

**THE STATE OF TEXAS
COUNTY OF ZAPATA**

IN THE COMMISSIONERS COURT OF ZAPATA COUNTY, TEXAS

Be it remembered, that on this the 22nd of February 2021, the Commissioners Court of Zapata County, Texas convened in **REGULAR SESSION** of said Court, at the regular meeting place thereof, in the Courthouse of Zapata, Texas, with the following members of said Court, to-wit:

PRESENT:

Hon. Joseph Rathmell	County Judge
Paco Mendoza	Commissioner, Precinct No. 1
Olga M. Elizondo	Commissioner, Precinct No. 2
Jose A. Solis	Commissioner, Precinct No. 3
Norberto Garza	Commissioner, Precinct No. 4
Mary Jayne Villarreal-Bonoan	County Clerk and Ex-Officio Clerk of the Commissioners Court

VISITORS: Nellie R. Treviño, Roger Miller, Daniel Arriaga, Cynthia Garza, Delia Mendoza, Ralph Trevino, and Manuel Gonzalez, Jr.

WHEREUPON, the following Orders and Proceedings were had by said Court, to-wit:

**MEETING CALLED TO ORDER AT 9:00 A.M.
ROLL CALL BY MARY JAYNE VILLARREAL-BONOAN, COUNTY CLERK AND
EX-OFFICIO CLERK OF THE COMMISSIONERS COURT
INVOCATION BY REV. ROGER MILLER
PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

COMMUNICATIONS

Judge Rathmell addressed the court regarding issues and difficulties arising during freeze and power failure. He stated that a generator is needed at the water plant and Las Palmas requires a pump to generate water. Falcon Rural Water Supply provides water for Meza Salinas. The bad times found the weaknesses in our communities. Water plant workers were fixing leaks in freezing temperatures to provide water for residents.

Commissioner Mendoza added that all crews assisted in different areas trying to restore water. The Fire Department also assisted.

Judge Rathmell added that 911 calls were transferred to the Fire Department.

Commissioner Elizondo stated that there was power in San Ygnacio and the Community Center was used as emergency shelter.

Commissioner Mendoza stated that South Elementary was also used as emergency shelter.

Fire Chief Daniel D. Arriaga said that there was a lot of criticism and finger pointing, but he can attest to what he saw; the sheriff's office and some officials were out there since day one. There is room for improvement, but all in all everyone did a very good job. Two shelters and warming centers were opened as soon as power came on. Requests for generators and water were made to state officials; however, the entire state was going through the same issue. He was always in contact with the state requesting the necessary items. A generous, anonymous person donated a generator, and they were able to get Chevron up and running providing fuel to emergency vehicles because they were running short on fuel, as well as open for people to purchase fuel and necessities. He further added that San Ygnacio took care of the people at the shelter and provided

a lot of food. He was also able to get one pallet of water from Falcon Rural on Saturday and six more are expected today. AEP provided a pallet to the food pantry.

Judge Rathmell and Chief Arriaga added that round 2 of COVID-19 vaccines will be allocated and expected this week starting with homebound and continuing thereafter with weekly allocations to local clinics. Chief Arriaga added that testing has resumed today at the pavilion.

Judge Rathmell stated that there are still quite a few COVID-19 positive cases in our community; he also received the news that retired Water Plant Director Carlos Trevino lost his battle with COVID-19 and passed away Saturday after fighting for about three weeks. Also, two other residents passed away in the last few weeks. He will be in contact with DHS seeking additional vaccine allocations for our community. There are currently 40 positive cases and a total of 29 confirmed deaths. Judge Rathmell continues to urge the county to continue following guidelines even if vaccinated.

Ralph Trevino addressed the court and commented on the lack of generators and equipment. You don't see it until you need it. Judge Rathmell added that the necessary adjustments will be made to provide what is needed. Mr. Trevino thanked the court and Sheriff's office for their assistance.

Commissioner Mendoza said he will talk to the state to see if they can assist.

