

MINUTES

Aransas County Commissioners Court



9:39 AM – Monday, September 11, 2023

The Aransas County Commissioners Court met on Monday, September 11, 2023, 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 \(aransascountytx.gov\)](https://aransascountytx.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

I. CALL TO ORDER & PLEDGES

The meeting convened at 9:39 AM

II. INVOCATION

III. ROLL CALL was taken and QUORUM was declared, and the following proceedings were had and done, to wit:

IV. CITIZENS TO BE HEARD

- Kristie Rutledge – On Saturday I attended the adoption event at Aransas County Animal Control. I first became aware through social media posts by Wendy Laubach and Melissa Esquivel who started the empty kennel page. About two weeks ago Melissa Esquivel posted a photo and video of a dog that I adopted. I was an urgent plea for a foster or adoption for a dog named Pascal, our family renamed him Duke. I adopted him a week ago. What I saw on that video was a dog who obeyed commands, walked leash well, he was very loving and very friendly. I learned that he had been in Animal Control since he was a puppy and brought in with two of his brothers. The social media post struck my heart that this animal was worthy of a family that would love him. I know that is a 16-17 year commitment. I had recently lost my pet of 16 years. I was not ready for another pet but I chose to step in by what I experienced on Saturday. I've never met your rescue organization. I don't even remember their name. I decided to volunteer due to my heart and the crisis we have here that is a community issue. We need to take responsibility here in Aransas County for our issues. Many volunteers were needed to solve this crisis. I've been listening to Commissioners Court and my perspective is independent of any group

and no prior experience. I brought my 11 year old neighbor and she had a chance to walk all of the dogs that were there for adoption. I could see immediately as an outsider one of the critical issues that we're missing. We have a lot of volunteers. These volunteers are giving you valuable and in kind donations of their time. Their time is worth money. If I were managing a grant or government I would be counting that money towards an in kind budget. I don't know how much it is but I saw volunteers that were happy there helping dogs. My dog only had training or any ability to socialize because of the volunteers who walked him every day. I want to give you a hand and a Thank You from my heart. I want to say there is no better investment you can make in the welfare of our community than restarting a public information campaign embracing your volunteers and the committee with Wendy Laubach and their advice. Embracing the American kennel Club and "the empty kennel." Let's find a community solution because a lot of people care and a lot of people are here. It's worth a little bit of investment. I had a chance to talk to the shelter manager and learned that the spay and neuter program was done away with during and after COVID, I don't know why. Accept all donations of in kind hours from the volunteers that help the Animal Control to help the overcrowding and to make these dogs adoptable. Start a social media campaign to embrace that. I took photos and videos because I could see the missing link between adoption and a shelter pet was proper advertisement. Thank you.

- Jeff Hutt – Today you are going to hear the Navigation District to Levy their tax rate. This is only their MNO tax rate. The Navigation District has been a model of entity. As far as I've know they are the only entity who is sitting in their new building after Hurricane Harvey. Every year they pass a no new revenue rate. The way you have it now is every year they have to come to you and they have to ask you to approve an MNO levy. This creates an issue with budgeting and this creates a problem for the Navigation District because their services agreements go out for 5-10 years. They are not for a year, so they are having to project out into the future what costs will be. In reality they don't know if they are going to be able to receive that tax levy to fund that MNO. I believe either we as a community need to pass a resolution. And we need to go to the State House in next legislative session and ask them to change the law that removes requirement for a levy and that gives you the option to remove the levy if you so choose but you won't have to pass it each year. Houston approves the levy each year but the Port of Houston's tax levy is included in the county's tax levy. Theirs is a single tax levy not a line item. If the Navigation District is not good with their finances we as the citizens will unelect them and you can count on us to do that. I just think the system we have now has caused too much conflict. For them to have to come and beg that you pass their tax levy I think is a bit much to ask. That is my personal opinion, thank you.

V. PRESENTATIONS AND PROCLAMATIONS

1. Presentation from Another Chance RFT regarding its role in providing services to Aransas County Animal Care – Bob Dupnik

Presented by: Tana Neel founder of Another Chance Rescue RFT – People ask me what RFT stands for, it stands for Rockport Fulton Texas. I appreciate the chance to speak today and talk about our organization. I'm grateful for all the volunteers that have shown up to show their support. I want to refresh the memories of everybody about Another Chance and what we actually do. My husband and I formed this in 2017 after I had already been going to Animal Control for a while when Ronell Burke would call and let her know there were dogs that I think you can help me with. I would go and try to help. While out there I realized they weren't getting help from anybody and they were putting down over 90 percent of the healthy cats and dogs there. We decided with some urging from some of our dog lovers to become a non-profit. We did in May of 2017. Later that year Hurricane Harvey hit. We had the opportunity to help assist officer Burke at that time and the staff there to get all the dogs and cats loaded and out to safety. That was one of the first big things we were able to help Animal Control. Our mission then and now remains the same. We committed to helping save the dogs in Aransas County. We work with Animal Control but it's not everything we do. We also help people in the community that call us that has had a death in the family and a dog that no one wants to take on. We try to network to get dogs to safety in other states, other parts of Texas by socializing them. It's because of volunteers that the dogs get socialized, walked, played with and get to vets. We continue to do that. For six years we have strived as a group to help Animal Control to become a no-kill facility. We still believe in that and for a while that ideal was embraced a lot of people. Helping Animal Control is not all we do. Dogs left behind by people who die or get ill, dogs found as strays and maybe Animal Control can't take at the time. Another Chance steps in to try to help by networking to find suitable rescues and no-kill shelters where they can have a better chance to get adopted. There are so many dogs and cats, that are homeless and all they need is "another chance." We try to find them a forever home and we give them attention. We get them medical care working with local vets, we also take them to the vet for appointments. The money that we spend at Animal Control in donations comes from people in town who donate to us, private donations, small fundraisers, grant money and the money that we report as donations come because we pay for vaccines, many rabies shots, many spays and neuters, these are done out of our private donations. There is no differential for what we do. We get money and the money goes to help the animals. That's it. We don't get or ask for any money from the county. Besides the regular vet runs and medical things that we do. Sometimes we have special things that come in like dogs that have been run over by a car, broken bones, eye surgeries, and have even taken dogs to a neurologist in Houston. Everything out there that dogs need we will try to do. Since we began Another Chance the County has been good to us. We've been recognized to work after we hit 500 dogs and then 1,000 and now we're knocking on the door of 2,000 dogs safe. We've been able to have TV spots, the county had donated two old Sheriff's vans for our use and we are very appreciative. The leadership team in town chose us for their project of the Heartworm Hotel. We've received the Spirit of Rockport Award from the city as well. These attaboy moments encourage us to continue our work. The volunteers work tirelessly every day and every way. Another Chance will always advocate for the dogs every time. We do not believe that a healthy dog should be killed for space. As they say

you can't save them all but we will continue to try. As I close with three non-profits in this county Another Chance RFT, Cattails and the June project working around the clock to help animals and Aransas County Animal Control it is disappointing that our Animal Control has withdrawn it's support to become a no-kill facility. I thank you for your time and I'm going to ask Debbie Gann, she is one of our volunteers. She is going to talk to you about a day in the life of the volunteer.

