THE STATE OF TEXAS \* COMMISSIONERS COURT

COUNTY OF KENEDY \* OF KENEDY COUNTY, TEXAS

On the 8th day of August, 2022, at 9:00 o'clock a.m., a special meeting of the Commissioners Court of Kenedy County, Texas, was held in the Kenedy County Courthouse.

**Commissioners present:**

Charles E. Burns, Jr., County Judge

Joe Recio, Commissioner, Precinct 1

Israel Vela, Jr., Commissioner, Precinct 2

Sarita Armstrong-Hixon, Commissioner, Precinct 3

Gumecinda “Cindy” Gonzales, Commissioner, Precinct 4

Veronica Vela, County Clerk

Cynthia Salinas, County Treasurer

Allison Strauss, County Attorney

Irma Longoria, Tax Assessor/Collector

JP Cecilia Schulz

JP Patti Fain

JP Jana Norrell

JP Jerry Miller, present in the afternoon only

Sheriff Ramon Salinas

Tom Denney, Chief Appraiser

Andy Garza, Kenedy County Groundwater Conservation District

Grace Salinas, Administrative Secretary

Javier Zambrano

Capt. Eddie Cruz

Sheriff Ramon Salinas

Brad Womack with Kleberg Bank

Janna Shoe with United Way

Denise Rodriguez

Sandy Maltby

Randy Maltby

Sandra Guzman

Charlotte

Lorenzo

Anita Garza, Appraisal District Office

**Absent:**

Leo Villarreal, Administrative Assistant

JP Jerry Miller in the morning

Brian Birdwell, Elections Administrator

1. **Judge Burns Called the Meeting to Order at 9:00 a.m., Quorum Present**.

Judge Charles E. Burns called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. with a quorum present.

**2. Pledge of Allegiance**.

Judge Charles E. Burns, Jr. led the Commissioners Court in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**3. Receive Public Comments**.

No public comments were made.

**4. Discuss & Act on Regular Minutes of July 11, 2022**.

Judge Charles E. Burns presented the Commissioners Court Minutes of the regular July 11, 2022, meeting.

Commissioner Sarita Armstrong-Hixon moved and Commissioner Gumecinda “Cindy” Gonzales seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that the minutes of the Minutes of the regular July 11, 2022, meeting be accepted as presented.

**5. Receive Report on Kleberg Bank’s CD Rates**.

Brad Womack with Kleberg Bank addressed the Commissioners Court regarding the interest rates for the County’s Certificates of Deposit. He stated that there were different interest rates regarding CD’s and that he will work with the County.

This being a report only, no vote was needed and none was taken.

**6. Receive Janna Shoe’s Presentation from 211 Texas/United Way Helpline**.

Janna Shoe with United Way addressed the Commissioners Court regarding the 211 Texas/United Way Helpline which assists citizens with evacuations during storms or emergencies; that the individuals requesting evacuation assistance is not guaranteed that they will be evacuated.

This being a report only, no vote was needed and none was taken.

**7.** **Discuss & Act on Treasurer’s Monthly Report and Transfers**.

Cynthia Salinas, County Treasurer, presented the Treasurer's Monthly Report and Transfers for the month ending July 31, 2022.

Commissioner Gumecinda “Cindy” Gonzales moved and Commissioner Joe Recio seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that the Treasurer's Monthly Report and Transfers ending July 31, 2022, be accepted as presented.

**8.** **Receive Report on Sam Noble Park Meeting**.

Cynthia Salinas addressed the Commissioners Court regarding the Sam Noble Park meeting ; that forms had been prepared for persons to use requesting the use of the park, that modified rules were presented and addressed and that another park meeting will be held before the end of the year.

This being a report only, no vote was needed and none was taken.

**9.** **Discuss & Act on the Sheriff’s Monthly Report**.

Deputy Eddie Cruz presented the Sheriff’s monthly report to the Commissioners Court for the month ending July 31, 2022. The issues of lack of jail space and morgue storage space for illegal immigrant bodies were discussed.

Commissioner Sarita Armstrong-Hixon moved and Commissioner Gumecinda “Cindy” Gonzales seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that the Sheriff’s Monthly Report be accepted as presented.

**10.** **Discuss & Act on Estimate/Quotes from CTC Gunworks, GT Distributors, Galls and Americana Arms for Sheriff’s Office Rifles and Ammunition**.

