



MINUTES

Aransas County Commissioners Court

Budget Workshop

11:20 AM – Monday, June 12, 2023

The Aransas County Commissioners Court met on Monday, June 12, 2023, at 11:20 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 \(aransascourttx.gov\)](https://www.aransascourttx.gov), 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

Called to order at 11:21 AM

Roll Call

County Treasurer – Alma Cartwright

- Treasurer Dept. Page 25
 - Increase for postage and office supplies to cover higher prices
 - Increase \$1000 for conferences to allow more staff to go
 - Bond Premium, went down, the Treasurer's is paid every 4 years that is why last years was more
 - Furniture had \$1000 for 2023 that probably will not spend, but does need a safe for the new courthouse that will be approximately \$3000
 - Requesting a possibility for a step increase for the Healthcare Staff, this brought up a discussion about how step increases are/should be handled in the budget process and consider changes for the future
- Assistance Dept. Page 142 Fund 530
 - Is set up for the pay of Healthcare employees and expenses for the Indigent Healthcare program
 - The Indigent Healthcare only pays for medical
 - IHS maintenance program – already approved in court for an additional \$275 per month for the online application process that is the increase for \$2976 for the year. IHS has not raised their rates in many years
 - Conference, association dues, and bond payments has gone down because we currently have 2 employees and don't plan to hire the third any time soon
 - Misc. – I don't know what know if the counter will be built in for the 2 interview rooms, I may need a desk/counter for the main area
- Hotel / Motel Venue Page 63 Fund 280
 - Collections are down again this month, hopefully will get it back over the summer months
 - Revenue is sinking a bit
 - Alma is now doing the Hotel / Motel records since her part-time person left
 - Discussion about temporary rental ordinances

- Unknown what will happen when the city starts permitting, different rules for city and county houses, discussion followed including parking issues
- Need a way to collect Hotel / Motel taxes through our website, fill out the form and make the payment all in the same place.
- Alma asked if this was still on the ARPA list, Commissioner Rousseau stated that service agreement needs to be but was not added to today's agenda but it must be before they can move forward, if someone is working on the website they are not talking her, and she needs something
- Transfer to INS that's the debit service
- Commissioner Casterline asked if the stuff that Rene Butler is going to be doing for the venue will be reimbursed to her budget out of venue, Jacky Cockerham stated she does keep track of her employees time they spend on that and yes it is reimbursed, also a percentage of her salary will be reimbursed also
- Indigent Healthcare Fund 520
 - What is budgeted is 8% of the gross tax levy, those numbers will not be available until the end of July
- Healthcare Sales Tax Fund 550
 - \$2,57,260 it is actually less than what we budgeted
 - This will be done at the end of July when we get numbers about the sales tax
 - Halo Flight and other entities will be making their requests
- Back to Treasurer's Department
 - 1 Full-time person who is no longer with her, is that position still in the budget, no hiring anyone right now but would like to leave that position open. Tana verified that it is still in the budget.
 - Commissioner Casterline asked if that position funded out of the Hotel/Motel fund. Alma is not sure it can be paid from there, Tana and Alma will investigate this and clear it up at the next budget hearings

Librarian Director – Iris Sanchez

- Fund 410
 - Come back at a later date to determine if we can raise fines and fees at the library
 - Finding fees need to go up from 5¢ to 10¢ & 10¢ to 20¢
 - So raise expected revenue to \$5,000
 - Will need to bring it before Commissioner's Court for approval to raise the fees
 - Increase for Books - \$3,000, and increase of \$1,000
 - Hard back books average cost is \$35, used to be \$16.95
 - Electronic book average cost varies greatly

Facilities Maintenance Director – Rene Butler

- General Fund, page 27 – Facilities Department
 - 410 Professional Services/Certified Services – costs continually going up, raised to \$30,000
 - Certified requirements, Plumbing, Fire Safety, etc.
 - Equipment to maintain costs continually going up
 - Insurance for all of the buildings has gone up
 - Commissioner Rousseau asked why longevity pay has gone up \$1,700, for each employee, she has a very low turnover rate
 - Cleaning Supplies can stay at \$4,800, we are still using what we received from the state during Covid

- Parks, page 46
 - Tiger Field has a known mechanical and electrical issues
 - Judge Garza asked if everything out there worked including the toilets, yes they do, Commissioner Rousseau as if they were the standard flush toilets, yes they are
- 450 & 418 Jail, page 34 - need to follow up with the Sheriff to verify amount
 - Up 40%, a portion of that is Rene's but the Sheriff may have increased somethings
 - 2022 came in at over \$60,000 so we needed to raise it, the Auditors will make sure those numbers are right and follow up with the Sheriff
 - Repairs were made to the control system and control room so those numbers may reflect that
 - Auditors will try to have number broken out for next hearing
 - Judge Garza asked if the Commissioners knew that the Jail passed the State inspection
 - ❖ Many Coastal Bend Facilities have not passed without major repairs and changes required
 - ❖ Rene requested the State Fire Marshall to come in and she walked her through and gave her some things to work on or get updated to get prepared, we do so and we passed
- 295 Pathways, page 70
 - The Auditors and Rene went through this budget to clean-up the line items, as there some that had never been used but had money sitting in them, we combined some. Tana stated you will see the variances in the salary lines, We removed Jennifer's 100% salary into venue and taking John's 100% out and put it into non-departmental, this does not include
 - the change approved today for Rene's salary
 - Commissioner Rousseau asked about 430 Advertising and legal notices, last Pathways steering committee meeting they want to increase promotional and advertising, Commissioner is requesting better coding in the future, Tana asked if she wanted it done now
 - ❖ Jacky stated she put \$20,000 for ads and \$20,000 for promotional
 - the bond will be paid off in 2031
- 441 Pathways buildings and utilities, page 70
 - Increased to realign with history this is includes
 - ❖ History Center
 - ❖ Need to add the Aquarium Education Center back in this
 - ❖ Some street lights
 - ❖ Pavilion lights
 - ❖ Pathway's Building
 - ❖ Etc.
- Commissioner Casterline requesting to have a special meeting and all go through the new courthouse at the same time, in session so we can discuss some of the stuff that has come up
 - Judge Garza stated that there would probably be a Special Meeting Thursday to handle what did not get on the agenda
 - Commissioner Casterline still thinks it would be a good idea to tour and be able to discuss while in session

