded by Commissioner Chaney

Discussion followed: Donations were mentioned.

Commissioner Rousseau recommend that a press release be done for the Certificate of Compliance for the Jail. This is the 16th time that the Jail has received this.

Vote: Motion carried 5-0: it was so ordered

VIII. COUNTY REPORTS, PROCLAMATIONS, AND RESOLUTIONS

6. Discuss, approve or disapprove the Rockport-Fulton Chamber of Commerce 4th Quarter Report for 2023 – Shannon Biggerstaff/Shelly Stuart/Judge Garza

Motion to approve: by Commissioner Rousseau, motion was seconded by Commissioner Dupnik

Discussion followed: **Shannon Biggerstaff** this is her last presentation. Her replacement will be Alyssa Masengail. See attachments for 4th quarter highlights.

Vote: Motion carried 5-0: it was so ordered

7. Discuss, approve, or disapprove the Friends of the History Center Report for 4th Quarter of 2023 – Pam Stranahan/Judge Garza

Motion to approve: by Commissioner Casterline, motion was seconded by Commissioner Chaney

Discussion followed: **Jane Hill & Courtney Smith** presented. See YouTube video for further information.

Commissioner Rousseau is there currently a sight manager?

Jane Hill we have a temporary site manager from another area. She is split between two areas. Revitalize Harriet's Garden - we will want to have a master plan.

Commissioner Chaney in reference to Revitalize Harriet's Garden have you spoken to the Master Gardeners here in Rockport?

Jane Hill yes we have spoken to them and once we have a master plan we will contact the Master Gardeners.

Commissioner Rousseau if we need to contact you may we contact the Fulton Mansion. I have some ideas I would like to share with you?

Jane Hill yes you may contact the Fulton Mansion.

Vote: Motion carried 5-0: it was so ordered

8. Discuss, approve or disapprove the Rockport Cultural Arts District 4th Quarter Report for 2023 – Jennifer Day/Judge Garza

Motion to approve: by Commissioner Casterline, motion was seconded by Commissioner Dupnik

Discussion followed: **Jennifer Day** presented. See YouTube video for further information.

Vote: Motion carried 5-0: it was so ordered

9. Discuss, approve or disapprove a program to hand out NARCAN to inmates upon their release; this endeavor is a joint effort between Sheriff Mills, Aransas County Detention Jail Staff, Judge Diana McGinnis, Justice of the Peace 2, and Patricia Arnold with ACMSI; Cost is budget neutral – Sheriff Mills/Judge Garza

Motion to approve: by Commissioner Casterline, motion was seconded by Commissioner Chaney

Discussion followed: Patricia Arnold Resolution No R-03-2023 was passed on 2/27/2023. The Opioid Abatement Fund for Aransas County helps the County with the overall health safety and welfare of our citizens. We began last year in March 2023, which was our first meeting with Sherriff Mills and Judge Diana McGinnis, to work on this issue. Under the Texas Opioid Abatement you had to choose some strategies in order to comply with the grant and we have met the majority of items on this list. We started training the schools in our community with NARCAN and providing it to our First responders and health care providers in our area. We are discussing the incarcerated population and prevention programs.

Commissioner Rousseau on the slide it says the leading cause of unintentional deaths in our country. Which one is it? Is it country or county?

Patricia Arnold it is country not county but it has superseded motor vehicle accidents, strokes and heart attacks which are still the highest however, if this is getting up we need to do our part to see what is happening. Narcan only works on opioids and is safe to use.

Judge McGinnis we have provided 10 different videos to the jail and the sheriff is able to control all the TV's and was able to play the videos.

Patricia Arnold there is a free drug disposal medication collection site located at 811 E. Concho Rockport, TX 78382 in front of the Aransas County Jail across Aransas County Sheriff's Department. It is free for the public to dispose of any prescription medications except for liquids.

Commissioner Rousseau this seems to support approval for the continued use of drugs. This is an observation from a few people in the community. I understand what you are trying to do. This would help innocent people who ingest the opioids but the fact we are giving it to people who already have an addiction that might be perceived as we know you are going to use drugs so this will help you if you use too high of a dose. Just wanted to mention that I have heard that feedback.

Sheriff Mills I would to comment on that. We are not just handing them the packet just as they leave. We are giving them educational counseling tied to this. I think this is very crucial to this whole endeavor. We have an educational channel and counseling services in hopes this will help the person change their mind and realize this is dead end.

See you tube video for further information.

Vote: Motion carried 5-0: it was so ordered

10. Discuss Aransas County Courts participating in the 2024 Texas Warrant Roundup with amnesty period dates from February 19, 2024 to March 1, 2024, and warrant roundup dates from March 2, 2024 to March 15-2024 – Judge McGinnis/Judge Garza

Motion to approve: by Commissioner Dupnik, motion was seconded by Commissioner Rousseau

Discussion followed: Judge Garza we are not taking action on this item we are just discussing it.

Judge McGinnis this is just to inform the commissioner's court that the last two weeks of this month we will have our warrant roundup. Our clerks have reviewed more than 8,000 warrants these are class c warrants notifications will be sent out to defendants today February 12, 2024. On February 15 the JP Courts along with Aransas County Sheriff's office will join Corpus Christi municipal court for a joint press release mobile signs will be placed along this city to inform the public. There will be an amnesty period from February 19, 2024 to March 1, 2024.

The roundup will commence March 2, 2024 thru March 15, 2024. Our courts along with the clerks will be working on the weekends during this roundup. These warrants total approximately 2 million dollars. Again these are Class C warrants.

Commissioner Rousseau when you say this was in the attachment, we are planning on mailing out 25,000 postcards and the collections agency will do a sweep and mail out 25,000 notices are those going to the same people or those two separate 25,000 people.

Judge McGinnis the attachment I gave you was pertaining to municipal court in Corpus Christi and yes we may have a different address that the collection agency has.

No motion needed for discussion

11. Discuss, approve or disapprove Resolution #R-01-2024, a Resolution Declaring Local State of Disaster for Aransas County as a result of the Border Crisis and illegal border crossings – Mike Geer/Sheriff Mills/Judge Garza

Motion to approve: by Commissioner Casterline, motion was seconded by Commissioner Chaney

Discussion followed: **Mike Geer** my role in this is to facilitate the request to be added to the governor's declaration. In June 2023 commissioner resolved to support the governors declaration but we didn't officially request to be named as a county. It was brought to my attention from the auditor's office that there are grants available. This could open up a stream of Narcan coming into the county so that we are not having to wait on a particular allotment from TEDM. We might have other options going forward.

Sheriff Mills we had applied to participate in operation Lone Star which is a state funded interdiction program with activities - two going north, two going south. While we participate today we don't have funding from the operation Lone Star. We're doing it under our Stone Garden interdiction funding but we can only participate with other agencies in counties that are Stone Garden funded which creates little roadblock in some places. What is different about the operation Lone Star and applying for this resolution supports for the first time in 15 years we see a coordinated effort by counties and cities that we will have operations in designated areas and we will share resources. We will send officers or they will send them to us. We've had people here from Goliad and Cuero. Instead of trying to do interdiction we will flood an area with 12, 15 or 20 officers and dogs and LPR units and have quite an impact where you will see the motoring traffic stop and slow down and reroute to other areas. They are keeping very good statistics on the stops, the arrests, and the detentions that are made for illegals. This is needed for the funding for the Lone Star grant.

