

STATE OF TEXAS:

COUNTY OF MILAM:

BE IT REMEMBERED, that on Wednesday, the 21st day of October A. D. 2015, the Commissioners' Court of Milam County, Texas, convened in Special Session in the Commissioners' Courtroom, Milam County Courthouse, 102 S. Fannin, Cameron Texas, with the following members of the Court present, to-wit:

DAVID BARKEMEYER, COUNTY JUDGE

RICHARD WATKINS, COMMISSIONER PRECINCT NO.1

DONALD SHUFFIELD, COMMISSIONER PRECINCT NO. 2

JOHN FISHER, COMMISSIONER PRECINCT NO. 3

JEFF MUEGGE, COMMISSIONER PRECINCT NO. 4

BARBARA VANSAN, COUNTY CLERK

Others absent, to-wit:

John Redington, Legal Counsel

And the proclamation having been made the Court was in session, the following business came on to be considered:

WORKSHOP TO DISCUSS MILAM COUNTY ELECTIONS

DISCUSSION:

Judge established a quorum was present and started the meeting at 8:58 a.m.

Turned workshop over to Barbara & Kolette –

Vansa – Thank you for being here. Kolette and I had a couple meetings about getting an Election Administrator. The majority of the information given is from me. I hope you have reviewed it. I have given each of you the Election Code regarding an Election Administrator. The request for an election administrator started when La Verne was hearing and her & I have repeatedly tried to get this in the county. It is beneficial for Milam County to have an EA regardless if it is Sherry or Nancy and it is up to the election commission to decide. The Voter registrar funds and County Clerk's election funds make up the budget.

Morgan – I did agree that this will be beneficial to have two full time employees not just one. It will be too much work for just one person.

Vansa – it should be two people two run this office from the beginning. I will only three employees starting in January. We need to look out for the county and what will work best. I would assume, and I shouldn't but think the elections commission would want to take applications for the EA position. The committee is made up of the Judge, myself, Kolette, the Republican Chairman and Democratic Chairman.

Vansa – I spoke to Lonnie Hunt, a representative from TAC about the records management fund. He suggested I talk to Bill Torrey, Co. & Dist. Attorney. I visited with Mr. Torrey and I have his support in funding through Records Management. But at this time I am weighing my options and hoping for the EA.

Morgan – I am still on the fence about this. I understand that this is a workshop. I would be one less employee and we have been very swamped and don't know how I would make it with one less employee.

Vansa – Guess this is it then. I asked you

Judge –to Barbara- Don't want you to go backwards on the idea. Let's don't jump to conclusions.

Shuffield – Don't give up.

Judge – let's don't go negative. I am not trying to squash the idea.

Vansa – my main concern is the Election. I have confidence in my employees that the job will get done regardless of how many employees we have. I was elected by the voters to do the job and that is what my employees and I will do. This book is what Sherry looks at / new laws are changing / she goes over everything.

Shuffield – who knows this book?

Vansa – Sherry does. I do not know half of what she does. It is my job but she knows it. I am not asking you to put Sherry in but we do need someone who can keep up with the laws, changes in elections, can check out the elections list serve on the internet off and on all day. I will not be able to do that with other duties & responsibilities of my office.

Morgan – I don't know it either, Nancy does it, she does it and goes to conferences.

Shuffield – regarding the museum there is nothing in writing he is leaving.

Morgan – the money is there

Vansa – contracts are current. The budget is larger next year due to it being a bigger election year. The election clerk salary is not included in the Election budget but is with my other ladies.

Mueck - \$79,000 will not fund that office. You have the obligation to take over the city and schools and County would pay upfront like we do for the party's. You would be reimbursed by them.

Danica Lara – what kind of salaries?

Morgan – Nancy's salary would come over.

Shuffield – Sherry's salary would come over.