Recess 12:16 PM 5-0 vote

Resume 1:30 PM Commissioner Chaney not present

County Clerk, Misty Kimbrough

- Personal Services
 - A total of 9 step increases, some of these will be done in the next month but want the 2024 Budget to reflect that increase
 - This is to recognize people who have stepped up to their new positions, meeting all expectations and are excelling in them
 - Salaries are currently lower than what was budgeted for 2023, due to retirement of a long-term employee
 - Question by Commissioner Dupnik asked when the \$2,838 will take effect. Some for 2023 and some for 2024.
 - Showing the whole amount will show the true expected salaries budget for 2024
- Office Supplies
 - Increase of \$500 to cover higher cost of everything
 - When moving to the new building will have to have new business cards, envelopes, etc.
- Postage
 - Increase of \$400, just this year there have been 2 hikes in prices for mail
 - We have spent \$773 of \$1,800 this year already
- Conference and Association Dues
 - Increase of \$600 to include 1 more regional conference for 2 people
- Misc. Repairs and Maintenance
 - Increase \$50, everything is costing more
- Bond Premiums
 - \$240 in prep for higher cost and if there is a turn over for an FTE
 - Question from Tana Taylor with Auditor's Office: What about the maintenance agreements?
 - Question on the change in the maintenance agreements.
 - In December of 2022 the Tyler Eagle annual fee was paid out of this line item
 - This was moved for 2024 it will be coming out of 2 different funds, 1. Records Archive Fee Fund 350 & Records Management & Preservation Fund 450
 - The additional \$50 will be for misc. maintenance and repairs
- Office Furniture & Equipment
 - The information in the booklet presented will give more information on all of the next items
 - \$990 because of UV issues and statutes we will be adding room darkening curtains on the windows that are 9' x almost 4'.
 - \$375 Blueprint storage rack, our was destroyed in Harvey
 - \$2,345 2 tables for public research of records
 - \$675 8 shelving units for storage in the storage rooms for Vital Statistics, Mental Health Records, Guardianship Records, and office supplies
 - \$240 2 bar height tables for front desk, the counter was developed adequately and these will hold our computers, scanners, etc. to aid us in helping our customers
 - \$40,250 5 plat cabinets, our were destroyed in Harvey, this will cover what we currently have
 - \$1,825 1 Industrial Rolling Ladder, to aid us get books and documents from the new High Density Rolling Shelves

- \$157,850 High Density rolling shelves – To hold all of our old documents that are in books, all of our Court Files and any other required documents to be made available to the public by statute
 - This is the only bid at this time, I could not get another company down here to give another bid.
 - These shelves will be 8' high x 21' wide and 27' long.
 - Without these shelves we will not fit in our room on day 1, with these shelves I believe we should never outgrow the space
- Upload data from Kofile “Part 1” to Tyler Eagle (new OPR system)
 - No additional funds will be needed to upload “Part 1” in Tyler Eagle
 - We were able to adjust “time” from 1 project to another to meet the need
 - Kofile will continue to store the books and documents of “Part 1” without additional costs as long as it is not passed June 2024.
- Tyler Eagle (OPR system)
 - \$39,949 annual fee set cost by contract until 2027, to be at the beginning of each year
 - This will be paid from fund 350 & 450 as mentioned above
 - Commissioner Dupnik asked if this was already approved in Commissioner Court
 - Yes it was approved in December of 2022 or 2021
- Kofile “Part 2”
 - If our revenue is less than expected, Kofile Sales Rep. state that we would adjust the plan by what documents are sent to meet the actual dollars available, and this can be written into the contract.
- Mold – current County Clerk Records in off-site storage – UNKNOWN COST
 - Found on March 1
 - Still no adjuster has been out to assess the damage
 - Rene Butler got with the owner of the building to take measure to stop the growth, but remediation has not started.
 - Jacky Cockerham – Aransas County Auditor has sent multiple emails to the insurance company without response
 - I am asking that you as the Commissioners to do what you can to try to get this moving
 - Rough plan to save as much money as possible
 - Scan and then shred everything allowed by the retentions schedules per the Texas State Library and Archives Commission Retention Schedule for Records of the County Clerk
 - Hire 2 part-time helpers to scan and shred documents that are beyond there retention date, 1 or 2 FTE’s will need to determine what can be scanned and shredded.
 - This would eliminate shipping and mold remediation costs for an estimated 10-15 filing cabinets full of court documents that are past their retention date
 - Get a bid from Kofile to add on the Mold remediation for the next group of documents they are scheduled to take no later than August 2023 or we will lose the agreed upon pricing that has continued to climb. We have a great working relationship with them and trust their work, they are the leaders in the country for remediation, preservation, imaging and indexing.

Commissioner Rousseau: What insurance company would be sending the adjuster?

Jacky Cockerham: The claim was filed with GSM, this falls under RPA prior to us changing our Insurance. She has reached out for a status update and has not heard back.

Commissioner Dupnik: Item 7 Furniture – The High Density Rolling Shelves – how many shelves is that.

Misty Kimbrough – They have a rough plan at this time, currently showing 9 different double-sided shelves. Just yesterday we got a move detailed list of what type & size of books and documents that will be stored there from Kofile. The company developing the storage shelves will be finalizing their bid from that list. They will not all be the same size or even depth because of so many different items that we are required to keep. Commissioner Dupnik: Can we purchase shelves needed currently and then later buy more shelves?
Misty Kimbrough: I did not cost it out that way, I will look into it.

Collections – Melissa Brown & Misty Kimbrough, County Clerk

- Page 20
- \$6,200 I-PLOW is our collections program a year
- \$80 Kiowaaware – Tablets to be used for intake, we have re-appropriated 3 of those to use for our new Tyler Eagle program for applications to be completed online in our office
- \$2,040 Thomson Reuters CLEAR we use for back ground checks, to find people in other jails throughout the USA, and to check for people applying for a Court Appointed Attorney
- \$300 Chairs for the new courthouse. Currently we have 2 stools because that is all that will fit in the office.