Commissioner Dupnik the 2nd page of this resolution on item number two says the state of disaster shall continue for a period of not more than seven days from the date of the declaration unless renewed by the county judge or continued by commissioner's court. How are we going to address that part?

Sheriff Mills that was a question I had as well but Mike Geer said it was the wording that was required with the state and I don't think it requires a renewal to participate but it's good for seven days from the date you all sign it so we can push it through to Austin. What we didn't do before was go through TEDM. While we signed the resolutions and forwarded it on it didn't go through the proper channels and that is why we are here now. Emergency management is coming into play to get this paperwork done properly so we can be recognized as a participating agency or county.

Commissioner Chaney Since this wording is in here that kind of locks our hands to that date period. Can we give the judge the authority to continue it?

Mike Geer Yes that is correct. The motion can be made to give the judge authority to just sign it and continue it for specified period of time.

Commissioner Casterline that has happened on some of the Hurricane Harvey items. We had to continue to renew them every week.

Jacky Cockerham I was going to add this would be similar to what we did with Hurricane Harvey. We will just renew it. Judge has the authority to renew it weekly.

Judge Garza we can do that.

Commissioner Rousseau I have a concern though on what you said in reference to flooding the area. We only have so many officers and if we are flooding the area and maybe helping other counties, which that's good to have county cooperation, what about what's going on in our county? Where will the officers be to take care of things here?

Sheriff Mills in reference to flooding it commissioner all this counties participate and we will send one or maybe two officers. For example Dewitt County or Live Oak county have interdiction officers they will send and Beeville and San Patricio will send one each county will participate which will help each other out.

Commissioner Chaney sheriff can you give us some sort of idea of the success of it, say monthly or quarterly.

Sherriff Mills every operation ends with a review and all the stats are accumulated. I can bring those anytime we participate wherever we are at.

Vote: Motion carried 5-0: it was so ordered

12. Discuss, approve or disapprove Resolution #R-02-2024, a Resolution for the FY2023 Homeland Security Operation Stone Garden – Jacky Cockerham/Judge Garza

Motion to approve: by Commissioner Casterline, motion was seconded by Commissioner Dupnik

Discussion followed: **Tana Taylor** in order to receive funding each year, for this grant, we have to renew this resolution.

Commissioner Rousseau there is a note referring to the 2nd item - the county agrees to provide applicable matching funds for the said project. What's an estimate of the matching funds that we provided?

Tana Taylor we do not provide matching funds for Stone Garden.

Commissioner Rousseau then why is that verbiage included in the resolution?

Tana Taylor they require that language in the resolution. Some grants have match funding but Stone Garden does not. It's a blanket resolution for all of the grants that go through OG's office

Vote: Motion carried 5-0: it was so ordered

13. Discuss, approve or disapprove Resolution #R-03-2024, a Resolution to select Tiger Field's Legacy to provide Sports Complex Management Services for the Tiger Field Athletic Complex – Judge Garza

Motion to approve: by Commissioner Casterline, motion was seconded by Commissioner Rousseau

Discussion followed: **Commissioner Casterline** I have a question on the agenda item - it says "management" but what's the difference in just leasing the field for the community.

Eric Smith the lease will be contract for it and they're going to provide the service of management for the facility.

Commissioner Chaney what is the term of the contract?

Eric Smith I don't have the contract in front of me I believe it's a three year with two one-year Optional renewals with their request and your confirmation.

Commissioner Casterline when do you think you will have the lease ready so we can read through it.

Eric Smith I can have that to you this week.

Judge Garza I would like to give a background on this. Commissioner's court approved an RFP. I don't have the exact date in front of me right now. We had 3 submittals - one of the submittals didn't meet all the requirements of the RFP. The other two were the City of Rockport & Tiger Field Legacy. There were four of us grading both submittals and they both got the same grade. They were both really good submittals and I am proposing to initiate an initiative aimed at enhancing the management and overall impact of our beloved Tiger Field. I strongly recommend considering a partnership with Tiger Field Legacy because they are a nonprofit organization and you know nonprofit organizations are driven by their commitment to the community. They often bring a unique perspective and passion for public service. By allowing Tiger Field Legacy to take over the management of Tiger Field we can leverage their dedication to fostering community engagement, promoting sportsmanship and creating inclusive recreational opportunities and during their submittal they are open to working with all programs that includes Little League, kickball and the adult league. We have someone that would like to speak - Jessica Pape.

Jessica Pape 109 Spanish Woods. I am on the city side of it of taking over Tiger Field. Tiger Field would need a lot of high maintenance right now and upgrades. I do feel the city would have that staff to do so. Having the city take over will create more recreational opportunities for the kids in the leagues in the community. Right now at Memorial Park we do Little League so I'm speaking on behalf of Rockport Fulton Little League. We have fields that we rent out from the city and the soccer league rents out the fields from the city during their season. Taking over Tiger Field we can do multiple recreational leagues including the basketball, Rockport Fulton Youth Football league. Rockport Fulton Youth Football league is a large and growing league with lots of volunteers and lots of kids and they are always lacking practice areas. Having the Tiger Field as a multi-recreational ground to supply that for all the kids for all the recreational leagues. I have been involved in the past in some of the adult recreational sports and they were good. They brought a lot of team sportsmanship to the community for the adults and the kids watching. The longevity of it was not there but it might have lasted a couple of years here and there. I think having something long term the city can support and maintain for the kids and the community. For example with little league alone we bring in 420 players just in one small season, we rent the fields, we have a lot of surrounding towns that come to play. The facility does bring revenue to the city. I am in for the city to be able to take over and create a good recreational area for the kids in our community and in those leagues.

Commissioner Chaney are going to charge any kind of fee for this lease?

Judge Garza no that is not in the RFP.

Commissioner Casterline we're not going to incur any costs are we?

Judge Garza we are going to be responsible for the maintenance of the building I believe.

Eric Smith the two responses that were qualified were Tiger Field Legacy. Their lease offer was \$10 per month and the City of Rockport's was just an in-kind so there was no money changing hands. it was just them caring for the facilities.

Commissioner Dupnik when you say take of the facility what do you mean?

Eric Smith City of Rockport would be responsible for upkeep of the grounds and they were responsible for the buildings and utilities.

Commissioner Dupnik you said the City of Rockport was going to be responsible for the buildings.

Eric Smith Yes

Commissioner Dupnik with Tiger Field Legacy would they be responsible for the buildings.

Eric Smith in the request for the proposal for Tiger Field Legacy they would be responsible for the buildings I am not aware and I haven't seen anything were the county is responsible for that. I think the Judge, Commissioner Rousseau and myself were at the bid opening and I don't recall saying that the county is responsible for the buildings.

Judge Garza I think the maintenance for example if the water heater goes out or if the toilet gets broken the county would go ahead and fix it that. Maintaining the day to day, that will not be the counties responsibility, there are certain areas the county maintains for example, the county does mow the grass around Tiger Field. Whichever organization gets the job will be responsible for inside the field.

