

MINUTES

BE IT REMEMBERED, That on this 1ST DAY of AUGUST, 2019, Commissioners Court of Fort Bend County, Texas, met at a special meeting with the following present:

KP GEORGE	COUNTY JUDGE
VINCENT MORALES	COMMISSIONER PRECINCT 1
GRADY PRESTAGE	COMMISSIONER PRECINCT 2
ANDY MEYERS	COMMISSIONER PRECINCT 3
KEN R. DEMERCHANT	COMMISSIONER PRECINCT 4
LAURA RICHARD	COUNTY CLERK

Commissioner Prestage was present via Facetime.
When the following were heard and the following orders were passed:

1. Call to Order.

Call to Order by Judge KP George at 9:01 a.m.

Commissioner Meyers recognized Commissioner Morales and Commissioner DeMerchant for their hard work on the proposed bond referendum project. The Commissioners Court has had a long history of carefully guarding and protecting the welfare and financial status of our County and the trust the taxpayers have placed in this court is very well founded. In Commissioner Meyers' opinion, the needs in Fort Bend County are flood mitigation, mobility, public safety and health and financial status for the future of our County. Commissioner Meyers also stated the County has committed a significant amount of funds to match federal grants and will have to come up with the County's share of the funding.

Judge George stated we are living at a time of expedient growth in our County at every level. The main challenges facing our County are drainage and mobility. The watershed study is important and the County is working with the Army Corp of Engineers. Commissioner Morales and Commissioner DeMerchant have put a lot of hard work, as well as, the County Auditor on the Facility Bond project. The court will be deciding what is best for the citizens of Fort Bend County. The safety and security of the citizens of Fort Bend County are absolutely the number one priority.

2. Conduct Budget Workshop, including Capital Improvement Projects.

Pamela Gubbels, Director of Finance & Investments stated the list of all requests made last week during the Budget Workshop totals \$5.3 million. This brings the total budget finance summary as it stands today, including a COLA, of \$396.2 million, which is a 6% increase over 2019 Budget. The General Fund, excluding items on the priority projects list, is about 21% Fund Balance, which is moving towards the preferred policy of between 25% - 30%. There is a Tax Rate decrease of .04 for a total Tax Rate of .46, including Drainage District. The CIP projects are a total net change to the budget of \$231,000.

Ed Sturdivant, County Auditor indicated the relevance of what Ms. Gubbels is sharing, the net \$231,000 change to the budget, is highly conditional on the court's movement of CIP out of the operating budget. It is being proposed to use a financing plan, whether it will be put on a bond referendum, or other financing vehicles.

Ms. Gubbels reviewed each department's request and presented recommendations to the court.

Justice of the Peace, Precinct 2 - Case Manager is not recommended.

Associate Judge - 268th & 240th District Courts - Not included in the budget. The courtroom is not built; nor funded.

Two Magistrate Positions - Not included in the budget. State funding will be lost for the weekend Magistrates.

(Commissioner Prestage stated the court should fund the Associate Judge and two Magistrate positions and work out a way to utilize the courtrooms the County currently has and plan in the future for an additional courtroom. Judge indicated he is in agreement with Commissioner Prestage. The County will continue to grow and add courts and workload. Judge agrees with Commissioner Prestage that our citizens do not mind which courtroom the justice is served, the Court needs to be creative on this matter. Ms. Gubbels indicated 10 additional staff would be needed at a cost of \$1.44 million; not including space.)

District Clerk - Two additional Clerk III, plus a supervisor - The two clerks are included due to the addition of the new reintegration court. The supervisor is not included in the budget.

District Attorney - The Administrative Secretary and the Certified Fraud Examiner are put in the budget.

Public Defender - One Mental Health Attorney is included in the budget.

Behavioral Health - CaseWorthy software is included. Eight additional hours for the Developmental Psychologist is included.

EMS - Two additional Paramedics are included in the budget and the Administrative Secretary to move from part time to full time is included.

Clinical Health Immunizations - 1 LVN and 1 CSA are included in the budget for the Katy Clinic to open three days/week.

Clinical Health Services - TB Case Manager (RN) is included.

Social Services - One caseworker for the Homeless Youth is included in the budget. A grant for the CaseWorthy software, for clients to register online, will be applied. Social Services will need \$13,000 for the difference. If the grant is not received, the court must decide if the \$13,000 will be taken out of the budget and wait another year for the software.

Medical Examiner - The Secretary Transcriptionist is included in the budget. The part-time Medical Examiner will be added until a full-time examiner is hired. The salaries for the Chief Deputy Medical Examiner and the Deputy Medical Examiner have been increased. The Deputy Medical Examiner's salary is included in the budget.

Information Technology - The additional \$100,000 fees to cover contracts are included in the budget. Two positions, Mobile Device Administrator and Mobile App Developer are included.