Commissioner Rousseau – notice that the 2023 budget for conferences budgeted \$2,000 but only year to date is \$150.

Misty Kimbrough – her conference is in September, so the major money has not yet been spent

Commissioner Rousseau – the anticipation is for that to be \$2,000 for next year?

Misty Kimbrough – yes

Judge Dupnik – Justice of the Peace 1

Judge Garza – the variance on the salaries is from last year’s COLA

Tana Taylor – and the step increases that have gone into effect this year

Doc Thomas – Constable 1

- Page 29
- \$922 variance for Insurance on the vehicle

Commissioner Dupnik – asked for clarification on there is a difference in the vehicle for Constable 1 and Constable 2. Constable 2 has a vehicle allowance?

Jacky Cockerham, Auditor - Constable 1 has a county vehicle, Constable 2 uses a personal vehicle with an allowance.

Gavin Harrison – Constable 2

- The original budge was for Charlie Phillips and he did not have insurance. Now that Gavin is in the position and it is needed, that is the reason for that variance.
- (\$150) less that last year with the exception of change in personal changes to (retirement, SSI, Ins, etc.)

Commissioner Rousseau – why is the travel allowance up by \$2,000?

Gavin Harrison – it was moved from line item for fuel to travel allowance, there was a confusion last year on where to use those funds so they have been moved. Looking at the overall budget it reflects a (\$150) decrease than last year with the exception of change in personal changes to (retirement, SSI, Ins, etc.)

Commissioner Rousseau – is the travel allowance allocated during the pay period?

Tana Taylor – yes ma’am.

Commissioner Rousseau – is any paperwork submitted?

Tana Taylor – there was at the beginning of this year.

Jacky Cockerham – this will require an additional change to the travel allowance.

Commissioner Rousseau – I guess I'm not asking clearly. If you receive a travel allowance do you need to turn anything in, showing what the travel has been?

Tana Taylor – no you do not.

Gavin Harrison – alternative to the allowance is approximately \$53,000 for a county vehicle, to break even with that expenditure it takes about 15 years, over what is being proposed in his budget.

Judge Garza – it looks higher because of the group insurance

Judge McGinnis – Justice of the Peace 2

- Page 19
- Not much change on my budget other than the fact I can't control debts.
- \$40,000 current in autopsy fees, we just started with Fort Bend County moving forward to hopefully help reduce the numbers possibly by next year. This year is uncontrollable.

Commissioner Rousseau – I notice this year to date we are at \$63,000.

Jacky Cockerham – Is there a reason we are using Nueces County instead of another county because they are double the cost.

Judge McGinnis – Lockhart chooses not to do any more service with us, so we had to use Nueces County.

That's why I looked for another facility, and Fort Bend County accepted us and we have done the paperwork for that.

Jacky Cockerham – why did we quite using Lockhart?

Judge McGinnis – they decided not to accept any more bodies from us.

Tana Taylor – you stated Fort Bend you are going to start using.

Judge McGinnis – yes we just got that approved about a month ago. We hope they are going to be cheaper. But, both judges will have the ability to use either one of the facilities, depending on the needs.

Commissioner Rousseau – I was thinking, we have already spent 42% for the year, so inquests will probably go way over this year.

Judge McGinnis – some of the deaths occurred in 2022, but the bills carried over to 2023.

Jacky Cockerham – there were a significant number of bills that were not received in a timely manner. So they are showing on this year's budget.

Judge McGinnis – it has been taking 6-9 months to get an autopsy report back.

Commissioner Rousseau – is that from Nueces?

Judge McGinnis – no

Commissioner Rousseau – it may be good we are no longer using Lockhart. Just wants to make sure that the amount allocated for 2024 is adequate.

Judge McGinnis – year to date amount given was \$44, 363

Jacky Cockerham – we just paid another approximately \$20,000, it was on today's accounts payable

Judge Garza – how much is a typical inquest?

Judge McGinnis – about \$4,000, if you will look at the reports for death autopsies, as of May 31st I'm at 34 deaths this year, with 11 autopsies. Last year we had 72 deaths and 17 autopsies. Our deaths are going up.

Commissioner Casterline – what other than the obvious triggers an autopsy?

Judge McGinnis – Car wrecks, suicides depending on the scene, an overdose, juvenile overdose, some are mandatory such as children, infants, if a defined determination is not possible if there is no medical history to help make that determination. This report is number just for JP2 office.

- Tickets – how many outstanding
- Warrants – as of 12.31.22, 1.7 million in 5,000 warrants

- Caseloads, phone activities, magistration last year was 891 the year before was 502, everything in her office has gone up. No way to know the number for 2024.

John Strothman – Projects Manager

- Page 13
- Fund 409 - Only moving part of the salary from another fund, he had been receiving 10% of his salary out of venue we moved it 100% to 409.

Commissioner Rousseau – most of 409 is used throughout the county?

Tana Taylor – right

Commissioner Rousseau – Rents & Leases estimating 9 months lease just in case we have to be here longer than expected. That was approved today, right?

Jacky Cockerham – yes

Commissioner Rousseau – so we may not have to pay all of that.

Judge Garza – right

Commissioner Dupnik – John is 409.102?

Tana Taylor – right, and that includes that stipend for \$10,000 that he did receive, and is no longer being received. So, that number is a higher budget number than what the actual salary is going to be.

Commissioner Rousseau – is someone else still in this?

Tana Taylor – not in 102

Commissioner Rousseau – what about 103?

Tana Taylor – yes ma’am, and there is the PIO open position as well. It has not been filled in quite some time.

Commissioner Dupnik – so the shown increase is because money is coming from a different account.

Judge Garza – yes

Lori Ceasar – Animal Care

- Page 44
- Salaries look good

Tana Taylor – 2 part-time positions replacing part-time people who had been there for some time. What is in the budget is what had remained, the 2 part-timers did come in at a lower rate.

Commissioner Rousseau – the proposed might actually be lower?

