THE STATE OF TEXAS \* COMMISSIONERS COURT

COUNTY OF KENEDY \* OF KENEDY COUNTY, TEXAS

On the 10th day of June, 2024, at 9:00 o'clock a.m., a regular meeting of the Commissioners Court of Kenedy County, Texas, was held in the Kenedy County Justice Court Building.

**Commissioner 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

Grace Salinas, Administrative Secretary

Leo Villarreal, Administrative Assistant

Irma Longoria, County Tax Assessor/Collector

Stephanie Garza, Elections Administrator

Allison Strauss, County Attorney

Jose E. Mendietta, Fire Chief

JP Jana Norrell

JP Cecilia Schulz

Jose E. Mendietta, Fire Chief

Tom Denney, Chief Appraiser

Andy Garza, Kenedy County GCD

Seferino Gutierrez, Maintenance Supervisor

Kirsten Mendez

Deputy Fidel Gonzalez

Lt. Adam Rodriguez

Chief Gilbert San Miguel

Sylvia Villarreal

Sandra Guzman

Dave Furzer

Daniel Almeida

Hector Castaneda, Ardurra

Ann Awalt, Community Action

Frances Garcia, Kleberg County Administrator

William Castillo, Big Fish Consulting

**Absent**:

Cynthia Salinas, County Treasurer

JP Patricia Fain

Sheriff Ramon Salinas

JP Jerry Miller

1. **Call Meeting to Order**

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

1. **Pledge of Allegiance**

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

1. **Public Comments**

No public comments were made.

1. **Discuss & Act on the Regular Minutes of May 13th, 2024.**

Judge Charles E. Burns presented the Commissioners Court Minutes of the regular May 13, 2024 meeting.

Commissioner Sarita Armstrong-Hixon moved and Commissioner Joe Recio seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that the Minutes of the regular May 13, 2024 meeting be accepted as presented.

1. **Receive William Castillo with Big Fish to Discuss Electric and Gas Refund to Kenedy County and Act If Necessary.**

William Castillo with Big Fish Consultants addressed the Commissioners Court of the need to approve the agreement and Limited Power of Attorney regarding the $2,097.55 being held by the State Comptroller; that once Kenedy County receives the funds, 50% will be paid to William Castillo and that if no funds are recovered by Kenedy County, then William Castillo will not be paid.

Commissioner Sarita Armstrong-Hixon moved and Commissioner Joe Recio seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that the Utility Study Agreement and Big Fish Consultants Limited Power of Attorney be approved.

1. **Receive Ann Awalt’s, the Executive Director of Community Action of South Texas, Presentation Regarding the Mobile Clinic.**

Anne Awalt, Executive Director of Community Action of South Texas presented the Commissioners Court a report on the mobile clinic and stated that she had two Board members with her, Stephanie Garza and Frances Garcia. She presented the agency’s history and that they served three counties from Beeville to Brownsville; that they have 17 programs that range from Head Start, Early Childhood Intervention, Senior Meals and Mobilization and are authorized to operate in Kenedy County; that the agency relies on partnerships; that their first partnership was in Freer ISD and have expanded to Brooks County; that they work with the University of Texas which helps build stronger communities. The program includes Head Start and Early Head Start from 0-3 years old and do weatherization, senior meals and Vet programs; that in Mathis they have a school-based health center with licensed professional counselors; that TAMUK wanted health services for their students on that campus and put a mobile medical unit on the campus; that the system has been revitalized at TAMUK; and that the container project for Sarita is a vital component. They will build the shipping containers and will be in Sarita in 2025. The plans are for the mobile clinic on the TAMUK campus to be moved to Sarita until the container is ready; that there is a PA that lives in Riviera and will be in Sarita for a half day on Mondays and will be working with the FED to add this zip code. The program ranks in the top 10 percent in the nation. Robert Vela and Dr. Silva initiated a health club which will be located on TAMUK. Kingsville would serve as the hub for the training and she would be glad to update the Court on this project.

Judge Burns thanked Ms. Awalt for all of her information, the container and mobile unit. He stated that the area around the Courthouse is ready for the mobile unit.

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

Cynthia Salinas, County Treasurer, was not present to give the Treasurer's Monthly Report and Transfers.

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

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

Lt. Adam Rodriguez presented the Commissioners Court with the Sheriff’s monthly report and the Chapter 59 report.

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

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

Jose E. Mendietta, Fire Chief, informed the Commissioners Court that he will be attending a training at the windfarm this week; that the poly tank will be coming in; that the class with Halo is being rescheduled for “Stop the Bleed” – one to be held in the morning and one in the afternoon; and that the tractor’s calanoid is not working but the part has been ordered.

Commissioner Sarita Armstrong-Hixon moved and Commissioner Israel Vela, Jr. seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that the Fire Chief’s report be approved as presented.

