

MINUTES OF THE ARANSAS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT

REGULAR MEETING - JANUARY 11, 2021

On the 11th day of January, 2021, there was a Regular Meeting of the Commissioners' Court in the Commissioners' Courtroom, 2840 Hwy 35 N, Rockport, Aransas County, Texas, with the following members present in person, via ZOOM, or via YouTube: **C. H. "Burt" Mills, Jr.**, County Judge; **Jack Chaney**, Commissioner, Precinct 1-1A; **Leslie Casterline**, Commissioner, Precinct 2; **Pat Rousseau**, Commissioner, Precinct 3; **Wendy Laubach**, Commissioner, Precinct 4; **Carrie Arrington**, County Clerk; and **Christy Gibson**, Chief Deputy County Clerk - Courts and Administration.

Other County Officers present in person, via YouTube, or via Zoom, were: **Alma Cartwright**, Treasurer; **Pam Heard**, District Clerk; **Tracy Orr**, Administrative Assistant to County Judge; **Amanda Oster**, County Attorney; **Jennifer O'Steen**, Assistant County Attorney; **Jacky Cockerham**, County Auditor; **Tana Taylor**, First Assistant County Auditor; **Latisha Murphy**, Assistant Auditor; **Elizabeth Guerra**, HR Assistant; **Judge Richard Bianchi**, County Court at Law Judge; **Judge Diane Dupnik**, Justice of the Peace - Pct. 1; **Sheriff Bill Mills**; **John Gutierrez**, Chief Deputy Uniform Operations (Sheriff's Department); **Rhonda Konieczny**, Executive Assistant to the Sheriff; **Collin Jackson**, IT Director; **Jerry Brundrett**, County Surveyor; **David Reid**, County Engineer; **Valerie Gonzalez**, Environmental Health Director; **Mike Geer**, Airport Manager; **Rene Butler**, Facilities Director; **John Strothman**, Project Manager; **William Whitson**, Long Term Recovery; **Lori Cesar**, Animal Control Director; and **Iris Sanchez**, Library Director.

Members of Local City Government, Community Groups and other Interested Parties present in person, via YouTube, or via Zoom, were: **Luis Puron**, Executive Director, Rockport Center for the Arts;

Betty Stiles, Texas Historical Commission; and **Mike Probst**, Editor and Publisher, The Rockport Pilot.

Aransas County Citizens present in person, via YouTube, or via Zoom, were: **C. Mace**

The Meeting was convened at 9:00 a.m. at which time a quorum was declared by Judge Mills, WHEREUPON, **the following proceedings were had and done, to wit:**

CITIZENS TO BE HEARD

There were none.

PRESENTATIONS

1. Luis Puron, Executive Director, Rockport Center for the Arts, presented a written historical descriptive data and photographs from the Rockport Center for the Arts regarding Kline's Cafe Building - a Texas Art Deco and Streamline Moderne Building - to the County Commissioners. Judge Mills then presented Betty Stiles (Texas Historical Commission) and Iris Sanchez (Aransas County Public Library) with historical notebooks on the building to be placed in their respective locations, in perpetuity, for all to view.

Ms. Stiles spoke on behalf of the Texas Historical Commission, stating that they are delighted that the Kline's Building is being salvaged, that it is an important building to this community, and that private money made salvaging it possible. In particular, she thanked Mr. Ron Meyeres and his wife who had the foresight to purchase both the building and a suitable piece of land for it in downtown Rockport, and who are orchestrating moving the building to that corner of St. Mary's and Magnolia, to serve as the Kline's Café Building's new site.

CONSENT ITEMS

2. Minutes from the December 28, 2020 Regular Meeting.

A motion was made by Commissioner Chaney and seconded by Commissioner Casterline to approve the consent items.

Question. Motion carried unanimously.

It is so ordered.

COUNTY REPORTS

3. Following Luis Puron's report to the Court, a motion was made by Commissioner Rousseau and seconded by Commissioner Casterline to approve the 4th Quarter 2020 Report for the Rockport Center for the Arts as given.

Question. Motion carried unanimously.

It is so ordered.

SHERIFF'S OFFICE

4. A motion was made by Commissioner Chaney and seconded by Commissioner Casterline to approve the Sheriff's request to go out for bid for two (2) new vehicles for the Sheriff's Department.

Question. Motion carried unanimously.

It is so ordered.

CONTRACTS, AGREEMENTS, GRANTS & LEASES

5. A motion was made by Commissioner Casterline and seconded by Commissioner Chaney to authorize the County Judge to sign a Lease Agreement with Jerome Kruszka, a long-term land lease on airport property for land upon which exists a box hangar he is purchasing from current land lease tenant Grand Laurent Corporation. [Previously Tabled 10-12-2020]

Question. Motion carried unanimously.

It is so ordered.

