



**DIANE DAY**  
*AUSTIN COUNTY CLERK*

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**COMMISSIONERS COURT MINUTES**

**March 10, 2025** Austin County Commissioners Court met in the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor Courtroom at the Austin County Courthouse with the following present:

Tim Lapham, County Judge  
Greg Mikel, Commissioner, Precinct 1  
Robert "Bobby" Rinn, Commissioner, Precinct 2  
Leroy Cerny, Commissioner, Precinct 3  
Chip Reed, Commissioner Reed, Precinct 4  
Diane Day, County Clerk  
Allison Gerik, Deputy Clerk

**9:00 A.M. OPENING**

**CALL TO ORDER**

**INVOCATION**

**PLEDGES OF ALLEGIANCE**

**ROLL CALL AND CERTIFICATION OF QUORUM**

**CONSIDERATION/ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

*Motion to Approve: Commissioner Reed, 2<sup>nd</sup> Commissioner Rinn (4-0)*

**Order #25-75**

**1. Introduction of new K-9 Officer by Sheriff Brandes**

Sheriff Brandes introduced K-9 handler, Deputy Orlando Buitron and his K-9 partner Knox to Commissioners Court. Deputy Orlando Buitron spoke on the importance of training that K-9 and handler need, to perform their everyday duties. K-9 Knox is currently trained for narcotics, tracking, and apprehension.

Judge Lapham inquired on the commitment needed from Deputy Orlando Buitron for K-9 Knox.

Deputy Orlando Buitron emphasized the extensive commitment as K-9 handler to Knox. Deputy Buitron and K-9 Knox are on call 24/7 for Austin County and many surrounding agencies.

Sheriff Brandes addressed the special vehicle equipment that was needed for the K-9 unit.

The K-9 vehicle is equipped with heat alert systems to ensure K-9 Knox is always safe. Sheriff Brandes expressed his gratitude to the Mark Chapman Foundation for the funds to purchase the K-9 and vehicle for Austin County.

Judge Lapham expressed his gratitude to Deputy Orlando Buitron and K-9 Knox for their dedication of service to Austin County.

## **2. Proclamation- American Red Cross Month**

Judge Lapham presented the American Red Cross Month Proclamation.

Jacob Balderez, American Red Cross Austin County Volunteer, spoke on the important role that Red Cross has when responding to natural disasters and house fires, to provide shelter and assistance in recovery efforts.

*Motion to Approve: Commissioner Reed, 2<sup>nd</sup> Commissioner Cerny (4-0)*  
**Order #25-76**

## **3. Petitions or Requests from the Public.**

## **4. Consideration and action to approve Resolution supporting HB 3000/SB 1377 Rural Ambulance Services Grant Program. (Judge Lapham)**

Judge Lapham called upon EMS Director, Chief Walter Morrow, to express his knowledge of HB 3000/SB 1377.

Chief Walter Morrow advised that HB 3000/SB 1377 would provide a grant for \$350,000 per year for EMS services. Chief Walter Morrow shared the current cost for one ambulance and the cost to outfit a new employee. Current response times are on average 8-19 minutes with an average call completion time of 3 hours. Chief Walter Morrow request court to support HB 3000/SB 1377.

Judge Lapham presented a resolution supporting HB 3000/SB 1377.

*Motion to Approve: Commissioner Rinn, 2<sup>nd</sup> Commissioner Rinn (4-0)*  
**Order #25-77**

## **5. Consideration and action to solicit construction bids to complete the EMS Stations in Bellville, Industry and Wallis. (Judge Lapham)**

Jonathan Hopko (County Engineer) advised that current construction company has reached their completion time limit. Jonathan stated bid walk throughs will occur on March 26, 2025 bids due on April 11, 2025 and opening of bids on April 14, 2025 at Commissioners Court.

*Motion to Approve: Commissioner Reed, 2<sup>nd</sup> Commissioner Rinn (4-0)*  
**Order #25-78**



**6. Consideration and action to solicit construction bids for a new building to house OEM Command Vehicle. (Jonathan Hopko)**

Jonathan Hopko (County Engineer) is ready to start soliciting bids. Vehicle is currently stored at the school and needs to be relocated to Precinct 1 location.

Bids due April 11, 2025 and will be opened April 14, 2025 at Commissioners Court.

*Motion to Approve: Commissioner Cerny, 2<sup>nd</sup> Commissioner Reed (4-0)*  
**Order #25-79**

**7. Discussion to approve Aguado Subdivision, Final Plat and action as appropriate, Pct 4. (Jonathan Hopko)**

Property division is a 7.3-acre lot located in Sealy and will not be subdivision related.

