



# MINUTES

## Aransas County Commissioners Court

5:00 PM – Thursday, November 4, 2021

The Aransas County Commissioners Court met in **Special Session** on Thursday, November 4, 2021, at 5:00 PM, in the Aransas County Courthouse, 2840 Hwy 35 N, Rockport, Texas.

Present: **C. H. "Burt" Mills, Jr.**, County Judge  
**Leslie Casterline**, Commissioner, Precinct 2  
**Jack Chaney**, Commissioner Precinct 1-1A  
**Pat Rousseau**, Commissioner, Precinct 3  
**Wendy Laubach**, Commissioner, Precinct 4

Absent:

**I. Call to Order**

The meeting convened at 5:00 PM.

**II. Roll Call** was taken.

**III. A Quorum was declared**, and the following proceedings were had and done, to wit:

[note: Judge Mills swapped the order of the Public Hearing and the Items for Deliberation and/or Action. They were addressed in the order recorded below rather than the order shown on the agenda.]

**IV. Items for Deliberation and/or Action**

1. Proposed Aransas County Economic Development Policy - which includes guidelines and criteria for tax abatement authorized by Chapter 312 of the Local Government Code, and tax rebates and other incentives authorized by Chapter 381 of the Tax Code
2. Proposed Creation of the Aransas County Economic Development Committee and the appointment of initial committee members
3. Proposed Application Forms

Michael Meek, Meek & Associates, LLC, (again) gave a presentation to the Court entitled, *Another Step Forward for Economic Recovery and Sustainability. This is just another step, another set of tools, to help in the County's post-Harvey recovery.*

He went over the timeline which brought us to this Special Meeting/Public Hearing, beginning with the County's December 2020 request of the Local Government Council (LGC) to review and make recommendations on changes to the Tax Abatement Policy, identification of target industries, and economic development incentive policies and, most recently, his presentation to the Court during the October 7, 2021 Workshop Meeting.

He reiterated that our community has done a wonderful job attracting tourism – which has been very good for our local growth and economy but which can't sustain our economy long-term, particularly in the aftermath of a major disaster like Hurricane Harvey. He suggested we add more non-tourism businesses into our economy to increase our tax basis and change it's mix. Ideally, our 13% non-residential tax base would be healthier if it was closer to the State average of 60%.

He closed his presentation by talking about the role of Meek & Associates in this process of diversifying our economy, which included drafting Chapter 312, 380-381, and 372 policies, procedures, and agreements, and developing target business sectors and strategy. He reminded the Court that the County's previous economic development program expired in 2013, was amended in 2016, and is now expired again.

He went over his submitted packet materials and answered specific questions on them from the Court. He noted that utilizing these tools are typically done sparingly on a case-by-case basis. Having these tools in place doesn't mean that the court ever has to use them.

The Court discussed their ideas for committee composition, including each commissioner being able to have an appointment to the committee. They also reviewed the forms and the wording of Resolution R-27-2021.

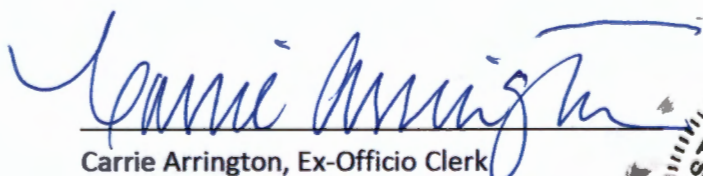
#### V. Public Hearing

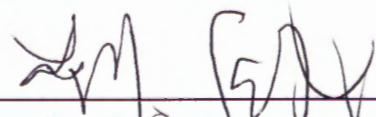
Of the 20 citizens in attendance at the Public Hearing, 8 signed up to speak:

- 2 spoke in favor of tax abatements and other authorized incentives (Nancy Bolting, Shauna Brader)
- 2 would have spoken in favor of them but felt they had nothing more to add to what had already been stated (John Jackson, Nanci Koski)
- 1 was ambivalent but suggested extreme caution (Katy Jackson)
- 2 were against them (Melissa Esquivel, Kristie Rutledge)
- 1 offered up advice based on her previous experiences with these types of incentives (Jennifer Shaw)

#### VI. Adjournment

No further business presenting, the Court adjourned at 6:43 PM on a motion duly made by Commissioner Rousseau and seconded by Commissioner Casterline.

  
Carrie Arrington, Ex-Officio Clerk  
of the Commissioners Court

  
C. H. "Burt" Mills, Jr., County Judge  
Leslie "Bubba" Casterline  
Judge Pro Tem