Debbie Gann – I am a volunteer with Another Chance Rescue. I've been involved with Another Chance since February of this year, so I'm fairly new. I recently accepted the position of volunteer coordinator, I coordinate the scheduling, recruiting and training. I appreciate the opportunity to share with you what the volunteers actually do. We have several types of volunteers: some handle local vet runs, some network dogs with rescue all over Texas and the United States. Some shuttle dogs to meet transports to get them to their safe havens with a rescue or an adoptive home. Several foster dogs whether some temporarily for a medical reason or long term until an adoptive home can be found. Some take doggies for a day out, a nice walk, a spa bath, or an afternoon in their personal home. Each and every volunteer is vital to our organization. The volunteer I want to tell you about today is the volunteer dog walker. This person is our worker bee that shows up at Animal Control every day, yes I mean seven days a week, rain or shine, scorching heat or frigid cold, to help the dogs that have found themselves homeless. A typical day for a dog walking volunteer starts around 730. We immediately go to the Another Chance Heartworm Hotel. This is where dogs going through Heartworm treatment are kenneled. They are kept there because their activity level must be kept minimal and monitored. These dogs are fed and taken to the play yard on a leash and walked to do their business. Water bucket and bedding are freshened as needed. Once these animals are cared for we move to the next task. Generally by this time the Animal Control Staff have begun their daily feeding process for the rest of the dogs. Our volunteer walkers usually assist the kennel staff by feeding the dogs kept in the outside kennels. Once they've been fed we begin the process of getting each every dog in the animal control facility out for exercised, fresh air and human interaction. We do our best in conjunction with the animal control kennel staff to help make their cleaning process as easy as possible. Generally we start with the outside dogs. We rotate each dog in and out of two play areas that are fenced in. At a minimum we get them out of their kennels. We take their dirty food bowls out, we pick up their excrement if possible. Several volunteers go the extra mile and clean the kennel, spraying everything down and scrubbing as needed. Ensuring that their water buckets are clean and filled with fresh water. We spend time with each dog by throwing a ball, playing with a stuffed toy or simply sitting on a bench in the play yard and letting them cuddle and get lots of petting and love. And of course picking up lots & lots & lots & lots of poop. During this time we are focusing on the dog. Does its poop look OK, does it have worms, do we see ticks, does it have sores or wounds. Anything we feel needs attention we report to the Animal Control staff and to the head of the rescue. She will see that the dog will get to the vet if needed. After the outside kennels are taken care of we begin the rotation of the indoor kennels. By this time the kennel staff have completed the feeding process and are ready to clean the indoor kennels. We take the dogs outside to the two play yards for exercise, play time and the daily inspection as I mentioned before. While out we take photos, videos and share them with our networking volunteers to be used when contacting various rescues throughout the United States. While taking the dogs in and out we try to work on leash manners as best possible. Each dog is

then placed back in a clean kennel, given a cookie for being good and on to the next kennel. After the indoor dogs are taken care of its back to the Heartworm Hotel, the dogs are taken out again for another potty break, fresh air and loving time. Then at four someone will return to give them another break. Sometime we complete this by 10:30 but more often than not it's as late as 11:30-12:00. It is a hard 3-4 hours of work for sure. At the end you are hot, sweaty, dirty, tired, covered in dog poop, with possibly a few new scratches. But your heart is full, you've made a difference today. I would like to personally thank the creation of the Animal Welfare Committee, I believe this committee is bringing a new awareness to our community. Our rescuers received several new dog walking volunteers as a result of visibility to this community. It is heartwarming to see all the people who truly care about what happens to these animals. The reaction from our community from monetary donations for spay and neuters to the recent drive for 16 new kennels as well as the outpouring of volunteers at the recent adoption event has been awesome to watch. As the Volunteer Coordinator for Another Chance I would love to invite you to come out and spend a morning or just a few hours with us. Meet the shelter dogs and see what a difference a caring person can make. We will continuously and tirelessly work to save precious lives and give them all Another Chance.

Jerry Neel – I'm the other half of the leadership team with Another Chance. We do appreciate so much the time and effort that is given across the community in support of our work. I want to take a moment to say, the reason why we're here to report these efforts today is because of former Director Ronnell Burke, her boss at the time John Strothman and the former Judge and their encouragement of all of our efforts. At the beginning we caught a vision of what could happen if Another Chance and Animal Control would work together to a greater goal. One of the things that we have been pleased to see occur has been a turnover through the years of persons who come in with different levels of involvement and commitment with the animals and grow in those relationships and in their support of what we're doing. We are not in this to ask the court for money, we try to give you money through services, capital improvements, and other things that go so far to make our work come together. Along with the support that we received at the beginning we were recently able to involve our current director in the creation of a document that was utilized as part of a grant proposal with the Moody Foundation that speaks to the issue of the relationship between Animal Control and Another Chance. Each of you the Commissioners have a copy of that as does the Judge. It's brief and I'll read it to you. (see attachment) We appreciated Director Cesar's words at that time and now are disappointed to find that she has recently withdrawn her previous support of the no-kill facility goal. And, now recommends a return to the old way. Bring them in, hold for a few days and then put them down model to avoid an overcrowding issue. Let it be a matter of record that Another Chance recognizes that the Director is the final Authority in such matters. We regret her decision to do this and will continue to seek to find ways to work as these circumstances might allow. We thank the court for your time and your attention through our presentation today.

Judge Garza asked council what the rule is for a lot of people wishing to speak on the same item.

Jennifer O'Steen – Our Commissioner's Court has not done it since I've been here but one rule that a lot of courts put in place is that if you have a group of people speaking

of the same issue that one representative will be chosen among the to speak on behalf of the group but here you've only had three speakers so if you wanted to have more speakers you could choose to do so.

