THE STATE OF TEXAS \* COMMISSIONERS COURT

COUNTY OF KENEDY \* OF KENEDY COUNTY, TEXAS

On the 9th day of January, 2023, at 9:00 o'clock a.m., a regular meeting of the Commissioners Court of Kenedy County, Texas, was held in the Kenedy County Courthouse.

**Commissioners present:**

Charles E. Burns, County Judge

Joe Recio, Commissioner, Precinct No. 1

Israel Vela, Jr., Commissioner, Precinct No. 2

Sarita Armstrong-Hixon, Commissioner, Precinct No. 3

Jose Salazar, Commissioner, Precinct No. 4

**Also present:**

Veronica Vela, County & District Clerk

Leo Villarreal, Administrative Assistant

Cynthia Salinas, County Treasurer

Irma Longoria, County Tax Assessor/Collector

Grace Salinas, Administrative Secretary

Ferman Garza, Maintenance Supervisor

Allison Strauss, County Attorney

Capt. Eddie Cruz, Sheriff’s Dept.

Tom Denney, Chief Appraiser

Andy Garza, Kenedy County GD

Jose E. Mendietta, Fire Chief

Ramon Salinas, III, County Sheriff

JP Patti Fain

Sandra Maltby, Maltby Builders, Inc.

Caleb Maltby, Maltby Builders, Inc.

Javier Zambrano, Grantworks

Sandra Guzman, Sheriff’s Office

James Carr

Tammy Mendez

Kirsten Mendez

William Dieterle

Stephanie Garza, Elections Administrator

**Absent**:

JP Jerry Miller

JP Jana Norrell

JP Cecilia Schulz

Daniel Almeida

1. **Call Meeting to Order at 9:00 a.m.**

Judge Charles E. Burns called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m.

1. **Pledge of Allegiance**.

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

1. **Receive Public Comments**.

Leo Villarreal thanked the Commissioners Court, the Commissioners and Allen Brown for the sympathy cards receiving regarding his sister’s death. Judge Charles E. Burns expressed condolences for Leo Villarreal’s loss.

1. **Discuss & Act on the Regular Minutes of December 9th, 2022 and Special Minutes of December 21st, 2022**.

Judge Charles E. Burns presented the Commissioners Court Minutes of the regular December 9, 2022, and special December 21, 2022 meetings.

Commissioner Sarita Armstrong-Hixon moved and Commissioner Israel Vela, Jr. seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that the minutes of the Minutes of the regular December 9, 2022, and special December 21, 2022, meetings be accepted as presented.

1. **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 December 31, 2022.

Commissioner Sarita Armstrong-Hixon moved and Commissioner Joe Recio seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed the Treasurer's Monthly Report and Transfers ending December 31, 2022, be accepted as presented.

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

Sheriff Ramon Salinas presented the Sheriff’s monthly report and the Chapter 59 report to the Commissioners Court for the month ending December 31, 2022.

Commissioner Sarita Armstrong-Hixon moved and Commissioner Israel Vela, Jr. seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that the Sheriff’s monthly report and Chapter 59 report be accepted as presented.

1. **Discuss & Act on Fire Chief’s Monthly Report**.

Jose E. Mendietta, Fire Chief, presented the Commissioners Court with the Fire District report.

Commissioner Sarita Armstrong-Hixon moved and Commissioner Joe Recio seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that the Fire Chief’s monthly report be accepted as presented.

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

Ferman Garza presented the Maintenance Department’s monthly report to the Commissioners Court for the month ending December 31, 2022; had spread four caliche loads; working on generator; had trimmed trees at the Nature Tral; and will inspect the Serna house for condemnation proceedings.

Commissioner Sarita Armstrong-Hixon moved and Commissioner Joe Recio seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that Ferman Garza’s monthly report be accepted as presented.

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

Judge Charles E. Burns informed the Commissioners Court that Daniel Almeida was not present.

Commissioner Sarita Armstrong-Hixon moved and Commissioner Israel Vela, Jr. seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that Daniel Almeida’s Sewer & Water System monthly report be tabled.

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

Javier Zambrano from GrantWorks presented the GrantWorks monthly report to the Commissioners Court regarding compliance with Colonia Grant #721905 and Community Development Grant #721220. He stated that Grant 7219220 was completed and needed to closed out; however, a Public Hearing needed to be held by February 1, 2023 and that Robert will work with the county on setting the Public Hearing.

He further stated that a Public Hearing was necessary for the Colonia Fund 2023.