Tana Taylor – we could lower that

Commissioner Rousseau – the people who came into those positions are paid less than the prior employees.

Commissioner Casterline – do you have the scheduled them going up in some way other than a step?

Lori Ceasar – no, I usually try to wait at least a year to see if they are going to work out as part-time. We were fortunate, the others were there for 7 years.

Tana Taylor – these were salaries set for the 2023 budget, at that time those people earning that higher amount were still here.

Commissioner Rousseau – we might be able to anticipate that the amount entered might be less for 2024

Tana Taylor – yes, she can calculate that number.

Commissioner Rousseau – question for Lori Ceasar, 39% increase in machinery and equipment, what is that for? This year we did the gates

Lori Ceasar – we are almost caught up, but still looking at the freezer from last year, we have bought a large chest freezer to hold carcasses until we can dispose of them, but it is rather strenuous to lift them out of the chest freezer. Rene was out this week to look at the top coil on the outside freezer.

Commissioner Rousseau – you may be replacing a freezer this year?

Lori Ceasar – it was already built (into the budget) last year. The \$60,000 this year, our truck has 160,000 miles on it and its 10 years old and not very reliable. We have replaced the transmission, during COVID when we couldn't get new trucks. While it was waiting to be fixed a raccoon made the truck his home, when they started the truck it blew up, the radiator the fan and everything had to be replaced. It still does not run very well.

Commissioner Rousseau – this would be for a new vehicle?

Lori Ceasar – this would be for the truck, the plan is to move the “box” onto the new truck.

Commissioner Dupnik – is this fund 580 you are talking about?

Lori Ceasar – yes

Commissioner Dupnik – the additional \$17,000 would be enough to compensate for the new vehicle you are talking about?

Lori Ceasar – as far as I can tell there has never been a plan to replace equipment, vehicles, or safety equipment such as catch poles, bite gloves, all that kind of equipment has not been built into the budget for a 2-3 year replacement plan.

Jacky Cockerham – Commissioner Dupnik, I believe you are asking that the total of \$60,000 (with the additional \$17,000 increase) is enough to cover the cost of the vehicle that is correct

Commissioner Dupnik – that total amount would be? OK

Lori Ceasar – that is the rough estimate that Blake and Tana Taylor, it must be a ¾ ton to hold the “box”

Judge Garza – can it be a surplus Sheriff's vehicle?

Lori Ceasar – not sure if they have ¾ ton trucks or not, we already take surplus when we can

Jack Cockerham – I was under the impression that they said they did not have anything.

Commissioner Dupnik – may need to look at a 1 ton to carry that big “box”

Lori Ceasar – the ¾ does pretty good, it is better for handling on roads that are still sand, they do sometimes get stuck, especially when it is wet.

Jacky Cockerham – we have a meeting on Wednesday to talk about ARPA funds, we do still have a little bit of a surplus on that. This is one project we are considering to bring to the committee, to replace the truck, it does help the health and welfare of the county. If approved it would take that \$60,000 out of General Fund and putting it in ARPA.

- Chemical are up a little bit
- Professional services are up, adoptions that have to be fixed

Commissioner Dupnik – food? There have been concerns about the food we have been using. You have already explained that you are getting the best food you can for the money, getting a premium generic brand. With you being so busy and full, do you anticipate having enough funds for 2024?

Lori Ceasar – I think we will be alright, we have been fortunate to have the PAC bring the CHEWY truck in, we got food 1 a month to every 3 months we get a pallet. Those donations are starting to dwindle down, they are sending frozen food and that is not something we can utilize as well. Animal Control/Care isn't their home. They are getting adequate nutrition/food, what the bag says they need. The calorie needs are calculated.

Commissioner Dupnik – question should have been that you are not getting all the donations you once did. He knows you are buying the best food you can buy, so without the donations do you have enough money in the budget?

Lori Ceasar – yes, we should be fine. We will just stay with the mid-grade food.

Commissioner Casterline – Are you getting complaints that you are not feeding them good enough food?

Lori Ceasar – yes

Commissioner Casterline – tell them to come pick them up and take them home with them.

Commissioner Dupnik – believes that she is doing a great job with that, some groups want more

Judge Garza- I think Commissioner Dupnik is just trying to ask if you need to increase this line item.

Commissioner Dupnik – yes, due to losing some donations

Lori Ceasar – we should be fine, but we cannot afford to feed Purina 1, it has gone to \$80 per bag at 44 lbs., not 50 lbs. What we get is \$30 for 50 lbs. bag. Most of the food is made by Diamond, they are a good dog food manufacturer. There are only 4 manufacturers in the US.

Commissioner Casterline – is there a manufacturer close to us?

Lori Ceasar – not that I am aware of. Purina for shelters was just getting going with COVID hit and it shut it down.

Commissioner Casterline – do some of the manufacturers make both cattle/horse feed and dog food.

Lori Ceasar – yes some do like Purina.

Commissioner Casterline – There was one in Cuero, if we could get a direct delivery to bypass the retailer.

Lori Ceasar – they may if I reach out to them, I'm just not aware of them, I will certainly look and see if I can find. Royal Canine has a shelter program but they want all adopters' information.

Commissioner Dupnik – I was not questioning the quality of food, my concern is the drop in donations.

Lori Ceasar – the availability of food is also a problem. The Humane Society asked if we had any food to spare for their food pantry. We help if we can but we haven't had it lately.

Commissioner Casterline – the animals we have right now, what is the longest stay? Do you have a break down and the length of stays?

Lori Ceasar – I can. I don't have it here now. With Another Chance they are there longer, if they are going through Heart Worm treatment. So the length of stay can be misleading.

Commissioner Casterline – when do the contracts for Rockport & Fulton come up for renewal?

Jacky Cockerham – we've been meeting with them and have started talking about that.

Lori Ceasar - I haven't been included yet.

Judge Garza – there is no expiration date on the contract.

Jacky Cockerham – when it does renew we defiantly need to look at cost.

Lori Ceasar – I am not sure but need to look at adding another officer.

Commissioner Casterline – I am not sure we should “do” theirs. I am not sure we can take care of our own.

