

THE STATE OF TEXAS §

COUNTY OF VICTORIA §

Be it remembered that on this the **9th day December A.D., 2024**, the Commissioners Court convened in **Regular Session** at the Victoria County Courthouse in the City of Victoria, Victoria County, Texas, with His Honor, Ben Zeller, County Judge, presiding and the following Commissioners attending:

Danny Garcia,	Commissioner Precinct No. 1	
Jason Ohrt,	Commissioner Precinct No. 2	
Gary Burns,	Commissioner Precinct No. 3	
Kenneth Sexton,	Commissioner Precinct No. 4	
and		
Heidi Easley,	County Clerk and Ex-Officio Clerk	Absent

and the following orders were passed:



COUNTY OF VICTORIA

MINUTES

COMMISSIONERS' COURT OF VICTORIA COUNTY, TEXAS

Monday, December 9, 2024, 10:00 AM, REGULAR TERM

VICTORIA COUNTY COURTHOUSE

115 N. BRIDGE ST., ROOM 241, SECOND FLOOR, VICTORIA, TX

1. Call to Order.

(1-0:00)

1. December 9, 2024. Ben Zeller, County Judge, called to order the Commissioners Court Regular Term for Monday, December 9, 2024, at 10:00 a.m.

2. Invocation and Pledges.

(2-0:00)

2. December 9, 2024. County Judge Ben Zeller opened the meeting with prayer and the reciting of the Pledges of Allegiance of the United States of America and the State of Texas.

3. Citizens Communication.

(3-1:57)

3. December 9, 2024. Judge Ben Zeller opened the meeting to anyone wishing to address general County business which was not on the meeting agenda.

Kat Munoz-Hickl, Program Manager of Golden Crescent Mothers, spoke about the purpose of the program. Mrs. Munoz-Hickl stated they would like to connect with the WIC Program and other local resources in Victoria County.

Michael Vonderau, 2204 E. North Street, thanked Commissioner Burns for his assistance with the helicopter at Patriot Park. Mr. Vonderau thanked Mark Sloat for his excellent work with Victoria Animal Services. He spoke about the potholes in the trailer park and also thanked the Victoria County Public Health Department for help with dental assistance.

Rick McBrayer, Emergency Management Director, and Fire Marshal Richard Castillo, spoke about the recent Percolator Fire around FM 1686 and Keefe Road.

Mark Sloat, Animal Services Director, commended Commissioner Burns for his support of Victoria County Animal Services.

County Judge Zeller, Commissioner Garcia, Commissioner Ohrt and Commissioner Sexton commended Commissioner Gary Burns for his dedication and service with Victoria County.

Commissioner Gary Burns thanked Victoria County for their support and opportunity to serve for so many years.

County Judge Zeller reminded everyone of the swearing in ceremony on January 1, 2025 at 11:00 a.m. in the Historic Courtroom.

Hearing no further comments, Judge Ben Zeller continued with the next agenda item.

4. Consider approval of minutes and take appropriate action.

(4-37:49)

4. December 9, 2024. Moved by Kenneth Sexton and seconded by Gary Burns, the Commissioners Court approved the minutes of the Commissioners Court meeting held on December 2, 2024. Motion adopted.

5. Consider approval of accounts payable and take appropriate action.

(5-38:06)

5. December 9, 2024. Moved by Kenneth Sexton and seconded by Gary Burns, the Commissioners Court approved the accounts payable as presented by Michelle Samford, County Auditor.

Regular Accounts	12/9/2024	\$625,277.35
Supplemental Accounts	11/21/2024 – 12/5/2024	\$244,722.19

Motion adopted.

6. Receive monthly and quarterly reports from various county officials and departments and take appropriate action.

(6-38:38)

6. December 9, 2024. Moved by Jason Ohrt and seconded by Danny Garcia, the Commissioners Court received the monthly reports from the County Treasurer; District Clerk; Tax Assessor Collector; County Auditor; Fire Marshal; Justices of the Peace, Precinct Nos. 1 - 4; and Constable, Precinct No. 1. Motion adopted.