Captain Eddie Cruz addressed the Commissioners Court regarding estimates/quotes from CTC Gunworks, GT Distribution, Galls and Americana Arms for the Sheriff’s Office rifles and ammunition and recommended that Americana Arms quote be accepted.

Commissioner Gumecinda “Cindy” Gonzales moved and Commissioner Joe Recio seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that the Sheriff’s Department purchase equipment and ammunition from Americana Arms in an amount not to exceed $30,000.00 and the funds be taken from the Unfunded Budget.

**11.** **Discuss & Act on Fire Chief’s Monthly Reports**.

Jose E. Mendietta, Fire Chief, presented the Fire District’s monthly report to the Commissioners Court for the month ending July 31, 2022.

Commissioner Gumecinda “Cindy” Gonzales moved and Commissioner Israel Vela, Jr. seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that the Fire Chief’s monthly report be accepted as presented.

**12.** **Discuss & Act on the Maintenance Department Monthly Report**.

Commissioner Joe Recio presented the Maintenance Department’s monthly report for the month ending July 31, 2022 which include the cleaning of the culverts and curbs, the impound, maintenance building and contacted Nadia Stephens regarding auctioning items.

Commissioner Gumecinda “Cindy” Gonzales moved and Commissioner Sarita Armstrong-Hixon seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that the Maintenance Department’s monthly report be accepted as presented.

**13.** **Receive Daniel Almeida and Act on the Sewer & Water System Monthly Report**.

Daniel Almeida was not present; therefore, no report was presented.

Commissioner Sarita Armstrong-Hixon moved and Commissioner Joe Recio seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that this item be tabled.

**14.** **Receive Richard Flores with Bearcom Regarding His Report on the Cell Tower Project and Act If Necessary**.

Richard Flores and his assistants, Charlotte and Lorenzo, presented the Commissioners Court with their report on the cell tower project and the need of a written agreement to enter the Yturria Ranch to address the cell tower.

This being a report only, no vote was needed and none was taken.

**15.** **Receive Javier Zambrano with GrantWorks Monthly Reports Regarding Compliance with Colonia Grant #7219075 and Community Development Grant #7219220 and Act If Necessary**.

Javier Zambrano with GrantWorks presented the Commissioners Court with GrantWorks’ monthly reports regarding compliance with Colonia Grant #7219075 and Community Development Grant #7219220 including that a 6-month extension had been requested.

This being a report only, no vote was needed and none was taken.

**16.** **Discuss & Act on Kenedy County Certification of 2022 No New Revenue Tax Rate and 2022 Voter Approval Tax Rate**.

Irma Longoria, Tax Assessor/Collector, informed the Commissioners Court that the 2022 No New Revenue Tax Rate of $.537427 and the 2022 Voter Approval Tax Rate of $.556376 need to be certified.

Commissioner Sarita Armstrong-Hixon moved and Commissioner Israel Vela, Jr. seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that the report on the 2022 No New Revenue Tax Rate of $.537427and the 2022 Voter Approval Tax Rate $.556376 be certified as presented.

**17.** **Discuss & Act on Kenedy County Certification of 2022 Total Appraised Value, Total Assessed Value, Total Taxable Value and Total New Property Taxable Value**.

Irma Longoria, Tax Assessor/Collector, informed the Commissioners Court that 2022 Total Appraisal Value, total assessed value, total taxable value and total new property taxable value needed to be certified.

Commissioner Sarita Armstrong-Hixon moved and Commissioner Israel Vela, Jr. seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that the report on the 2022 No New Revenue Tax Rate and the 2022 Voter Approval Tax Rate be certified as presented.

**18.** **Discuss & Act on Kenedy County Certification of 2022 Anticipated Collection Rate**.

Irma Longoria, Tax Assessor/Collector, informed the Commissioners Court of the need to certify the 2022 Anticipated Collection Rate.

Commissioner Sarita Armstrong-Hixon moved and Commissioner Joe Recio seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that the report on the 2022 Anticipated Collection Rate be approved as presented.

**19.** **Discuss & Act on the Imposition of Optional Fees for FY2023 from the TxDMV**.

Irma Longoria, Tax Assessor/Collector, informed the Commissioners Court of the imposition of optional fees for FY2023 from TxDMV. Judge Burns recommended that Option A because it did not make any changes.

