THE STATE OF TEXAS \* COMMISSIONERS’ COURT

COUNTY OF KENEDY \* OF KENEDY COUNTY, TEXAS

On the 14th day of June, 2021, at 9:00 o'clock a.m., a regular meeting of the Commissioners Court of Kenedy County, Texas, was held in the Kenedy County Courthouse.

**Commissioners present:**

Charles E. Burns, County Judge

Joe Recio, Commissioner, Precinct No. 1

Israel Vela, Jr., Commissioner, Precinct No. 2

Sarita Armstrong-Hixon, Commissioner, Precinct No. 3

Gumecinda "Cindy" Gonzales, Commissioner, Precinct No. 4

**Also present:**

Veronica Vela, County & District Clerk

Leo Villarreal, Administrative Assistant

Ruben Hernandez, Maintenance Supervisor

Irma Longoria, County Tax Assessor/Collector

Allison Strauss, County Attorney

Cynthia Salinas, County Treasurer

Ramon Salinas, III, County Sheriff

Daniel Almeida

Grace Salinas, Administrative Secretary

Jennifer Cuellar, County Treasurer’s Office

Jose E. Mendietta, Fire Chief

Thomas Denney, Chief Appraiser

JP Cecilia Schulz

JP Patti Fain

Andy Garza, Kenedy County GCD

Gilbert San Miguel, Sheriff’s Dept.

Eddie Cruz, Sheriff’s Dept.

Cynthia Salinas, County Treasurer

Ramon Salinas, III, County Sheriff

Daniel Almeida

**Absent**:

None

**CALL TO ORDER**

Judge Charles E. Burns called the meeting to order.

1. **Pledge of Allegiance**.

Judge Charles E. Burns led the Commissioners Court in the Pledge of Allegiance.

1. **Receive Public Comments**.

Raul Meza thanked the U. S. for the U.S. Army birthday and thanked the Kenedy County Commissioners’ Court for Brian Birdwell’s continued information regarding the possible construction of the 20x20 building to house his companies’ fiber optic equipment and understands that the final decision is subject to the Commissioners’ Court.

1. **Discuss & Act on the Regular Minutes for May 10, 2021 and Special Meeting for May 18, 2021, May 21, 2021 and June 1, 2021**.

Judge Charles E. Burns presented the Commissioners’ Court Minutes of the regular May 10, 2021 meeting, the May 18, 2021 special meeting and the June 1, 2021 special meeting.

Commissioner Sarita Armstrong-Hixon moved and Commissioner Gumecinda “Cindy” Gonzales seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that the minutes of the Minutes of the regular May 10, 2021 meeting, special May 21, 2021 and June 1, 2021 meetings be accepted as presented except that on Page 2 of the May 18, 2021, minutes needs to reflect that only one bid was received, therefore the item was tabled.

1. **Discuss & Act on Treasurer’s Monthly Report and Transfers**.

Judge Charles E. Burns presented the Treasurer's Monthly Report and Transfers for the month ending May 31, 2021.

Commissioner Gumecinda “Cindy” Gonzales moved and Commissioner Joe Recio seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that the Treasurer's Monthly Report and Transfers ending May 31, 2021, and investments be accepted as presented and that the County Treasurer is authorized to transfer $2,005,000.00 to the TX Pool account.

1. **Receive Daniel Almeida and Act on the Sewer & Water System Monthly Report**.

Daniel Almeida presented the Sewer & Water System monthly report.

This being a report only, no vote was needed and none was taken.

1. **Discuss & Act on Sheriff’s Monthly Report**.

Deputy Eddie Cruz presented the Sheriff’s monthly report to the Commissioners’ Court for the month ending May 31, 2021.

Commissioner Gumecinda “Cindy” Gonzales moved and Commissioner Joe Recio seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that the Sheriff’s report be taken under consideration for further study.

1. **Discuss & Act on Fire Chief’s Monthly Report and Terminating Burn Ban**.