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

Seferino Gutierrez presented the Maintenance Department’s monthly report to the Commissioners Court for the month ending May 31, 2024.

Mr. Gutierrez stated that:

1. The gates at the Sheriff’s Law Enforcement Center have been installed;
2. Mowing is slowing down and sprinkler heads are being repaired and installed;
3. The Ag Building is being cleaned and trash being removed to get the building ready for the Hurricane season;
4. Water, water containers and fuel containers are being topped off;
5. The old sports building is being cleaned and will be used as a storage unit for the mosquito pump and poison and that a lock will be installed on the door; that batteries are being charged and they run on solar power;
6. He is getting the oak trees out of the pits and obtaining liners to dispose of them;
7. New air conditioner at the Tax Office was installed and that the big tree behind the office had been removed;
8. That the application for the permit for red dye gas fuel needs to be completed; and
9. Rosales Yards will be out tomorrow planting grass at the JP building.

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

1. **Discus & Act on Insulating the Sheriff’s Office.**

Judge Charles E. Burns informed the Commissioners Court of the need to consider insulating the Sheriff’s building with closed cell insulation due to mold buildup for the cost of $33,575.00.

Commissioner Sarita Armstrong-Hixon moved and Commissioner Joe Recio seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that the Sheriff’s building be insulated with closed cell insulation for the cost of $33,575.00.

1. **Receive Dave Furzer and Act on the Sewer & Water System Monthly Report.**

Dave Furzer presented the Commissioners Court with the Sewer & Water System Report for the month ending May 31, 2024.

He stated that the South well has been approved by the health Department; all is running well; and that the tanks are all filled up.

Judge Burns inquired about the TCEQ deficiencies and Mr. Furzer said the deficiencies have been taken care of.

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

1. **Discuss & Act on Replacing the Valves at the South Well in the Amount of $675.00.**

Judge Charles E. Burns informed the Commissioners Court of the need to consider replacing the valves at the South Well in the amount of $675.00.

Commissioner Sarita Armstrong-Hixon moved and Commissioner Joe Recio seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that the valves at the South Well be replaced for the amount of $675.00.

1. **Receive Hector Castaneda’s, with Ardurra, Presentation Regarding the Update on the Master Drainage Study.**

Hector Castaneda with Ardurra presented the Commissioners Court with his monthly update on the Master Drainage Study. He stated that by next month, he will have a written list of what has been done.

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

1. **Receive the Progress Report on the Courthouse Repairs and on Proposal No. 24-118 in the Amount of $3,642.00, Regarding the Interior Painting in the Court Room and Act If Necessary.**

Caleb Maltby with Maltby Builders, Inc. informed the Commissioners Court of the progress of the Courthouse repairs and requested the consideration of Proposal No. 24-118 in the amount of $3,642.00 regarding the interior painting in the Courtroom. He stated that a water test for the Courthouse roof is scheduled for tomorrow morning to determine where the leak is coming from. He stated that the leak is not from the roof drains for there is water leaking after a rain. The roof is still under warranty since it was done in 2018. The good thing is we know the roof drains themselves are not leaking.

Regarding the JP Building, Caleb stated that his wife’s photography company will be working on the blow-up prints to help with the acoustics in the JP building.

Commissioner Sarita Armstrong-Hixon moved and Commissioner Israel Vela, Jr. seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that Proposal No. 24-118 in the amount of $3,642.00be approved as presented.

1. **Discuss & Act on the Consent Agenda:**

**(A) Approve Travel Expenses for Kirsten Mendez to Attend the 2024 DPS Crime Records Conference in South Padre Island, Tx, July 15-19th, 2024. ($1,125.32 within budget)**

**(B) Approve Travel, Lodging, and Meal Expenses for Veronica Vela to Attend the Criminal Justice Information System Conference in South Padre Island, Tx, July 15-19th, 2024. ($973.90 within budget)**

**(C) Approve Travel, Lodging, and Meal Expenses for Maria Lerma to Attend the Criminal Justice Information System Conference in South Padre Island, Tx, July 15- 19th, 2024. ($1,125.32 within budget)**

**(D) Approve Travel, Lodging, and Meal Expenses for Alicia Garcia to Attend the Criminal Justice Information System Conference in South Padre Island, Tx, July 15-19th, 2024. ($973.90 within budget)**