Commissioner Chaney who will be paying for the insurance?

Eric Smith Tiger Field Legacy if selected or City of Rockport if they are selected.

Commissioner Chaney under state law we are limited. You have to almost do a quid pro quo on any expenses that the City or the County is out even with any other nonprofit. If we were not using that we would not be paying on it. If it's something that we would be paying whether we are using it or not. If we are insuring against people getting hurt or anything like that because of the participation that has to be done by the participant. If I'm not mistaken I believe that is right. I just want to be real clear about that. I want to make sure there's a clear delineation between what the county can pay and what the county cannot and it's nothing against the organizations, we just have to be very careful about that.

Commissioner Rousseau the statement about the scores were the same, is that correct?

Eric Smith the final four scores when tallied were the same.

Jesse Torres Jr 420 Weeping Willow Rockport, TX 78382. I am the president of Tiger Field Legacy. Just a little background: Tiger Field Legacy was only created for the possibility of maintaining this field for this RFP. I wanted to be clear with our intentions. We will absolutely work with Little League. Little League already has a facility and we have a lot of people that can't use the park and can't use the ball field during Little League season. Our intent is to be able to support adult, youth, everything. We have talked with the youth football league and we have some people on the board in Little League that are working with us as well. I was born and raised in Rockport. I highly go back to everything that I have in my career and I attribute what started at Tiger field for me and I pretty much want to give everybody else the opportunity to have the same success I did, and if that means making the field available to somebody that wouldn't be at Little League or anywhere else. We have basketball fields there, we have softball fields there and right now it's only catered to younger adults so if older adults want to play on the field they can. The left side is horrible and we are more than prepared to maintain everything. We have had many meetings to discuss what it's going to take to make this field playable and completely with volunteers and our money that we have raised through the community. No county funds will be used towards Tiger Field. It's completely our burden and we understand the insurance, we understand the utilities, we have gone through all of that and we are more than prepared to take that responsibility.

Commissioner Dupnik it sounds like your group is a chartered 501 and what you are doing would actually take expenses which would divert them from taxpayers to your groups operating expenses.

Jesse Torres Jr yes, it would be funding from organizations. We have a big decorated group that's with us. We have professional relationships and we have already reached out for donations. If this follows through, we are very comfortable with the funding that we are going to get through donations and not necessarily from taxpayers or funds from the county, just from what we raise thru hard work.

Commissioner Dupnik is there a point in time where you think you would approach the county or someone for hot funds or some way some kind of venue funds.

Jesse Torres Jr If that was necessary, but that is not our intent right now. I think we can completely manage this ourselves. We have a lot of support. I agree with Jessica with having to have another field and one of our intents is to make sure that Little League has a field to practice on because we know there are so many kids and they are restricted, and right now the Tiger Field, in last couple of years, has

gone downhill and it is heartbreaking to me. We have a passion in making sure that it's available for use for everyone in the community.

Commissioner Rousseau I am really impressed that in the RFP reviews, the strength of the volunteers that you have and what you have already done and given back to this community in many organizations to support the kids, to support education, to support projection graduation; you have already been doing things that show your passion for this community and although I realize the city is a good steward, I just have to salute you in the fact that you all are following what the initial group of parents who took over Tiger Field four or five decades ago and really made it into a stellar place.

Judge Garza I do want to mention a lot of these involved in Tiger Field Legacy are volunteers. I was approached during projection graduation for a kick ball tournament it took one week for these volunteers to organize it all and we had a very successful event we raised \$2,500 or \$3,500 - I can't remember at this time.

Gene Camango City of Rockport Parks Director. I appreciate the opportunity to respond. It was a tie score and we are very much appreciative of Tiger Legacy's volunteers but with all due respect, we have paid staff. Jessica spoke about Little League. We will be out the morning of Little League parking cars, making bathroom stops, continuously making sure things go right and what I think the city does bring to this is a balancing interest. Memorial park has disc golf, soccer, baseball, trail running, people trying to train dogs - that capacity as an organization to manage and juggle those interest within the city lies in us and it goes back to scheduling and programming. I also like to point out the young lady, Britney Elkin, our Assistant Parks Director/Event Planner, she takes care of all the minuscule stuff that no one ever sees as event goes down, like the audio and making sure everything runs smoothly. We believe our constituents are your constituents. The events we hold like the Easter egg hunt on the baseball fields - we do not say are you City of Rockport or County everyone participates. We have the ability to be inclusive. He spoke about basketball courts, which need improvements and no one uses. There is also a pickle ball court that no one uses it and I have a feeling that has to pass maintenance. We are dedicated and we have a regular daily routine of our parks that we go through every day even when baseball season isn't there. We are going through those parks everyday maintaining trash receptacles and the simple stuff of safety inspections and other things. The city has the ability to pull from staff, not only park staff to host these events, but we also have city staff. When we have a parks event I can reach down into water, sewer, and other entities and pull staff to make sure the events are successful. Equipment - not only do we have nine mowers and dedicated people who own mowers and we have the maintenance shop for those mowers we also have the ability to find a backhoe and find different or other equipment heavier equipment. We wanted to show our interest in management in Tiger Field and in our proposal we also guarantee that we would work to make sure the existing activities at Tiger Field are kept and incorporated into the scheduling and use of Tiger Field. We see it as a win-win. I understand your favor for Tiger Legacy but we're all encompassing and willing to work with others as far as the use of Tiger Field.

Commissioner Chaney for those who don't know, I've worked quite a bit with parks department over the years and done some electrical maintenance, that sort of thing and they do a very good job keeping their stuff. I am more in favor, since it's a tie score, with the parks department because they don't have to continually look to volunteers and now Tiger Legacy sounds like it's very organized and everything and I'm not against them by any means. I have worked for a long time to get the city more involved in the counties business as far as participating. They have the insurance, they have the ability to take care of lights, and they have everything that is needed to make that happen.

Shelley Steckler as a member of Rockport Parks and Leisure Board I would like for you to consider allocating this RFP to the City of Rockport. So you guys are currently discussing just the baseball leagues but there also soccer leagues and many other leagues that could be utilizing Tiger Field if it was maintained on a daily basis.

Commissioner Rousseau Mr. Torres you seem to only be portrayed towards baseball. Would you like to speak to that.

Jesse Torres Jr., no one got to see the RFP because that is not our intent. It's not just one sport we want to provide - we want to provide for all sports. That basketball court is very dated as I'm sure you saw in our RFP. We want to put up a canopy up and make it a little safer and keep it out of the sun. We have a lot of plans and we do own heavy equipment. I have backhoes, I have zero turns - I have everything I intend to use. We have maintained this field before. We all played at Tiger Field as young kids and as adults. The field was once very beautiful when it was managed correctly and it has gone downhill that is why we want to do it. We have the proper people in order to maintain this field. We have plumbers, electricians, and inspectors, we have welders, we have carpentry people and we have masonry guys.

Commissioner Chaney I would like to amend that you make a sub motion to approve the city.