Deidra Ciriello – Thank you for the opportunity to speak here today. A little about me for a perspective that I'm coming from. I am a lifelong fiscal conservative. I've spent my entire career developing policy and writing laws for a long list of very fiscally conservative lawmakers at the national level. It's a principle that I've embraced for over 25 years. When talking about tough budget times and tough decisions that we have to make. It's important as you begin a policy discussion to make sure that we understand, the audience, where is the information coming from, and that we have a really good command of the facts and what is actually happening. There has been great discussion from volunteers so I thought it might be good from you to hear from the donors and their perspective. We started donating and supporting Another Chance back before Harvey in 2017 when Ronnell was still there. We identified on Facebook their good work. Getting the dogs out, paying for vaccinations, the spay and neuter work, any medical attention needed and ultimately they would pay for transport, even out of state. Aransas County dogs have ended up as far away as New Jersey and Connecticut. We see pictures in the snow for the first time. We were very impressed with what they were able to do on a very small budget. How big the impact they are having. Like the volunteers many of the donors come from different walks of life. Some may be on a fixed income and only give \$20, some are business owners, former Law Enforcement, Educators, former Marines and the list goes on. So many people give big and small because they truly embrace not only the goals but the fact that they've been able to make such a big impact. People do get confused asking where is their shelter? It's important to remember they are a foster-based organization. They are a rescue, they are assisting Aransas County Animal Control. They are pulling those dogs out and trying to get them adopted. One of the things that strikes me as I read the minutes during these conversations is that it's important to remember that the dogs who end up in Animal Control are not bad dogs. They are there through no fault of their own. The owners have gotten, sick, cancer, surrendered the animal, they may be homeless. I ended up fostering two different Another Chance dogs. Another Chance has stepped up over and over. For example a dog comes in that has been hit by a car, Animal Control calls Tana to see if she come get the dog, they do and they pay all the medical care. I want to make that point clear as we talk about budget and being fiscally conservative. That is money that Another Chance is raising from private donors and spending that money appropriately. As one of those donors I want to explain why so many people have come together over the past 6 years to support that cause. I want you all to hear from a donor that has a 25 year record of developing policy all of which embraces fiscally conservative principles and they don't have to be mutually exclusive I'm happy to say. I appreciate the court's time on this and hearing from all of these folks. I just want to put a face to one of those donors. Thank you for your time and consideration and if we can be of assistance to the county please don't hesitate to let us know.

Commissioner Rousseau – I would like to add that I adopted a dog about a year ago who was in the care of Another Chance. He had be rescued from a situation that there were about 25 dogs in a house with no people. They taught him to be around people and to walk on a leash. When I received him he had already been treated for heartworm, he had been neutered and had his medication. I was amazed with the thoroughness and consideration of Another Chance. Dobby is doing well in his new home.

Commissioner Dupnik – First of all, I want to apologize to Another Chance. At our last meeting we were going to have a discussion and the intent was for Another Chance to be available to speak. Due to a snafu that didn't happen and I should have followed through personally. Your group brings so much to the community. It's been said that a lot of animals that should be saved and need to be saved. That's why I asked the discussion to start. We have to be realistic in many ways also but I want to thank you again for what you do and I want to apologize that you weren't part of the first discussion but I'm glad you are here for the second one and for the presentation. Thank you.

Commissioner Casterline – I'd like to say I think what you are doing is great but the other side of what we see up here is we probably have an all-time high of aggressive dogs on the streets. People are calling us and we are going looking for them ourselves. We had someone die from a dog attack. I and I think the other Commissioners are getting frequent calls of aggressive dogs on the street. That is something else we have to deal with.

Commissioner Chaney – I've lived here for 26-27 years and we've adopted several animals from Animal Care. The number of people here for this presentation show the support that we have. I think Commissioners Court has been remiss in not taking on this issue. Sometimes the volunteers get forgotten and I apologize for that, I should not have done that. I would suggest that the organization get on the schedule of Commissioner Court at least semi-annually. Let's see what we can do, make some plans and goals. One of the bad things about this and the same with every successful volunteer organization that I know of. Sometimes there are different directions that you think you need to go. We are taking this seriously, we are going to be working to help develop policies. I for one am not in favor of a no-kill facility. We should have a strict policy for not killing policy. There are some animals that have done something really bad and we need to be fiscally responsible. If we want to handle more then we need to put more facilities in place. Some of the animals have been there for quite some time, we need to have a process in place to determine if the animal is recoverable or adoptable. We need to make decisions in a cooperative manner. The one who has the ultimate responsibility on the County's side is the County Judge. This is not going to be a one-time fix. It's something we're going to need to visit at least once a year. We are not going to get any smaller even with the economy as bad as it is. We can't stop growth, more people are coming and we shouldn't do that any way. With more growth brings more animals.

Judge Garza – I do want to mention the gentleman from New Jersey did not say stop growth but to encourage commercial growth.

Commissioner Dupnik – Question for Ms. Neel, you have a good presence here today, how many volunteers do you have? (the answer was state off mic, but stated over 40)

Tana Neel – You have stated that there are aggressive dogs out there. We are aware of that and know that there are aggressive dogs. And about the incident I don't even want to get into that. We know there are aggressive dogs and some come in very ill and if we can't take care of them and give them a good life then obviously the decision needs to be made to put them down, that's euthanasia, that's not killing. If a dog is super aggressive and to protect the people in the county then something has to be done. I don't think anybody here is opposed to that. We understand when you say no kill it's not really no-kill there's still going to be some dogs that need to be put down. That is just a reality but if they are healthy and need more time, we have dogs that have been there a long time, if there is space out there open, why would you want

to kill a healthy dog just to maintain a number at the shelter?

Commissioner Chaney – I agree.

Tana Neel – That’s the part that gets most of us. Just using the # 20, if there are empty kennels you still have to have cleaning people. I just like that to be considered that killing a healthy dog when there is space should not be a consideration. That’s my opinion and I think I’m speaking for the rest of our group.

Commissioner Chaney – I agree with that 100%

Tana Neel – as far as aggressive and sick we get that.

Judge Garza – Thank you.

Lowell Rothschild – I would like to point out that the county has a 19 page policy outlining what is legal and illegal. Dogs running loose is illegal and those dogs should not be allowed to do that. The owner should be cited, it’s a Class C Misdemeanor to allow your dog to run loose. Part of it is there are dogs but dogs have owners and it’s the owner’s responsibility to not allow their dogs to run loose. Part of it is not relying on volunteers to fix the problem but relying on owners to control the dogs. Thank you.