6. A motion was made by Commissioner Rousseau and seconded by Commissioner Laubach to approve authorizing County Judge to sign a Lease Termination Letter for Grand Laurent Corporation, on its existing land lease of airport property, contingent upon full execution of a long-term Lease Agreement covering the same land with Jerome Kruszka. [Previously Tabled 10-12-2020]

Question. Motion carried unanimously.

It is so ordered.

7. A motion was made by Commissioner Casterline and seconded by Commissioner Chaney authorizing the County Judge to sign a ten (10) year Renewal Agreement on the existing land lease between Aransas County and Aransas County Navigation District for the Aquarium Education Center at the rate of \$3,960/year (\$39,600 total), a ten percent increase from the original lease made ten years ago. This is the first of two ten year renewal options.

Question. Motion carried unanimously.

It is so ordered.

8. A motion to approve Resolution #R-01-2021, a resolution authorizing the County Judge to issue notice of intent to award a contract for implementation of the \$6,946,222 Cedar Bayou re-dredging project, was made by Commissioner Casterline and seconded by Commissioner Chaney. John Strothman relayed that all but the County's match was covered by a variety of grants but that our match was also previously budgeted. He went on to report that the project looks like it will be coming up at around \$2,000,000 below budget.

Question. Motion carried unanimously.

It is so ordered.

PLANNING & BUDGET

9. A motion was made by Commissioner Rousseau and seconded by Commissioner Casterline to approve the December 2020 Indigent Healthcare Report as submitted by Alma Cartwright.
Question. Motion carried unanimously.
It is so ordered.
10. Judge Dupnik revisited her previous request to the Court of changing her part-time Court Clerk position to a full-time Civil Court Clerk position at pay group 11. The additional money is not in her budget but she asked for it to come out of the Technology Fund for this year and stated that she would put it in her budget for 2022. She reported about a 14% increase in case filings this year over last year. [Previously Tabled 11-23-2020] A motion was made by Judge Mills and seconded by Commissioner Casterline to approve changing J.P. 1's part-time Civil Clerk position to a full-time position at pay group 11.
Question. Motion carried unanimously.
It is so ordered.
11. County Auditor Jacky Cockerham reported no Budget Line Item transfers or amendments. A motion was made by Commissioner Chaney and seconded by Commissioner Casterline to approve the (no) Budget Line Item Transfers and Amendments for this period.
Question. Motion carried unanimously.
It is so ordered.
12. Ms. Cockerham also stated that our Accounts Payable and Payroll/Payroll Liabilities were all normal for the period. A motion was made by Commissioner Casterline and seconded by Commissioner Laubach to approve Accounts Payable and Payroll/Payroll Liabilities.

Question. Motion carried unanimously.

It is so ordered.

REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS, ELECTED OFFICIALS & DEPARTMENT HEADS
WHEREIN NO ACTION WILL BE TAKEN

David Reid, County Engineer, reported on an emergency project: Egery Island Restoration. His PowerPoint slides cited several years of weather events and storm surges and then showed pictures of the resulting Egery Island erosion, ten feet in depth and within six feet from the pavement, which was very uncomfortable for the integrity of the road. The property was partly County Right-of-way and partly State of Texas so it took some effort to get the permissions for the project - but we came up with this plan, submitted it for permits, and completed the substantial work as shown, utilizing 167 tons of boulders/rock, 304 cubic yards of clay/dirt, 120 feet of concrete traffic barriers, and about a week's worth of work. He also gave special thanks to the following people and entities involved in the project: Aransas County Road & Bridge operator Edward Lopez; Hanson Professional Services; TxDOT; AL-CO; General Land Office (GLO); James Campbell, Aransas County citizen; and Coast Materials in Aransas Pass.

Commissioner Chaney made a statement complimenting the quality and skill of our County Workers at Road & Bridge. Commissioner Casterline asked about parking restrictions for the area. Mr. Reid said they had put No Parking signs up earlier and that they remained out there. Judge Mills speculated that the people at Egery Island were really happy with the improvements. Mr. Reid retorted that he hoped so but that he kind of thought that for everybody we make happy, we piss somebody off. Judge Mills said he's learned that himself.

Judge Mills then mentioned the opening of the new Emergency Room on the 5th of January. He stated: It was a small crowd because of COVID, probably 50 or so people in attendance. It was a good opening though, very well-attended by the staff - some nice people working in the building - and they received their first ambulance two hours after the facility opened. It's good for everybody in Aransas County to have this important facility. We are really glad to have them here and look forward to working with them into the future.

Jacky Cockerham mentioned that the Commissioners had a Fees Report and asked if there were any questions on it. There were none.

No further business presenting, the Court adjourned at 9:41 a.m.
on a motion duly made by Commissioner Casterline and seconded by
Commissioner Rousseau.

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

CARRIE ARRINGTON, EX-OFFICIO CLERK
OF THE COMMISSIONERS' COURT