Fire Chief Jose E. Mendietta presented the Fire District’s monthly report to the Commissioners’ Court for the month ending May 31, 2021 and that the burn ban needed to be terminated and that a snake venom seminar has been planned to be held at the schools’ gymnasium. He will inform the parties of the date and time that the Snake Seminar will be held.

Commissioner Sarita Armstrong-Hixon moved and Commissioner Israel Vela, Jr. seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that the burn ban be terminated.

1. **Discuss & Act on the Maintenance Department Monthly Report**.

Ruben Hernandez, Maintenance Supervisor, presented the Maintenance Department’s monthly report to the Commissioners’ Court for the month ending May 31, 2021. Commissioner Sarita Armstrong-Hixon mentioned that the Armstrong Post Office ceiling needed to be attended to. Allison Strauss is to address the Post Office issue.

Commissioner Gumecinda “Cindy” Gonzales moved and Commissioner Joe Recio seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that lights at the Sam Noble Park be turned on.

1. **Receive Mary Mora and Natalie Gonzalez and Act on GrantWorks Monthly Reporting on the Grant Status and Compliance, Discuss & Act on Awarding the Construction Contract for CDBG Contract #7219220 and Awarding the Construction Contract for CDBG Contract #7219075**.

Mary Mora and Natalie Gonzalez presented GrantWorks monthly report on the Grant Status and compliance and the need to award the construction contract on CDBG Contract #7219220 and CDBG Contract #7219075.

**Housing Grant: Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA)** - This is the “Homeowner Rehabilitation Assistance”. It is a “no match” for the County with a maximum of $400,000.00, enough to reconstruct four homes. The target households are for those living in the worst conditions, often the elderly and disabled. The homes must be owned and occupied and must agree to live in the house for a certain period of time.

Looks like things have changed a bit as far as the starting construction date. I was informed by Terry Ross from GrantWorks that she would begin asking those applicants who have cleared the title phase for updated financial documents sometime in July or August. Once those applications advance to the construction stage, the state date will be sometime in 2022. The builder’s schedule determines the exact month construction will begin. She went on to say the qualified applicants will be given a move-out date of at least six weeks in advance. As of today’s, meeting, we are still at this same stage.

I checked with Donna Johnston from Grantworks and she stated there is no change from above.

**Community Development Grant 2019-2020, $300,000.00; Grant #7219220** - Activities: This Grant is for the piping/valve replacement at the WWTP Lift Station, Pumps, and Controls for the WWTP Pond Pumps, replacing pond piping, relining one of the ponds and first-time water & sewer service.

We had two bids come in on May 5. We also had Commissioners Court on this day at 2:00 p.m. to open and accept the bids. Once bid was from Hubert Construction Co. from Kingsville and the other bid was from Southern Trenchless from Weslaco.

Hector from LNV read the bids out loud. Hubert Construction has a bid for $230,050.00 and Southern Trenches’ bid is for $216,750.00.

Hector took the bids to make sure all their bids were in order and has a letter of recommendation he will read to the Court today. GrantWorks also has to “clear the bidders” making sure a contractor is allowed to work these projects.

There is an agenda item regarding these two bids and possible awarding the contract today.

**Colonia Grant; Grant for $500,000.00; Grant #7219075; February 1, 2020 to January 31, 2022** - Activities: This Grant is for a generator at the WWTP, the Lift Station will have improvements rehabbing the wetwell, replacing the pond pumps, relining another pond, and new water & sewer services.

We had two bids come in on May 5. We also had Commissioners Court on this day at 2:00 p.m. to open and accept the bids. Once bid was from Hubert Construction Co. from Kingsville and the other bid was from Southern Trenchless from Weslaco.

Hector from LNV read the bids out loud. Hubert Construction has a bid for $230,050.00 and Southern Trenches’ bid is for $216,750.00.