7. Consider approval of bond forfeiture releases and take appropriate action.

(7-38:59)

7. December 9, 2024. None. No action taken.

8. Consider approval of CMC Interim vendor payments and take appropriate action.

(8-39:11)

8. December 9, 2024. Moved by Danny Garcia and seconded by Jason Ohrt, the Commissioners Court approved the Citizens Medical Center interim vendor payments dated December 5, 2024, in the amount of \$509,712.69 and the ACH report dated December 5, 2024, in the amount of \$1,997,059.53. Motion adopted.

9. Receive announcement of a new \$1,700,000 U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) grant award for upgrades to the Air Traffic Control Tower at the Victoria Regional Airport and take appropriate action.

(9-39:44)

9. December 9, 2024. Executive Director Lenny Llerena provided information to the Court. Moved by Kenneth Sexton and seconded by Gary Burns, the Commissioners Court received the announcement of a new \$1,700,000.00 U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) grant award for upgrades to the Air Traffic Control Tower at the Victoria Regional Airport. Motion adopted.

10. Discuss and ratify acceptance of a grant for the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) - Federal Contract Tower (FCT) Project No. 3-48-0219-028-2025 at Victoria Regional Airport from the U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to repair/rehabilitate/modernize equipment in Sponsor Owned

Contract Tower in the amount of \$577,736 and take appropriate action.

(10-42:47)

10. December 9, 2024. Moved by Gary Burns and seconded by Kenneth Sexton, the Commissioners Court ratified the acceptance of a grant for the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) - Federal Contract Tower (FCT) Project No. 3-48-0219-028-2025 at Victoria Regional Airport from the U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to repair/rehabilitate/modernize equipment in Sponsor Owned Contract Tower in the amount of \$577,736.00. Motion adopted.

11. Consider approval of the following items regarding the Invitation for Bids (IFB) - Replace and Upgrade Communications and Weather Equipment at the Airport Traffic Control Tower and take appropriate action:

a. Receive bids and bid tabulation.

(11a-44:39)

11a. December 9, 2024. Lenny Llerena, Executive Director, provided the Court with information. Moved by Gary Burns and seconded by Kenneth Sexton, the Commissioners Court received bids and bid tabulation regarding the Invitation for Bids (IFB) - Replace and upgrade communications and weather equipment at the Airport Traffic Control Tower. Motion adopted.

Consider approval of the following items regarding the Invitation for Bids (IFB) - Replace and Upgrade Communications and Weather Equipment at the Airport Traffic Control Tower and take appropriate action:

b. Receive bid review and recommendation for an award from AJT Engineering, Inc.

(11b-44:39)

11b. December 9, 2024. Executive Director Lenny Llerena provided information to the Court. Moved by Gary Burns and seconded by Kenneth Sexton, the Commissioners Court received the bid review and recommendation for an award from AJT Engineering, Inc. regarding the Invitation for Bids (IFB) - Replace and upgrade communications and weather equipment at the Airport Traffic Control Tower. Motion adopted.

Consider approval of the following items regarding the Invitation for Bids (IFB) - Replace and Upgrade Communications and Weather Equipment at the Airport Traffic Control Tower and take appropriate action:

c. Consider 0002 Base Bid award and 0004 Base Bid with Digital ATIS totaling \$555,980.00.

(11c-44:39)

11c. December 9, 2024. Lenny Llerena, Executive Director, provided the Court with information. Moved by Gary Burns and seconded by Kenneth Sexton, the Commissioners Court approved the 0002 Base Bid award and 0004 Base Bid with Digital ATIS totaling \$555,980.00 regarding the Invitation for Bids (IFB) - Replace and upgrade communications and weather equipment at the Airport Traffic Control Tower. Motion adopted.

Consider approval of the following items regarding the Invitation for Bids (IFB) - Replace and Upgrade Communications and Weather Equipment at the Airport Traffic Control Tower and take appropriate action:

d. Authorize the County Judge to enter into negotiations and execute an agreement with Wolen, LLC, pending legal review.