Morgan – all they do is elections

Shuffield – is this a full time 8-5, Monday – Friday

Mueck – yes

Vansa - Curtis Chubb asked what does she do in an off season. She helps with county clerk duties but keeps up with elections. Next year would be busy and she would need to be dedicated to elections.

Morgan – you are adding a VR – you have to drive out and look for roads and check on houses.

Mueck – even numbered years you will need two full-time and a part time. VR is busy every year adding voters, running reports.

Vansa – La Verne Soefje sent a letter. After we tried numerous times for an EA and didn't get it, Dale Jaecks offered a position for an Election Clerk in the County Clerk's Office. At that time, 2008, Sherry was hired as the election clerk and has remained in that position since. Another offer I have is the office space. The County Clerk's Office has the fire proof / water proof vault to store the equipment that is supposed to be out of public view when not in use. I would give up this space

because of the vault. The utilities are there. I would close off from the county clerk's office so each office would be on its own but give access to the restrooms and we need access to the posting boards. The posting boards is for public notices that have to be available 24/7.

Morgan - \$79,000 not enough?

Vansa – that covers Election workers, locations, maintenance – election budget in clerk's office only. That's why I was asking what expenses you have in the VR budget and you said you do not have a VR budget.

Morgan – we don't have contracts with equipment.

Mueck – where do you get the money to pay Hart if they come out?

Judge asks Lara – the general fund?

Vansa - \$79,000 covers locations, workers,

Morgan – we don't have any contracts

Mueck – who pays for the voters cards

Morgan – HAVA

Judge – we have to take over city & schools

Vansa – you don't have to volunteer but if they ask, you have to take it

Mueck – if City of Cameron approaches & ask you have to take but you can charge a 10% fee for paper, etc. but you get reimbursed.

Vansa – that is just like the Primary, we are reimbursed by the party chairs

Judge – we looked at doing this. We just don't know what to do about Luminant. If Kolette does not give up Nancy – what about my help? Barbara is in the same dilemma. The museum – Charles is going to retire. When he retires part time will have to fill in, intentions to allocate \$20,000 to their budget for part time help. Bankruptcy Judge in Delaware has declined to hear Luminant trial. It will be heard in Texas. We need to think about what Barbara wants.

One advantage is to have one or two or at least one and part time.

Disadvantage – the odd number year is not full time work. We could set up in odd years they help in other office.

I am not opposed to the idea.

Morgan – I have always been for it. It would be all in one building – one place is better.

Vansa – some voters want to register to vote, we send them across the street & they get mad because they can't do it with us. Some have thrown their hands up & said we just won't register.

Judge – schools got mad when we wouldn't help.

Mueck – we have 45 days to send out military ballots. That one election theirs was going on the same time ours was, it wouldn't work. They can use our tally equipment but they bought their own e-slates & DAU's and JBC's. They do borrow our equipment if needed.

Vansa – water districts, schools, city laws are different and the EA would have to keep up with ALL of them regardless if they all contract, the EA has to be prepared. Their laws are different than the County.

Judge – My thought would be if we would have the good fortune to one of the alternative we consider. If we do this, this would give Barbara some relief and help Kolette out

Jodi Morgan – How much VR salary would come over? Barbara's part time \$25,000.

Danica Lara – line item transfer

Vansa – another portion would have to come over to make up the salary

Shuffield – when do you want to do this?

Vansa – yesterday.

Shuffield – Kolette & Barbara get together and work up the cost then report back to us.

Mueck –

Danica Lara – Kolette needs to do a budget.

Judge – If we don't do it now, maybe in the next budget

Mueck – how is this going to help County Clerk's office?

Morgan – it's not.

Vansa – so we are waiting on Kolette? My proposal is here – utilities are already in place & being paid; location is offered; computers & equipment belong to the county with the help of HAVA funding years ago. Why are we waiting?

Shuffield – Do commissioners over see it?

Judge – hire / create it is up to the committee / budget is by commissioners

Tommy Grimes, Democratic Party Chair – I have spent the entire weekend at the SOS office and talked about an hour on changes on the laws. You need someone to handle this. Our right is to express the votes. It has to be done, we got to have a way to pay for it.