Hector from LNV took the bids to make sure all their bids were in order and has a letter of recommendation which he will read to the Court today. GrantWorks also has to “clear the bidders” making sure a contractor is allowed to work these projects.

There is an agenda item regarding these two bids and possible awarding the contract today.

**CTIF (Road Grant); Grant for $295,360.00** – The Administration for this grant is Langford Community Management Services.

The application along with all the Road Reports were submitted to TX Dot on May 27, 2020. We received the “award letter” on June 23, 2020.

The County was awarded $295,360.00 with a match from the county of 73,840.00 for a total project cost of $369,200.00.

I spoke with Jill from Langford Mgmt. and she stated we are needing an engineer to do plans, advertise for contractors and oversee the project. She went on to say since this was a small project we may be able to hire an engineer as small purchase procurement.

I asked her if TX Dot would be okay with this. She said it actually was up to the County and if small purchase procurement is allowed to hire engineering services.

**Hazard Mitigation Project Plan** – The “Hazard Mitigation Project Plan” was developed for Kleberg County, the City of Kingsville, and Kenedy County. This plan was needed so Kenedy County would be able to apply for HMA (Hazard Mitigation Assistance) Grants.

We are advertising on Thursday, May 13 for engineering services with proposals to be submitted by May 25. We had one proposal come in. It was from LNV (Ardurrra).

On June 1, at the special Commissioners Court, the proposal was opened and accepted. Since there were no other bids, all that is required is a letter stating there was only one proposal and be signed by the Judge.

There was an agenda item and the Court awarded the Engineer contract to LNV (Ardurra).

Now as grants are offered, GrantWorks and LNV (Ardurra) will work together and with the Courts approval can submit an application. These grants vary and once GrantWorks knows of an interest in Kenedy County, they will be able to come and speak to the Court about the details of the grant.

Commissioner Sarita Armstrong-Hixon moved and Commissioner Israel Vela, Jr. seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that.

1. **Receive Report from Allison Strauss on Kenedy County Sheriff Chapter 59 Funds Questions and Act If Necessary**.

Allison Strauss, County Attorney, informed the Commissioners’ Court that her report on the Kenedy County Sheriff Chapter 59 Funds questions was still in progress.

This being a report only, no vote was needed and none was taken.

1. **Discuss & Act on Hiring Joey Mendietta Fire Chief as Kenedy County Emergency Management Coordinator**.

Judge Charles E. Burns informed the Commissioners Court that Tomas Sanchez had retired as the County’s Emergency Management Coordinator and that there was a need to hire Jose E. Mendietta, the Fire Chief, as the Kenedy County Emergency Management Coordinator on a part-time basis.

Commissioner Gumecinda “Cindy” Gonzales moved and Commissioner Sarita Armstrong-Hixon seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that Jose E. Mendietta, Fire Chief, be hired as a part-time Kenedy County Emergency Management Coordinator effective June 14, 2021.

Commissioner Sarita Armstrong-Hixon moved and Commissioner Israel Vela, Jr. seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that Jose E. Mendietta, Fire Chief, be paid $5,000.00 per year and increase the salary as needed and that the Tomas Sanchez budget line item be amended from today to December 31, 2021.

1. **Discuss & Act on William Castillo Electricity Contract with Constellation- has New Contract Better Than the One with MP2**.

William Castillo presented the Commissioners Court with an electricity contract with Constellation Electric which provided for better rates than the contract with MP2.

Commissioner Sarita Armstrong-Hixon moved and Commissioner Joe Recio seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that the contract with Constellation Electric be approved subject to Allison Strauss and Leo Villarreal’s approval.

1. **Report Austin S. Shefield, Flooding Condition of his grandmother’s house in Sarita**.

Judge Charles E. Burns reported to the Commissioners Court the flooding condition regarding Austin S. Shefield’s grandmother’s house located at Sarita, Texas which generated the need to consider a community drainage plan.

This being a report only, no vote was needed and none was taken.

1. **Discuss & Act on Sarita Drainage Master plan**.