(11d-44:39)

11d. December 9, 2024. Executive Director Lenny Llerena provided information to the

Court. Moved by Gary Burns and seconded by Kenneth Sexton, the Commissioners Court authorized the County Judge to enter into negotiations and execute an agreement with Wolen. LLC pending legal review regarding the Invitation for Bids (IFB) - Replace and upgrade communications and weather equipment at the Airport Traffic Control Tower. Motion adopted.

- 12. Consider approval of a department name change from Administrative Services to Engineering and Development as approved in the 2025 Adopted Budget and take appropriate action.**

(12-47:10)

12. December 9, 2024. Moved by Danny Garcia and seconded by Jason Ohrt, the Commissioners Court approved the department's name change from Administrative Services to Engineering and Development as approved in the 2025 Adopted Budget. Motion adopted.

- 13. Receive notice of FY24 Texas Indigent Defense Commission Indigent Defense Coordinator Grant Budget Adjustment, Grant # 212-24-C24, and take appropriate action.**

(13-48:35)

13. December 9, 2024. Grant Administrator Robin Knipling provided the Court with information. Moved by Jason Ohrt and seconded by Kenneth Sexton, the Commissioners Court received the notice of FY24 Texas Indigent Defense Commission Indigent Defense Coordinator Grant Budget Adjustment, Grant No. 212-24-C24. Motion adopted.

- 14. Consider approval of FY22 Operation Stonegarden Budget Adjustment, Grant No. 3186208 and take appropriate action.**

(14-49:24)

14. December 9, 2024. Robin Knipling, Grant Administrator, provided information to the Court. Moved by Jason Ohrt and seconded by Danny Garcia, the Commissioners Court approved the FY22 Operation Stonegarden Budget Adjustment, Grant No. 3186208. Motion adopted.

- 15. Consider approval of renewal Contract Order ID No. Q-09071236 for Online West Pro Flex Services from Thomson Reuters Westlaw for the Victoria County Criminal District Attorney's Office and take appropriate action.**

(15-50:13)

15. December 9, 2024. Moved by Danny Garcia and seconded by Jason Ohrt, the Commissioners Court approved the renewal of Contract Order ID No. Q-09071236 for Online West Pro Flex Services from Thomson Reuters Westlaw for the Victoria County Criminal District Attorney's Office. Motion adopted.

- 16. Consider approval of a request to pay out the compensatory time of Victoria County employees for hours worked in response to the November 5 Joint General Election and take appropriate action.**

(16-50:44)

16. December 9, 2024. County Auditor Michelle Samford provided information to the Court. Moved by Gary Burns and seconded by Jason Ohrt, the Commissioners Court approved the request to pay out the compensatory time of Victoria County employees for hours worked in response to the November 5th, 2024 Joint General Election. Motion adopted.

- 17. Receive new Tax Abatement Guidelines and Criteria, effective November 4, 2024, and take appropriate action.**

(17-52:08)

17. December 9, 2024. Moved by Jason Ohrt and seconded by Kenneth Sexton, the Commissioners Court received the new Tax Abatement Guidelines and Criteria, effective November 4, 2024. Motion adopted.

- 18. Consider approval of the following detention and/or residential contracts for the Victoria Regional Juvenile Justice Center and take appropriate action:**

a. Brooks County.

(18a-52:44)

18a. December 9, 2024. Moved by Jason Ohrt and seconded by Kenneth Sexton, the Commissioners Court approved the Detention and Residential Contracts between Victoria Regional Juvenile Justice Center and Brooks County. Motion adopted.

Consider approval of the following detention and/or residential contracts for the Victoria Regional Juvenile Justice Center and take appropriate action:

b. Kleberg-Kenedy County

(18b-52:44)

18b. December 9, 2024. Moved by Jason Ohrt and seconded by Kenneth Sexton, the Commissioners Court approved the Residential and Detention Contracts between Victoria Regional Juvenile Justice Center and Kleberg-Kenedy County. Motion adopted.

