THE STATE OF TEXAS \* COMMISSIONERS COURT

COUNTY OF KENEDY \* OF KENEDY COUNTY, TEXAS

On the 10th day of May, 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:**

Louis E. Turcotte, III 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

Cynthia Salinas, County Treasurer

Ramon Salinas, III, County Sheriff

Ruben Hernandez, Maintenance Supervisor

Irma Longoria, County Tax Assessor/Collector

Allison Strauss, County Attorney

Jose E. Mendietta, Fire Chief

Thomas Denney, Chief Appraiser

JP Patti Fain

JP Cecilia Schulz

Andy Garza, Kenedy County GCD

Eddie Cruz, Sheriff’s Dept.

Daniel Almeida

Brian Birdwell

Ruben Meza

Cindy Block

Homero Vera

Chuck Burns

**Absent**:

Petra Hernandez, Administrative Secretary

Jennifer Cuellar, County Treasurer’s Office

**CALL TO ORDER**

Judge Louis E. Turcotte, III called the meeting to order.

1. **Receive Public Comments**.

Ruben Meza with Foremost Telecommunications addressed the Commissioners Court regarding the Major Fiber Build project taking place along U. S. Highway 77; that Foremost Telecommunications has fiber networks build in Corpus Christi, Rio Grande Valley, Laredo and other areas/cities in South Texas; that their current built out project is looking for a mid-point structure to host some fiber data and voice equipment; and they are looking to secure a long term 10-year lease for a building in the Sarita area.

Judge Louis E. Turcotte, III thanked Ruben Meza for his comments.

1. **Discuss & Act on the Regular Minutes for April 12, 2021 and Special Minutes for May 5, 2021**.

Louis E. Turcotte, III, County Judge, presented the Commissioners Court Minutes of the regular April 12, 2021 meeting and the special May 5, 2021 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 April 12, 2021 meeting and the special May 5, 2021 meeting be accepted as presented except for Agenda Item 10 changing the word concrete cost and replacing it with cost of project for the boat barn.

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

Cynthia Salinas, County Treasurer, presented the Treasurer's Monthly Report and Transfers for the month ending April 30, 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 April 30, 2021, and investments be accepted as presented.

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

Daniel Almeida presented the Commissioners Court with his monthly report for the month ending April 30, 2021.

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 April 30, 2021.

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

1. **Discuss & Act on Fire Chief’s Monthly Report**.

Fire Chief Jose E. Mendietta presented the Fire District’s monthly report to the Commissioners Court for the month ending April 30, 2021.

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

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 April 30, 2021.

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

1. **Receive Mary Mora and Act on the Grant Monthly Report**.

Mary Mora presented the Commissioners Court with her monthly Grant report. She reported as follows:

**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.

**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.

At this point, Hector took the bids to make sure all their bids were in order and will be writing a letter of recommendation which he will bring to the next Commissioners Court meeting. GrantWorks also has to “clear the bidders” which checks out a contractor allowing them to work these projects.

If at all possible, we will be asking if we can have a special Commissioners Court meeting to award the contract.

**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.

At this point, Hector took the bids to make sure all their bids were in order and will be writing a letter of recommendation which he will bring to the next Commissioners Court meeting. GrantWorks also has to “clear the bidders” which checks out a contractor allowing them to work these projects.

If at all possible, we will be asking if we can have a special Commissioners Court meeting to award the contract.

**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 TxDot 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.

This past Friday, we sent TxDOT signed Certification Form 2 they were requesting. Once they check out these forms, we will be given approval to continue. We will be going out for bids and hopefully start the road repairs soon.

I emailed Jill from Langford Community Management and her response was “I wish I knew” but she did email TxDOT asking if they could tell us how soon we could go out for bids.

**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 advertised for engineers on April 22 requesting proposals to be submitted by May 5. We did not have anyone submit a proposal.

We are advertising on Thursday, May 13, and will also be doubling up on emails we will be sending out to potential engineers on these same day.

The proposals are supposed to be submitted by May 25 no later than 1:00 p.m. We will then be able to open, score, and award the engineer service on next Commissioners Court meeting on June 12.

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

1. **Discuss & Act on MP2 Energy Invoice in the Amount of $73,157.18**.

Louis E. Turcotte, III, County Judge, informed the Commissioners Court that the County had received a $73,157.19 invoice from MP2 Energy for electric service to Sarita.

William Castillo with Save With Big Fish informed the Commissioners Court that he had been contacted by Leo Villarreal and he was pursuing options available and that it appeared that MP2 was not the contract provider and suggested that the invoice not be paid at this time.

Commissioner Sarita Armstrong-Hixon moved and Commissioner Gumecinda "Cindy" Gonzales seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that William Castillo continue to investigate the $73,157.19 invoice and report his findings to the Commissioners Court.

1. **Discuss & Act on Setting Dates Regarding Applicants for the Position of County Judge to Submit Resumes or Statements and to Conduct Interviews**.

Louis E. Turcotte, III, County Judge, informed the Commissioners Court of the need to set dates regarding applicants for the position of County Judge to submit resumes or statements and to conduct interviews.

Commissioner Gumecinda "Cindy" Gonzales moved and Commissioner Sarita Armstrong-Hixon seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that applicants submit resumes or statements by Monday, May 17, 2021, at 3:00 p.m. and that interviews be held on Friday, May 21, 2021, at 9:00 a.m.

1. **Discuss & Act on Allison Strauss, County Attorney’s, Report Regarding Sheriff’s Chapter 59 Fund Issues**.

Allison Strauss, County Attorney, informed the Commissioners Court that she was working on a special report regarding the Sheriff’s Chapter 59 Fund issues; that she had received Leo Villarreal’s report and was revising it and working on it.