Commissioner Sarita Armstrong-Hixon moved and Commissioner Israel Vela, Jr. seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that Javier Zambrano work with the Judge’s office to identify and publish the Public Hearing and post inspection for the 2023 Colonia prior to February 1, 2023, and for the 2023 Colonia Fund.

1. **Discuss & Act on Authorizing GrantWorks to Issue Requests for Proposals (RFPs) for Administrative Service and Requests for Qualifications (RFQs) for Engineering Services Related to the 2023 Colonia Fund- Construction (CFC) Administered by the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA)**.

Judge Charles E. Burns informed the Commissioners regarding the need to authorize GrantWorks to issue requests for proposals (RFPs) for administrative service and requests for qualifications (RFQs) for engineering services related to the 2023 Colonia Fund-Construction (CFC) administered by the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA).

Commissioner Sarita Armstrong-Hixon moved and Commissioner Joe Recio seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that GrantWorks is authorized to issue requests for proposals (RFPs) for administrative service and requests for qualifications (RFQs) for engineering services related to the 2023 Colonia Fund-Construction (CFC) administered by the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA).

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

Caleb Maltby with Maltby Builders, Inc. presented to the Commissioners Court the construction progress report regarding the Justice of the Peace Building/Hurricane Shelter. They are working on the exterior of the building, bricks, air conditioning ducts, plumbing and will be spraying the interior with spray foam and thereafter, will start sheet rocking.

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

1. **Discuss & Act on Transformer and Generator Pad Proposals for the New JP Building**.

Sandra Maltby with Maltby Builders, Inc. informed the Commissioners Court regarding the transformer and general pad proposal was $18,595.00 for the new JP Building/Hurricane Shelter.

Commissioner Sarita Armstrong-Hixon moved and Commissioner Israel Vela, Jr. seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that the proposal for the generator pad in the amount of $18,595.00 be approved as presented.

1. **Discuss & Act on Opening the three Demolishing Bids and the Hiring of a Contractor to Demolish Ralph Cuellar’s Mobile Home and Remove the Debris**.

Ferman Garza, Maintenance Supervisor, informed the Commissioners Court that three bids had been received regarding the hiring of a contractor to demolish Ralph Cuellar’s mobile home and removal of the debris.

The three bids were from Camacho Demolition, LLC, in the amount of $10,750.00, Kingsville Transport Services in the amount of $11,900.00 and J & D Company in the amount of $15,500.00.

Ferman Garza recommended awarding the bid to Camacho Demolition, LLC.

Commissioner Sarita Armstrong-Hixon moved and Commissioner Joe Recio seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that Camacho Demolition, LLC be awarded the bid to demolish Ralph Cuellar’s mobile home and that a letter be sent to Ralph Cuellar after the demolishment with the cost thereof.

1. **Consent Agenda:**

**(A) Approve Lodging, Travel, and Meal Expenses for Monica Gutierrez to Attend the 2023 Healthy Boot Camp in Denton, Tx on February 8-10, 2023. ($1,080.00 within budget, LODGING to be reimbursed by TAC)**

**(B) Approve Meal Expenses for Norma Alaniz to Attend the 2023 Healthy Boot Camp in Denton, Tx on February 8-10, 2023. ($147.50 within budget)**

**(C)Approve Meal Expenses for Sandra Guzman to Attend the 2023 Healthy Boot Camp in Denton, Tx on February 8- 10, 2023. ($150.00 within budget)**

**(D) Approve Lodging, and Meal Expenses for Ashley Gonzalez to Attend the 2023**

**Healthy Boot Camp in Denton, Tx on February 8-10, 2023. ($490.00 within budget,**

**LODGING to be reimbursed by TAC)**

**(E) Approve Registration and Travel Expenses for Denise Gutierrez to Attend the TJCTC Clerk Training in Galveston, Texas on February 26 – March 1, 2023. ($1,144.00 within budget)**

**(F) Approve Registration and Travel Expenses for Leticia Vela to Attend the TJCTC Clerk Training in Galveston, Texas on February 26 – March 1, 2023. ($963.16 within budget)**

**(G) Approve Registration and Travel Expenses for Lucia Longoria to Attend the TJCTC Clerk Training in Galveston, Texas on February 26 – March 1, 2023. ($591.91 within budget)**

**(H) Approve Registration and Travel Expenses for Grace Salinas to Attend the 2023**

**County Court Assistant’s Training Conference in San Marcos, Tx on February 14 – 17, 2023. ($1,118.05 within budget)**

Judge Charles E. Burns informed the Commissioners Court that the following Commissioners, employees and officials needed to attend the below seminars and conferences and costs be advanced thereon, as follows:

Employee Name: Monica Gutierrez

Training/Seminar: 2023 Healthy Boot Camp

Location: Denton, Texas

Date: February 8-10, 2023

Cost: $1,800 within budget for Lodging, Travel, and Meal Expenseswith LODGING to be reimbursed by TAC

Employee Name: Norma Alaniz

Training/Seminar: 2023 Healthy Boot Camp

Location: Denton, Texas

Date: February 8-10, 2023

Cost: $147.50 (meals only)

Employee Name: Sandra Guzman

Training/Seminar: 2023 Healthy Boot Camp

Location: Denton, Texas

Date: February 8-10, 2023

Cost: $150.00 within budget for meals

Employee Name: Ashley Gonzalez

Training/Seminar: 2023 Healthy Boot Camp

Location: Denton, Texas

Date: February 8-10, 2023

Cost: 49150.00 within budget with lodging to be reimburse by TAC

Employee Name: Denise Gutierrez

Training/Seminar: TJCTC Clerk Training

Location: Galveston, Texas

Date: February 26-March 1, 2023

Cost: $1,144.00 within budget for registration and travel expenses

Employee Name: Leticia Vela

TJCTC Clerk Training

Location: Galveston, Texas

Date: February 26-March 1, 2023

Cost: $963.16 within budget for registration and travel expenses

Employee Name: Lucia Longoria

Training/Seminar: TJCTC Clerk Training

Location: Galveston, Texas

Date: February 26-March 1, 2023

Cost: $591.91 within budget for registration and travel expenses

Employee Name: Grace Salinas

Training/Seminar: 2023 County Court Assistant’s Training Conference

Location: San Marcos, Texas

Date: February 14-17, 2023

Cost: $1,118.05 within budget for registration and travel expenses

Commissioner Sarita Armstrong-Hixon moved and Commissioner Joe Recio seconded the motion; the motion was passed with a 4-1 vote, with Commissioner Israel Vela, Jr. voting against, that the above employees are authorized to attend their respective trainings and that the County advance the costs thereof provided that proper receipts be provided to the County Treasurer.

1. **Discuss & Act on Adjusting the Evidence Custodian Salary from $35,000.00 to $35,500.00**.

Sheriff Ramon Salinas informed the Commissioners Court of the need to adjust the Evidence Custodian salary from $35,000.00 to $35,500.00.

Commissioner Sarita Armstrong-Hixon moved and Commissioner Joe Recio seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that the Evidence Custodian salary be raised from $35,000.00 to $35,500.00.

1. **Discuss & Act on Adjusting the Deputy’s Salary Budget Line Item 10-470-147 from $48,708.00 to $48,600.00**.

Sheriff Ramon Salinas informed the Commissioners Court of the need to adjust the Deputy’s salary budget line item 10-470-147 from $48,600.00 to $48,708.00.

Commissioner Joe Recio moved and Commissioner Israel Vela, Jr. seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that the Deputy’s salary budget line item 10-470-147 be adjusted from $48,600.00 to $48,708.00.

1. **Discuss & Act on the 2023 State Forfeiture Budget**.

Sheriff Ramon Salinas informed the Commissioners Court of the Kenedy County Sheriff’s Office 2023 Forfeiture account in the amount of $6,979.00.

Commissioner Joe Recio moved and Commissioner Sarita Armstrong-Hixon seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that the 2023 Forfeiture Budget account of $6,979.00 be approved as presented.

1. **Discuss and Act on the Continuing Education Transcript of Completion Mandated by SB546 Regarding Irma G. Longoria, Tax Assessor Collector, Pursuant to Texas Property Code Section 6.231(d)**

Judge Charles E. Burns informed the Commissioners Court that the Continuing Education Transcript of Completed mandated by SB546 regarding Irma Longoria, Tax Assessor Collector, pursuant to Texas Property Code, Section 6.231(d).

Commissioner Sarita Armstrong-Hixon moved and Commissioner Joe Recio seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that the Continuing Education Transcript of Completion mandated by Senate Bill 546 regarding Irma G. Longoria, Tax Assessor Collection, be accepted as presented.

