

THE STATE OF TEXAS
COUNTY OF HUTCHINSON

On this 25th day of August 2025, A.D., the Commissioners' Court met in a Regular Session with the following members present to wit:

Cindy Irwin	County Judge
Gary Alexander	Commissioner Precinct #1
Dwight Kirksey	Commissioner Precinct #2
Ben Bentley	Commissioner Precinct #3
Chris Prock	Commissioner Precinct #4
Kelly Ratliff	County Clerk & Ex-Officio Clerk of Commissioners Court

AGENDA

CALL TO ORDER FOR REGULAR MEETING, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND INVOCATION

Judge Irwin called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. Gary Alexander led the pledge and prayer.

PUBLIC COMMENT; 5 MINUTES PER PERSON (WITH SIGNED PARTICIPATION FORM)

None at this time.

CONSENT AGENDA

CONSIDER AND/OR APPROVE MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS COMMISSIONERS' COURT MEETING

CONSIDER AND/OR APPROVE COUNTY AUDITOR'S TABULATED REPORT TO COMMISSIONERS COURT PURSUANT TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT CODE 114.024

CONSIDER AND/OR APPROVE PAYMENT OF BILLS

CONSIDER AND/OR APPROVE PAYROLL

CONSIDER AND/OR APPROVE DISPOSAL OF OBSOLETE OFFICE EQUIPMENT AS REQUESTED BY DEPARTMENTS

ACCEPT CERTIFICATES OF COMPLETION FROM ELECTED OR APPOINTED OFFICIALS

CONSIDER AND/OR APPROVE REPORTS FROM ELECTED/APPOINTED OFFICIALS REQUIRED BY STATE LGC 114.044

Ben Bentley made a motion to approve Consent Agenda Items, seconded by Gary Alexander. All voted aye and the motion carried unanimously. Reports have been made part of the minutes.

REGULAR AGENDA

CONSIDER AND/OR APPROVE THE DONATION OF ASPHALT MILLINGS TO THE CITY OF BORGER MUNICIPAL GOLF COURSE

Steven Meyer, Danny Holcomb and Shawn Holcomb, are board members of the Borger Municipal Golf Course, requesting asphalt millings to be used for cart paths. Mr. Meyer spoke on the needs of the Borger Municipal Golf Course. After discussion the City of Borger is assisting with this project, and we already have an Interlocal Agreement with the City of Borger that has access to the lower grade asphalt millings that will be sufficient for the cart path project.

CONSIDER AND/OR APPROVE PROCLAIMING SEPTEMBER 2025 AS HUNGER ACTION MONTH

Gary Alexander made a motion to approve the above stated agenda item, seconded by Ben Bentley. All voted aye and the motion carried unanimously. Document has been made part of the minutes.

CONSIDER AND/OR APPROVE ORDER AND NOTICE FOR THE NOVEMBER 4, 2025 CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT ELECTION

Dwight Kirksey made a motion to approve the above stated agenda item, seconded by Chris Prock. All voted aye and the motion carried unanimously. Order and Notice have been made part of the minutes.

CONSIDER AND/OR APPROVE JOINT ELECTION AND ELECTION SERVICES AGREEMENT BETWEEN BORGER INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT AND HUTCHINSON COUNTY FOR NOVEMBER 4, 2025 CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT ELECTION

Chris Prock made a motion to approve the above stated agenda item, seconded by Dwight Kirksey. All voted aye and the motion carried unanimously. Agreement has been made part of the minutes.

CONSIDER AND/OR APPROVE COMBINING POLLING LOCATIONS FOR THE NOVEMBER 4, 2025 CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT ELECTION

Ben Bentley made a motion to approve the above stated agenda item, seconded by Gary Alexander. All voted aye and the motion carried unanimously. Forms have been made part of the minutes.

PUBLIC HEARING – ON COUNTY CLERK’S RECORDS MANAGEMENT ARCHIVE AND VITALS PLAN

Kelly Ratliff, County Clerk presented the County Clerk’s Records Management Archive and Vitals Plan. This plan has been made part of the minutes.