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

Employee’s Name: Kirsten Mendez

Training/Seminar: 2024 DPS Crime Records Conference

Location: South Padre Island, Texas

Date: July 15-19, 2024

Cost: $1,125.32 within budget

Official’s Name: Veronica Vela

Training/Seminar: Criminal Justice Information System Conference

Location: South Padre Island, Texas

Date: July 15-19, 2024

Cost: $973.90 within budget

Employee’s Name: Maria Lerma

Training/Seminar: Criminal Justice Information System Conference

Location: South Padre Island, Texas

Date: July 15-19, 2024

Cost: $1,125.32 within budget

Employee’s Name: Alicia Garcia

Training/Seminar: Criminal Justice Information System Conference

Location: South Padre Island, Texas

Date: July 15-19, 2024

Cost: $973.90 within budget

Commissioner Sarita Armstrong-Hixon moved and Commissioner Joe Recio seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that the above officials 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 Approving the Professional Service Contract with National Mobile X-Ray, LLC Between the Sheriff’s Office.**

Gilbert San Miguel, Chief Deputy, informed the Commissioners Court of the need to consider approving the Professional Service Contract with National Mobile X-Ray, LLC to take inmates’ TB and x-rays while in jail. The fee is $150 per test.

Commissioner Sarita Armstrong-Hixon moved and Commissioner Israel Vela, Jr. seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that the Professional Service Contract with National Mobile X-Ray, LLC be approved with the set rate of $150 per x-ray.

1. **Discuss & Act on CIS Report Writing System Contract Regarding the Sheriff’s Office.**

Judge Charles E. Burns informed the Commissioners Court that item needed to be tabled.

Commissioner Sarita Armstrong-Vela moved and Commissioner Israel Vela, Jr. seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that this item be tabled.

1. **Report on Possible Dates for Grand Opening for the JP Building/Hurricane Shelter.**

Judge Charles E. Burns informed the Commissioners Court of the need to select possible dates for the grand opening for the JP Building/Hurricane Shelter and that July 13 will be considered as the possible date for the grand opening of the JP Building/Hurricane Shelter.

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

1. **Discuss & Act on 2025 TCDRS Plan Assessment Employer Contribution Rates and the Partial Lump Sum Payment Option.**

Judge Charles E. Burns informed the Commissioners Court of the need to consider approving the 2025 TCDRS Plan Assessment Employer Contribution Rates and the partial lump sum payment option for there was no reason to change the Employer Contribution Rates.

Commissioner Sarita Armstrong-Hixon moved and Commissioner Joe Recio. seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that the current contribution rates be approved but that the partial lump sum payment option is not approved.

1. **Discuss & Act on the TAC Risk Management Pool Coverage in the Amount of $76,330.00 for July 1, 2024 – July 1, 2025 Term.**

Judge Charles E. Burns informed the Commissioners Court of the need to consider approving the TAC Risk Management Pool Coverage in the amount of $76,330.00 for July 1, 2024-July 1-2025 term.

Commissioner Sarita Armstrong-Hixon moved and Commissioner Israel Vela, Jr. seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that the TAC Risk Management Pool Coverage in the amount of $76,330.00 for the July 1, 2024-July 1, 2025 term be approved.

1. **Discuss & Act on Removing the Old Justice of the Peace Building from the TAC Property Insurance.**

Judge Charles E. Burns informed the Commissioners Court of the need to consider removing the old Justice of the Peace building from the TAC property insurance for it was scheduled to be demolished.

Commissioner Sarita Armstrong-Hixon moved and Commissioner Israel Vela, Jr. seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that the old JP building be removed from insurance coverage.

1. **Discuss & Act on the TAC 2024-2025 Health and Employee Benefits Pool Renewal.**

Judge Charles E. Burns informed the Commissioners Court of the need to consider approving the TAC 2024-2025 Health and Employee Benefits Pool renewal.

Commissioner Sarita Armstrong-Hixon moved and Commissioner Joe Recio seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that the TAC 2024-225 Health and Employee Benefits Pool Renewal be approved.

1. **Discuss & Act on Approving an Updated Payment list of Monthly Recurring Bills.**

Judge Charles E. Burns informed the Commissioners Court of the need to consider approving an updated payment list of monthly recurring bills to include the PVS payments which are payments regarding testing chlorine in the water which is required by TCEQ.

Commissioner Sarita Armstrong-Hixon moved and Commissioner Israel Vela, Jr. seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that the monthly list of recurring bills be approved to include the PVS payments.

1. **Discuss & Act on a 2024 Budget Workshop Date.**

Judge Charles E. Burns informed the Commissioners Court of the need to consider setting a date for the 2024 Budget Workshop.

Commissioner Sarita Armstrong-Hixon moved and Commissioner Israel Vela, Jr. seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that the 2024 Budget Workshop be held on July 8, 2024, at 1:30 p.m.

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 May 31, 2024.

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

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

There was no need for an Executive Session, therefore, one was not held.

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

There was no need for an Open Session.

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 10:37 a.m.

/s/ Charles E. Burns

Charles E. Burns, County Judge

ATTESTED TO:

/s/ Veronica Vela

Veronica Vela, Clerk of Commissioners Court