Lori Ceasar – we can take care of our own. Our intakes are about the same but owner surrenders has jumped. Those we have a hard time with, the owners need to do their due diligence to find a place. I don't think it is up to the county to bring them in. Those are first out because we have possession right then. Can we for \$10 do that? We people just trying to survive its difficult, but we also have both recues that contribute a lot to the County as well. I don't have an answer. We are not sure they are always from Aransas County. If they live in Aransas Pass city limits they should go there first.

Commission Dupnik – does Aransas Pass pay anything?

Lori Ceasar – no, but it's easy to push them to the other side of the road.

Commissioner Casterline – what is the percentage that is picked up in Lamar?

Lori Ceasar – Lamar is not that high, the most pick-ups are down by the Roads: Shaver, Holden, Johnson, and Smith, A-1, on the edge Aransas Pass.

Commissioner Casterline – Jacky are looking at the fees on those contracts?

Jacky Cockerham – we most defiantly are, those have not been changed in years, while our costs have gone up considerably.

Commissioner Casterline – what percentage of our budget is funded through them?

Lori Ceasar – probably a third.

Jacky Cockerham – I don't want to even guess. I think the City Rockport pays now about \$25,000 per year. I may be wrong, I just need to look at it.

Lori Ceasar – thought is about \$100,000 but not sure. We are at a about a \$450,000 budget, that's not very much.

Commissioner Casterline – we need to look at it, they don't hesitate in giving big raises, in things we partner with them, without asking they just send a bill.

Collin Jackson – IT Director

- Page 14
- Most of the IT budget covers the entire county, it is not one department.
- We are working on de-skewing the budget each year working on breaking things out of the IT budget to be in the different department's budget.
- We have it down about \$200,000 by getting items to the correct departments.

Commissioner Casterline – is that money just moved to other budgets?

Collin Jackson – some of it, about \$80,000 to other budgets. Took about \$130,000 out of capitol for the new courthouse that we have already issued PO's for, which brought that back down to a typical budget for new pc's purchasing and inventory control for general replacements around the county. Keeping our 4-5 year rotation cycle for computers.

Commissioner Rousseau – when you said you took \$130,000 out of your budget did it go into some other department's budget?

Collin Jackson – I did not that came straight out of bottom line

Commissioner Rousseau – I notice some departments have excessive phone charges and yours is going up \$13,000, the airport went up considerably, and a couple of other departments.

Collin Jackson – part of this federal and state broadband initiatives. They have enacted new fees that they have passed down to the customers. Some of it is for every phone at someone's desk we get charged for the extension. The phone the department has the more their phone bill will be.

Commissioner Casterline – have you looked at going with someone different?

Collin Jackson - all phone systems now are per phone, they don't general phone lines any more.

Commissioner Dupnik – why is there a variance on your salary?

Collin Jackson – I don't have anything to say on the salary numbers because I didn't put those together.

Tana Taylor – that was due to a step increase.

Commissioner Dupnik – for his staff?

Tana Taylor – no sir, when we did the 2023 budget in 2022 and the requests for step increases, this is part of the discussion that some people do process them and some don't. There is no variance in the 103 line, because those step increases have not gone into effect.

Collin Jackson – those are Judy and Russ, there annual reviews will come up at the end of this month. So if they get step increases that is when they will happen. I've been very conservative on step increases but with cost of living and things they are doing now I will be putting them in for this year that is in the budget.

Judge Garza – what do you use professional services on?

Collin Jackson – consulting for network design, security design, use it for major projects instead of capital outlay. We have not had to use it in the last few years but it needs to stay there because it will come up.

Judge Garza – Collin does your budget take into account moving into the new courthouse?

Collin Jackson – most of the furniture will be going, we shouldn't need anything major, just small things.

Linda Doane – Human Resources Director

- Page 24
- Furniture for assistant it is a very small desk

- Maintenance agreement increase, Collin can answer

Tana Taylor – part is for the HR Module for Encode, it is an annual maintenance, the renewal is going up, and this is one of the ones that IT used to cover but is now going in the HR budget.

Commissioner Rousseau – if part is for Encode what is the rest of it for?

Tana Taylor – I don't know the answer to that.

Linda Doane – Encode is the only one I am aware of.

Jacky Cockerham – we will see if we can figure this out, the approximate \$3,000 may not need to be added this may be for that on its own.

Tana Taylor – we need to verify that because that this year is the first year that he changed from his budget to everybody else's. I'll check that.

Jacky Cockerham – sometimes Collin says to change it but then still charges it to his department.

Commissioner Casterline – a number of years ago it was set up in each department then it was put all in his

2:37 PM Five minute recess

Tana Taylor – Auditor's

- Page 23

Judge Garza – the increase is just in salaries

Tana Taylor – When the District Judges came to meet with us about the budget asked to put in for 5% COLA for ours to match what they are doing for all of their counties.

Commissioner Dupnik – that is 102 & 103?

Tana Taylor – 103, correct

Commissioner Casterline – we need Judges for Live Oak County where they don't have all that income.

Jacky Cockerham – our Judges are in Live Oak County.

Commissioner Casterline – they don't live there, they live in San Patricio where they've got millions of dollars

Jacky Cockerham – Judge Bauer lives in Bee County

Kevin Stroud – Elections

- Page 22

Tana Taylor – I will say that the budget sheets he turned in for expenses there was a lot of statutory regulations that he had to increase his part-time salary

Commissioner Casterline – for what they pay?

Tana Taylor – for what he is required to have on staff per the number of voters are coming in.

Commissioner Casterline – what happened to the bill where the head of elections would be elected?

Jacky Cockerham and Tana Taylor – we don't know.

Misty Kimbrough – in conference it was stated that it is still under the County Clerk unless there is an Elections Administrator appointed.

Tana Taylor – in an email sent to me it was HB 1217, requires more hours to be open for early voting, that is the reason for the increase.

Commissioner Rousseau – including a Sunday

Tana Taylor – line item 115 it is a \$40,000 variance

Commissioner Casterline – this will be for an election year, not every year

Jacky Cockerham – He stated that next year was going to be a very busy year.