CONSIDER AND/OR APPROVE COUNTY CLERK’S RECORDS MANAGEMENT ARCHIVE & VITALS PLAN

Dwight Kirksey made a motion to approve the above stated agenda item, seconded by Ben Bentley. All voted aye and the motion carried unanimously.

CONSIDER AND/OR APPROVE FIRE MITIGATION LINES IN THE STINNETT AREA

Alan Well, EMC, presented a Release of Liability that County Attorney, Craig Jones has approved. This was brought up after a discussion a few months back when a private party is asking for Wildfire Mitigation assistance by Hutchinson County. Mr. Wells stated once this is approved, they can move forward with this when Road & Bridge is available to get started on the fire mitigation lines. Chris Prock made a motion to approve the above stated agenda item with the Release of Liability, seconded by Ben Bentley. All voted aye and the motion carried unanimously. Release of Liability form has been made part of the minutes.

UPDATE ARP GRANT PROJECTS

Commissioner Bentley reported the upgrade to the chiller should be finished today. This Thursday the new generator will be put in place. Everyone that parks in the assigned parking and that middle area needs to park at the Stinnett Annex due to having a crane take the old generator out and put the new generator in place. Friday they will start the hook up, next Thursday start up and next Friday electrical hook up. Richard Hein with IT has been notified about possible power outage next Friday.

CONSIDER AND/OR APPROVE BURN BAN OR RESCIND BURN BAN

Allan Wells, EMC, reported that the drought index is below 500. No action taken at this time.

CONSIDER AND/OR APPROVE REQUESTS FOR USE OF CLUBROOMS AT BORGER LIBRARY OR FRITCH

Chris Prock had no requests for the Borger Library Clubroom. Dwight Kirksey submitted a schedule for the Fritch Library Clubroom through October 31, 2025. Dwight Kirksey made a motion to approve the above stated agenda item, seconded by Chris Prock. All voted aye and the motion carried unanimously.

CONSIDER AND/OR APPROVE LINE ITEM CHANGES, TRANSFERS, AND/OR BUDGET AMENDMENTS

None at this time.

CONSIDER AND/OR APPROVE ADVERTISING, OPENING, ACCEPTING OR AWARDING BIDS

Lesha Krieg, Auditor presented 1 request for Sealed Bid for the Fiber Optic Project at the 3 library locations. Richard Hein, IT Director and Nancy Criswell, Library Director have reviewed. Ms. Krieg will post it in the paper for 2 weeks and will open bids on September 15, 2025. She will present the proposals in Commissioners' Court on September 22, 2025. Dwight Kirksey made a motion to approve the above stated agenda item, seconded by Gary Alexander. All voted aye and the motion carried unanimously.

CONSIDER AND/OR APPROVE DONATIONS TO HUTCHINSON COUNTY

None at this time.

DISCUSSION OF COUNTY JUDGES' AND COMMISSIONERS' PRECINCTS DAILY OPERATIONS

Commissioner Kirksey reported he has received many calls about permitting for companies digging for fiber optic projects. Duane with R&B said at one time a umbrella contract was talked about for the use of right of ways for digging. Commissioner Kirksey will research and check with other counties on a process.

Sheriff Langwell reported that when they transfer inmates to a holding facility or to a unit, they can apply for mileage reimbursement. They applied and received reimbursement. Sheriff Langwell suggested putting it towards the Capital Projects Fund for the possibility of a future jail.

Judge Irwin reported reminding everyone of the new posting requirements starting Sept 1, 2025. The agenda must be posted 3 business days prior to the public meeting. With Sept 1st being a holiday the agenda will need to be posted this Thursday for the Commissioners Court meeting on Monday, Sept 8th of the next week. If you have agenda items for the Sept 8th meeting, they need to be in by this Thursday, Aug 28th.

CONSIDER AND/OR APPROVE SALE OF STRUCK OFF TAX PROPERTIES AND TAX DEEDS

None at this time.

PUBLIC HEARING – ON PROPOSED TAX RATE AND PROPOSED SALARY INCREASES

Judge Irwin reported that she has declined to take her raise along with all the Commissioners. The other elected officials are welcome to do the same.