Vote: Motion carried 3-2: Commissioner Casterline & Dupnik voted no, it was so ordered

14. Discuss, approve or disapprove Resolution #R-04-2024, a Resolution for the Juvenile Justice & Truancy Grant Program in Aransas County – Judge McGinnis/Jacky Cockerham/Judge Garza

Motion to approve: by Commissioner Dupnik, motion was seconded by Commissioner Chaney
Discussion followed: **Judge McGinnis** this is a continuation of the grant I told you I would be applying for.

Commissioner Rousseau how much money will we receive and how is it being used.

Judge McGinnis we applied last year for \$57,000 and we just got a check back for \$16,700. This year I was able to apply for \$78,000. The money used is for personnel, That is for our drug counselor and for the supplies for operating expenses.

Commissioner Rousseau we received \$16,000 so far.

Judge McGinnis yes we have only received the first quarter. It has only been 6 months.

Tana Taylor - so this expires in August so we still have all these months to capture and I submit the reimbursement.

Commissioner Rousseau so received the money after we have expended it similar to some of the other activities.

Commissioner Casterline we should probably use all the money with the grant.

Vote: Motion carried 5-0: it was so ordered

15. Discuss, approve or disapprove Resolution #R-05-2024 designating County Judge Ray Garza as the authorized official for Aransas County's FY2025 Rifle-Resistant Body Armor Grant Program, Grant Number 5124501, effective September 1, 2024 through the Office of the Governor's Criminal Justice Division – Jacky Cockerham/Judge Garza

Motion to approve: by Commissioner Casterline, motion was seconded by Commissioner Rousseau

Discussion followed: **Tana Taylor** this is a new grant that the sheriff and Robbie Strahan are interested in. They came to court last month and you guys approved to apply for the grant we have submitted the application and now this is the resolution that they need for that.

Sheriff Mills that plate is part of the armor that we would apply for in this grant. We brought the grant to you all a few weeks ago for permission to do it so this would be the second phase to pass a resolution. The 100 club here has for years been very gracious and provided us with vests and such but the body armor with the plates is another step for the ballistic rating and everything else for office safety. We just need the resolution so we can proceed with the grant application.

Gavin Harrison Constable it may not seem like it in a small community like Aransas County but those rifle plates have already saved about four officers lives in Aransas County

Vote: Motion carried 5-0: it was so ordered

16. Discuss, approve or disapprove Resolution #R-06-2024 designating County Judge Ray Garza as the authorized official for Aransas County's FY 2025 Bullet-Resistant Shield Grant Program, Grant number 5057801, effective September 1, 2024 through the Office of the Governor's Criminal Justice Division – Jacky Cockerham/Judge Garza

Motion to approve: by Commissioner Rousseau, motion was seconded by Commissioner Dupnik

Discussion followed: Sheriff Mills This resolution is similar to the previous one. These shields we use while entering into a hallway or approaching a building. This affords the officers to be able to see where they are going. The hope is for each of the sergeants to have one - we would like to have them out in the field without having to return to the office to get them.

Commissioner Chaney what is the cost of them.

Tana Taylor we received the quote for about \$3,500 each and believe we are going for four of them.

Vote: Motion carried 5-0: it was so ordered

17. Discuss homeless encampments in Aransas County – Elle Morales/Commissioner Casterline / Judge Garza

Motion to approve: No motion needed for discussion

Discussion followed: **Commissioner Casterline** I asked that this be put on there because I currently have one in my precinct. I actually think we have more than one in my precinct.

Elle Morales I do have an ordinance here for each of you for our public nuisance and also for our OSSF. Because we are in the county we don't quite have as many rules and regulations that a city would have. I do have both of my code enforcement officers out in the hallway so they can come in and speak to this. We don't have building codes in the county so in the city they have those requirements and regulations that they can fall back on whereas people basically living in just about anything in the county they are allowed to do that. That is your private property you can do as you please. For example the homeless encampment that is in Commissioner Casterline precinct that happens to be the property owner's son so even though we can fine the property owner, he is not going to kick his son off the property and we have numerous types of those situations. We also have a lot more squatter situations happening in the county that we are trying to deal with. We met with Chief Deputy Brooks about ways that we as code enforcement and the sheriff's department can start going about taking care of some these situations, but again it is very challenging as far as our ordinances are. Our ordinances were written in about 2018. I do feel like they need to be updated but that takes somebody having the time to go through and make the proper suggestions and go to the county attorney's office to make sure it is correct before bringing it to the commissioner's court and I feel like both our OSSF ordinance and Public Nuisance ordinance need to be updated so that we may have a little more authority.

Commissioner Rousseau Elle, did you say you are working on revising an ordinance to present to us?

Elle Morales no. I feel like there needs to be an ordinance update. I have not had the time to do so maybe when the new director comes in they can work on that.

We are fully staffed so when the new director comes he or she will have the time do so.

Commissioner Rousseau

I just didn't understand if we were going to expect one in the next quarter or two or will it be a little further down the road.

Commissioner Chaney you use the term OSSF what is that?

Elle Morales that is the on-site sewage facility which those two go hand and hand. We are cross training the code enforcement people to do the job of the OSSF person and vice a versa.

Commissioner Dupnik what is exactly the issue on Steart Street? You said the occupant is the owner's son. What is the actual violation there?

Elle Moralez so basically on that property he has a lot of miscellaneous garbage around. He does seem to be living in a tent and they recently brought a travel trailer and it's sitting in the right of way. We have addressed that issue so that way the right away is cleaned up because we do have an ordinance for that.

Commissioner Dupnik you don't have the right to inspect their sewage facilities.

Elle Moralez we are not sure if that particular property actually has a septic on it. We have been very low on staff, but now we have someone who can actually go out there it will be a lot simpler.

Vote: no vote needed for discussion.

IX. COUNTY ROADS AND FLOODPLAIN - NONE

X. CONTRACTS AND GRANTS

18. Discuss, approve or disapprove allowing the airport manager to write a Letter of Interest (LOI) to the Texas Department of Transportation, Aviation Division, which is the first step in accessing the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), a 90% federal match grant, to fund the repair of taxi-lanes and aircraft parking areas near the T-Hangars at the airport – Mike Geer/Judge Garza

Motion to approve: by Commissioner Rousseau, motion was seconded by Commissioner Chaney

Discussion followed: **Mike Geer** currently in the BIL we have \$745,000 available. This project will not cost that much but TX-Dot Aviation will weigh in and help get an opinion of cost for this, then there will be an RFP RQ process and if approved then it will move up to FAA and they will hold the bank account or hold the checkbook for it.

Commissioner Rousseau this is great thank you.

Mike Geer incidentally the 10% match - we're not going to use all \$745,000, but if we were to we have the 10% match in our budget for the grant

Vote: Motion carried 5-0: it was so ordered

19. Discuss, approve or disapprove Change Order No. 1 for construction contract for Ruby Allen & Traylor Ditch Improvements in the County's General Land Office Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Relief (CDBG-DR) Contract #20-065-098-C270, to Anderson Columbia Co. increasing the contract amount by an additional \$823,262.22; this change order will increase the contract amount from \$4,569,661.00 to \$5,392,923.23; the change order is for additional work needed to relocate existing utilities and adding concrete ditch lining – David Reid/Judge Garza

Motion to approve: by Commissioner Casterline, motion was seconded by Commissioner Chaney

Discussion followed: **David Reid** this is large change order it is a long large project. This is well below the 25% we're allowed to make change orders.