1. **Discuss & Act on Approving Public Official Bonds for Newly Elected Officials.**

**Charles E. Burns, County Judge ($1,243.00)**

**Israel Vela, Jr., Commissioner ($178.00)**

**Jose Salazar, Commissioner ($178.00)**

**Cynthia Salinas, Treasurer ($266.00)**

**Veronica Vela, County/District Clerk ($178.00 & $178.00)**

**Jana Norrell, Justice of the Peace ($178.00)**

**Jerry W. Miller, Justice of the Peace ($178.00)**

**Cecilia G. Schulz, Justice of the Peace ($178.00)**

**Patricia Fain, Justice of the Peace ($178.00)**

**Estefana Stephanie Garza, Elections Administrator ($70.00)**

Judge Charles E. Burns informed the Commissioners Court of the need to approve payment of the Public Official Bonds for the following newly elected officials:

Charles E. Burns, County Judge in the amount of $1,243.00

Israel Vela, Jr., Commissioner in the amount of $178.00

Jose Salazar, Commissioner in the amount of $178.00

Cynthia Salinas, Treasurer in the amount of $266.00

Veronica Vela, County/District Clerk in the amount of $178.00 & $178.00

Jana Norrell, Justice of the Peace in the amount of $178.00

Jerry W. Miller, Justice of the Peace in the amount of $178.00

Cecilia G. Schulz, Justice of the Peace in the amount of $178.00

Patricia Fain, Justice of the Peace in the amount of $178.00

Estefana Stephanie Garza, Elections Administrator in the amount of $70.00

Commissioner Sarita Armstrong-Hixon moved and Commissioner Israel Vela, Jr. seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that the Public Official Bonds be paid as follows:

Charles E. Burns, County Judge in the amount of $1,243.00

Israel Vela, Jr., Commissioner in the amount of $178.00

Jose Salazar, Commissioner in the amount of $178.00

Cynthia Salinas, Treasurer in the amount of $266.00

Veronica Vela, County/District Clerk in the amount of $178.00 & $178.00

Jana Norrell, Justice of the Peace in the amount of $178.00

Except Jerry W. Miller, Justice of the Peace in the amount of $178.00 until it is determined whether he is bondable

Cecilia G. Schulz, Justice of the Peace in the amount of $178.00

Patricia Fain, Justice of the Peace in the amount of $178.00

Estefana Stephanie Garza, Elections Administrator in the amount of $70.00

1. **Receive Presentation of Thomas Denney the Chief Appraiser for Kenedy County Central Appraisal District Regarding Real Property Exemptions Available to Property Owners, ie, Homestead Exemptions, Over 65 Exemptions, Agricultural Productivity, Valuations, Wildlife Exemptions, Etc**.

Thomas Denney, Chief Appraiser for Kenedy County Central Appraisal District, informed the Commissioners Court regarding real property exemptions available to property owners, i.e., homestead exemptions, over-65 exemptions, agricultural productivity, valuations, wildlife exemptions, etc.

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

1. **Discuss & Act on Amending the 2022 Policy Manual by Changing Daily Work Hours From 8:30-4:30 to 8:00 – 5:00**.

Judge Charles E. Burns informed the Commissioners Court of the need to amend the 2022 Policy Manual regarding changing daily work hours from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. to 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Commissioner Sarita Armstrong-Hixon moved and Commissioner Joe Recio seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that the Personnel Policy Manual be amended to require a 40-hour workweek effective January 16, 2023, and that each Department Head post their hours for the public.

1. **Discuss & Act on Placing All Offices on Hourly and Salary Basis and Certify to Same**.

 Judge Charles E. Burns informed the Commissioners’ Court that all County offices and employees needed to be placed on a salary basis. Cynthia Salinas, County Treasurer, presented to the Commissioners’ Court the 2023 Salaries for the Kenedy County officers and employees and stated that she does not have to file with the State Comptroller.

After due consideration and discussion, Commissioner Sarita Armstrong-Hixon moved and Commissioner seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that all County officers and employees be and are hereby placed on a salary basis and that certified same.

1. **Discuss & Act on Appointing the 2023 Salary Grievance Committee**.

  Judge Charles E. Burns informed the Commissioners Court that a 2023 Salary Grievance Committee needed to be appointed. After due consideration and discussion, the following names were recommended from the Grand Jury list: Ruben Hernandez, David Castillo, Homer Garza and Nancy Garcia be appointed to the Kenedy County 2023 Salary Grievance Committee and Estevan Lopez be appointed as Alternate.

Commissioner Sarita Armstrong-Hixon moved and Commissioner Israel Vela, Jr. seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that Ruben Hernandez, David Castillo, Homer Garza and Nancy Garcia be appointed to the Kenedy County 2023 Salary Grievance Committee and Estevan Lopez be appointed as Alternate.

1. **Discuss & Act on Renewal of Liability Insurance in the Amount of $36,377.00 Due on March 1, 2023**.