Commissioner Gumecinda “Cindy” Gonzales moved and Commissioner Joe Recio seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that Option A for FY2023 be approved.

**20.** **Receive Report on the Construction Progress Regarding the Justice of the Peace Building/Hurricane Shelter**.

Randy Maltby presented the Commissioners Court with his report on the construction progress of the Justice of the Peace Building/Hurricane Shelter.

This being a report only, no vote was needed and none was taken.

**21.** **Discuss & Act on the Spraying of the Millings and Estimate from Arturo de la Paz**.

Judge Charles E. Burns informed the Commissioners Court that Arturo De LaPaz had submitted a $3,800.00 quote to spray the millings on the cemetery road from the gate to the cemetery.

Commissioner Sarita Armstrong-Hixon moved and Commissioner Joe Recio seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that the County pay not more than $3,800.00 to spray the millings on the cemetery road from the gate to the cemetery.

**22.** **Discuss & Act on Ralph Cuellar’s Mobile Home Status Report**.

Judge Charles E. Burns informed the Commissioners Court that Ralph Cuellar’s mobile home had been determined to be uninhabitable and that Ralph Cuellar inquired whether there were any grant funds available to pay for demolishing the mobile home. Judge Burns stated that due to the mobile home not being inhabited, no grant funds were available.

Commissioner Sarita Armstrong-Hixon moved and Commissioner Israel Vela, Jr. seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that Ralph Cuellar be informed that grant funds were available and that Ralph Cuellar be informed that the mobile home was going to be demolished and that he would have to pay the county.

**23.** **Discuss & Act on Resolution for Approving the Application for Operation Lone Star Grant Program FY23 Operation OLS Grant #4372802**.

Judge Charles E. Burns presented and read to the Commissioners Court the Resolution for Approving the Application for Operation Lone Star Grant Program FY23 Operation OLS Grant #4372803.

Commissioner Gumecinda “Cindy” Gonzales moved and Commissioner Joe Recio seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that the above Resolution for Approving the Application for Operation Lone Star Grant Program FY23 Operation OLS Grant #4372803 be adopted as presented and read.

**24.** **Consent Agenda**:

A. **Approve Travel and Registration Expenses for Charles Burns to Attend the 100th Annual CJCA of Texas Conference in Lost Pines, Texas on October 3-6, 2022 ($1,695.95 within budget)**

B. **Approve Registration and Meal Expenses for Diana Serna to Attend the T-CPR TCOLE #786 and Basic CPR Training in Aransas Pass, Texas, on August 23, 2022. ($80.00 within budget)**

C. **Approve Registration and Meal Expenses for Illeana Lopez to Attend the T-CPR TCOLE #786 and Basic CPR Training in Aransas Pass, Texas, on August 23, 2022. ($80.00 within budget)**

D. **Approve Meal Expenses for Illeana Lopez to Attend the TCIC-TLETS Full Access Training at Beeville County Sheriff’s Office on September 7-9, 2022. ($147.50 within budget)**

E. **Approve Travel and Registration Expenses for Irma Longoria to Attend the Advanced Assessment & Collection Course in Conroe, Texas, on September 12-14, 2022. ($1,140.22 within budget)**

Judge Charles E. Burns informed the Commissioners Court of the need for the following officials and employees to attend the following conferences and trainings and for the expenses be advanced by the County:

Charles Burns

100th Annual CJCA of Texas Conference in Lost Pines, TX

October 3-6, 2022

$1,695.95

Diana Serna & Illeana Lopez

T-CPR TOLE #786 and Basic CPR Training in Aransas Pass, Texas

August 23, 2022

$80.00 each

Illeana Lopez

TCOC-TLETS Full Access Training at Beeville County Sheriff’s Office

September 7-9, 2022

$147.50

Irma Longoria

Advanced Assessment & Collection Course in Conroe, Texas

September 12-14, 2022

$1,140.22

Commissioner Sarita Armstrong-Hixon moved and Commissioner Gumecinda “Cindy” Gonzales seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that the above-named officials and employees attend the respective conferences and training and that the County advance the costs thereof provided proper receipts are provided to the County Treasurer.

**25.**  **Discuss & Act on the Purchase of a Patrol Unit for the Sheriff’s Office (within budget)**

Judge Charles E. Burns inquired of Sheriff Ramon Salinas whether he had been able to locate a patrol unit for purchase. Sheriff Ramon Salinas responded that he had found one for $50,000.00.