Item 2 continued - Conduct Budget Workshop, including Capital Improvement Projects:

Constable Precinct 1 - One deputy including vehicle, equipment and salary are included in the budget.

Body Cameras - Fourteen cameras are included in the budget.

Engineering - Two Clerk III's to be moved from part time to full time are included in the budget.

Electronic Voting - The amount of \$27,000 is included in the budget. Judge George stated the Electronic Voting system can add transparency and clarity for our citizens. Currently, all proceedings in the courtroom are live stream in order for Fort Bend County citizens to watch the meetings at their leisure.

Judge George stated the voting system will be done today or tomorrow. He also indicated the electronic voting system will add better transparency, better clarity and Judge guarantees time will be saved.

Fort Bend Museum - The additional amount of \$12,500 is included in the budget.

Facilities - Project Manager to manage all projects with the County, in addition to all the construction projects and Parks projects, has been added to the budget.

Mr. Sturdivant stated the \$150 million in Facilities has been mischaracterized as a Facilities Bond Referendum initiative. The projects in CIP have historically been funded from the Operating Budget. Currently, the amount is \$20 million. If the County were to continue in this way, the County would not be able to give a tax rate back to the taxpayer, fund the retiree healthcare liability, new positions would have to come out and there would be no cost of living allowance for County employees. Next year, there will be a new revenue cap legislation and all this effort is being made for the County to be able to handle the operating requirements of Fort Bend County. These Capital initiatives are being moved out of the operating budget and into a financing plan.

3. Review projects and discuss potential facilities bond election.

Commissioner Morales thanked Ed Sturdivant, County Auditor and his team, Pamela Gubbels, Director of Finance and Investments and her team and Jamie Knight, Facilities Director and all those who deliberated with him and Commissioner DeMerchant on numerous occasions. In being good stewards financially, Commissioner Morales and Commissioner DeMerchant are proposing a bond referendum in November to be a single proposition for Flood Mitigation to fund \$62,004,101 for the County's local match for federally funded flood projects. This match commitment will leverage \$233 million in flood projects, primarily funded with federal grants, FEMA, USDA and FHWA. These projects are established to fund damages incurred during the 2015, 2016 floods and Hurricane Harvey in 2017. The Bond Counsel agrees and recommends this proposal as well and for this to be under the Drainage District.

Commissioner DeMerchant stated after meeting with residents, HOA and visiting with Mayors, it was clear that Flood Mitigation is most important to our citizens. A decision was made, by the committee, to defer the Facilities projects and focus on the Flood Mitigation.

Commissioner Meyers indicated that \$38 million in Flood Mitigation has not been approved yet for a federal grant. In working with the State Legislature in this past session, \$1.5 billion will be available for funding the local match and the County will be able to apply for the state's funding. The state may not fund 100%; but possibly 75% of the local match.

4. Take all appropriate action on the project list for proposed bond referendum.

No action.

Recess:

Recessed at 10:51 a.m.

5. **Meet in Closed Session to deliberate the following matter as authorized by the Texas Government Code:**

§ 551.071. Consultation With Attorney. Commissioners Court will meet in Closed Session to seek the advice of its attorney about pending or contemplated litigation; a settlement offer; or on a matter in which the duty of the attorney to Commissioners Court under the Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct of the State Bar of Texas clearly conflicts with Texas Government Code Chapter 551.

Texas Local Government Code Chapter 262 County Purchasing Act; Texas Government Code Chapter 791 Interlocal Cooperation Act; Texas Health & Safety Code: Chapter 711. General Provisions Relating to Cemeteries and Chapter 713: Local Regulation of Cemeteries.

Closed Session:

Convened at 11:01 a.m.
Adjourned at 11:21 a.m.

Reconvene:

Reconvened at 11:25 a.m.

6. **Reconvene Open Session and consider taking action on the following matter:**

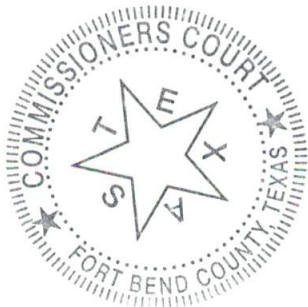
§ 551.071. Consultation With Attorney.

Texas Local Government Code Chapter 262 County Purchasing Act; Texas Government Code Chapter 791 Interlocal Cooperation Act; Texas Health & Safety Code: Chapter 711. General Provisions Relating to Cemeteries and Chapter 713: Local Regulation of Cemeteries.

No action.

7. **Adjournment.**

Commissioners Court Special Meeting adjourned at 11:25 a.m. on Thursday, August 1, 2019.



I attest to the accuracy of the foregoing minutes.

Laura Richard

Laura Richard, County Clerk, Fort Bend County, Texas