Judge Charles E. Burns informed the Commissioners Court of the need to pay $36,377.00 for the renewal of the County’s Liability Insurance which is due on March 1, 2023.

Commissioner Joe Recio moved and Commissioner Sarita Armstrong-Hixon seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that 36,377.00 be paid for the renewal of the County’s Liability Insurance which is due on March 1, 2023.

1. **Discuss & Act Approving the 2023 Employees and Public Officers’ Salaries Within the Kenedy County Budget**.

 Judge Charles E. Burns informed the Commissioners’ Court that all County offices and employees needed to be placed on salaries within the Kenedy County budget. Cynthia Salinas, County Treasurer, presented to the Commissioners’ Court the 2023 Budget Salaries for the Kenedy County officers and employees.

After due consideration and discussion, Commissioner Sarita Armstrong-Hixon moved and Commissioner Israel Vela, Jr. seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that all County officers and employees be and are hereby placed on a salary basis within the Kenedy County budget.

1. **Discuss & Act on Hiring Auditors for 2022**.

Judge Charles E. Burns informed the Commissioners’ Court that auditors needed to be considered to conduct the County’s Audit of the Kenedy County 2022 Financial Records.

After due consideration and discussion, Commissioner Sarita Armstrong-Hixon moved and Commissioner Joe Recio seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that Dan Morales be hired as the Kenedy County Auditor to conduct and prepare the 2022 Kenedy County Audit.

1. **Discuss & Act on Appointing the 2023-2024 Historical Committee.**

**William Dieterle, Juan Vela, Manuel Garcia, Ricky Zarate, Sandra Garcia-Burns, Judge Cecilia Schulz, Judge Patti Fain**

Judge Charles E. Burns informed the Commissioners Court of the need to appoint the 2023-2024 Historical Committee.

Commissioner Sarita Armstrong-Hixon moved and Commissioner Joe Recio seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that William Dieterle, Juan Vela, Manuel Garcia, Ricky Zarate, Sandra Garcia-Burns, Judge Cecilia Schulz and Judge Patti Fain are appointed to the 2023-2024 Historical Committee.

1. **Discuss & Act on Changing the Regular Commissioners’ Court Dates for the Following Months, April 10, 2023 to April 11, 2023, October 9, 2023 to October 10, 2023, and December 11, 2023 to December 8, 2023**.

Judge Charles E. Burns informed the Commissioners Court of the need to change the regular Commissioners Court meeting dates for the following months:

April 10 to April 11

October 9 to October 10

December 11 to December 8

Commissioner Sarita Armstrong-Hixon moved and Commissioner Israel Vela, Jr. seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that the following regular Commissioners Court meeting dates be changed as follows:

April 10 to April 11

October 9 to October 10

December 11 to December 8

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

Judge Charles E. Burns informed the Commissioners’ Court of the need to pay the bills for the month ending December 31, 2022.

Commissioner Sarita Armstrong-Hixon moved and Commissioner Israel Vela, Jr. seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that the bills be paid as presented.

1. **EXECUTIVE SESSION: TEXAS GOVERNMENT CODE, § 551.071, § 551.072, § 551.073, § 551.074-PERSONNEL**

Judge Charles E. Burns called the Executive Session to order at 10:56 a.m.

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

Judge Charles E. Burns called the Open Session to order at 11:41 a.m. No action was taken.

1. **Discuss & Act on Appointing Fire Commissioners to the Kenedy County Fire Emergency Services District 1 for a Two-Year Term Commencing January 1, 2023**.

Judge Charles E. Burns informed the Commissioners Court of the need to appoint three Fire Commissioners to the Kenedy Count Fire & Emergency Services District No. 1 for two-year terms commencing January 1, 2023. Allen Brown, Deyanira Garcia, Rogelio Salinas, Melinda Vela and William Dieterle submitted their names for consideration.

Commissioner Joe Recio moved and Commissioner Israel Vela, Jr. seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that William Dieterle and Melinda Vela be reappointed and that Rogelio Salinas be appointed as Fire Commissioners for the Kenedy County Fire & Emergency Services District No. 1 for two-year terms commencing January 1, 2023 and ending December 31, 2024.

1. **Adjournment**.

There being no further business at this time to come before the Commissioners Court, Commissioner Sarita Armstrong-Hixon moved and Commissioner Joe Recio seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that the Kenedy County Commissioners Court be adjourned at 11:48 a.m.

/s/ Charles E. Burns

Charles E. Burns, County Judge

ATTESTED BY:

/s/ Veronica Vela

VERONICA VELA, Clerk of Commissioners Court