Commissioner Casterline what made them decide to put a concrete bottom in?

David Reid we made them decide to put a concrete bottom there.

Commissioner Casterline what's the reasoning?

David Reid we had some ditch slopes that were getting steeper and didn't feel like the erosion control that was going to be used was going to keep those standing.

Commissioner Casterline is that all included in the grant.

David Reid yes it's all included in the grant.

Vote: Motion carried 5-0: it was so ordered

20. Discuss, approve, or disapprove Change Order No. 2 on the construction contract for East Lindon in the County's General Land Office Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Relief (CDBG-DR) Contract #20-065-098-C270, to Gerke Excavating Inc., in the amount of \$99,351.12; changes include adding 741 linear feet arch pipe for \$156,439.92, refund of \$46,728.00 for concrete box culverts, refund of \$133,677.60 for sodding, \$102,285.60 for erosion mat in place of sod, and \$21,031.20 HOPE pipe and installation – David Reid/Judge Garza

Motion to approve: by Commissioner Casterline, motion was seconded by Commissioner Chaney

Discussion followed: Commissioner Rousseau could you just explain this slightly?

David Reid this was done for the betterment of the project. We wanted to increase the size of pipes driveway culverts on Lindon so we asked to make them larger. That was the biggest chunk of this and it is HDP pipe which is hope pipe which is okay. The erosion matting we saw another contractor use it on another project of the county and it worked really well so we wanted to get that changed.

Commissioner Casterline I was wondering what hope pipe was. I hope it works.

Vote: Motion carried 5-0: it was so ordered

21. Discuss, approve or disapprove Change Order No. 3 for construction contract for Rattlesnake Point Road in the County's General Land Office Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Relief (CDBG-DR) Contract #20-065-098-C270, to New Stout Excavating Group, Texas, LLC., to increase the contract time by an additional sixty (60) days; this increase will extend the contract time from 377 days to 437 days – David Reid/Judge Garza

Motion to approve: by Commissioner Dupnik, motion was seconded by Commissioner Casterline

Discussion followed: David Reid this is additional time is for the repair of the detour roads that we were able to get included in the grant which is a good thing but they do need more time to do that and we really don't want to seal coat too early in the year because of the weather.

Commissioner Rousseau is Allen M Parks part of that?

David Reid yes

Commissioner Casterline are they going to chip seal it instead of using asphalt?

David Reid yes they are going to chip seal it and depending on the cost of it, which I don't know what that's going to be yet, they are still working on it, but it might be that Road and Bridge does the chip sealing if we can't fit it in the budget.

Commissioner Dupnik so we are looking at Allen M Parks and part of Salt Lake Road then also part of East Sage Brush and then all and part of Old Salt Lake Road.

David Reid yes, all those streets that have been used as detours. Some of them are in worst shape than others so we'll evaluate at the time so we can spend all the money we can.

Commissioner Rousseau will the people who live on those roads be notified that there will be construction.

David Reid yes we can do that. I'm sure they will be happy.

Vote: Motion carried 5-0: it was so ordered

22. Discuss, approve or disapprove declaring the Aransas County 2008 John Deere 5075M as surplus and to be used as a trade-in for the purchase of a replacement vehicle, and authorize County Judge and/or County staff to execute necessary documents – Blake Brown/David Reid/Judge Garza

Motion to approve: by Commissioner Dupnik, motion was seconded by Commissioner Casterline

Discussion followed: David Reid so this tractor started working for the county the same time I did.

Judge Garza the tractor is worth \$15,000 right?

David Reid yes.

Vote: Motion carried 5-0: it was so ordered

23. Discuss, approve or disapprove the purchase of a 2023 New Holland Powerstar 75 for the amount of \$44,554.00 and using the 2008 John Deere 5075M as a trade in, and authorize County Judge and/or County staff to execute necessary documents – Blake Brown/David Reid/Judge Garza

Motion to approve: by Commissioner Rousseau, motion was seconded by Commissioner Dupnik

Discussion followed: David Reid this New Holland will be the 2nd one that we have had. I was really happy with the first one so the price is good for this one.

Vote: Motion carried 5-0: it was so ordered

24. Discuss, approve or disapprove entering into a contract for Grant Writing Services between Aransas County, Texas and Lone Star Strategy Group, LLC, for a period of one (1) year for monthly payments of \$3,000 – Judge Garza

Motion to approve: by Commissioner Rousseau, motion was seconded by Commissioner Chaney

Discussion followed: Judge Garza commissioners, remember in October of 2023 we approved Lone Star Strategy group for grant writing services? It was going to be \$2,000 but the agreement was she was going to give us a discount because she is going to work for us and the Navigation District together. The Navigation District never executed their part so Lone Star Strategy never executed the contract with us. It was kind of dead deal so I am just bringing it to you all so that way she will only work for us.

Commissioner Casterline after we approved it the last time I looked at it little more and to me she is lacking in experience. I think there are other people out there who might serve us better.

Commissioner Chaney I never understood what she was trying to sell us. This is not going to replace Grantworks right.

Judge Garza no sir we still have Grantworks. This was for handling smaller projects. Some of the department heads have approached me before and asked if there is interest in this grant writer and I responded no, she never executed her part of the contract.

Commissioner Casterline she has never responded back until now. Why hadn't she?

Judge Garza I have been in contact with her and you know it was on going and she's actually attended a couple of meetings on her dime, but yes we were in contact. I knew she wasn't going to execute it without the Navigation District on board for that \$2,000 a month, but for her to work with us and not the Navigation District it is going to be \$3,000.

Commissioner Dupnik where exactly is the \$3,000 a month going to come from?

Jacky Cockerham it will come from Professional services. We budgeted the \$24,000 but the other \$12,000 would need to come out of fund balance or if we don't spend all the Professional Services.

Commissioner Rousseau the only item I have and I visited with Eric about this before court was page 2 of the contract under item 4 compensation we need to insert in there per month because it says we'll be compensated for a fixed fee of \$3,000 but we need to insert per month.

Judge McGinnis does this also include the program for the grants I wrote or is this something I can continue for free of charge.

Commissioner Dupnik will we be getting quarterly progress reports

Vote: Motion carried 4-1 Commissioner Casterline voted no: it was so ordered

25. Discuss, approve or disapprove Change Order #84 from Teal Construction– Reduce County Seal size from 5 feet to 3 feet and re-locate from the tile floor to a wall visible upon entry – Elle Morales/Judge Garza

This item was struck from the agenda

26. Discuss, approve or disapprove Change Order #85 from Teal Construction – Time Capsule Light; a temporary light fixture will be installed over the time capsule for one year at which time a permanent solution for the light will be installed – Elle Morales/Judge Garza

This item was struck from the agenda

XI. PLANNING AND BUDGET

27. Discuss, approve or disapprove Aransas County Indigent Health Care Report for January 2024 – Alma Cartwright/Judge Garza

Motion to approve: by Commissioner Casterline, motion was seconded by Commissioner Chaney

Discussion followed: Alma Cartwright if you have questions I do know one item on the inpatient hospital is a little bit high but there was 2 clients and one of them was in the hospital twice so that explains the \$29,000.