Kevin Stroud – the temporary help has been historically been under budgeted. The county was under the impression that we got reimbursed from the State but we do not. The exception for that is the Primary Elections, when we get reimbursed for Election Day workers only. We are responsible for footing the bill for early voting.

Judge Garza – proposed for temporary help is \$45,000 it has been corrected since your books were printed to \$52,872.

Commissioner Dupnik – will you clarify reimbursements

Kevin Stroud – For Primary Elections, the county is responsible for early voting, and on Election Day the parties are responsible for it. For Election Day we get the reimbursement from the State.

Commissioner Casterline – are there going to be any new machine purchases on the horizon?

Kevin Stroud – No, but one major addition is on the supplies line item, that is an increase of \$19,000 due in large part to the thermal ballot paper that is required for new equipment. Next year is going to be a very busy election year. We have 4 anticipated elections and the price of that paper has gone up \$50 per box.

Commissioner Casterline – what is the significance of using that kind of paper?

Kevin Stroud – is what is required by that voting equipment. It's a special type of paper. To his knowledge the voting machine vendor is the only supplier for that paper.

Commissioner Casterline – I wonder if they didn't think of that on their own?

Commissioner Rousseau – your conference and association dues

Kevin Stroud – requesting an increase primarily due to the extra part-time employee in my office. Registration fees are going up as well as mileage costs.

Commissioner Rousseau – I hope that all of you would not all be attending the same conference.

Kevin Stroud – there is a time that will happen.

Commissioner Rousseau – how is the office handled?

Kevin Stroud – it depends on the conference itself, we have one in early August. August is our slowest time of the year, last year we just closed the office for the training.

Commissioner Rousseau – how many days?

Kevin Stroud – closed to the public for 3 days.

Commissioner Casterline – what kind of calls do we have that time of year anyway?

Kevin Stroud – phone calls minimal to none. I do take the work laptop and retrieve the voicemails, so if anything comes up I do have the ability to respond to those.

Commissioner Rousseau – where is the conference?

Kevin Stroud – this one is in Austin.

Anna Marshall – Tax Assessor Collector

- Page 26
- Not many major changes
- Decrease in professional services
- The only increase is in misc. repairs and maintenance, the contracts for the 2 money machines are going up.
- Increase for the bond premiums added my bond or the Texas Collectors Bond will be renewed in 2024

Commissioner Rousseau – is that not on an annual basis?

Anna Marshall – it is every other year with the election, 2024 will be mine, then in 2025 will be the Chief Deputies, then none for 2-3 years.

Commissioner Rousseau – the figure from the Appraisal District is most likely going up.

Anna Marshall – I'm sure.

Commissioner Rousseau – what I saw last week at the meeting is about a \$70,000 increase, I just wanted to make a note of that because it is going to be a significant amount.

Anna Marshall – another thing I ask is for 1-2 step increases upon yearly evaluations if deserved.

Judge Bauer – District Judge

- Page 16
- There have been changes in the law that requires us to go up a couple of categories
 - It is now a county expenses to provided interpreters in civil cases for those who cannot speak English, in this county we have had some other languages as well. This can be very expensive. So we have gone up on interpreters on line item 410
 - Jury fees have gone up instead of \$6 for the first day, it will be \$10, and everyday thereafter instead of \$40 will be \$54 or \$56. That increases our jury fees pretty significantly. Raises it to \$32,000 by our best estimate.
 - Every jury we have planned for Aransas County goes, we never crater in Aransas County. Some of our District Judge to set weeks, weeks where all five of our counties keep the District Court room available for a jury trial. Two of those for this year are Aransas County Weeks to take care of Aransas County Trials. Some of these are incarcerated individuals who have been held for more than 600 days. A lot of them are older cases that they out on bond and these are not the first ones that are called so these cases keep getting delayed and delayed. During these District court weeks, I have taken the position that I can call any criminal case that I want. So I am using it to move the bond cases, many of these are very serious cases that just haven't been addressed. I believe we still have some bonds cases from 2019 and they need to be taken care of. The law requires that those who have bene incarcerated go first, but on the special setting weeks we can have a civil preference or do bond cases. These means that I know for two additional weeks we are going to have juries. Judge Whatley has also made two of hers for Aransas County jury weeks. Judge Flanigan, I don't believe has set his reserved weeks yet, but we all of a like mind.
 - Attorney's fees – when crime goes up and much more serious crimes it causes these fees to go up. This is our best guess is that \$300,000.

Commissioner Dupnik – when you say attorney fees at \$300,000, what I've got is \$200,000

Jacky Cockerham – what ya'll got has been changed after talking about it, it is now \$300,000

Commissioner Rousseau – we are already at 42% of the year so I didn't know if that was realistic

Judge Garza – those are the court appointed attorneys?

Judge Bauer – they are.

Jacky Cockerham – we do get a reimbursement but only like \$30,000 for all of it between District and County Court.

Judge Bauer – I take the financial obligation seriously, I often set these cases for status to make sure that they paying back what needs to be paid back.

Amada Oster – County Attorney

- Page 21
- Step Increases – and request another attorney to handle our felony cases. We have so many cases sometimes we have 70-90 cases set for one day. If we had another attorney we might be able to resolve

more of them. We are the middle of picking a murder jury right now and I'm need here. We do our best to coordinate vacations and time off but with only 2 handling felony cases and didn't do well coordinating being sick earlier this year and that put us where we both had to come to work sick. I think we would be able to move through more of our dockets with an additional attorney.

- Court Costs includes our travel expenses for victims and witnesses, almost all of those do get reimbursed by the State. It looks like a lot but we have flown people from Alaska to Florida, because they were victims of sexual assault or something like that and we needed them here to testify. About 90% does get reimbursed by the State.

Commissioner Rousseau – does it go back into the General Fund?

Jacky Cockerham –it goes to a revenue line instead of an expense line.

Amanda Oster – when we do bond forfeitures for the county those funds don't get reflected in our budget they do come back to the General Fund. Judge Bianchi asked our office to start doing his bond forfeitures this year so now we do them for County Court at Law as well. This is if someone does not come to court, their bond is forfeited. If it is a surety company that company is liable for those funds, if it is a cash bond we get to keep the money.