Commissioner Gumecinda “Cindy” Gonzales moved and Commissioner Joe Recio seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that the Sheriff’s Department is authorized to purchase a patrol unit for $50,000.00.

**26.** **Discuss & Act on Telecommunicator Nicole Longoria, Salary Increase to Full Budget Amount ($32,816.40)**

Judge Charles E. Burns informed the Commissioners Court of the need to increase Nicole Longoria’s salary to the full budget amount of $32,816.40.

Commissioner Gumecinda “Cindy” Gonzales moved and Commissioner Joe Recio seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that Nicole Longoria’s salary be increased to the full budget amount of $32,816.40.

**27.** **Discuss & Act on Purchasing Three Personal Computers for the Sheriff’s Office (within budget)**

Judge Charles E. Burns informed the Commissioners Court of the need to purchase three personal computers for the Sheriff’s Office within budget.

Commissioner Gumecinda “Cindy” Gonzales moved and Commissioner Joe Recio seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that three personal computers be purchased for the Sheriff’s Office within budget.

**28.** **Discuss & Act on Surplus Distribution Payment from TAC**.

Judge Charles E. Burns informed the Commissioners Court that $35,393.00 had been received as a surplus distribution payment from TAC.

Commissioner Sarita Armstrong-Hixon moved and Commissioner Gumecinda “Cindy” Gonzalez seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that the $35,393.00 be distributed equally to each county employee that currently is qualified for medical services.

**29.** **Discuss & Act on 2023 County Choice Silver Retiree Medical Program Renewal**.

Judge Charles E. Burns informed the Commissioners Court of the need to choose a plan for the 2023 County Choice Silver Retiree Medical program renewal.

Commissioner Sarita Armstrong-Hixon moved and Commissioner Gumecinda “Cindy” Gonzales seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed to keep the current Plan 1 and it be renewed for the 2023 County Choice Silver Retiree Medical program.

**30.** **Discuss & Act on a Request from the South Texas Human Rights Center Director, Eddie Canales, to Conduct Research in Kenedy County Regarding Migrant Death Practices**.

Judge Charles E. Burns informed the Commissioners Court that Eddie Canales, Director of the South Texas Human Rights Center wanted to conduct research in Kenedy County regarding migrant death practices.

Commissioner Sarita Armstrong-Hixon moved and Commissioner Gumecinda “Cindy” Gonzales seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that this item be tabled.

**31.** **Report on Receiving Kenedy County Central Appraisal District Operating Budget for 2023**.

Tom Denney, Chief Appraiser, informed the Commissioners Court that he had submitted the Appraisal District’s budget and that the County’s portion was $131,871.49 plus $25,000 for 911 services totaling $156,871.49.

Commissioner Sarita Armstrong-Hixon moved and Commissioner Gumecinda “Cindy” Gonzales seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that Tom Denney’s report be accepted as presented.

**32.** **Discuss & Act on Whether New Positions May be Created Pursuant to TAC’s Opinion and Rules**.

Allison Strauss, County Attorney, presented the Commissioners Court with a statement regarding whether new positions may be created pursuant to TAC’s opinion and rules.

Commissioner Sarita Armstrong-Hixon moved and Commissioner Gumecinda “Cindy” Gonzales seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that the County Attorney is authorized to prepare a document that recognizes or declares that it is an emergency to employ a person for a part-time position in the County Attorney’s office and a full-time Clerk in the County Clerk’s office.

**33.** **Discuss & Act on TexMesonet Weather Station Proposal**.

Judge Charles E. Burns informed the Commissioners Court regarding TexMesonet Weather Station’s proposal, particularly land that would be needed to place the weather station.

Commissioner Sarita Armstrong-Hixon moved and Commissioner Joe Recio seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that this item be tabled.

34. **Discuss & Act on Kenedy County Policy Regarding Kenedy County Employees, Which are Firefighter Volunteers, Responding to Emergency Calls**.

Judge Charles E. Burns informed the Commissioners Court of the need to consider a Kenedy County policy regarding Kenedy County employees who are firefighter volunteers responding to emergency calls that their Kenedy County pay would not be affected while responding to emergency calls.

Commissioner Sarita Armstrong-Hixon moved and Commissioner Gumecinda “Cindy” Gonzales seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that Kenedy County pay employees who are firefighter volunteers while responding to emergency calls should not be affected irrespective of the number of days called.