Judge Rathmell thanked the South Texas Food Bank and USDA for the providing food.

Romeo Salinas stated that he will be addressing the needs of the food pantry during the next meeting; there was no food loss at our local food bank.

Commissioner Elizondo stated that Casa De Dios Puerta del Cielo provided food for distribution.

Commissioner Mendoza added that the Boys and Girls Club opened their kitchen and provided food.

Commissioner Solis thanked Siesta Shores Water Plant for their assistance.

Cynthia Garza stated that it took them one and a half day to get water because they had frozen pipes, they used a generator.

Commissioner Elizondo asked the public and businesses to conserve energy.

Sheriff Del Bosque said his office received calls regarding carbon monoxide poisoning; this needs to be addressed and people need to be trained to follow protocol and need to be made aware that there are monitors for carbon monoxide. He suggested that a mock training be held with emergency services and courthouse to be prepared. Alberto Gonzalez assisted with generators. Inmates were provided with additional blankets and hot meals. He commended everyone that worked behind the scenes.

Judge Rathmell added that the county has no natural gas distribution system and the county is mostly electric.

Sheriff Del Bosque suggested a local propane distribution center. He further thanked Judge Tano Tijerina from Webb County who offered fuel to the department.

Commissioner Solis stated that he is very disappointed with Falcon Rural; the manager never answered or returned phone calls. Something needs to be done to connect Tepozan/Meza Salinas to Zapata County. Commissioner Mendoza suggested seeking funds to connect and service all constituents in the future.

ORDER APPROVING INVOICES

Motion was made by Commissioner Garza, seconded by Commissioner Mendoza, to approve invoices in the amount of \$2,506,984.02 as presented by Triunfo Gonzalez.

The above motion, being put to a vote, was approved by the affirmative vote of all members of the Court.

ORDER APPROVING CHECKS ISSUED

Motion was made by Commissioner Mendoza, seconded by Commissioner Solis, to approve checks issued in the amount of \$2,506,984.02, as requested by Hon. Romeo Salinas, County Treasurer.

The above motion, being put to a vote, was approved by the affirmative vote of all members of the Court.

PRESENTATION ON UTILITY U TRAINING GIVEN TO SIESTA SHORES WATER PLANT AND ZAPATA COUNTY WATERWORKS EMPLOYEES

Cynthia Garza was present for Cesario Vela of Communities Unlimited and gave a brief report. Communities Unlimited provides training to Zapata County Waterworks and Siesta Shores Water Plant. Three employees at the Siesta Shores Water Plant are training and testing to get the D operator license. Eighteen Zapata County Water Plant employees also received the training.

PRESENTATION OF APPRECIATION CERTIFICATES BY U.S. CENSUS BUREAU TO COMMISSIONERS COURT

Lucia E. Juarez presented appreciation certificates to commissioner's court members by the U.S. Census Bureau. The census count will be available by April 30, 2021.

ORDER APPOINTING COMMISSIONER JOSE A. SOLIS AS REPRESENTATIVE TO ZAPATA COUNTY APPRAISAL DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Motion was made by Commissioner Garza, seconded by Commissioner Mendoza, to appoint Commissioner Jose A. Solis as representative to the Zapata County Appraisal District Board of Directors for the unexpired term of former Commissioner Eddie Martinez, which expires on December 31, 2021, as requested by Hon Joe Rathmell, County Judge.

The above motion, being put to a vote, was approved by the affirmative vote of all members of the Court.

ORDER APPROVING DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS FROM 312 EDPR TAX ABATEMENT

Motion was made by Commissioner Mendoza, seconded by Commissioner Solis, to approve distribution of funds from the 312 EDPR Tax Abatement as requested by Nellie R. Trevino, Personnel Director. A total of \$125,000 will be distributed between Chamber of Commerce, Boys and Girls Club, Zapata County Fair Association, Food Pantry/Helping Hands, and scholarship fund will be established for graduating seniors, each will receive \$25,000.00.

The above motion, being put to a vote, was approved by the affirmative vote of all members of the Court.