Commissioner Dupnik – question to the Auditors – is the social security and insurance reflecting for that new attorney?

Tana Taylor – yes sir.

Amanda Oster – Judge Bauer asked me to mention the faster these cases get moved the less attorney fees get paid and they spend less time in our jail so the Sheriff doesn't have to house them.

Judge Garza – is there a formula where you have to complete a certain amount of cases in order to qualify for some grants? I get an email that shows our percentages of where we are at.

Amanda Oster – we have to close 90% of the cases, it rolls on an annual basis so we are not talking about this year, and it's in the past. And they do an average that 90% have to be closed or we lose a lot of grant funding and those are only tied to criminal cases and our class C tickets don't count in those numbers. Those cases lingering for years does affect those numbers and possibly grant monies.

Judge Garza – so this position will help make sure we make that 90% mark

Amanda Oster – yes, several years ago Nueces County did not meet the mark and they lost a lot of grant money. So it is something the state takes seriously, it is not a hallow threat.

Law Library Fund

- Page 98 / 100
- Fund 470
- A few years ago we switched to an electronic law library. Until we move into the new courthouse the books we have currently will stay in the office but once we move into the new facility there will not be a place for them. We will find someone who can use them. We will be staying with electronic library, neither the books or electronically gets a lot of use. It is significantly cheaper to be electronic and it is more user friendly.
- The cost of the subscription increased \$500
- 570 Furniture – this is just to replace something if it is broken.

Asset Forfeiture Fund

- Fund 485
- Page 106
- The money that goes into this fund is that we are awarded through forfeiture cases. I have the sole discretion within legal parameters on what that money can be used for. I do have to make a budget but to be fair you guys don't get to decide what the money is used for, as long as I am following the law.

- I had allotted quite a bit of money to get our investigator a new car, by the end of this year that goal will be satisfied. So that item has come off of the budget for next year. We have left money in for the maintenance of the vehicle such as oil changes, tires, and things of that nature.
- I can also donate money to specific non-profit organizations. So there is a few thousand dollars for that every year. It is listed under donations. I think by next year we will \$5,000 to donate. In the past we have donated to the child advocacy center, they interview our children for our cases.

Commissioner Rousseau – to any other entities?

Amanda Oster – they have to meet the requirements set including being a non-profit agency

Commissioner Dupnik – we don't recover a lot of money each year?

Amanda Oster – We don't recover a lot, when I worked at Kleberg County they got about a million per year and funded employees and some other stuff. We are doing better at recovering funds this year but I anticipate making that big expenditure for the vehicle then maintaining things and if we get another big amount I will consider what to purchase that I don't want to ask the county for.

Commissioner Rousseau – your office supplies went from \$500 to \$7, 500, that seems significant.

Amanda Oster – that's not right, my intention was that we could use some of the asset forfeiture money to buy some new furniture to meet the minimum that we will need for the new space.

Commissioner Rousseau – year to date it shows \$99 in forfeited assets but we are thinking that we will get \$25,000 for the year? Is that optimistic?

Amanda Oster – we've actually gotten more money than that this year

Jacky Cockerham – we just had a significant deposit just this las week.

Amanda Oster – I look at pending money for the asset forfeiture and yes I think we will receive that amount, but I can't spend it if I don't have it. But if I don't have it budgeted then I can't spend if I get it.

Pre-trial Intervention Fund

- Page 122
- Fund 560
- No significant change here, had a discussion with Auditors about which line item to put the money coming into and the money coming out. Not different money just need to know where the money is going to go. These line items were already in place when I got here. If we sign up people on a Pre-Trial Intervention they pay \$500. I don't get or need that money, but there are very specific things I can spend that money on. The main one is for people to watch over them while they are on pre-trial supervision that is like a probation. If you do everything you are supposed to do you won't have a convection on your record. One of the things I can do with that money is give it to the Probation Office for their work in supervising the individuals. After the paperwork is done we are not doing anything with them so I don't think I should be keeping the money. This reflects that any money coming in goes back out to the Probation Department and help pay what they are doing. Meeting with them every month, sending them to classes, making house calls, and things like that. This amount is our goal because reflects about ½ of a person's salary at the Probation Department, because we share our Probation officers with multiple counties.

Judge Bauer – I missed something on page 16. On the petit jury expenses that have increased to the \$56 we do get that refunded by the State, so that is basically a wash. But we do have to budget for it because sometimes those checks don't come quickly.

Elle Martinez – Environmental Health Director

It was very hard to hear Ms. Martinez so this transcript may not be complete

- Page 40 - Fund 590

Commissioner Rousseau – on 103 Regular FT Employees what is showing here does not reflect what was approved in this morning’s court for the supervisory in training position.

Tana Taylor – correct.

Commissioner Rousseau – so the \$269,780 we will add \$50,000 some

Tana Taylor – correct

Commissioner Rousseau – is that \$50,000 some plus inclusive of burdens

Tana Taylor – to that particular line it will be \$37,900 to 103, then what makes up to the \$55,039 that covers all the benefits.

Commissioner Rousseau – so when we get the revised budget it will have that amount in

Tana Taylor – yes ma’am

Commissioner Rousseau – doesn’t look like you are adding much, motor vehicle repairs.

Judge Garza – you don’t anticipate any more machinery or big ticket items – you are on Environmental Health

Tana Taylor – I’m sorry I misspoke the numbers I gave you is going to go into the 510 fund Transfer Station

Commissioner Dupnik – asked for clarification on 492 Septic Permit Fee, that’s a revenue we normally get?

Elle Martinez – We pay the first thing, so for Environmental Health we don’t have a lot of needs. Some of our vehicles full insurance to identify the afforded enforcement guys when they go out, we have two that keep going back to get fix the camera that they have for code enforcement.

Tana Taylor – we haven’t added that line for your uniforms, she is requesting that a thousand dollars for uniforms

Commissioner Rousseau – so the line item is not on here

Tana Taylor – no

Commissioner Rousseau – but it will be added

Tana Taylor – yes ma’am

Commissioner Rousseau – what’s that number going to be?

