

**COMMISSIONERS' COURT OF TITUS COUNTY, TEXAS
SPECIAL MEETING
JULY 28, 2008**

PUBLIC OFFICIALS AND PUBLIC ATTENDING:

**Sam W. Russell, County Judge
Mike Fields, Commissioner Precinct 2
Thomas Hockaday, Commissioner Precinct 4
Teresa Price, County Clerk
Miguel Larson, County Sheriff
Ron Staggs, Environmental Investigator
Norma Narramore
Jerry Clark
Ashley Tompkins
Marvin Hinson**

**Bob Fitch, Commissioner Precinct 1
Phillip Hinton, Commissioner Precinct 3
Carl Johnson, County Auditor
Debby Rhea, County Treasurer
Joyce Simpson, Assistant to County Judge
Leonard Rockwell, Elections Administrator
Gerry Evenwel
Charles L. Smith
Paul Lindsey**

Judge Sam W. Russell called the Special Meeting to order at 9:07 a.m. stating that for the record all notices had been posted 72 hours prior to this meeting. The Pledge of Allegiance was followed by invocation given by Commissioner Mike Fields.

1. Public Comments and/or Requests for Information on Non-agenda Items in Accordance with Section 551.042, Texas Open Meetings Act

There were no public comments and/or requests for information on non-agenda items.

2. Consider and Possibly Approve Minutes for Commissioners' Court on July 14, 2008

Motion was made by Commissioner Bob Fitch and seconded by Commissioner Phillip Hinton to approve minutes for Commissioners' Court on July 14, 2008. Motion carried unanimously.

3. Consider and Possibly Approve Renewal of Titus County Tax Abatement Policy

Charles Smith with the Mt Pleasant Industrial Foundation came before Commissioners Court stating that State Law requires county governments to review their tax abatement policy every two years. The policy brought forth today is the same as before with the addition of Residential Health Care Facilities. These facilities would typically be Rest Homes, Assisted Living Facilities or Live In Treatment Facilities and offer some level of nursing care, personal care and meals. A criteria separate from those applied to industry applies to Health Care Facilities. These facilities are open 24 hours per day. Employment within the health care industry is growing with doctors moving to Mt Pleasant and jobs in this field require skilled training or education. The tax abatement policy would include remodeling and new construction.

Motion was made by Commissioner Thomas Hockaday and seconded by Commissioner Bob Fitch to approve the renewal of Titus County Tax Abatement Policy as submitted with the addition of Health Care Facilities. Motion carried unanimously.

4. Open Bids and Consider and Possibly Approve the Following:

- a) **Steel Culverts, 16 Gauge Galvanized Steel, 2.66 x ½ spiral, lock seam construction, all diameters** – Bid was received from Contech Construction Products, Inc. per attached quotation. Prices are subject to an 8% escalation per 30 days thereafter.

Motion was made by Commissioner Phillip Hinton and seconded by Commissioner Bob Fitch to approve the bid from Contech Construction Products, Inc. Motion carried unanimously.

5. Consider and Possibly Approve Appointment of Election Judges and Alternates for 2009-2010 Election Year

Leonard Rockwell, Elections Administrator, presented the Commissioners Court with a list of Election Judges and Alternates for 2009-2010. (See attached) Judge Russell asked Mr. Rockwell if the first page was the Election Judges with the second page being the alternates and was told that it was.

Motion was made by Commissioner Mike Fields and seconded by Commissioner Phillip Hinton to approve appointment of election judges and alternates for 2009-2010 election years. Motion carried unanimously.

6. Consider and Possibly Approve Early Voting Location for General Election

Leonard Rockwell recommended leaving Pine Terrace Apartments off of the Early Voting locations and adding Mt Pleasant Assisted Living – 2003 N Edwards; Mt Pleasant Health Care – 1606 Memorial Drive and the Villa – 1714 N Edwards as well as the Titus County Elections Administration Office located at 110 S Madison.

Motion was made by Commissioner Phillip Hinton and seconded by Commissioner Mike Fields to approve Early Voting Location for General Election. Motion carried unanimously.

7. Consider and Possibly Approve Appointments to Serve on the Board of Directors for Northeast Texas Rural Rail Transportation District

Motion was made by Commissioner Thomas Hockaday and seconded by Commissioner Bob Fitch to reappoint Carl Johnson and replace Danny Crooks with Judge Sam Russell to serve on the Board of Directors for Northeast Texas Rural Rail Transportation District. Motion carried unanimously.