Vansa – Mr. Whitmire could not be here. He feels sure we will come to a decision. Then asks Mr. Hubert and Mr. Howe if they have anything they want to discuss.

Wes Howe, Precinct 318 Election Judge stated I get paid \$10 an hour. I am involved, this is my part to make sure it gets done. Finding people to do this is hard. Next year will be a big election. You already have the equipment & space. It's a pain to have to call two different offices for equipment.

Vansa asks Curtis Chubb if he has any comments? He said not right now.

Judge – I like Donald’s idea.

Shuffield –

Mueck – I don’t know your job, you don’t know my job. But you have to go through me for elections. How do you think three people can handle this? We had a lawsuit last year that involved Opey and I abided by the law. I did everything that book had.

Ted Hubert, Precinct 317 Election Judge – I was waiting my turn. I can’t think of anything more important than an election position. If I had to I would volunteer my time. It is everyone’s right to vote. We encourage people to vote. When you look at the number of people that vote it is pathetic. I applaud you for your time.

Vansa – I am not blaming the court for us losing Sherry. I talked to Mr. Hunt about records management. Part time or Temporary position that would be strictly elections. Mr. Torrey said he would support my decision.

Fisher – I think if you can. Sherry, do you do it all?

Mueck – No I do not do Nancy’s job. She enters voters.

Morgan – Nancy’s is an everyday job.

Vansa – I have met with Kolette, Sherry & Jodi all separately and discussed the office offer for an EA. On voting days it would be tight but would work.

Curtis Chubb to Vansa – so you talked to your employee’s about this?

Vansa – yes, they know what is going on and my offer. We are going to do what we have to with how many or how few employees I have. I was elected to handle the county clerk’s duties & responsibilities and that is what I plan to do and my employees will do the same as always.

Howe – I heard “you two go back and make a list”.

Vansa – I would like to do soon. I am having surgery November 24 and will be out until January. I want to know what will happen before I am out. The order states the day of the EA has to within a year of the date the order is approved by the Court.

Barkemeyer – we have to see if we can legally do this after the budget has been set.

Vansa – Mr. Hunt said as long as you don’t add to the budget money wise you can change.

Lara – line item transfer

Morgan – combine both offices to come up with a budget

Vansa – I would think the commission would want applicants to apply. I will get with the cites & schools to get the their costs. They have to pay for the Tally as well.

Fisher – maintenance?

Shuffield – we have an unusual year coming up. We do need to keep up doing what we can efficiently. The voice of vote is very important to me. That is what puts us in office.

Shuffield – I am for keeping the voting running smoothly.

Vansa – if it is not approved by 2018 the \$25,000 will not be there, I will use it next year for temporary or part time help. Kolette’s part time is \$21,000 something.

Mueck – Mr. Hubert says we have 14,000voters – the amount of work is the same regardless if you have 1 or 14,000 voters.

Motion by Commissioner Muegge, seconded by Commissioner Shuffield to adjourn the Workshop at 10:26 a.m. This motion having been put to vote prevailed, the vote being unanimous.

The above and foregoing Minutes examined and approved in Open Court this 9th day of November 2015.

County Judge

State of Texas:

County of Milam:

I, Barbara Vansa, County Clerk, Milam County, Texas, attest that the foregoing is a true and correct accounting of the Commissioners’ Court authorized proceedings for October 21 2015.

**County Clerk and Ex-Officio Member of
Commissioners’ Court, Milam County, Texas**

**STATEMENT OF APPROVAL
ELECTION WORKSHOP – OCTOBER 21 2015**

Commissioner of Precinct No. 1

Commissioner of Precinct No. 3

Commissioner of Precinct No. 2

Commissioner of Precinct No. 4

**Minutes from the October 21, 2015 Milam County
Commissioners Court meeting ends on**