Tana Taylor – 120.590.496

Commissioner Rousseau – Under the Septic Permit Fees?

Elle Martinez – requesting some filing cabinets for the permit files, they are jam packed.

Judge Garza – how big is that filing cabinet for 1400

Elle Martinez – we use the medical ones

Tana Taylor – you need that for 2024? The County Clerk’s office is getting rid of some.

Misty Kimbrough – we will have regular filling cabinets

Tana Taylor – not the medical style

Mosquito

- Page 84 fund 400

Tana Taylor – Elle has also requested a uniform line for this department that is not here right now, for \$500.

Elle Martinez

- I want to get the guys at least T-shirts for the future to identify them, about a month or so ago, the City of Rockport Service Department actually got broken into and they stopped our guys to make sure they were County Employees. None of the had their ID badges it was a matter of a phone call
- One of the big thing with mosquito talk is they are out from 9 PM until 3 AM driving down rural areas and if a tire goes out or they get stuck they are calling for help, and they need to get out of there as quickly as possible. They try to get themselves towed back to the yard.
- \$7-10,000 for new sprayer
- Trucks are old and need to be replaced, we will then use it for the transfer station

Commissioner Casterline – what is the age of your trucks?

Elle Martinez – I don’t know that off the top of my head. But the mechanic said that there’s one that we should replace and that is why we’re requesting. It will come to Environmental Health and utilize it there then pass it down to Mosquito Control because one it goes to Mosquito Control all the chemicals destroy it.

Commissioner Casterline – I’m surprised there haven’t been a lot more mosquitos.

Elle Martinez – that’s because they are out there spraying

Commissioner Rousseau – so the \$35,000 is in anticipation of a new truck?

Elle Martinez – correct

Commissioner Rousseau – can you get a truck for \$35,000?

Elle Martinez – I don’t know the exact amount

Jack Cockerham – ya’ll usually but the little Ranger type trucks, not the big full sized

Commissioner Dupnik – where does the funds come from?

Tana Taylor – all based on the sales tax

Jacky Cockerham – they get like a 100th of penny of the General Fund Tax the rest of it is Health Nurses

Tana Taylor – showing on the screen the revenues

Transfer Station

- Page 151 Fund 510

Commissioner Rousseau – here is where we will add the Supervisory Position

Tana Taylor – right

- The largest thing in this department would be a front loader

Judge Garza – is that the \$295, 000

Elle Martinez –

- It’s part of that, the front loader will cost approximately \$255,000
- Building up about 500 feet of station railing around the dumpster area for \$25,000
- \$10,000 to cover the dumpsters at night. When they have debris left in the overnight they are supposed to be covered. We can put a big canopy over the top which we know will get destroyed. We think this would be a better easier idea to just cover them at night. It will probably take 15-20 minutes per dumpster.
- By the end of the year there will be 3 with our license
- The supervisor, assistant supervisor, the operator and myself have gone to the Corpus Christi Transfer Station and spoke to them and got advice about what would be good for the future for Aransas County Transportation Station as far as work as we are growing. They just purchased 92 acres.
- Trucks that go to Corpus Christi every day of the week
- Under Miscellaneous Repairs and Maintenance

Commissioner Casterline – are those tarps fairly, are they light, I wonder how much they weigh. Have you ever seen tarps that are used on Billboard signs they have a vinyl covering on one side there are companies that when they take those down they cut them into different sizes and sell them. The ones we used to use were real good quality.

Elle Martinez – this are on the truck so there’s specific requirements

- \$5,000

Commissioner Rousseau – what Line Item did you put that in? (could not hear the response)

Commissioner Casterline – something we might look into when you are going to your schools, I learned at one of my conferences. A County in East Texas set up a hardware store. Items that were being discarded they recycled, but they had a building where they sold doors and anything that you could think of that was good. People that were doing construction would come and buy all of their stuff from the dump.

Elle Martinez – spoke but I couldn’t understand what she was saying.

- Our mechanic, he is young but he is a good mechanic and I would like to send him to some training for Hydraulics

Commissioner Rousseau – do you have that on your conference and associations dues?

Elle Martinez – right

Commissioner Casterline – does she have enough money to cover what she is talking about here?

Jacky Cockerham – She is going to use it up.

- This year is a goal to get our transportation costs down, we have 2 trailers we haven't been using for the last 2 years and we finally got one up and running this last week again. We took parts from 1 to get the other up and going. This cuts down our trips to Corpus Christi to 1 time a day.

Commissioner Casterline – do we need to look into replacing the 1 you scavenged from

Elle Martinez –

- We are going to see how this one goes for six months
- Joe one of our drivers has been practicing how to drive the double trailer and back it up. His maiden voyage will be this week.

Commissioner Dupnik – that will cut your traveling expenses in ½ roughly.

Elle Martinez – if we can cut our trips down to one or two times a day, right now we make 3-4 trips a day. Each trip takes about 3 hours.

Commissioner Casterline – How many drivers do you have?

Elle Martinez – 2 drivers, 1 works Monday – Thursday and 1 works Tuesday – Friday. Joe comes in early on Monday to handle the chemicals then starts with the regular items. Once we see how this works and there are no accidents we will start training Andrew who used to work for Road and Bridge.

Commissioner Dupnik – have you figured out what one trip does cost you for your vehicle and your driver?

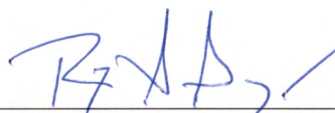
Elle Martinez – I have not

Commissioner Rousseau – it sounds like great things are going on out there.

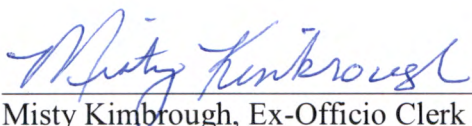
Judge Garza – Can I have a motion to adjourn

Commissioner Rousseau so moved, Commissioner Casterline seconded

Motion carried 4-0



Ray A. Garza, County Judge



Misty Kimbrough, Ex-Officio Clerk
Of the Commissioners Court