- 19. Consider approval of Resolution No. 2024-0096 accepting a donation of supplies valued at \$3,000.00 from Warriors Weekend in regard to the helicopter monument at Patriot Park and take appropriate action.**

(19-53:18)

19. December 9, 2024. Commissioner Gary Burns provided information to the Court. Moved by Gary Burns and seconded by Kenneth Sexton, pursuant to Local Government Code §81.032, the Commissioners Court approved Resolution No. 2024-0096 accepting a donation of supplies valued at \$3,000.00 from Warriors Weekend to be utilized for and dedicated to the fence installation for the helicopter at Patriot Park. Motion adopted.

- 20. Consider approval of Resolution No. 2024-0098 accepting a donation from the Victoria 100 Club for a 1 Springfield AR15 Rifle, valued at \$1,149.99, from Victoria All Sports for Constable, Pct. 3 and take appropriate action.**

(20-54:43)

20. December 9, 2024. Moved by Jason Ohrt and seconded by Danny Garcia, pursuant to Local Government Code §81.032, the Commissioners Court approved Resolution No. 2024-0098 accepting a donation from Victoria 100 Club of 1 Springfield AR15 Rifle, valued at \$1,149.99, from Victoria All Sports to be utilized for and dedicated to Victoria County Constable, Precinct No. 3. Motion adopted.

- 21. Consider approval of the following Resolutions for road donations for the installation of a driveway and pipe culvert to improve drainage and take appropriate action:**
a. Resolution No. 2024-0097 from Larry Wagner at 415 Midway Rd. S. in Pct. 4, valued at \$800.00.

(21a-55:26)

21a. December 9, 2024. Moved by Danny Garcia and seconded by Kenneth Sexton, the Commissioners Court approved Resolution No. 2024-0097 for a road donation in the amount of \$800.00 from Larry Wagner at 415 Midway Road S in Precinct No. 4 for

installation of a driveway and pipe culvert to improve drainage. Motion adopted.

Consider approval of the following Resolutions for road donations for the installation of a driveway and pipe culvert to improve drainage and take appropriate action:
b. Resolution No. 2024-0099 from Hector S. Cruz at 1398 Wood-Hi Rd. in Pct 1, valued at \$900.00

(21b-55:26)

21b. December 9, 2024. Moved by Danny Garcia and seconded by Kenneth Sexton, the Commissioners Court approved Resolution No. 2024-0099 for a road donation in the amount of \$900.00 from Hector S. Cruz at 1398 Wood-Hi Road in Precinct No. 1 for installation of a driveway and pipe culvert to improve drainage. Motion adopted.

22. Consider approval of the following 2024 budget amendments and take appropriate action:

(22-56:12)

22. December 9, 2024. Moved by Kenneth Sexton and seconded by Gary Burns, the Commissioners Court approved the 2024 budget amendments for:

- a. General Fund/Sheriff's Office, Expenditures – Line item transfer
- b. General Fund/Various Departments, Revenues and Expenditures - Increase
- c. Emergency Management, Expenditures - Line item transfer
- d. Records Management Fund, Expenditures - Line item transfer
- e. Road and Bridge, Precinct No. 2, Expenditures - Line item transfer
- f. Road and Bridge, Precinct No. 3, Expenditures - Line item transfer
- g. County Specialty Court, Expenditures - Increase
- h. Airport Fund, Expenditures - Line item transfer
- i. National School Lunch Program, Expenditures - Line item transfer
- j. Health Insurance Fund, Expenditures - Line item transfer
- k. Capital Projects Fund, Expenditures - Increase

Motion adopted.

23. Consider approval of personnel changes and take appropriate action.

(23-57:28)

23. December 9, 2024. Moved by Gary Burns and seconded by Jason Ohrt, the Commissioners Court approved that payroll be processed in compliance with policy and personnel changes:

- a. Constance Filley Johnson, Criminal District Attorney - Criminal District Attorney's Office:
 - 1. A change in longevity pay for Andrea M. Smith Harvey for an increase in longevity pay from \$55.38 to \$64.50 on January 3, 2025 payroll and \$64.62 thereafter, GL Code 100-475-1135.
- b. Richard Castillo, Fire Marshal - Victoria County Fire Marshal's Office:
 - 1. Request to payout Compensatory hours for David A. Stithem (253.58 hours) and Thomas Gutierrez (159.55 hours) with fringe benefits added to the totals and to be paid from the salary budget.
- c. Brian Watson, Chief Public Defender - Public Defender's Office:
 - 1. Employment of Diana Espinosa, Legal Support Specialist, to be paid \$21.11 per hour, Budget Code 525-401-1110, effective December 10, 2024. Grade 5 Plan General. Remarks: over midpoint but budget avail in grant per BW.