Commissioner Casterline – We’ve had the same issue with people that dump trash. Those people don’t have money to pay a fine. So when they come to the Judge the Judge has to weigh do we send them to jail for this, if the jail is already full. I’m sure Lori would like help cleaning kennels so they can do that instead.

Wendy Laubach – In connection with the donations you are going to hear about in a moment is a lot of miscellaneous but a big chunk of them is almost \$20,000 that we raised recently. The purpose of those funds is so closely associated with what we have been discussing. I am the chair of the Animal Welfare Committee that has been in place for under two months. It was quite clear from the first day we met that overcrowding was the big issue and that causes a series of problems. Some are humanitarian and important to many volunteers. Other are procedural and Law and Order related and are extremely important to the county. The shelter director is in a terrible position if her shelter is full she doesn’t have emergency space to take in emergency animals. She knows she’s going to be confronted with and they are just brought in and it’s a horrible thing. They have to find the space and they can’t just stack them in the hall. So obviously it makes her very nervous to run a shelter that’s at capacity, over capacity even close to capacity she’s got to have some emergency space. We don’t necessarily need to be using the emergency space all the time, some needs to be left for emergency and overflow. The first day it occurred to us that if we could find the money to bring in some temporary outdoor kennels. I say temporary because they can be put up very quickly when a problem can’t wait. It would be lovely to have a big construction project but that is probably next year as there is no money in the budget right now. So we tried figure what we could do immediately to provide some emergency overflow space. We talked to the director at the first meeting about how temporary kennels would work. We fixed on a particular brand and size and outfitting with canopy shade cloths dog houses and beds. Everything that would work and where they would fit. It’s a tight fit outside right now but we found a place for some to fit. And we moved forward. We got side tracked thinking the county could pull off an emergency construction project but it became clear that’s a long term project and ran into many delays and worse there is simply no money. This year is a tight budget. So we quickly went back to the original plan of temporary kennels and went out with a heart felt community fundraising campaign in less than two weeks we managed to raise almost \$20,000. That is good news not only in

creating some emergency overflow space but shows the depth of the commitment of this community. At the same time we were signing up new volunteers in droves. Something else with the temporary kennels is they luckily have a number of different uses. The fact that they are temporary helps instead of building a permanent structure. We got the population down by a 1/3 since the committee started two months ago. We have more to go but we still are at a very crowded level. Dogs are in what are intended to be double chambered kennels. They've had to put down the track door between them to put dogs in each half. That's a bad way to keep dogs, it's very hard to keep them clean. It's very hard on the kennel techs who are already overworked and understaffed. If we can use the temporary kennels to stage the dogs for an hour or two while the techs can clean all the kennels at one time to make it easier. That is a really good use for temporary kennels. The director has expressed her support for that use of the temporary kennels. The third thing we can use these for is taking dogs that are doubled in the kennels and put them in the temporary kennels for a while. Then if you get a catastrophe and they're bringing in a bunch of dogs you can move the other dogs back in and double them again. The fourth thing is evacuations, they set up and break down in minutes and are very humane shelters. If we have to evacuate from the shelter to the AgriLife building these shelters will fit in there easily. It addresses the Law and Order issue that we are very focused on. We are aware and working towards the issue of aggressive animals on the street and they will have the space to do that. We are working on all the ways we can to get animals out of that shelter, get the crowding down and find a way to avoid this situation again.

Judge Garza – they did have an adoption event we went to help clean up and during that my wife was walking dogs back to the shelter and we're going to be the proud owners of new puppy soon.

Commissioner Dupnik – What is the shelter capacity right now with the added kennels?

Wendy Laubach – we don't own the kennels yet they still need to be bought. The shelter has 10 outdoor kennels, 16 double chamber indoor kennels that have become 32, 4 more bite or quarantine or rabies kennels in addition to a wall full of cages where puppies are.

Judge Garza – we have to move on. 30 seconds please.

Jerry Neel – Another Chance also has 24 dogs in foster care we are providing full support for that: feed, medications and anything else that they need in order to maintain those animals safely and humanely while this problem is being addressed.

Judge Garza – thank you.

2. Proclamation P-11-2023 recognizing September 15th as National POW/MIA DAY – Judge Garza

Motion to accept proclamation P-11-2023: by Commissioner Rousseau, motion was seconded by Commissioner Chaney

Read by Jennifer O'Steen

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

3. Proclamation P-12-2023 recognizing September 19th as "Texian Navy Day" – Judge Garza

Motion to accept proclamation P-12-2023: by Commissioner Casterline, motion was seconded by Commissioner Rousseau
Dr. Justin Parkoff, Executive Director of TEXAS Maritime Museum, Marine Archaeologist, Before we joined the United States we were known as Texians as opposed to Texans. This day is special to me I got my Admiralty from Gov. Abbott in 2015. That is one of the things that this celebrates, all the Admirals around the state honorary positions that help us preserve the history of our borders and our Maritime History. Read the proclamation.
Vote: Motion carried 5-0: it was so ordered

VI. CONSENT AGENDA

4. Discuss, approve or disapprove the Minutes from the August 28, 2023 Regular Meeting - Misty Kimbrough/Judge Garza
5. Acknowledge receipt of, and record in the minutes of Commissioners Court, a Certificate of Completion for Rene Butler from OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration) having completed the OSHA 30-Hour General Industry Safety and Health Certification Course – Rene Butler/Judge Garza

DONATIONS

6. Acknowledge and accept a Donation of a canopy, valued at \$80.00, from Builders FirstSource to Aransas Pathways for use during events, including Hummerfest – Jennifer Heard/Rene Butler/Judge Garza
7. Acknowledge and accept a Donation of \$75.00 for cat and dog food from Ernie Salathe for Aransas County Animal Care – Lori Cesar/Judge Garza
8. Acknowledge and accept a Donation of puppy supplies valued at \$50.00 from Nora Katon for Aransas County Animal Care – Lori Cesar/Judge Garza
9. Acknowledge and accept a Donation of \$75.00 for kitten supplies from Karen Small for Aransas County Animal Care – Lori Cesar/Judge Garza
10. Acknowledge and accept a Donation of puppy supplies valued at \$100.00 from Noelle Myska for Aransas County Animal Care – Lori Cesar/Judge Garza
11. The following donations totaling \$15,873.00 have been made toward the purchase of temporary kennels for Aransas County Animal Care:
 - a. Acknowledge and accept a Donation of \$500.00 from Thomas Shank
 - b. Acknowledge and accept a Donation of \$20.00 from Lorrie Harrington
 - c. Acknowledge and accept a Donation of \$100.00 from Janet Gammon
 - d. Acknowledge and accept a Donation of \$2,000.00 from E & J Towing Service
 - e. Acknowledge and accept a Donation of \$10,000.00 from The Storage Place
 - f. Acknowledge and accept a Donation of \$2,003.00 from City by the Sea Community
 - g. Acknowledge and accept a Donation of \$1,000.00 from Coastal Bend Waste
 - h. Acknowledge and accept a Donation of \$250.00 from Gary Nobles
– Lori Cesar/Judge Garza