*Motion to Approve: Commissioner Reed, 2<sup>nd</sup> Commissioner Rinn (4-0)*  
**Order #25-80**

**8. Discussion and action as appropriate to approve New Ulm Division of property, Hickory Street, Pct. 2.**

Property is located at 235 Hickory St. The 1.2-acre lot has municipal water and sewer allowing the lots to be smaller in size.

*Motion to Approve: Commissioner Rinn, 2<sup>nd</sup> Commissioner Mikel (4-0)*  
**Order #25-81**

**9. Discussion to approve the purchase of a 2015 Freightliner MA 106 for Pct. 4 and action as appropriate.**

Commissioner Reed advised that Precinct 4 is looking to purchase old Bluebell truck to haul equipment. Truck will come outfitted with all hitch requirements.

*Motion to Approve: Commissioner Rinn, 2<sup>nd</sup> Commissioner Cerny (4-0)*  
**Order #25-82**

**10. Discussion regarding the Austin County Employee Manual and action as appropriate.**

**a. Section 6.9- Emergency Closing**

Commissioner Reed, Tara Wise (HR Administrative Assistant), Roy Mercer (Emergency Management Coordinator), and Texas Association of Counties held a meeting in regards to policy standards and what other counties policies consisted of.

Tara Wise (HR Administrative Assistant) presented an email to Judge Lapham. Judge Lapham shared email with court and showed concern for distributing equal pay based on schedules.

Judge Lapham considered employees to be paid their regular salary up to 8 hours.

Commissioner Cerny request to bring this agenda item back to court as a workshop with department heads.

**b. Section 8.6- Sick Leave**

Tara Wise (HR Administrative Assistant) request to have a policy change stating that new employees receive 1 day of sick time on date of hire, and 8 hours monthly after their 60-day probation.

*Motion to Approve: Commissioner Reed, 2<sup>nd</sup> Commissioner Rinn (4-0)*  
**Order #25-83**

**11. Consideration and action to request bids for SUV for Constable, Pct. 3.**

Bids due April 11, 2025 and opening of bids on April 14, 2025 at Commissioners Court.

*Motion to Approve: Commissioner Reed, 2<sup>nd</sup> Commissioner Mikel (4-0)*  
**Order #25-84**

**12. Discussion and action to approve purchase of a 2025 Dura-Haul Bottom Dump Trailer for Pct. 3.**

Per Commissioner Cerny, this trailer will be purchased through the TIPS program. Trailer will come powder coated. Trailer cost is \$53,000.

*Motion to Approve: Commissioner Cerny, 2<sup>nd</sup> Commissioner Rinn (4-0)*  
**Order #25-85**

**13. Discussion regarding postage machine renewal and action as appropriate.**

Dianna Grobe (Chief of Staff – Judge Lapham Office), advised that Pitney Bowes contract is ending on the postage machine located at the courthouse. There are still postage funds remaining in the account that cannot be refunded once contract ends. Will need to renew contract with Pitney Bowes.

*Motion to Approve: Commissioner Cerny, 2<sup>nd</sup> Commissioner Rinn (4-0)*  
**Order #25-86**

**14. Consideration and action to approve purchase of comprehensive tracking/scheduling software for EMS Department.**

Chief Walter Morrow (EMS Director) request the use of funds for purchasing new tracking software. The prior contract has expired. This tracking software is used for tracking narcotics, supplies, and equipment.

*Motion to Approve: Commissioner Cerny, 2<sup>nd</sup> Commissioner Rinn (4-0)*  
**Order #25-87**

