

**MINUTES**

BE IT REMEMBERED, That on this 19TH DAY of MAY, 2020, 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

When the following were heard and the following orders were passed:

**1. Call to Order.**

Call to Order by Judge KP George at 1:02 p.m.

**2. Public Comments regarding the Agenda and Announcements.**

There were 16 public comments for Agenda Item #3.

1. Deacon Gilbert Rodriguez, 1107 Walden Circle, Sugar Land, St Theresa's Catholic Church, Coordinator for Hispanic Ministries, requested to increase the CARES budget for Rental Assistance to \$25M and for Utility Assistance to \$7M.
2. Shariq Ghani, 19902 Sonterra Lane, Richmond, requested the budget be increased to \$25M for Rental Assistance and \$7M for Utility Assistance.
3. Renee Teel, Mission Director, 2222 Streamcrest Lane, Sugar Land, requested the budget be increased to \$25M for Rental Assistance and \$7M for Utility Assistance.
4. Bryan Guinn, FBISD CFO, 72 Grants Lake Circle, Sugar Land, asked that FEMA only be used as a last resort due to the need of a match.
5. Jeff Wiley, President and CEO of EDC, 2415 Hodges Bend Circle, Sugar Land, requested the County maximize the funds as much as possible by using FEMA and budget \$40M to businesses.
6. Mayor Andrew Bohoc, Mayor of Needville, 9003 Stephens Street, Needville, was representing the citizens of Needville and small cities in Precinct 1. Mayor Bohoc stated small towns need help with businesses and would also like to see support go to senior citizens.
7. James Uschkrat, Fort Bend Family Promise, 4514 Bermuda Drive, Sugar Land, requested the budget be increased to \$25M for Rental Assistance and \$7M for Utility Assistance.

**Item 2 continued - Public Comments:**

8. Juanita Darkis, Fort Bend The Metropolitan Organization (TMO), 2606 Balsam Ridge Way, Fresno, requested assistance for families with their mortgages.
9. Father Lee Flores, TMO, 1600 Avenue D, Rosenberg requested help with rental assistance and a plan for homeless people.
10. Mayor Joe Zimmerman, 1406 Lake Pointe Parkway, Sugar Land, stated he does not support the \$134M budget as presented and believes it does not address the intent of the funding as the governor reviewed last week.
11. Eugene Campbell, 1903 West Lake, Houston, spoke on behalf of Missouri City. The City asked 20% of the funds be allocated immediately.
12. Mayor Charles Jessup, 1 Troyan Drive, Meadows Place, was representing City of Meadows Place and spoke on behalf of the Fort Bend Mayor and Counsel Association which is not in favor of the budget as proposed. Mayor Jessup urged the County to move quickly on distributing the money to the cities.
13. Mayor Aaron Groff, 4114 Brighton Loop, Fulshear, believes it is imperative to support the local businesses. Mayor Groff finds it difficult to support the budget as presented because of the lack of detail on the funding.
14. Ahmad Khan, Religious Director of Maryam Islamic Center, 504 Sartartia Lane, Sugar Land requested the budget be increased to \$25M for Rental Assistance and \$7M for Utility Assistance.
15. Amina Ishaq, 2322 Golden Bay Lane, Richmond, requested support for families with Rental and Utility Assistance.
16. Andrew Van Chau, 29818 & FM1093 Fulshear, was representing the Fulshear/Katy Area Chamber, stated there is a lot of need for individuals who are unemployed and need help with rental assistance, food and mental health. Mr. Chau believes it is critical to put more money in businesses and back into the economy.

Judge George announced Monday, May 25, 2020 the County offices will be closed in observance of Memorial Day.

**3. Take all appropriate action on initial priorities to be funded by the CARES Act Local Government Assistance allocation, and authorize the Auditor to begin the distribution process with input from the Advisory Team and Commissioners Court.**

Moved by Commissioner Prestage, Seconded by Commissioner DeMerchant  
Duly put and carried (3-2), it is ordered to approve the budget as presented for the initial priorities for the \$134,262,393 CARES Act Local Government Assistance allocation, and appoint the County Auditor as the Budget Manager for the fund distribution process. This action also directs the County Auditor to place all eligible emergency protective measure expenditures under the FEMA Public Assistance funding when appropriate with the local match to be provided by the County.

Motion Passes

Judge George	Yes
Commissioner Morales	No
Commissioner Prestage	Yes
Commissioner Meyers	No
Commissioner DeMerchant	Yes

Moved by Commissioner Meyers, Seconded by Commissioner Morales  
Duly put and carried (2-3), it is ordered to amend the current motion to substitute the budget received from the County Auditor and position the alternate budget.