Motion to accept the consent agenda: by Commissioner Rousseau, motion was seconded by Commissioner Dupnik
Judge Garza acknowledged donations
Vote: Motion carried 5-0: it was so ordered

VII. COUNTY ROADS AND FLOODPLAIN

12. Discuss, approve or disapprove Change Order #4 to the Construction Contract between Aransas County and KC Lease Service, Inc. d/b/a Matagorda Construction & Materials for the Copano Heights Project funded through the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery Program, which grant is administered by the Texas General Land Office ("GLO") as set forth in CBDG-DR Contract No. 20-065-098-C270 to extend the term of the contract to allow an additional 28 calendar days to complete the project – David Reid/Judge Garza

Motion to approve: by Commissioner Casterline, motion was seconded by Commissioner Chaney
Presented by: David Reid
Discussion followed: This adds 28 days to be completed by the end of October
Vote: Motion carried 5-0: it was so ordered

VIII. PLANNING AND BUDGET

13. Discuss, approve, or disapprove the Aransas County Indigent Health Care Report for August 2023 – Alma Cartwright/Judge Garza

Motion to approve: by Commissioner Dupnik, motion was seconded by Commissioner Casterline; Commissioner Chaney was not present for this item
Presented by: Alma Cartwright
Discussion followed: August is the end of the fiscal year; Federal Poverty Guideline used this past year was 21% next year will be 50%; the money is spent as the expenses are requested/needed. We spent 4% of the tax levy but required to budget 8%. The month expenditures was \$53,381.97 and the year is \$617,827.00.
Vote: Motion carried 4-0: it was so ordered

14. Discuss, approve, or disapprove the 2022-2023 End of Year Report for the Aransas County Indigent Health Care Program – Alma Cartwright/Judge Garza

Motion to approve: by Commissioner Dupnik, motion was seconded by Commissioner Rousseau; Commissioner Chaney was not present for this item
No discussion
Vote: Motion carried 4-0: it was so ordered

15. Discuss, approve, or disapprove the creation of a new position for a Licensed Chemical Dependency Counselor ("LCDC") in Group 15 of the pay schedule, to provide services to juveniles in Aransas County in order to comply with the requirements of the Juvenile Justice & Truancy Prevention Grant for 2023-2024 which has been awarded to Aransas County in the amount of \$57,247.00 – Judge McGinnis/Judge Garza

Motion to approve: by Commissioner Casterline, motion was seconded by Commissioner Dupnik; Commissioner Chaney came back in.
Presented by: Judge McGinnis and Lara Rios
Discussion followed: Judge McGinnis – I miss spoke at the last meeting. We must have a separate position for LCDC, group 15-1 \$59,402, the grant will be \$56,183, the difference can be taken out of the Opioids Settlement.
Commissioner Rousseau – is the grant guaranteed each year?

Judge McGinnis – we can reapply each year but it is not guaranteed.
Commissioner Rousseau – I appreciate your addition of the proposed salary would be and how it would be funded. I'm fine with this as long as we understand that if the grant is not renewed we may need to drop this position.
Judge McGinnis – we understand that. Legislation has revamped our juvenile programs completely and the juvenile case managers can only handle 200 per manager we are not even going to meet that with the number of cases being filed. So next year I will probably be coming again for another JCM position.
Commissioner Rousseau – currently we have two, correct?
Judge McGinnis – The current JCM is an LCDC so I plan on moving her to the LCDC and that is going to leave a position open for the JCM. We will do everything we can to apply to give us a good chance.
Commissioner Rousseau – would there be a possibility of funding that total salary out of the Opioids Settlement, I believe that settlement is a one-time payment. I don't believe it's an annual settlement.
Jennifer O'Steen – It's not an annual guaranteed amount but as the state enters into agreements we have the opportunity to join them so as agreements take place we can to get our share. But, keep in mind that even the agreements we entered into two years ago I think we've received proceeds from one settlement. It's not guaranteed to be annual or even guaranteed at all.
Commissioner Dupnik – can the Health Care Tax dollars be directed towards this?
Jacky Cockerham – Yes sir. We have budgeted most everything that we get from Health Care Sales Tax so it would a matter of taking some out of the fund balance which we are transferring from Indigent Care.
Judge McGinnis – at least this year it is taken care of and gives us time to look into it.
Vote: Motion carried 5-0: it was so ordered

16. Discuss, approve, or disapprove the August 2023 Auditors Monthly Report – Jacky Cockerham/Judge Garza

Motion to approve: by Commissioner Dupnik, motion was seconded by Commissioner Casterline
Discussion followed: Jacky Cockerham – The Sales Tax we are right now collected at 60% and ideally we should be at 67% because this is the eighth month in the year. We are running behind in what we anticipated what we would collect in Sales Taxes.
Commissioner Rousseau – on the Collection Comparison Report: JPs, District & County Clerk, and Sheriff. JP 1 are doing well difference year to date is higher. JP 2, District and County Clerk, Sheriff and Animal Control all are falling behind.
Jacky Cockerham – these are not budgeted numbers these are the actual collections. It is just what comes in. JP 2 license and weight is down and we are not able to write a lot of tickets due to not being able to open the Weigh Stations.
Sheriff Mills – DPS is required to turn the lights on to open the station by law. The troopers stationed to do that previously have transferred to the Marine Division of DPS. We do not have a Licensed and Weight Trooper who's spending any time in the area. We have submitted a request through the Auditor's Office for an AG's opinion about why cities and counties that aren't an MOU with TXDOT & DPS, why we can't

turn that light on ourselves? It may take a legislative change. We pay for the stations, the roads here are our responsibility to maintain and if Troopers tied up in the Valley then we can't turn it on. We just need permission to turn the lights on.

Commissioner Rousseau – year to date L&W is up \$50,000

Sheriff – yes ma'am Ronnie has been pretty aggressive and we did have a trooper that was opening the station up but about 1.5 months ago he transferred to the marine division. You will see that drop significantly. About this report, it is flawed. In the nature that credit is giving where that check is written. I have staff writing letters 30 hours a week. If you'll look at the postage it has gone up this year. A large share of money was collected through the efforts of the lady working in my office sending out letters on these warrants. But because the check was made out to another office that is where the credit is going. We do keep a log to show letters that went out. This puts one office against another and they are really not. It's a combined effort.