2. Employment of Natalia Wallace, Case Worker, at a rate of \$20.64 per hour, Budget Code 525-401-1111, effective December 10, 2024. Grade 4 Plan General Tier n/a. Remarks: request is over midpoint. Budget avail in Grant per BW.
- d. David Gonzales, Public Health Director - Victoria County Public Health Department:
 1. Position/other code change (g/l code) for Kimberly Green, Assistant Director (Public Health), at a rate of \$35.00 per hour, from Budget Code 800-631-1141 to Budget Codes 800-631-1141 (92.85%) \$32.50 and 803-631-1141 (7.15%) \$2.50, effective November 16, 2024. Other Remarks: ****KEEP**** Cell Phone Allowance \$1080.04 Annual (\$41.54 bi-weekly) 800-631-1139. Grade 16 Plan General.
 2. Employment of Graciela Villa, Community Health Worker I, at a rate of \$18.56 per hour, Budget Code 804-631-1104, effective December 10, 2024. Other Remarks: ADD - Cell Phone Allowance \$479.96 - 804-631-1139 (\$18.46 per pay period) Grade 5 Plan General Tier n/a.
- e. Ben Zeller, County Judge - County Judge's Office:
 1. Retirement of Lisa Ramirez, Administrative Assistant, with 80 PTO and 184.53 Compensatory hours due, effective January 15, 2025.
- f. Justin Marr, Sheriff - Sheriff's Office:
 1. Salary change and position/other code change for Austin Christensen, from Detention Officer, at a rate of \$20.76 per hour, Budget Codes 100-565-1116-\$18.74 and 288-565-1116-\$2.02 to Patrol Deputy, at a rate of \$25.31 per hour, Budget Codes 100-563-1109-\$24.29 and 288-563-1109-\$1.02, effective December 28, 2024. Grade 7 Plan Law Enforcement Tier 1.
 2. Position/other code change for Mariah Tinney, from Detention Deputy at a rate of \$25.31 per hour, Budget Code 100-565-1114-\$24.29 and 288-565-1114-\$1.02 to Patrol Deputy, Budget Codes 100-563-1109-\$24.29 and 288-563-1109-\$1.02, effective December 28, 2024.
- g. Vinicio Llerena, Executive Director - Victoria Regional Airport:
 1. Employment of Antonio Rodriguez, Operations/Maintenance specialist, at a rate of \$16.50 per hour, Budget Code 321-606-1116, effective December 10, 2024. Grade 3 Plan General.

Motion adopted.

24. **Closed meeting pursuant to V.T.C.A. Government code §551.074 to discuss personnel in various departments; §551.072 to discuss real property; §551.087 to discuss economic development, and §551.071 to conduct a private consultation with the County's attorney regarding matters protected by the attorney-client privilege.**
(24-59:13)

24. December 9, 2024. The Commissioners Court went into closed session at 11:04 a.m., pursuant to V.T.C.A. Government Code §551.074 to discuss personnel in various departments; §551.072 to discuss real property; §551.087 to discuss economic development; and §551.071 to conduct a private consultation with the County's attorney regarding matters protected by the attorney-client privilege.

25. **Pursuant to V.T.C.A. Government Code §551.102, return to an open meeting and take any action deemed necessary based upon discussion in the closed meeting**
(25-59:44)

25. December 9, 2024. The Commissioners Court returned to open meeting a 11:56

a.m., pursuant to V.T.C.A. Government Code §551.102, with no action taken.

26. Adjourn.

(26-59:56)

25. December 9, 2024. The Commissioners Court adjourned the meeting of December 9, 2024.