Motion Failed.

Judge George	No
Commissioner Morales	Yes
Commissioner Prestage	No
Commissioner Meyers	Yes
Commissioner DeMerchant	No

Ed Sturdivant, County Auditor gave an overview of the CARES Act Funds. Mr. Sturdivant read the guiding information on the use of the funds from the CARES Act Title VI regarding Local Government Assistance. 1. Costs that are necessary expenditures incurred due to the public health emergency with respect to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) 2. Costs that were not accounted for in the budget most recently approved as of March 27, which was the date of the enactment of the CARES act for state or local government 3. Costs that were incurred during the period that begins March 1 - December 30, 2020. Additional guidance was received from the Department of Treasury, as well as, Texas Department of Emergency Management. The compliance aspect of those funding sources will be rigorously managed and will not be done in a vacuum. Even though the cities would prefer these funds be directly paid to them, and have them provide accounting after the fact, this Commissioners Court, with a letter from the Judge to the US Department of Treasury, makes the County accountable for that compliance. The distribution criteria will be developed quickly with input from all.

**Item 3 continued - CARES Act Allocation:**

Commissioner Meyers stated, for clarification on this issue, Commissioners Court on behalf of the County has a responsibility for refunding the money back to the Federal Government should the expenditures be disallowed after an audit by the Federal Government. Even though the County may have given the funds to the cities, the County is responsible.

Ed Sturdivant, County Auditor explained, with the guidance information received from the Department of Treasury, the qualifications for expenditures regarding Rental Assistance and Utilities, is intended to target the individuals who are directly damaged as a result of the pandemic and lost their jobs, didn't receive unemployment assistance and are unable to meet the needs of their family. If someone was having challenges with their finances before the pandemic, these individuals should be routed to the services that are already in place. Mr. Sturdivant stated for the distribution, the County must get input on everything the local governments in Fort Bend County are experiencing a need for, the County would define those as the eligible use of the funds and then the submission process, which the County would develop and convey to all of the local governments, would be disseminated.

Commissioner Meyers stated one of the things the court must operate on are the guidelines put out by those who supplied the money. Congress had a specific goal in mind, which is to put the country back to work. Assisting businesses by refitting their facility and providing PPE, disinfecting/sterilization, etc, will help, because even if businesses open back up, the customers/patrons must feel comfortable in going into the businesses. Cities are hurting due to the drop in sales tax revenue as a result of the closure of the economy and some businesses are closing permanently. One of the ways to help people pay their rent and utilities is putting them back to work by keeping these businesses opened. Commissioner stated the current plan does not do this. A significant portion of this plan is basically expanding the County government. In his opinion, the County is being reactive and not proactive and he cannot support the budget as presented.

Commissioner Morales would like the court to consider increasing the small business line item, because it is getting people back to work. Commissioner believes the County needs to help all those individuals, that are in need, to not be evicted; but assistance is needed to get businesses up and running.

**4. Take all appropriate action to establish COVID-19 Testing Strike Team consisting of members employed by Fort Bend County, Local Fort Bend Fire Departments, & EMS to adhere to Governor of Texas' directive for SARS-CoV-2 during COVID-19 pandemic.**

Moved by Commissioner Meyers, Seconded by Commissioner Prestage  
Duly put and unanimously carried (5-0), it is ordered to establish COVID-19 Testing Strike Team consisting of members employed by Fort Bend County, Local Fort Bend Fire Departments, & EMS to adhere to Governor of Texas' directive for SARS-CoV-2 during COVID-19 pandemic.

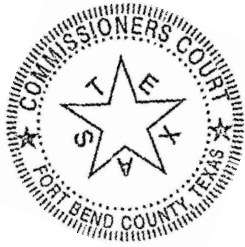
Judge George	Yes
Commissioner Morales	Yes
Commissioner Prestage	Yes
Commissioner Meyers	Yes
Commissioner DeMerchant	Yes

Mark Flathouse, Emergency Manager/Fire Marshal, stated the governor requested every Fire Department in the state of Texas perform COVID-19 testing within nursing homes. A mandate came out for licensed Fire Departments to do this job. A task force under HHS with the Fire Department and EMS was established. The costs will be reimbursed by TEDEM.

**5. Adjournment.**

Commissioners Court Special Meeting adjourned at 2:25 p.m. on Tuesday, May 19, 2020.

Moved by Commissioner Meyers,  
to adjourn.



**I attest to the accuracy of the foregoing minutes.**

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**Laura Richard, County Clerk, Fort Bend County, Texas**