Commissioner Rousseau – this is not a budgeted amount?

Jacky Cockerham – no ma'am this is just actual collections.

Commissioner Rousseau – so if totaled through July by this report we've collected over \$800,000 and that is not showing up in our budget somewhere?

Jacky Cockerham – it does show in the budget, but this report itself does not show it as budget vs actual, it just shows actuals. At the bottom we do have a separate item shows where the SOs warrants and what office collected those warrants.

Misty Kimbrough – I can speak the County Clerk's. The majority of our monies come from filing of land records. With the interest rates and the cost of living going up home sales have dropped dramatically in this county and that's where that loss is coming from.

Commissioner Dupnik – When you look at the differences you are comparing last year to this year.

Jacky Cockerham – yes sir.

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

17. Discuss, approve, or disapprove the Aransas County Navigation District (ACND) 2023-2024 Tax Rate Levy of NO-NEW-REVENUE RATE of 0.034041/\$100 VALUATION (\$0.025471/\$100 VALUATION for Maintenance and Operations (M & O) and \$0.00857/\$100 VALUATION for Interest and Sinking (I & S) – Judge Garza

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

Discussion followed:

Commissioner Rousseau – when Jeff Hutt spoke earlier he kept saying that the Tax Levy was only MNO but it's for MNO & INS is that correct Mr. Barrett?

Keith Barrett, Harbor Master and Executive Director – Yes that is correct. We broke that out so you could see where each portion went.

Commissioner Dupnik – I want to thank you for your website, your website is outstanding. Also for the information that your District puts out on there.

Keith Barrett – the website and some of the other updates that we've been making is an improvement. I think it's easier to find information. We are proud this year that we did get to stay at the no new revenue rate. Even though in budget season is a

challenge. We go through the same process as you do with plenty of open discussion, budget workshops, eventual hearings, proposed amounts and then adopted amounts. This is the amount that the commission did adopt. We went ahead and signed the MOU with the county for collection. I think Eric Smith has that new contract so if you choose to approve will be complete on both sides.

Commissioner Chaney – This budget is all revenue or are leases on a separate budget?

Keith Barrett – No. That’s all inclusive. It has all of our revenue and also includes the Tax Rate.

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

18. Discuss, approve, or disapprove the list of Changes to the Proposed 2024 Budget that the Commissioners Court consider Warranted by Law and Required by the Interest of the Taxpayers – Jacky Cockerham/Judge Garza

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

Commissioner Rousseau - Thank you for a list of the changes. I have a couple of questions: 1. I didn’t see the \$2,500,000 transfer to Health Care.

Jacky Cockerham – it’s there close to the bottom is say transfer \$2,500,000

Commissioner Rousseau – My concern we are showing that a revenue and it’s not really revenue. I think it would be good to reclassify that.

Jacky Cockerham – I thought we did change that, we will have to look at it, and we can change that.

Commissioner Rousseau – 2. I had the question earlier about the \$54,000 for facility equipment for the grant match on generators and you are going to see if it’s possible to use the ARPA funds if there money is available.

Jacky Cockerham – we can move that to the ARPA funds and if for some reason we have projects that come in over and don’t have it available we would have to do a transfer back into General Funds or do it either way.

Commissioner Rousseau – there was an increase in Professional Services in the Waterway restoration for Key Allegro Stabilization Project. Was that on the list that you gave us?

Jacky Cockerham – it was not on this list. It had been done prior to filing the proposed budget. All of these on this list have been done since we filed the proposed budget with the County Clerk. There are several projects that have committed that money to so we put those amounts there to make sure we cover all of those commitments.

Commissioner Rousseau – I wonder if the Fire Department allocations can come from the Health Care Sales Tax? The Treasurer stated she did not think so.

Jacky Cockerham – I agree with the Treasurer. And we have stretched the Health Care Sales Tax to where we are going to be using the fund balance. And some of the monies we are moving over from Indigent Health Care.

Commissioner Rousseau – The animal care donations have been going into an account that’s in the General Fund, 120 300 767. My understanding at the end of the year since it’s in that account it rolls into the General Fund?

Jacky Cockerham – yes ma'am.

Commissioner Rousseau – I think if people make donations to the Animal Care that needs to be a reserved account, so at the end of the year it will stay available for Animal Care for the next year.

Jacky Cockerham – we will be bringing that to Commissioner's Court.

Commissioner Rousseau – Under County Court at Law on page 20, the regular full-time employee allocation from 2023 – 2024 doubled. Did we add an employee?

Tana Taylor – We did actually, that is where the full-time Baliff that was added from the Sheriff's office, because the majority of the funding will come out of the CCL budget.

Commissioner Rousseau – Since we are moving money from Health Care Sales Tax to help with Animal Control why did we drop the part-time tech.

Judge Garza – That is a decision I made, I dropped that before we moved the money. I figure a tech can't control the streets but an ACO can patrol streets and help clean.

Commissioner Dupnik – hopefully the commercial cleaner will help the shelter be more efficient when doing that.

Commissioner Rousseau – So we are going ahead and get that industrial cleaner.

Judge Garza – yes

Commissioner Chaney – I didn't understand. Are we removing the part-time tech and make it a full-time position?

Judge Garza – No, during the original budget we added a full-time ACO and a part-time tech. I did away with the part-time kennel tech. But there is still a full-time ACO that we are adding.

Commissioner Rousseau – The waterway restoration \$250,000 for professional services, do we know what that is going to be used for?

Jacky Cockerham – we have some grant and that is one that Commissioners have committed to give assistance for some other projects for Texas Parks and Wildlife and Coastal Bays and Estuaries, so we have put some money in as place holder for those funds. That is a special revenue fund, it is not tax based.

Jacky Cockerham - There are a couple of things on the list that I want bring to your attention: This does include last year's tax rate of 0.358411 per \$100. It includes a one-step increase for all employees and department heads. We did remove the 2% COLA for everyone but it does include a 2% COLA for elected officials who choose to take it. This does include an increase in non-departmental Professional Services of \$20,000 that the Judge asked to be put in. There is the \$24,000 for facilities but we can move that to ARPA if that's what you choose to do, if there is still money left.

Commissioner Dupnik – Clarification that one-step increase for employees is merit based.

Judge Garza – The Bayshore Stabilization on Key Allegro, we did put money in for that, right?