- 15. CONSENT AGENDA - Items listed are of routine nature and may be acted on in a single motion unless requested otherwise by members of Commissioners Court.**
- a. Consideration and action to approve G24HN0026A HIDTA Grant Increase of \$21,200 (Sheriff).**
  - b. Approval of Minutes:**
    - i. January 27, 2025**
    - ii. February 3, 2025**
  - c. Consideration and action to approve required schooling application for Wesley Peschel, Justice of the Peace, Pct. 2, to be held April 1-4, 2025 at TJC Training Center in Bee Cave.**
  - d. Consideration and action to authorize interlocal agreements for street maintenance between:**
    - i. Austin County, Pct. 1 and the City of Bellville**
    - ii. Austin County, Pct. 2 and the City of Industry**
    - iii. Austin County Pct. 3 and:**
      - 1. City of Sealy**
      - 2. Town of San Felipe**
    - iv. Austin County, Pct. 4 and:**
      - 1. City of Brazos Country**
      - 2. Town of San Felipe**
      - 3. City of Sealy**
      - 4. City of South Frydek**
      - 5. City of Wallis**
  - e. Consideration and action to approve contract for professional engineering services between DPK Engineering LLC and Austin County Pct.2 for the purpose of engineering a bridge crossing Beaty Branch and Hurtig Road.**
  - f. Consideration and action to accept special donations per LGC 81.032 for the summer reading program:**
    - i. To Knox Memorial Library**
      - 1. \$50**
      - 2. \$50**
      - 3. \$100**
      - 4. \$100**
      - 5. \$100**
      - 6. \$125**
      - 7. \$500**
    - ii. To West End Library**



1. \$50
2. \$100
3. \$100
4. \$100
5. \$100
6. \$100
7. \$100
8. \$100
9. \$100
10. \$100
11. \$100
12. \$100
13. \$100
14. \$200
15. \$200
16. \$250
17. \$250
18. \$500

- g. Consideration and action to accept executed lease contract between the State of Texas House of Representative and Austin County.
- h. Consideration and action to approve required schooling application for Jesse Skinner, Assistant District Attorney, to be held June 18-20, 2025 in San Antonio, Texas.
- i. Consideration and action to approve required schooling application for Kim Rinn, Tax Assessor Collector, to be held June 1-4, 2025, in Galveston, TX.

*Motion to Approve: Commissioner Cerny, 2<sup>nd</sup> Commissioner Rinn (4-0)*  
**Order #25-88**

16. **Budgetary and Financial Claims - action as appropriate.**
  - a. **Payment of Claims**

Total = \$1,974,153.03

*Motion to Approve: Commissioner Cerny, 2<sup>nd</sup> Commissioner Rinn, passed (4-0)*  
**Order #25-89**

- b. **Fund Transfers**

Total = \$329,326.48 (February 26, 2025)  
 Total = \$1,169,816.51 (March 10, 2025)

*Motion to Approve: Commissioner Reed, 2<sup>nd</sup> Commissioner Rinn, passed (4-0)*  
**Order #25-90**

**c. Budget Amendments**

No Budget Amendments.

**d. County Auditor's Review of finances**

Budget Report (Account Summary) issued for review.

**e. County Treasurer's**

**i. Payroll and Escrow Report(s)**

**1. 03.07.2025**

*Motion to Approve: Commissioner Cerny, 2<sup>nd</sup> Commissioner Rinn, passed (4-0)*  
**Order #25-91**

**17. Written end-of-the month reports submitted by County Offices.**

- a. Criminal Court – February 2025
- b. Civil Court- February 2025
- c. Family Court- February 2025
- d. Constable Pct. 1- February 2025
- e. Constable Pct. 2- February 2025
- f. Constable Pct. 4- January 2025
- g. Justice of the Peace, Pct. 3- February 2025
- h. Jail Report- February 2025
- i. Library- February 2025
- j. TDMV- February 2025
- k. OSSF- February 2025

*Motion to Accept: Commissioner Reed, 2<sup>nd</sup> Commissioner Cerny, passed (4-0)*  
**Order #25-92**

Court recessed at 10:50 a.m.

**18. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

In accordance with Texas Local Government Code §551.071, §551.125 and §551.129, a closed meeting will be held concerning the following items:

- a. Legal Matter

Court Reconvened at 11:30 a.m.

**19. Action as appropriate on Executive Session.**

No Action.

**20. Commissioners Court Inquiry.**

Commissioner Rinn received appreciation for completion of fire station.

*Motion to Adjourn: Commissioner Reed, 2<sup>nd</sup> Commissioner Mikel, passed (4-0)*  
**Order #25-93**

Court adjourned at 11:32 a.m.

**ALL SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS ON FILE WITH COUNTY CLERK AS PROVIDED BY  
COMMISSIONERS COURT**

I, Diane Day, Austin County Clerk, attest to the minutes of the Commissioners Court proceedings for March 10, 2025.

Date: April 7, 2025  
Diane Day, Austin County Clerk  
Clerk of Commissioners Court  
Austin County, Texas

By: Allison Gerik  
Allison Gerik, Deputy



**FILED**

2025 APR -7 PM 2: 53

*Diane Day*  
COUNTY CLERK  
AUSTIN COUNTY, TEXAS