Commissioner Rousseau I noticed prescription drug total was down from last month from when it was \$11,000.

Alma Cartwright they worked on this especially at the jail returning some stuff and getting some credits and there are some more credits yet to come.

Commissioner Rousseau I know Suryta was working with the jail or some other folks about a new (unable to hear the word mentioned) has that been identified?

Alma Cartwright I don't know where that is at because there's not a whole lot out there but they were going to check with other counties to see who was out there. I was going to let the jail staff do what they wanted to do - we're just watching the cost.

Commissioner Rousseau the credits are good though.

Vote: Motion carried 5-0: it was so ordered

28. Discuss, approve or disapprove job description for an attorney that will serve under the Commissioners Court – Judge Garza

Motion to approve: by Commissioner Casterline, motion was seconded by Commissioner Chaney

Discussion followed: Judge Garza I'm going to read the background. This is something I brought to the court. The commissioners court serves as the governing body for our county responsible for making critical conditions that impact the welfare and development of our community. As a complexity and scope of legal issues faced by the county continue to grow there is a compelling need to enhance a court's legal capacity by adding a dedicated attorney position to the team. This strategic move is aimed at fortifying the county's ability to navigate legal challenges ensure compliance with evolving laws and ultimately protect the best interest of our residents. This position is going to be separate from the county attorney's office.

This strategic move is aimed at fortifying the county's ability to navigate legal challenges ensure compliance with evolving laws and ultimately protect the best interest of our residents. This position is going to be separate from the county attorney's office and I know the question is going to be asked - if we could take the money from the county attorney's civil attorney and put it to this and the answer is no. The county attorney still needs a civil attorney to do civil work in the county attorney's office.

Commissioner Casterline Jen was spending a massive amount of time on ours it just appears that was in the budget.

Judge Garza Jen was working long hours and on the weekends to get all the work done.

Eric Smith I'm not attorney. By the way Amanda previously spoke with Judge Garza about his desire to hire an attorney specifically for commissioners court she has let Judge Garza know the downsides of doing so since Amanda is currently next door in District Court picking a jury. She has provided this letter to make certain information is provided to the Commissioners court as a whole county employee's and to the public. Amanda believes the summary of this job is a bit misleading. The attorney position would not be responsible for developing and implementing the county government legal affairs as a whole but they can in fact do many of the things in the job description, although in Amanda's opinion a majority of these duties listed do not specifically require an attorney's expertise. The important information Amanda must stress today is that if you take legal guidance from an attorney outside of the county attorney's office you are opening yourself up to being held personally liable for the outcome of those choices. Yes even if Amanda does not know about it Amanda is not one who could be held accountable - you are so keep that in mind while seeking legal opinions from anyone outside of her office. Amanda will not be conferring her legal authority to make a decision or give legal opinions to anyone who does not work for her in her department.

Commissioner Rousseau I have some questions. I visited with the Judge a few months ago after talking with people within in the county and the city to see if we could have an attorney who reported just to the Commissioner's Court, and perhaps we could contract for the services. Judge Garza has experience in another role with using contracted attorneys and feels that you don't really have a handle on what the expenses would be which is true. You use them as you need them and if you need them for something major that would be a lot of money however, there are advantages to having someone who can be a part from perhaps the county attorney's office that could give us legal advice, but my concerns with this job description is some of these tasks seem to be more public information office related. I do think we need an attorney that is devoted to commissioner's court. I am a little concerned with some of the things that Eric just mentioned in Amanda's comments and I wonder if we might table this until we could take another look at this situation.

Commissioner Dupnik I have some of the same concerns because some of this when you look at the job descriptions or essential duties, it seems to read as a position of a lobbyist as much as anything and there is associated cost when it talks about representing the county's interest at Legislative committees during session. That kind of falls into do we need an attorney doing that necessarily or are they going to be available to the court. The other thing I had concerns about is the person being dedicated strictly to the court. Where is the money coming from and even though they're a county employee will their opinion be as thorough or as firm as it is through the county attorney's office. I would like to second that table.

Judge Gaza this is work in progress. This is a first draft. The part about the legislature - I did testify last year twice in in front of legislature and Jen was with me both times that is why I kept that in there because of that reason. I want an attorney in commissioner's court.

Commissioner Chaney I think we need an attorney out of the district attorney's office assigned to the Commissioners Court through the county judge for opinions because whenever Jen was in here having to do this she couldn't be across doing the other stuff and she had a fulltime job. I hate expanding the attorney's office but I really do think that the points that Ms. Osteen made were valid.

Jacky Cockerham may I add something. I have talked to the judge about this. I agree with Amanda and what she is saying if it needs to be under the county attorney's office as someone directly associated or dedicated to the court. We need a lot of help. We need help with writing policies, reviewing policies, with resolutions, and we need help with RFP's and contracts. We do not always have time to just set aside for us and some of those things end up getting postponed or dragged along for months and so if we have somebody, whether it be in the county attorneys or working directly for the commissioners or dedicated even directly to commissioners, it would certainly help a lot in streamlining some of the stuff that we have to do.

Judge Garza it doesn't matter who the attorney works for. I just want someone in here.

Commissioner Casterline the problem is if it's in the county attorney's office, department heads come and ask for budget to do certain things. When we budget the county attorney's office I believe we all thought we budgeted that person and it's great if that was in there, but we can't dictate to a department head or elected official how they do their job so we don't have an attorney right now for commissioners court and we need one. I would move to withdraw the motion and table it to where we could look at this further. If the person is in the county attorney's office we don't have control of it. I know we have a hard time hiring people.

Mike Geer Commissioner Casterline brings up a good point that if the attorney works for the elected official which is to say Amanda, would Amanda be the one to hire the person, but if the attorney is going to work for the Commissioners Court, will they answer to the Judge? Then it seems to me that the Commissioners Court would then make the hire. In other words you may be able to find a candidate that you find more appealing or you are looking for different qualities in than somebody that would be working for another elected official. Just wanted to say that for the record.

Amended motion to table: By Commissioner Rousseau and seconded by Commissioner Dupnik

Vote on Amended motion: 5-0: it was so ordered

29. Discuss, approve or disapprove Request for Authorization for the Justice of the Peace offices to use overtime for a State Warrant Round-Up – Jacky Cockerham/Judge Garza

Motion to approve: by Commissioner Dupnik, motion was seconded by Commissioner Chaney

Discussion followed: **Judge McGinnis** this is pertaining to the statewide roundup since we are working two solid weeks. That includes Saturday and Sunday. The clerks will be receiving 16 hours additional and I'm hoping that we can get that paid for each clerk. The Saturday and Sunday will be from 10 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. the courthouse will be open we will have it staffed with Judges here to take care of anybody who's coming in or anybody who wants to pay during that time. The dates will be March 2nd & 3rd, and March 9th & 10th, a Saturday & Sunday. I do have the money in the budget but I do not have it budgeted for overtime.