Jacky Cockerham – Some of that in the Waterway Restoration is for that. We don't have any idea what that's going to cost yet.

Commissioner Rousseau – I would like to request that we publish the final salaries of elected officials showing which ones accepted the 2% COLA and those that did not.

Jackie Cockerham – yes ma'am we can do that.

Jack Chaney – Do we need to adjust anything on the Sales Tax Increase?

Jacky Cockerham – No sir, I think what we budgeted to stay level, I don't think we need to go up. I think we can budget what we budgeted last year.

Jack Chaney – why did we anticipate that the sales tax is down.

Jacky Cockerham – because right now it is. I personally feel like the construction from Harvey, we had such an increase and that has leveled off. We do still have a lot of development but not the extent that we had when everyone was rebuilding from Harvey. We do continue to watch it but I feel at this time I do not recommend any increase.

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

19. Discuss, approve, or disapprove Adopting the 2024 Budget – THIS BUDGET WILL RAISE MORE TOTAL PROPERTY TAXES THAN LAST YEAR'S BUDGET BY AN AMOUNT OF \$3,212,223, WHICH IS A 23.20% INCREASE FROM LAST YEAR'S BUDGET. THE PROPERTY TAX REVENUE TO BE RAISED FROM NEW PROPERTY ADDED TO THE TAX ROLL THIS YEAR IS \$559,528.00 –

Jacky Cockerham/Judge Garza

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

Judge Garza – this is where we actually adopt the budget.

Commissioner Dupnik – There is a lot of truth by those that have spoken. About the burden on the employees and citizens of our community. But we need to think about how we got here. Not faulting prior courts. The courts made an effort to keep the taxes low and in some cases it wasn't sustainable. You don't operate a business at a loss. We've done that and this year we got to a \$3,000,000 deficit in our budget and through the Judge's leadership and the work of department heads we've worked to do it. Operating in this year's budget we are still ending up at \$1,500,000-\$2,000,000 over what we budgeted for. As a court and the county staff have worked at it. There have been cuts and we do have an increase but as mentioned earlier our expenses have gone up considerably. Just like they have for everyone else. We have a responsibility to maintain a fiscally secure county. People say we are over budget or have budgeted more than we need to budget. We're still going to be around \$500,000 over budget. I'm sure there will be cuts coming with things coming with new courthouse. There are a lot of unknowns. In the past the court made an effort to keep taxes low but you cannot continue to do that. At the end of 2024 if we are responsible like we hope to only be \$500,000 into our revenue balance. We will be sitting around \$6,000,000 and that's the base amount we need to recover from a storm. That is 1 reason I would like to approve this budget as set with the tax rate. We do need to maintain a healthy reserve in case we have a major event. Thank you.

Judge Garza – I want to point out our expenditures from our budget. 2020 & 2021, we went up almost \$3,000,000 in expenditures. Between 2021 & 2022 we went up almost a \$1,000,000. 2022-2023 up almost \$3,000,000 and of the last three years we had two with no revenue rate and this year no revenue rate plus a penny. We increased our expenditures but we never increased our revenues. This is a year to

catch up. I know it's a hard number to swallow, 23% but a conservative budget isn't only going as low as you can but being responsible. I think we cut a lot of fat. I'm thinking about next year like a county challenge, be like the most healthy challenge, do the most steps but because of this budget, because the downfall we are at. This morning I was thinking maybe we could find what challenge the county, the elected officials and the department heads to find ways to cut more. Cut more waste, be innovative and talk to your people and ask if they have ideas. So: Cut more, be innovative, reward and recognize focus next year. I think this is the best that we are going to get it and be responsible with our finances.

Commissioner Chaney – The only problem I see with this budget is we were not able to give that we should have been able to. Our people out there are coming and expressing their opinion about us being flippant with our budget expenditures. There is not anybody working for the county that's making a lot of money. It takes a lot of training for the employees to do it and they have a lot of responsibility and exposure. I wish we could have given them all a raise. I just want to say this budget is a based on best that we can do. Commissioner Dupnik is correct if you keep cutting your employees by not bringing them up to the cost of living or near it you are going to lose them. We are not here to make money but we are not here to balance the budget on the backs of the employees either. I think it's a good budget.

Commissioners Dupnik – A lot of the public doesn't understand about the option of the COLA to the elected officials. Some of our elected officials like the Tax Office and Clerk Offices. These elected officials in a lot of counties that I've seen in the past. You have the officials whose are sitting in the office kind of doing an overview of what is going on. Our county by design or because of its size and staffing you'll see the District Clerk in the courtroom several times a week, the Tax Assessor at the front desk, these are working department heads. They are elected officials I think it should be their option to receive a COLA when we make it available. That's between them and their voters.

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

20. Discuss, approve, or disapprove 2024 Salaries, Expenses and other allowances of Elected Officials – Jacky Cockerham/Judge Garza

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

Commissioner Rousseau – On the agenda the back ground states there is no increased budgeted for elected officials for the 2024 budget is there not a 2% COLA budgeted?

Jacky Cockerham – yes ma'am I must have over looked that I'm sorry.

Judge Garza – I thought we added it?

Jacky Cockerham – it is in the budget it just wasn't in the background for this item.

Vote: Motion carried 4-1: it was so ordered; Commissioner Rousseau voted NO

21. Discuss, approve, or disapprove the adoption of Resolution #R-24-2023, a Resolution for the 2023 Tax Roll, Levy and Rate. The total tax rate to be levied for the County of Aransas for the Tax Year 2023, be and is hereby set at \$0.358411 per \$100 valuation with an assessment ration of 100 percent, to be assessed and collected by the Tax Assessor-Collector for Aransas County as follows:

- a) \$0.269534 per \$100 valuation for the purpose of the County Ad Valorem Maintenance and Operations fund;
- b) \$0.039815 per \$100 valuation for the purpose of the County Ad Valorem Interest and Sinking fund;
- c) \$0.042572 per \$100 Valuation for the purpose of the County Farm to Market/Flood Control Maintenance and Operations with the resulting levy being split on a percentage basis: 79.11% designated for the County's Road and Bridge Maintenance and Operations fund and 20.89% designated for the Flood Control Maintenance and Operations fund;
- d) \$0.006490 per \$100 valuation for the purpose of the County Farm to Market/FLOOD ONLY Interest and Sinking fund.