Public Participation Form – Tom Phelan introduced himself with a story of moving to Borger in 1982 working for Phillips Petroleum Company. Mr. Phelan's concern is with the county workdays being Mon-Thurs. He feels with the high pay scale the county has we should go back to a 5-day work week to provide public service to the citizens.

Public Participation Form – Mary Kay Phelan introduced herself and thanked the court for allowing her to speak. Mrs. Phelan’s concern is with the salaries and wages of Hutchinson County. She did research on Moore County, Gray County and Hutchinson County with similar population and tax rates. She provided tax revenue information for each county and expenditures. She also did salary comparisons for elected officials in surrounding counties. Providing examples between Hutchinson County and Potter County. The Hutchinson County Judge, County Clerk and Commissioners make more than Potter County with a much larger population. She feels we are spending too much on salaries. She appreciates the fact that the county has talked about reevaluating the salaries in the past as well as the Judge and Commissioners electing not to take their raise this year. She feels the wages are not equivalent to the job responsibilities.

Judge Irwin spoke to the public comments. She wanted to clarify that the county is open from 8am to 6pm, allowing those that may work from 9am to 5pm to give them time before 9am and after 5pm to conduct business. The offices that provide the most customer service, such as the Clerk’s Office, are also open during the lunch hour. The County Clerk in Potter County does not conduct elections; they have a separate position, staff and office for elections. The Hutchinson County Clerk conducts all election responsibilities.

Judge Irwin reported on the proposed tax rate; they set this so if something comes up that wasn’t discussed in the budget workshop we are covered. When you set a proposed tax rate you cannot go any higher when setting the tax rate. Traditionally when we set a tax rate it is lower than the proposed tax rate.

Judge Irwin asked if there are any other comments on our proposed tax rate and or proposed salary increases. No further comments or questions.

BUDGET WORK SESSION FOR BUDGET 2025-2026

Juvenile Probation. Jeremy Sharp, Juvenile Probation Officer, spoke on the Detention line item. At the previous Commissioners’ Court meeting it was discussed to reduce this line to \$80,000.00. He presented this to the Juvenile Board, and they would like to see this line item at \$100,000.00 in the event grant funds are not approved. These Detention funds cover placement beds, general detention, meds, psychological and electronic monitors. Mr. Sharp will use state money, local money and grant funding as well as apply for extensions that may or may not be funded. He presented current placement billing information for juveniles that the day rates are on the higher side for the foreseeable future. There was discussion about reducing it to \$80,000.00 and request from contingency funds if needed and the process for requesting from contingency funds. Mr. Sharp would still like to go with \$100,000.00, which is still a decrease from previous year’s budget. The board will revisit this next budget year. All agreed but would like to make this line item where no transfers can be made.

Adult Probation. Judge Irwin and Lesha Krieg, Auditor, have reviewed the budget Jennifer Rhoden, Adult Probation Director, submitted and there were little to no changes. This budget was attached to CivicPlus for review.

Budget discussion. Lesha Krieg, Auditor, reported making changes to the Social Security line item and Retirement line item for the County Attorney as it was being paid out of supplemental and it must be paid by the county.

Lesha Krieg, Auditor, said she did not increase the amount of TIRZ funding based on the certified values. She has it at \$60,000.00 based on current tax rate and certified values. It will be based on whatever tax rate is adopted so this should be fine. No questions.

Lesha Krieg, Auditor, looked at the Utilities line items as they were raised a few years back but she thinks they can be lowered. Jail Utilities changed from \$23,000.00 to \$20,000.00, Library Utilities from \$28,000.00 to \$22,000.00, Courthouse Utilities from \$85,000.00 to \$70,000.00, Annex Utilities from \$45,000.00 to \$35,000.00 and Stinnett Annex Utilities from \$11,000.00 to \$6,000.00. After discussion majority agreed to these changes.

Lesha Krieg, Auditor, reported on Airport that we have always added \$50,000.00 to the Grant line item and Expenditure, she suggested to zero them out until grants are approved so we know exactly what to plug in when we get the approval letter. All agreed.