**35.** **Discuss & Act on Paying Ruben Hernandez’s Comp Time and Vacation Time**.

Judge Charles E. Burns informed the Commissioners Court that Ruben Hernandez was entitled to 80 hours of vacation time but did not have any documentation regarding comp time.

Commissioner Sarita Armstrong-Hixon moved and Commissioner Gumecinda “Cindy” Gonzales seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that Ruben Hernandez be paid 80 hours of vacation time and comp time if Ruben Hernandez produces documentation regarding his comp time.

**36.** **Discuss & Act on Purchasing a Digital Recorder for Commissioners Court Purposes**.

Judge Charles E. Burns informed the Commissioners Court that Allison Strauss had advised that Kenedy County does not have the population to support audio and video recording of the Commissioners Court meetings, therefore, the equipment did not need to be purchased.

Commissioner Gumecinda “Cindy” Gonzales moved and Commissioner Joe Recio seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that a digital recorder regarding audio and video recordings of the Commissioners Court meetings did not need to be purchased.

**37.** **Discuss & Act on Consolidating the Polling Places in the Sarita Townsite, in Armstrong and Norias**.

Judge Charles E. Burns informed the Commissioners Court to consider consolidating the polling places in the Sarita Townsite and in Armstrong and Norias.

Commissioner Sarita Armstrong-Hixon moved and Commissioner Gumecinda “Cindy” Gonzales seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that the polling places in the Sarita Townsite be consolidated to vote at the Elections Office and the Armstrong and Norias polling places to vote at Norias Ranch.

**38.** **Discuss & Act on Order Calling the November 8, 2022 General Election**.

Judge Charles E. Burns provided to the Commissioners Court the proposed Order Calling the November 8, 2022 General Election and informed the Commissioners Court of the need to pass it.

Commissioner Sarita Armstrong-Hixon moved and Commissioner Joe Recio seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that the Order Calling the November 8, 2022 General Election to accepted as presented and be signed as required by law.

**39.** **Discuss & Act on Notice of the November 8, 2022 General Election**.

Judge Charles E. Burns provided the Commissioners Court with the Notice of the November 8, 2022 General Election and of the need to pass it.

Commissioner Gumecinda “Cindy” Gonzales moved and Commissioner Sarita Armstrong-Hixon seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that the Notice of the November 8, 2022 General Election be accepted as presented, be signed and posted as required by law.

**40.** **Discuss & Act on Payment of Bills**.

Judge Charles E. Burns informed the Commissioners’ Court of the need to pay the bills.

Commissioner Sarita Armstrong-Hixon moved and Commissioner Gumecinda “Cindy” Gonzales seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that the bills be paid as presented.

41. **EXECUTIVE SESSION: TEXAS GOVERNMENT CODE, 551.071, 551,072, 551.073, 551.074 – PERSONNEL**.

No Executive Session was needed.

**42.** **Open Session: Discuss & Act on Items Addressed in Executive Session**.

No Executive Session having been held, this item was not needed.

**43.** **Recess for Lunch**.

The Commissioners Court recessed for lunch at 11:45 a.m. and will return at 1:45 p.m.

**44.** **Discuss & Act on Amending the 2022 Budget**.

Judge Charles E. Burns, at 1:50 p.m., called the Commissioners Court meeting back to order and inquired of Denise Rodriguez regarding the need to amend the 2022 budget now.

Commissioner Sarita Armstrong-Hixon moved and Commissioner Gumecinda “Cindy” Gonzales seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that proposed amendments to the 2022 Budget be tabled until the August 22, 2022 meeting to give Department Heads an opportunity to address their budget concerns.

**45.** **Reconvene at 1:30 for the 2023 Budget Workshop**.

Judge Charles E. Burns, at 2:00 p.m., called the 2023 Budget Workshop to order. The Commissioners and Department Heads discussed and proposed the 2023 Budget provisions and amounts of funds to consider.

This being a workshop, no final budget action was needed or taken.

**46. Adjournment**

There being no further business to come before the Commissioners Court, Commissioner Sarita Armstrong-Hixon moved and Commissioner Gumecinda “Cindy” Gonzales seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that the meeting be adjourned at 4:06 p.m.

/s/ Charles E. Burns

Charles E. Burns, Jr., County Judge

ATTESTED BY:

/s/ Veronica Vela

Veronica Vela, County Clerk