Motion to approve the 2023 Tax Roll, Levy and Rate: by Commissioner Rousseau, motion was seconded by Commissioner Casterline
Vote: Motion carried 5-0: it was so ordered

22. Discuss, approve, or disapprove adopting the 2023 Tax Roll and Levy – Anna Marshall/Judge Garza

Motion to adopt the 2023 Tax Roll, Levy and Rate: by Commissioner Chaney, motion was seconded by Commissioner Casterline
Vote: Motion carried 5-0: it was so ordered

23. Discuss, approve or disapprove Ratifying the Property Tax Increase reflected in the 2024 Budget – Jacky Cockerham/Judge Garza

Motion to approve: by Commissioner Casterline, motion was seconded by Commissioner Chaney
Vote: Motion carried 5-0: it was so ordered

24. Discuss, approve, or disapprove the Budget Line Item - Transfers for the 2023 Budget – Jacky Cockerham/Judge Garza

Motion to approve: by Commissioner Dupnik, motion was seconded by Commissioner Casterline
None at this time
Vote: Motion carried 5-0: it was so ordered

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

Motion to approve: by Commissioner Casterline, motion was seconded by Commissioner Chaney
Jacky Cockerham – all are normal
430 – Capital Projects Fund
1. Mott McDonald for FEMA Grant for Cedar Bayou \$14,626.66
2. PGAL \$30,000 for the Courthouse
3. Mott McDonald for Little Bay Project \$ \$938.00
730 GLO Street Projects
1. Mott McDonald \$97,675.10 for multiple projects

7300 Street Projects

1. Mott McDonald \$97,675.10 for multiple projects
2KC Lease \$24,523.68 for the Copano Heights Project
2. Grant Connection for Bay Shore TCEQ Restore Act Grant \$13,255.46
3. Mott McDonald multiple invoices for TCEQ Restore Act Grant \$8,159.00

431 – ARPA Fund

1. Drainage Improvements for Builders First Source \$97.86
2. Rinker Materials for pipe \$ 22,409.60
3. Teal Construction for the courthouse \$1,193,859.20

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

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

- Commissioner Dupnik – What I said earlier is not to take away from anyone. The Sheriff, County Treasurer and everybody put in a lot of work into what they do and you can see them out there actually doing more and I appreciate that.
- Sheriff Mills – I want to thank the Commissioners about some of the comments from this morning. And the people from the rescue groups, I want to acknowledge their efforts and not undermine or undercut what they are doing it's a noble endeavor. My concern is that we don't understand the whole scope of the problem yet. What we haven't discussed this morning but it needs to come out in a workshop is the number of animals that we don't pick up. The problem that we only provide services 5 days a week. Animal Control has got to be expanded somehow. The attitude has surfaced a couple of times in the last few months that we are not working together on this. It was acknowledged this morning that vans have been given to the rescue organization rather than auction them off. We are now providing a pickup for Animal Control that we are cycling out, it will have a kennel in it. We are all in this together but I'm not sure we are looking at the whole problem yet. The number of dog that aren't picked up and what we would generate in a seven day endeavor with Animal Control. We heard a lady said there were 23 animals in foster care right now. That would lead me to believe that maybe the adoption rate is not what we'd like it to be. Maybe the public doesn't know the dilemma that's out there. I now today there are animals that aren't being picked up and can't be accepted that are wanting to be surrendered because we don't have room. It's the same endeavor I see in the jail, all too often that we have a cap and a capacity limit, but the Jail Commission steps makes me follow ours. This puts Lori in a real tough spot we've got rescue organization that have influence and leverage over her when she tasked with the budget that we have. Sometimes it puts her in conflict of what the right thing is to do. A comment that spay and neutering stopped with COVID, that's not true. We posted posters all over the courthouse and all over the county. There were targeted locations from a grant to spay and neuter in neighborhoods. People have taken the last 2 months to stand up here in meetings and maybe they weren't well informed and maybe it was just pot shots that were taken. There has been a spay and neuter program ongoing. We've got to find a way to bring people to be more responsible pet owners. We heard from

people who are responsible but talking about those that don't really care, that we pick up animals and return them multiple times.

There have been off handed comments made about the Sheriff's budget I'm going to say that nobody in this room this morning, not one has called me and asked me about any item on that budget. But will come in here repeatedly make comments that we are not spending all of our funds. For the record the Sheriff's Office budget failed to make budget because of some expenditures that were written off two years previous. The Detention Center came in just under budget I think overall about a \$100,000 range, when we are talking about a \$5,000,000 budget. That's not a lot of fat. There was talk about not expending right now, my expenses occur all year long. For food, housing, inmate care, and activities that we do. We provide cooperative services with Environmental Health, we make visits to some locations that my deputies know the people better because of previous history with them and need to be present to make sure everybody is safe. We have made radios available to Environmental Health and Animal Control to try to improve their safety. Thank you.

- Commissioner Dupnik – Several months ago the court approved a light for St. Charles Bay boat ramp in Lamar. It was installed last Wednesday.

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

NONE

XI. CLOSED SESSION

26. Convene into a Closed Session to consult with counsel and receive legal advice about insurance matters related to Aransas County's projects and insurance claims from Hurricane Harvey, including the following pending litigation:

- Aransas County Texas v. Endurance American Specialty Insurance Company, et al, Aransas County District Court Cause No. 23-0021; and*
- Northstar Recovery Service, Inc. v. Aransas County Independent School District and Aransas County, Aransas County, District Court Cause No. 23-0066 consolidated with Northstar Recovery Services, Inc. v. HR&R, LLC, et al, Aransas County District Court Cause No. 20-0159; and*
- Aransas County v. Kathleen Hicks, in her official capacity as Director of the Regional Pool Alliance, Aransas County District Court Cause No. 23-0069.*

pursuant to Section 551.071 of the Texas Open Meetings Act, which authorizes closed sessions for a governmental body to consult with its attorney(s) regarding advice on legal matters pertaining to "Pending or Contemplated Litigation; or a Settlement Offer; or on a matter in which the duty of the attorney to the governmental body under the Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct of the State Bar of Texas clearly conflicts with" the Open Meetings Act –Jen O'Steen/Judge Garza

NO need for Closed Session

XII. OPEN SESSION

27. Reconvene into Open Session
28. Discuss and take action on matters discussed in closed session – Jen O'Steen/ Judge Garza


NO Closed Session

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn: by Commissioner Rousseau, motion was seconded by
Commissioner Dupnik
Vote: Motion carried 5-0: it was so ordered
Meeting adjourned at 11:38 AM

ARANSAS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT




Misty Kimbrough,
Ex-Officio Clerk of the Commissioners Court


Ray A. Garza, County Judge

