

STATE OF TEXAS:

COUNTY OF MILAM:

BE IT REMEMBERED, that on Monday the 26th 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 VANSA, COUNTY CLERK and JODI MORGAN, DEPUTY 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 9:10 a.m.

Barkemeyer-Lets discuss cost first

Vansa- Again as I mentioned in the last workshop the Election budge is \$79,390.00 this does not include an Election Clerk Salary. It was my choice to let go Sherry Mueck due to budget cuts.

Morgan- The Voter Registration cost consist of the Voter Registrar Salary, Voter Cards, Seminars and mileage. Other cost include the E-Poll Book maintenance of \$424.00 which is paid out of the general fund not my budget and the Verizon Cards in the amount of \$3,647.04 which is paid out of Susan Reinders budget. I have seriously thought and prayed about this and I have decided that this is not in the best interest for my office. I have to look out for my office and take care of it. I am elected by the voters to take care of our office and I feel that this is just not the best thing to do.

Barkemeyer- Any more discussion?

Shuffield - What percentage of time does Nancy handle Voter Registration?

Morgan- About 60-65% of the day is Voter Registration and the remainder Nancy helps out with taxes and she is cross trained to handle Vehicle Registration, mobile home lien releases but the majority of her day is Voter Registration.

Vansa- Kolette and I did visit this past Friday and I do understand Kolette's point of losing an employee. But she has 5 full time employees and 1 part time in the budget next year; where I have only 3 full time employees and 1 part time in my budget next year. On my way over here to court this morning I started thinking about the Election Code. Election Code 31.071 states that the Election duties can be transferred to the Tax Assessor Collector's office. I did not discuss this with Kolette, but this is another suggestion since she does have 2 more full time employees than the County Clerk's Office. Maybe one could handle elections.

Barkemeyer- Well the Luminant Trial is set for February 2016, we just don't know the outcome. When the decision is made we will know something then. Right now we need to stick to our decision, it is a hard decision but we need to stick to it.

Vansa- With the part time salary and the difference out of records management can I make a full time employee?

Barkemeyer- Run your department how you feel. I am not going to tell you how to run the County Clerk Dept and something not work out and you blame me. You have made your decision and now you need to run your department.

Vansa- I will be talking to Danica about another full time employee then.

Barkemeyer- I have stated my position

Muegge- What you are proposing is that you will take the part time money and make the difference up in Records Management to make a full time employee?

Vansa- Yes I will use the \$25,000.00 part time money until it is zeroed out and then Records Management will kick in for the remainder of the year.

Muegge- I see you have some figures from the schools.

Vansa- Yes those are the ones that have responded on their cost for elections.

Muegge- So if a budget was created for an Election Administrator we would have to pay the money up front and then wait to be reimbursed by the schools if we handled their elections?

Vansa- Yes, the schools were aware of this workshop too.

Barkemeyer- After the Luminant outcome we should consider this again. If the outcome is not good than we will be in the same pickle. If the outcome is good we can take another look at this.

Morgan - Court will start in February; budget meetings start in June we still might not know anything due to the trial could take up to 2 years.

Barkemeyer- We just don't know. They could settle out of court.

Nancy Tucker- So what you are saying is; whatever the outcome we will be back to decide on an Election Administrator?

Barkemeyer- Yes, it will depend on the outcome, there is no sense on sitting here stewing over it.

Barkemeyer- Ok since Kolette has told us her decision

Morgan- I apologize if I wasted the courts time

Barkemeyer- No, we needed to close this out. We have some new commissioners here so they needed to hear this. The party chairs want this too so we needed to bring this to discussion. With the cuts we have had the workloads increase more on the Tax Office, County Clerk and District Clerk.

Vansa- I did receive an email from Bill Whitmire, stating that having an EA position would be helpful. In the Election Budget next year I do think there should be a salary in that budget instead of the County Clerk's budget.

Tucker- I would like to say something. It is my understanding that you think one person can handle this. There is no way one person can do this workload. The Election Clerk and Voter Registrar have work to do all day. My suggestion is to consider two people for the EA department. We both have deadlines to meet, reports to run and to prepare for the Elections. Elections are not just registering people and having them vote.

Barkemeyer- We have a county with 25,000.00 people and a tax base of a million dollars, we don't have enough money. We are the second poorest county in this area. We have the second lowest tax base in twelve counties around not including McLennan and Bell. I am trying to describe the situation we are in. We want a Veterans Office with 2 people, we want an Elections Dept with 2 people, we just don't have the money. I will be the bad guy but we just don't have the money. I know you all need the help but we have no money. I would like to resign and let someone else handle it, but that is not the solution.

Curtis Chubb- Could you cut the VA and give the money to the Elections Department: Elections is much more busy.

Barkemeyer- No

Vansa- Curtis thanks for the offer but I am not for that either. We need the VA.

Barkemeyer- Start trying to understand.. It ain't good, say your prayers for Mr. Fisher the attorney and say a prayer for Luminant. Luminant is not the enemy.

Tommy Grimes- It takes a lot of time and effort to bring new things in. If Luminant takes three years then we are in for a decade of hurt not just the upcoming year.

Barkemeyer- Luminant is not the enemy, if we can keep them alive and going it will get better.

Barkemeyer- Is there anything else? We just need to table this or come back later.

Shuffield- We have heard lots of good stuff

Morgan – Barbara gave me a good idea, that I should do a separate budget for the Voter Registrar next year. I am going to start putting that together.

Motion by Commissioner Muegge, seconded by Commissioner Shuffield to adjourn the Workshop at 9:40 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 216 2015.

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

STATEMENT OF APPROVAL

ELECTION WORKSHOP – OCTOBER 26 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 26, 2015 Milam County
Commissioners Court meeting ends on**