8. Consider and Possibly Approve Increase in Per Diem for Meals for Travel for Employees and Elected Officials

Carl Johnson, County Auditor, informed the court that the County now pays \$30/day per diem for meals if overnight travel is required and \$10.00/Day per diem if overnight travel is not required. No limit has been set on hotel. Mileage is adjusted each year according to IRS rate.

Motion was made by Commissioner Mike Fields and seconded by Commissioner Phillip Hinton to increase per diem for meals to \$40.00/day for overnight travel and \$20.00/day for travel not requiring overnight stay effective 8/1/2008. Motion carried unanimously.

9. Consider and Possibly Approve Requiring Background Checks and Physicals for all Titus County Fire Department Volunteers

Marvin Vinson with VHS came before the court stating that this has already been presented to the Volunteer Fire Departments and is simply a preventive type measure. Insurance companies tell us that we need to do this or our rates will increase. If you are 50 years of age or older, a physical will be required every year. If you are under 50, a physical will be required every other year. Dr. Troyce Williams and Dr. Paul Meriwether have agreed to perform physicals at a cost of \$75.00/person. Drug and Alcohol Testing Compliance Services has agreed to do background and MVR checks for \$25.00/person. If a volunteer works for a company that requires a physical, they can submit a copy of that instead of having to get another one. Judge Russell asked how long it would take before we had a \$7700 increase in insurance to offset the cost of these physicals. He was answered in that it was according to what claims are filed. Another concern is that it is hard to get volunteers now and will this make it harder? Commissioner Mike Fields told the court that according to HB 3667, if we do this, the volunteers would qualify for Workman's Compensation.

Motion was made by Commissioner Mike Fields and seconded by Commissioner Phillip Hinton to approve requiring background checks and physicals for all Titus County Fire Department Volunteers. Motion carried unanimously.

10. Consider and Possibly Approve Travel and Seminars for Titus County Employees and Elected Officials

Travel was presented for the following: Joan Cross to attend the Secretary of State's 26th Annual Election Law Seminar for Voter Registrars and Elections Administrators August 6-8, 2008 in Austin; County Judge Sam W. Russell and Phillip Hinton, Commissioner Pct 3 to attend the 2008 TAC Annual Conference in Austin August 27-29, 2008; Ron Staggs, Environmental Investigator to attend "Foreclosure and Property Enforcement" class for illegal dumping held in Mt Vernon on July 29, 2008 and Teresa Price, County Clerk, and Stefanie Morlen to attend the Texas College of Probate in San Antonio September 10, 2008.

Motion was made by Commissioner Mike Fields and seconded by Commissioner Bob Fitch to approve travel and seminars for Titus County Employees and Elected Officials. Motion carried unanimously.

11. Approve Oral and Written Reports of County Officials

Reports were received from County Clerk, Cookville Volunteer Fire Department and Auditor's Department.

Motion was made by Commissioner Phillip Hinton and seconded by Commissioner Mike Fields to approve oral and written reports of county officials. Motion carried unanimously.

Judge Russell asked Mr. Johnson if we had received the Tax Appraisal Roll yet and was told that we should receive it today.

12. Approve Budget Amendments

There were no budget amendments.

13. Sign Pay Orders and Approve Payments

Motion was made by Commissioner Phillip Hinton and seconded by Commissioner Bob Fitch to sign pay orders and approve payments. Motion carried unanimously.

Judge Russell reminded the court that Budget Hearing Workshop was scheduled for Thursday, July 31, 2008 beginning at 9:00 a.m.

Judge Russell stated that he was asked over the weekend why we were the only county in Texas that has not got 911 on the Internet. When you look up the address, it still shows the old addresses such as NW and SW. Commissioner Mike Fields told him that we should be on the Internet because we had contracted with Ark-Tex Council of Governments for the Public Enhancement System and had paid a large sum of money for this. Commissioner Thomas Hockaday also stated that we pay \$0.50 on our monthly phone bills for 911. Judge Russell is to contact Ray McCarty with Ark-Tex Council of Government who is in charge of this program.

Adjourn

Motion was made by Commissioner Thomas Hockaday and seconded by Commissioner Phillip Hinton to adjourn. Motion carried unanimously.