ORDER AMENDING ZAPATA COUNTY 2020-2021 HOLIDAY CALENDAR

Motion was made by Commissioner Mendoza, seconded by Commissioner Solis, to amend the approved Zapata County 2020-2021 Holiday Calendar and remove three county fair days from holiday calendar as requested by Nellie R. Trevino, Personnel Director.

The above motion, being put to a vote, was approved by the affirmative vote of all members of the Court.

ORDER APPROVING LINE-ITEM TRANSFER

Motion was made by Commissioner Garza, seconded by Commissioner Mendoza, to approve the following line item transfer to meet departmental needs:

	DEPARTMENT	LINE ITEM	FUND	AMOUNT
FROM	Tax Office	10-334-499	Scanning and Preservation	\$2,500.00
TO	Tax Office	10-427-499	Workshop/Travel Expenses	\$2,500.00

as requested by Delia Mendoza, Tax Assessor-Collector.

The above motion, being put to a vote, was approved by the affirmative vote of all members of the Court.

ORDER APPROVING RESOLUTION AND AWARDED PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERING SERVICES FOR ZAPATA COUNTY 2021-2022 TxCDBG COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FUND

Motion was made by Commissioner Mendoza, seconded by Commissioner Elizondo, to approve resolution of award for Professional Engineering Services for the Zapata County 2021-2022 TxCBG Community Development (CD) Fund to Premier Engineering as requested by Carl Esser, Esser & Company Consulting, LLC.

The above motion, being put to a vote, was approved by the affirmative vote of all members of the Court.

**MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER GARZA,
SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER MENDOZA,
TO ENTER INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER GARZA,
SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER MENDOZA,
TO RETURN TO REGULAR SESSION**

ORDER APPROVING HIRING OF COMPUTER TECHNICAL ASSISTANT FOR ELECTRONIC DATA PROCESSING DEPARTMENT

Motion was made by Commissioner Garza, seconded by Commissioner Solis, to approve hiring of Ryan Torres as Computer Technician Assistant for the Electronic Data Processing Department, 10-402, as previously approved by Commissioners Court as requested by Nellie R. Trevino, Personnel Director.

The above motion, being put to a vote, was approved by the affirmative vote of all members of the Court.

ORDER APPROVING FORBEARANCE AGREEMENT BETWEEN ZAPATA COUNTY AND PATRICIO HERNANDEZ DBA GRANDE GARBAGE COLLECTION COMPANY IN CAUSE NO. 9929

Motion was made by Commissioner Mendoza, seconded by Commissioner Garza, to approve Forbearance Agreement between Zapata County and Patricio Hernandez DBA Grande

Garbage Collection Company in Cause No. 9929 in the 49th District Court as presented as requested by Hon. Joe Rathmell, County Judge.

The above motion, being put to a vote, was approved by the affirmative vote of all members of the Court.

Closed Session/Executive Session is requested pursuant to Texas Government Code Title 551, Subchapter D, Section 551.071 (A)(B) Consultation with Attorney.

**NO ACTION WAS TAKEN ON THE FOLLOWING ITEM DISCUSSED IN
EXECUTIVE SESSION**

16/20. to discuss issues related to both Water and Wastewater Department as requested by Ralph Trevino, Water Plant Manager.

Closed Session/Executive Session is requested pursuant to Texas Government Code Title 551, Subchapter D, Section 551.074 (A)(B) Personnel Matters.

ADJOURN

Motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Garza, seconded by Commissioner Mendoza, and being put to a vote, was approved by the affirmative vote of all members of the Court.

There being no further business for disposition at this term, the Court adjourned.

JOSEPH RATHMELL, COUNTY JUDGE
OF ZAPATA COUNTY, TEXAS

ATTEST:

MARY JAYNE VILLARREAL-BONOAN,
COUNTY CLERK AND EX-OFFICIO
CLERK OF THE COMMISSIONERS
COURT OF ZAPATA COUNTY, TEXAS