Jacky Cockerham there should be money in the budget - we would just have to do a line item

transfer to correct that to recognize it.

Judge McGinnis I did not confer with Judge Dupnik to see what she had and how they were handling it.

Jacky Cockerham it should be the same.

Commissioner Chaney will we have to have the security guard?

Jacky Cockerham that's what I was just wondering with Donnie but he does mostly comp time doesn't he.

Judge McGinnis whoever is coming in is going to be the officers themselves.

Jacky Cockerham well but with the doors open I think is the concern.

Judge McGinnis I did not confer with the sheriff but he is involved in this point of the round up.

Tana Taylor the sheriff does have overtime budgeted.

Vote: Motion carried 5-0: it was so ordered

30. Discuss, approve or disapprove a request from the Airport Manager, Mike Geer, to Self-Insure the Airport Hangars and use the saved premium of \$125,535.00 to create a building replacement fund for the airport – Mike Geer/Jacky Cockerham/Judge Garza

Motion to approve: by Commissioner Rousseau, motion was seconded by Commissioner Chaney

Discussion followed: **Mike Geer** thank you for hearing my argument on this case because I brought it up to the Judge a while back and brought it to Jacky's attention and we had a discussion about it. It seems to me that the cost for insuring the airport has gone up 1000% since I have been here and it's just keeps getting higher as we add buildings. When you try to build in the M & O into the rent or the lease for those facilities we're going to price ourselves out of the market. Number one, I wanted to say that from the airport's remaining budget-neutral standpoint that it's not tenable with insurance costs being what they are. In an effort to keep the airport off the backs of the taxpayers, which it currently is not, everybody knows that, but it is and we're pretty proud of the fact that we are one of very few airports in the State of Texas that operates in such a way, but in an effort to do that I thought maybe it might be worth our efforts to create a fund for a building replacement because the hangars that have been replaced and rebuilt at the hanger airport now are wind rated to much higher standards, over 150 miles an hour, and as partially enclosed structures, in other words a door comes up the building, has be engineered to withstand, that it seems to me that maybe we're looking at a maximum of having to reskin the building as opposed to just completely rebuilding it. The previous hangars were not built to any standard that anybody can discern or tell me they were built to budget and they weren't particularly well maintained and they fell down in pretty strong wind. We dropped flood a number of years ago because we just weren't at risk of flood at 22 feet above sea level. Number two, the airport has superior drainage and number three they're just metal buildings with a concrete slab. If they get flooded they're going to dry right out so that made sense. It seems to me that in a wind event we're looking at the cat five hurricane that would hit us with the kind of wind that could potentially take these hangars down. I believe there have been two cat five hurricanes that made landfall in the United States since they've been rating hurricanes, Andrew & Camille but that's one issue. But the other issue is that our hazard mitigation plan currently is at a .6% chance of a major hurricane making landfall any given hurricane season. Now that's a cat three or higher. I think our biggest risk is a really high wind from a cat 5 hurricane. Seems to me that our money might be better spent putting it into a fund. I still don't have five

hangers. If that's some sort of a standard, I think I can rebuild the airport with grants inside of seven years, even if we didn't have enough money in the airport hangar rebuild fund. By the way that number is probably going to end up being a little bit higher than \$125,000 because we don't need to put the fuel pavilion on there. It's at the end of its life. I'm going to get a grant to replace it. When we replace it will probably want to ensure it.

Jacky Cockerham correct it won't be maybe another \$10,000 or so.

Commissioner Chaney even if we increase what we normally put in for insurance by 10% and look at it again another five years or whatever, if we can go 10 years with that we can probably replace one or more of the hangers at any given time and we would already be back to full complement. How much are we waiting for just at the airport?

Jacky Cockerham it's over 10 million dollars

Commissioner Chaney we can build a couple of hangers for 10 million dollars easy.

Mike Geer keep in mind we're not going to rebuild the hanger - we're going to reskin the hangers.

Commissioner Casterline what is the value of what you're talking about self-insuring?

Commissioner Rousseau the value is on the second page.

Commissioner Casterline and this is only hangers?

Mike Geer yes it is only hangers. So in the terminal building FBO, the six based operation and Eugene Johnson Memorial hanger we have some assets in there, and we have the building because the building has a lot of value, but all of those would be insured with wind and TWIA. We are still asking for the \$125,000 to spend but put it into a fund. At some point the airport's going to have to pay back what it's borrowing from the county. That's just the way we are set up. We're not set up to operate on the general fund.

Commissioner Chaney so we are talking about putting in \$125,000 to start the fund.

Mike Geer yes and then whatever the percentage of the airport's insurance would be every year going forward or we could come up with just a definite number not to exceed.

Jacky Cockerham that would be between you and the Commissioner's Court if you want to do a flat amount that just goes in. I would recommend probably even just staying with what the insurance is.

Commissioner Casterline currently is the \$125,000 coming from the airport fund or the general fund.

Mike Geer it comes from the airport fund but at some point like I said when I present the budget to you that I intended to spend \$1.3 million and we're going to make \$1.2 million then I'm asking for the general fund for \$100,000 but its spread out over the entire budget.

Jacky Cockerham I believe Commissioner what you're asking it's set up as a receivable that we will receive it from the airport once the funds are there so it's always covered. It's going to show that the airports in a negative but will eventually be in the positive.

Commissioner Casterline it's always covered if they have the money in there but if it blew down next year.

Vote: Motion carried 4-1 Commissioner voted no: it was so ordered

31. Discuss, approve or disapprove renewing the Aransas County windstorm insurance with Texas Windstorm Insurance Association (TWIA) – Jacky Cockerham/Judge Garza

Motion to approve: by Commissioner Rousseau, motion was seconded by Commissioner Dupnik

Discussion followed: Jacky Cockerham based on the vote that you just took, the renewal for TWIA, I had originally put it as \$700,779 that will actually be \$575,245. I do need you to approve paying it because it's not in the accounts payable that you're going to approve in a little while. We can either just make a motion for that but I did not put it in there because I did not know what the vote was going to be for the prior item.