Judge Charles E. Burns informed the Commissioners Court of the need to develop a Master Plan for drainage in Sarita and that Hector Castaneda, the LNV Engineer, would present the Drainage Master Plan at a future Commissioners Court meeting.

Commissioner Gumecinda “Cindy” Gonzales moved and Commissioner Joe Recio seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that this item be tabled.

1. **Discuss & Act on Visiting with the Kenedy Foundation Regarding Obtaining the Laguna Site in Sarita to Use as Part of the Drainage Master Plan**.

Judge Charles E. Burns informed the Commissioners Court of the need to visit with the Kenedy Foundation regarding obtaining the laguna site in Sarita to use as part of the drainage master plan.

Commissioner Sarita Armstrong-Hixon moved and Commissioner Gumecinda “Cindy” Gonzales seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that Judge Burns and Leo Villarreal visit with the Kenedy County Foundation in obtaining the laguna site.

1. **Discuss & Act on Judge Burns $100,000 Bond**.

Judge Charles E. Burns informed the Commissioners Court that his $100,000.00 Bond has been approved by the bonding company.

Commissioner Gumecinda “Cindy” Gonzales moved and Commissioner Joe Recio seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that Judge Burns’ $100,000 Bond be approved.

1. **Discuss & Act on Judge Burns Salary**.

Judge Charles E. Burns informed the Commissioners Court that he was keeping Judge Louis E. Turcotte, III salary of $79,670.00.

Commissioner Gumecinda “Cindy” Gonzales moved and Commissioner Joe Recio seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that Judge Burns be paid $79,670.00 annually.

1. **Discuss & Act on Bank Resolution Authorizing Judge Chuck Burns to Sign County Checks**.

Judge Charles E. Burns informed the Commissioners Court of the need to pass a resolution authorizing him to sign the County’s Kleberg Bank checks.

Commissioner Gumecinda “Cindy” Gonzales moved and Commissioner Joe Recio seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that a Bank Resolution Authorizing Judge Chuck Burns to sign Kleberg Bank checks.

1. **Discuss & Act on Employing Grace Salinas and Paying $50,000 Annual Plus Benefits**.

Judge Charles E. Burns informed the Commissioners Court of the need to set a salary plus benefits for his secretary, Grace Salinas, at the amount of $50,000.00 annually plus benefits.

Commissioner Joe Recio moved and Judge Charles E. Burns seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that Grace Salinas be employed as Administrative Secretary at an annual salary of $50,000.00 plus benefits commencing June 1, 2021.

1. **Consent Agenda.**
2. **Approve Travel Expenses for Irma Longoria to Attend the Truth In Taxation Course in Conroe, Tx on July 12th – 14th, 2021. ($1, 020.74 within budget)**
3. **Approve Travel Expenses for Jerry Miller to Attend Justice of The Peace Core Curriculum in Austin, Tx on June 26th -29th, 2021. ($475.22 within budget)**
4. **Approve Travel Expenses for Jerry Miller to Attend Rural Leadership Specialty Workshop in Boerne, Tx on July 4th – 7th, 2021. ($430.76 within budget)**
5. **Approve Travel Expenses for Sarita Hixon to Attend the South Texas County Judge and Commissioners Association Conference in South Padre Island, Tx on June 29th – July 1, 2021. ($919.87 within budget)**
6. **Approve Travel Expenses for Israel Vela to Attend the South Texas County Judge and Commissioners Association Conference in South Padre Island, Tx on June 29th – July 1, 2021. ($1047.53 within budget)**
7. **Approve Travel Expenses for Joe Recio to Attend the South Texas County Judge and Commissioners Association Conference in South Padre Island, Tx on June 29th – July 1, 2021. ($929.69 within budget)**

Judge Charles E. Burns informed the Commissioners Court that it was necessary to approve travel and advance of funds for the following County employees attending seminars:

1. Name: Irma Longoria, County Tax Assessor/Collector

Seminar/Conference: Truth In Taxation Course

Place: Conroe, Texas

Date: July 12th – 14th, 2021

Cost to be Advanced: $1, 020.74 within budget

1. Name: Jerry Miller, Justice of the Peace

Seminar/Conference: Justice of The Peace Core Curriculum

Place: Austin, Texas

Date: June 26th -29th, 2021

Cost to be Advanced: $475.22 within budget

1. Name: Jerry Miller, Justice of the Peace

Seminar/Conference: Rural Leadership Specialty Workshop

Place: Boerne, Texas

Date: July 4th – 7th, 2021

Cost to be Advance: $430.76 within budget

1. Name: Sarita Hixon, Commissioner

Seminar/Conference: South Texas County Judge and Commissioners Association Conference

Place: South Padre Island, Texas

Date: June 29th – July 1, 2021

Cost to be Advanced: $919.87 within budget

1. Name: Israel Vela, Commissioner

Seminar/Conference: South Texas County Judge and Commissioners Association Conference

Place: South Padre Island, Texas

Date: June 29th – July 1, 2021

Cost to be Advanced: $1,047.53 within budget

1. Name: Joe Recio, Commissioner

Seminar/Conference: South Texas County Judge and Commissioners Association Conference

Place: South Padre Island, Texas

Date: June 29th – July 1, 2021

Cost to be Advanced: $929.69 within budget

Commissioner Gumecinda “Cindy” Gonzales moved and Commissioner Israel Vela, Jr. seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that the below County employees/officials attend the below conferences and costs advanced subject to proper receipts being submitted to the County Treasurer:

1. Name: Irma Longoria, County Tax Assessor/Collector

Seminar/Conference: Truth In Taxation Course

Place: Conroe, Texas

Date: July 12th – 14th, 2021

Cost to be Advanced: $1, 020.74 within budget

1. Name: Jerry Miller, Justice of the Peace

Seminar/Conference: Justice of The Peace Core Curriculum

Place: Austin, Texas

Date: June 26th -29th, 2021

Cost to be Advanced: $475.22 within budget

1. Name: Jerry Miller, Justice of the Peace

Seminar/Conference: Rural Leadership Specialty Workshop

Place: Boerne, Texas

Date: July 4th – 7th, 2021

Cost to be Advance: $430.76 within budget

1. Name: Sarita Hixon, Commissioner

Seminar/Conference: South Texas County Judge and Commissioners Association Conference

Place: South Padre Island, Texas

Date: June 29th – July 1, 2021

Cost to be Advanced: $919.87 within budget

1. Name: Israel Vela, Commissioner

Seminar/Conference: South Texas County Judge and Commissioners Association Conference

Place: South Padre Island, Texas

Date: June 29th – July 1, 2021

Cost to be Advanced: $1,047.53 within budget

1. Name: Joe Recio, Commissioner

Seminar/Conference: South Texas County Judge and Commissioners Association Conference

Place: South Padre Island, Texas

Date: June 29th – July 1, 2021

Cost to be Advanced: $929.69 within budget

1. **Discuss & Act on Cybersecurity Compliance Training to be Completed by June 14, 202**1.

Judge Charles E. Burns informed the Commissioners Court of the need for County employees and officials to complete the Cybersecurity Compliance Training by June 14, 2021.

Leo Villarreal informed the Commissioners’ Court that all employees and public officials were in compliance and had the certificates of compliance.

This being a report only, no vote was needed and none was taken.

1. **Receive Report on Melissa Peros on the Cell Tower**.

Richard Flores with Bearcom informed the Commissioners Court that Melissa Peros was not present due to a break in at the Bearcom offices but had sent a written report and Richard Flores proceeded to deliver a report to each County Commissioner and Judge Burns.

This being a report only, no vote was needed and none was taken.

1. **Discuss & Act on Adding a New Line Item to Maintenance Dept. for Landscaping**.