Commissioner Kirksey asked if we need to revisit the days and hours that the county is open. Commissioner Prock explained that when this was decided the hours were 8am to 5pm and closing for lunch so the county could not service those who also work those hours. If the county went to 8am to 6pm and stayed open for lunch, then the county could service those citizens during the lunch hour and after 5pm to 6pm for extended public hours. He sees it as what is the most benefit to the county and staff satisfaction. Commissioner Kirksey mentioned the banks had shown concern at one point due to car and home loans and no access to the county on Fridays. Judge Irwin mentioned the car dealerships have access to a web portal for this now.

Commissioner Kirksey wanted to speak about heavy salaries within the county and how it has always been a concern of his since taking office. He is proud that discussions are being held and are more open-minded to scale back salaries. Discussions have been held on raises based on longevity etc. Departments bringing in new employees at a lower tiered rate than the employees that left. He feels we are going in the right direction.

Commissioner Prock wanted to discuss SB 293 that passed. This bill raised the district side base pay from \$145,000.00 to \$175,000.00 or more based on longevity. We also have the county supplement that went up with the intentional increase that we set. So we need to decide as a court, do the raises apply to supplement or the salary. It is capped at 25% and if it had gone over in the past on the county side they would take it from the state side. Commissioner Kirksey asked who this applies to, and Judge Irwin said District Judges and District Attorneys. The supplement for the District Judges is \$20,640.00 and the District Attorney is \$23,215.00. In the past the county raise has gone onto the supplement. Lesha Krieg, Auditor said with the new bill the maximum supplement can be \$25,000.00, increase in base pay to \$175,000.00 for a total maximum of \$200,000.00 including both sources. Her understanding is if the county goes over the new max \$25,000.00 supplement it starts coming out of the state side. For the last 2 years the supplement max was \$18,000.00 and we were paying \$20,640.00 to the judges due to adding the county raise over the years which is over the max, so the difference was coming from the state side. All agreed with no raise on any county supplements. If we need to revisit in the next meeting we can.

Lesha Krieg, Auditor introduced 2 West Texas High School students, Kyra De La Cruz and Maritza Smith that are working towards an accounting certificate and have the option to sit in with someone in the industry for a class period, so the Auditors office has taken these students on.

Judge Irwin reported the Contingency line item has \$500,000.00 in it now. She presented the Hutchinson County Capital Projects Fund – Jail 10 Year Plan. This plan has been made part of the minutes. If these funds are designated to a jail project those funds can be uncommitted and used for something else if needed, it would need an action item to move it. This will go into its own TexPool account dedicated. This could be a 10–20 year plan. This would be for a Law Enforcement Center including the Sheriff's Office. Lesha Krieg, Auditor reported the audited FY 24 was net change in fund balance was 3.3 mil. Commissioner Bentley was concerned about why such a high unused balance, we provide services to the citizens where we are not providing services and feels it needs to be looked at. If it is agreed to transfer 5 mil it will show a deficit and can be explained as we have an excess in fund balance and we are using that fund balance for a Capital Project for a possible new jail in the future. After discussion it was agreed for FY 2026 Initial Transfer of \$5,000,000.00 to the Capital Projects Fund which is subject to change.

Sheriff Langwell asked about his Dispatch line item. Lesha Krieg, Auditor confirmed his Dispatch line item was \$157,800.00 and was updated to \$163,000.00.

Budget Scenarios have been made part of the minutes. After discussion the Commissioner Court agreed on \$.50. Lesha Krieg, Auditor, will put some scenarios together for \$.51 and down. Hutchinson County has reduced the tax rate the last 5 years.

Next meeting will set the budget and tax rate.

CONSIDER AND/OR APPROVE MOTION TO ADJOURN

Gary Alexander made the motion to approve the above stated agenda item, seconded by Ben Bentley. All voted aye and the motion carried unanimously. Adjourn 11:47 a.m.



ATTEST:


CINDY IRWIN – COUNTY JUDGE


KELLY RATLIFF – COUNTY CLERK