Vote: Motion carried 5-0: it was so ordered

32. Discuss, approve, or disapprove the Budget Line Item - Transfers for the 2024 Budget – Jacky Cockerham/Judge Garza

Motion to approve: by Commissioner Rousseau, motion was seconded by Commissioner Chaney

Discussion followed: No discussion followed

Vote: Motion carried 5-0: it was so ordered

33. Discuss, approve, or disapprove Accounts Payable and Payroll/Payroll Liabilities – Jacky Cockerham/Judge Garza

Motion to approve: by Commissioner Dupnik, motion was seconded by Commissioner Casterline

Discussion followed: Jacky Cockerham These are normal payables payroll liabilities. I did want to let you all know this does include our debt services payments that are due in February as well as half of the interest and the refunding for 2012. The LTRS for 2012 are paid off. It includes for fund 430 PGAL \$8,685.47 for the courthouse project, New Stout Construction which is the Rattlesnake Road project, there's a check for \$1,605,661.75 - this is for August through December invoices. Brizzo Construction for \$481,330.33 for the southeast Aransas County project and DLF for the community building is \$166,444.46. Those I will remind you for the New Stout, Brizzo and DLF are all reimbursed at 100%. They're part of our GLO Grant. T. Baker Engineering for the water tank at the Detention Center invoice of \$475. They're the engineers to do that project. These are ARPA funds that are used and Mammoth Foundation is for the generators out at Animal Control and AGRI Life \$1,938.42 and those are also ARPA funds and then Teal Construction invoice for \$595,619.53

Vote: Motion carried 5-0: it was so ordered

XII. REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS, ELECTED OFFICIALS, AND DEPARTMENT HEADS – NO ACTION WILL BE TAKEN

- Commissioner Rousseau there was a statement made earlier about the Pathways has to hire people to do the maintenance there because they don't have volunteers. Pathways actually used to hire contracted employees which cost the county a lot of money. We have absorbed that and the public facilities department has taken care of that and the maintenance costs have decreased substantially.
- Commissioner Rousseau there is a group called Texas Wino, I'm not sure where they are based in Texas. They have a website and they had an event on their website. They have hundreds of events posted on their website but one listed in particular, The Rock which is the Convention Center here, was going to have the Texas Wine festival March

maybe 25th or 26th whatever the Saturday is in March. There was no contract ever done with The Rock for that event. This Texas Wino group made one inquiry about the date open they then posted that they were selling tickets for this event with no refunds and the executive director Luis Puron only found out about it late Thursday through Instagram messages. He immediately contacted his attorney and Texas Wino pulled that but now they are saying they are going to have an event in Aransas Pass and the Aransas Pass Community Center doesn't have anything about that either. It seems to be a scam group. My husband is chair of the board for the Maritime Museum and they had several people call asking about if the Maritime Museum Memorial Day event was rescheduled at The Rock so I went to clarify it with the Maritime Museum - would they still be having their Wine Festival Memorial Day weekend and that the Center For The Arts and The Rock were in no way trying to compete. This was a total scam and it's unfortunate that many people have fallen prey to it not just here but in other communities. Thank you.

Commissioner Casterline have they reported it to the AG's office?

Commissioner Rousseau I can check with Luis to see what their attorney has done. I only found out about all of this on Saturday and I'll be checking with my own attorney to see what we can do.

- **Gavin Harrison** in regards to Narcan I just made some quick inquires and I am going to push it with a recommendation if you are prescribed an opioid for pain management that includes pain patches I would recommended you get NARCAN. I just checked and Narcan is available over the counter at Walgreens. It is in stock here in Rockport and at the Aransas Pass location. It's about \$45 for two doses and it's FSA approved. You should have that in your house. We have responded to calls where kids have gotten a hold of the used pain patches and they still contain enough fentanyl to kill an adult.
- **Sherriff Mills** I would like to say thank you to the volunteer fireman. 120 acres burned last night south of the county into Smith road. The fire got out of hand. Someone was burning some trash and it ended up coming clear over the bypass and south of Johnson road. People need to understand that there is a ton of dry fuel under these trees with the freeze and with the wind they had last night they are fortunate they stopped it at the bypass and that we didn't burn on both sides. They were out there way into the early morning hours this morning. Woodsboro, Refugio, Annville departments came from all around to assist and they helped shut down the highway for quite a while but your volunteer firemen did a superb job and they need to be acknowledged in that effort. And on the other deal I want to clarify and really try to stress the point about the Narcan in the jail. My fear is that it's going to end up in my drug recovery box outside when they walk outside but it will give me the opportunity to start a little bit of drug education with them and try to open the door. That way we can get them counseling and get them off the cycle they're caught up in. This is and in no way an effort on any one of our three parts to support drug abuse and continuing in that endeavor but trying to get it out into the community more of an awareness about the effects of fentanyl and the other opioids that have taken over households of people you know and friends and neighbors of yours. Thank you.
- **Commissioner Dupnik** I would like to mention when the Sheriff mentioned about the fire yesterday. A week ago I had couple of people approach me about we need to have a

full time paid fire department. There is no way our community could afford it because the volunteers we have right now, the commitment they have and the equipment that they have is such an asset to our county and the resources they have help each other. But for us to have a full time fire department would be such an expense. This group saves our taxpayers and the commitment they have as such an advantage of the county. Just want to thank our volunteers also and for what they do for our community.

- **Commissioner Chaney** another thing about that - I've been to other communities that have had paid fire departments and volunteer fire departments and the response time and the success is very minimal difference. The only thing that I would say about that fire is that according to one of the witnesses out there they came out there without any water in the trucks. That's the second time they have done that in that particular area and I have no idea why, or maybe they just had come from another fire or something and had no time to get water.
- **Mike Geer** first of all, that was not the case, there were 14 agencies that showed up. If somebody did show up without water I don't which one it was.
- **Commissioner Chaney** I was just saying that we need to make sure that that's not an issue.
- **Mike Geer** You mentioned about expensive equipment. There was talk about a paid fire department too and what I'm starting to notice, and I'm new coming into it, I'm trying to be objective about how all this looks. You have three different volunteer fire departments in Aransas County and they have three very different philosophies, three different chiefs, and three different organizations that have different ideas about how to fight fires. Last night the Texas fire service came to assist the volunteer fire departments especially with wildfires like we experienced last night. There were conversations happening between the chiefs and with TFS that I hadn't seen happen before and discussions about how we fight fires. They lose equipment all the time. Every year one of our volunteer fire departments loses an asset. It either burns or it's ruined. They had a truck stuck last night in a hole for 4 hours and luckily they fought the fire around it and saved the asset but it took that long to get it out of there and get it back into the fight. You have land that is allowed to overgrow. In some cases last night, the fire didn't even really begin to get under control until the first bulldozer showed up and when that happened it was a game changer. We need a bulldozer - whether that's a cooperative effort where all three departments raise money to get a dozer or they look for money from the municipality - it benefits us to have one, keep it on a trailer ready to go where any of the three departments can hook onto it and take it out to a fire. Right now we're completely reliant on a land owner to provide a bulldozer on their own property to help create fire breaks or wait till TFS gets here, which they're hours away from any fire that happens. The other thing too is that if we had a bulldozer we could start working with fire departments to identify pieces of land and work with land owners to then cut fire brakes and to manage property ahead of fire season so that if and when that property is allowed to catch on fire it's easier to manage and we don't lose so many trees.

XIII. REPORTS ABOUT ITEMS OF COMMUNITY INTEREST – NO ACTION WILL BE TAKEN

- Collin Jackson spectrum is down right now as well the 911 calls which are being routed to Ingleside, Verizon is also down.

XIV. CLOSED SESSION - NONE

XV. OPEN SESSION – N/A

XVI. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn: by Commissioner Casterline, motion was seconded by Commissioner Rousseau

Vote: Motion carried 5-0: it was so ordered

Meeting adjourned at 12:17 P.M.

ARANSAS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT



Ray A. Garza, County Judge

4/8/24

Date signed.



Miss Kimbrough,
Ex-Officio Clerk of the Commissioners Court

4/8/24

Date signed.