Judge Charles E. Burns informed the Commissioners Court of the need to add a landscaping line item to the Maintenance Department’s Budget.

Commissioner Sarita Armstrong-Hixon moved and Commissioner Joe Recio seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that a Landscaping line item be added to the Maintenance Department’s Budget.

1. **Receive Report on Demolition and Removal of Non-Inhabitable Houses in Sarita**.

Leo Villarreal informed the Commissioners Court regarding the demolition and removal of none-inhabitable houses in Sarita; that ten out of the fourteen houses were in line to be demolished and that the work would be completed by August 30, 2021.

This being a report only, no vote was needed and none was taken.

1. **Discuss & Act on Negotiating an Interlocal Agreement with Cameron County Regarding the Federal ADA Voting Internet System**.

Judge Charles E. Burns informed the Commissioners Court of the need to enter into an Interlocal Agreement with Cameron County regarding the Federal ADA Voting Internet System.

Commissioner Sarita Armstrong-Hixon moved and Commissioner Israel Vela, Jr. seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that Leo Villarreal communicate with the Cameron County Judge regarding entering into an Interlocal Agreement with Cameron County regarding the Federal ADA Voting Internet System.

1. **Report on the Status of the Justice of the Peace Building and Visit to a Similar Building Being Constructed by Maltby Builders, Inc**.

Leo Villarreal informed the Commissioners Court regarding the status of the Justice of the Peace building and that he and Judge Burns had visited and inspected the design and materials in a similar building being constructed by Maltby Builders, Inc. in Corpus Christi and that the visit had provided a realistic picture of the J. P. Building that is subject to be constructed in Sarita.

This being a report only, no vote was needed and none was taken.

1. **Report on the Windstorm and Hail Policy Follow up on it**.

Judge Charles E. Burns informed the Commissioners Court Windstorm and Hail Policies were being looked at to determine whether there was double coverage.

This being a report only, no vote was needed and none was taken.

1. **Discuss & Act on Approval of Property Insurance Coverage ($52,000), Health Insurance New Rates**.

Judge Charles E. Burns informed the Commissioners Court of the need to approve the property insurance coverage in the amount of $52,000.00 and health insurance new rates.

Commissioner Sarita Armstrong-Hixon moved and Commissioner Joe Recio seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that the property insurance coverage in the amount of $52,000.00 and health insurance new rates be approved.

1. **Discuss & Act on Setting Date(s) for Centennial Celebration**.

Judge Charles E. Burns informed the Commissioners Court of the need to set a date for the Centennial Celebration

Commissioner Gumecinda “Cindy” Gonzales moved and Commissioner Joe Recio seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that the Centennial Celebration be held on October 30, 2021.

1. **Discuss & Act on Moving the Independence Day Holiday from Friday, July 2, 2021 to Monday July 5, 2021**.

Judge Charles E. Burns informed the Commissioners Court of the need to move the Independence Day holiday from Friday, July 2, 2021 to Monday, July 5, 2021.

Commissioner Sarita Armstrong-Hixon moved and Commissioner Israel Vela, Jr. seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that the Independence Day holiday be moved from Friday, July 2, 2021 to Monday, July 5, 2021.

1. **Discuss & Act on Payment of Bills**.

Judge Charles E. Burns informed the Commissioners’ Court of the need to pay the bills for the month ending May 31, 2021.

Commissioner Sarita Armstrong-Hixon moved and Commissioner Israel Vela, Jr. seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that the bills be paid as presented except for the Longoria indigent costs until it is verified that they were residents of the County at the time that the costs were incurred.

1. **Adjournment**.

There being no further business to come before the Commissioners’ Court, Commissioner Sarita Armstrong-Hixon moved and Commissioner Israel Vela, Jr. seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that the Kenedy County Commissioners’ Court be adjourned at 12:00 o'clock p.m.

/s/ Charles E. Burns

Charles E. Burns, County Judge

/s/ Veronica Vela

Veronica Vela, County Clerk