Commissioner Sarita Armstrong-Hixon moved and Commissioner Gumecinda "Cindy" Gonzales seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that Allison Strauss complete her report and inform the Commissioners Court of her findings and recommendations.

1. **Receive Report on King Ranch Rudolph Cell Tower**

Leo Villarreal informed the Commissioners Court that Melissa Peros with Bearcom had obtained permission to enter King Ranch and had made a determination on the equipment needed regarding the Rudolph Cell Tower and had submitted it to the engineers for confirmation and cost. Meanwhile, she was exploring voter sites where the vote recordings could be installed.

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

1. **Discuss & Act on the Purchase of Security Cameras for the Kenedy County Buildings in Sarita**.

Brian Birdwell informed the Commissioners Court that is was necessary to purchase security cameras for the Courthouse, Tax Office, Appraisal District Office, the Maintenance Building for the cost of $49,954.26.

Commissioner Gumecinda "Cindy" Gonzales moved and Commissioner Joe Recio seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that security cameras for the Kenedy County buildings be purchased for the cost of $49,954.26 to be paid from the Courthouse Security Fund.

1. **Discuss & Act on Declaration of Local State of Disaster.**

Louis E. Turcotte, III, County Judge, and Leo Villarreal, informed the Commissioners Court there was a need to consider passing a Declaration of Local State of Disaster that Brent Smith, Kinney County Attorney, was seeking counties to pass a Declaration of Local State of Disaster for the purpose of asking Greg Abbot, Texas Governor, to provide military or Texas Rangers assistance in returning illegals to the border. Leo Villarreal questioned the U. S. policy regarding illegals was contrary to what Texas intended to do and who was to pay for the medical costs for sick illegals.

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

1. **Consent Agenda.**
2. **Approve Travel for Irma Longoria to Attend the 87th Annual TACA Conference in Corpus Christi, Texas on June 6-10, 2021. ($1,331.62 within budget)**
3. **Approve Travel Expenses for Irma Longoria to Attend the Intro to Property Tax Admin & Appraisal Courses in Austin, Texas on June 14-18, 2021. ($1,501.21 within budget)**
4. **Approve Travel for Three (3) Officers Attending Mental Health Course in Corpus Christi, Texas on June 3, 2021. ($950.00 within budget)**

Louis E. Turcotte, III, County Judge, informed the Commissioners Court that the following persons needed to attend the following seminars/conferences and that the County needed to advance the costs thereof, as follows:

Irma Longoria to attend the 87th Annual TACA Conference in Corpus Christi, Texas on June 6-10, 2021 and for the County to advance $1,331.62 within budget, provided proper receipts are presented to the County Treasurer;

Irma Longoria to attend the Intro to Property Tax Admin & Appraisal Courses in Austin, Texas on June 14-18, 2021 and the County to advance $1,501.21 within budget, provided proper receipts are presented to the County Treasurer; and

Three (3) Officers to attend the Mental Health Course in Corpus Christi, Texas on June 3, 2021 and the County advance $950.00 within budget, provided proper receipts are presented to the County Treasurer.

Commissioner Joe Recio moved and Commissioner Gumecinda “Cindy” Gonzales seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that the below persons attend the below seminars and conferences and that the County advance the requested costs provided that property receipts are presented to the County Treasurer:

Irma Longoria to attend the 87th Annual TACA Conference in Corpus Christi, Texas on June 6-10, 2021 and for the County to advance $1,331.62 within budget;

Irma Longoria to attend the Intro to Property Tax Admin & Appraisal Courses in Austin, Texas on June 14-18, 2021 and the County to advance $1,501.21 within budget; and

Three (3) Officers to attend the Mental Health Course in Corpus Christi, Texas on June 3, 2021 and the County advance $950.00 within budget.

1. **Discuss & Act on Approving Replacement of Departmental Phone System for Sheriff’s Department ($9,900.00 within budget)**.

Louis E. Turcotte, III, County Judge, and Sheriff Ramon Salinas informed the Commissioners Court of the need to approve the replacement of departmental phone system for the Sheriff’s Department at a cost of $9,900.00, within budget.

Commissioner Joe Recio moved and Commissioner Gumecinda “Cindy” Gonzales seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that the replacement of departmental phone system for the Sheriff’s Department is approved at a cost of $9,888.21, within budget.

1. **Discuss & Act on Approving to Move the Security Access Control System Connection to Another Office Location within Sheriff’s Office ($950.00 within budget)**.

Louis E. Turcotte, III, County Judge, informed the Commissioners Court of the need to approve moving the Security Access Control System Connection to another office location within the Sheriff’s Office for the cost of $950.00, within budget.

Commissioner Sarita Armstrong-Hixon moved and Commissioner Israel Vela, Jr. seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that the Security Access Control System Connection be moved to another office location within the Sheriff’s Office for the cost of $950.00, within budget.

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

Louis E. Turcotte, III, County Judge, informed the Commissioners Court of the need to pay the bills for the month ending April 30, 2021.

Commissioner Sarita Armstrong-Hixon moved and Commissioner Gumecinda “Cindy” Gonzales seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that the bills be paid as presented except for MP2 and Kologik LLC.

1. **Adjournment**

There being no further business to come before the Commissioners Court, Commissioner Sarita Armstrong-Hixon and Commissioner Gumecinda “Cindy” Gonzales seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that the Kenedy County Commissioners Court be adjourned at 11:50 o'clock a.m.

/s/ Louis E. Turcotte, III

Louis E. Turcotte, III, County Judge

/s/ Veronica Vela

Veronica Vela, County Clerk