

**STATE OF TEXAS:**

**COUNTY OF MILAM:**

**BE IT REMEMBERED, that on Thursday, the 7<sup>th</sup> day of April A. D. 2016, 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 "OPEY" 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**

**JODI MORGAN, DEPUTY COUNTY CLERK**

**Others present, to-wit**

**Sherry Mueck, Tax Assessor Collector**

**Nancy Tucker, Deputy Clerk / Voter Registrar**

**Danica Lara, Auditor**

**Donna Orsag, Treasurer**

**Tiffany Greene, HR**

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

***MILAM COUNTY ELECTIONS WORKSHOP***

**10:00 A.M. – Judge called the meeting to order and established a quorum.**

**Judge – Purpose of meeting – Barbara and Sherry came to me about a proposal / suggestion to discuss and possibly combine the VR etc duties that are housed in the Tax Office and Election Office. Reason for the workshop is for them to discuss it but not make any decisions and can be put on the agenda for a future meeting. No decision to make, just to understand.**

**Vansa – we have come numerous times about establishing an Elections Administrator (EA) for the county. I gave each of you information regarding the Election Office & VR becoming one department. The EA is fully the County’s responsibility to fund as far as salary and location. If the schools & cities come to you (EA), you have to do it – if we do what we are proposing we do not have to do their elections. We are no longer asking for an EA.**

**I have talked to Sherry about moving the Election duties & VR duties under one roof. It can be transferred to the Tax Office or County Clerk’s Office without becoming an EA office. Due to Sherry being new but not new we discussed & agreed to bringing it over to the County Clerk’s office under my supervision.**

**I want someone that can do two jobs. We all have and do more than one thing in our office but help with other things also.**

**Nancy is here today, I did visit with her. She heard my pros & cons and I heard hers. I have talked to other people and they feel if the salary transfers the person should too. If it is Nancy she is going to have to get a mean bone because sometimes you have to be strong. I gave her a packet with all the information, requirements, duties, pertaining to what would be required of the person taking the position.**

**This past March election Jodi & I spent most of the day out of the office, going to voting locations helping with issues that came up. It was tough. I have decided when we have the March Primary Election the County Clerk’s Office will be closed for regular business and allow ALL the County Clerk’s Office staff to be available for election purposes only; this would allow the staff to play catch up on some backload of work they may have but would be able to assist voters or election personnel with issues they may have, some even being having to travel to voting locations throughout the county. While the Judges & other election personnel know the equipment & have handbooks there are times we have to go to the location but first try to walk through the issue first. If for some reason we would need to all be out it wouldn’t interfere with our county clerk duties, we could close and not worry.**

**I gave you a chart, timeline for the transfer if you decide to approve it Monday, using April 11 as an example. If we are all good and can sign off on Monday I have the order ready for Court.**

**Judge – what do we send to the State comptroller?**

**Vansa – we send minutes approved, not approved and the Order the court signs. We only have to notify them.**

**Judge – if we go to an EA, it has to be approved through them?**

**Vansa – no, approved by the election committee: County Judge, County Clerk, Tax Assessor, Democratic Chair, and Republican Chair.**

**Judge – if we do this, we still have some control.**

**Mueck – Commissioners court still has control of the salary**

**Judge – if you go this route it is different than an EA – an EA has to do cities and school elections**

**Vansa – Nancy handles the VR for all entities. If we had an EA they would have to do all election work. Nancy only does the VR for all entities.**

**Mueck – the only thing the Commissioners Court gives up is the hiring and firing of the EA. You will still control the salary.**

**Vansa – All this on the timeline is what we have to do. Again, I am using Monday as an example. If this gets approved I would like for it to happen by June 13, this would allow the person to come in, get a little familiar with the office and go to an Election seminar July 11-13 with Jodi.**

**Judge – we don't have to do Monday though, we can do at a later date.**

**Vansa – reviewing the timeline – If you approve it and Nancy is the one hired, I would consider moving sooner if it works for Sherry.**

**2016 Budget covers – locations were free this time, we pay the election judges, programming and contracts on equipment.**

**VR budget – no separate budget – only transferring \$27,230 salary**

**2017 Budget planning – if we need anything extra.**

**I would like to close the election side off; a simple door & wall. I have a bid of less than \$3000. I want to do this, you have candidates come in to turn in paperwork and want to visit. We try to catch them before going in the election side. I have had candidates visiting inside and**

**out even had to run them off. I think this would be good to do. Nothing outrageous.**

**Shuffield – you want to do regardless of the move?**

**Vansa – yes, has nothing to do with the move, just wanted to let ya'll know. Sherry gave me a list of items, equipment that would move to my office. Jodi mentioned a better copier would be good, we don't need anything big and fancy. I was in Danica's one day when the copier lady came in and said the contracts were coming up and thought I would ask Danica to check on one for us.**

**Lara – The VA office has one that cost \$60 or so a month**

**Vansa – Donald has this beautiful little building out there. I talked to Donald, Judge & the city and talked about moving it by the probation office for storage for elections. He said it leaks and the flooring is rotted. So I told him he could keep it.**

**Muegge – you are talking about putting a wall, who would be over there?**

**Vansa – It would be a door between the election department and county clerk's office so we both would have access. Diane Cecil with TAC said when hiring in my office to title as a Deputy Clerk although they would work mainly with Election duties or whatever department needed.**

**Muegge – that was my concern if they are titled elections, would that be all they do.**

**Vansa – I talked to Nancy about being able to do other jobs if the county clerk ladies need help and same for them helping Nancy.**

**Muegge – I think the transition would be simple if you just move Nancy over. She already knows the job. If you don't transfer Nancy then you are training someone for two jobs.**

**Vansa – if it's Nancy, Jodi said that Nancy could go ahead and come over now.**

**Tucker – the cities and schools would need their list so I would need my big printer to print that.**

**Morgan – when would you print that?**

**Tucker – next week. But sometimes they need updated list.**

**Mueck – what about the Epoll books?**

**Tucker – I didn't want to do, due to running into the May runoff.**

**Vansa – another transfer would be the Chapter 19 funds. Nancy gave me information on that and I don't know anything about it. Nancy would you explain that?**

**Tucker – we get money for registered voters, cancelled voters, and any changes. It is so much for whichever we do. It depends on the size of the election.**

**Vansa – reading Chapter 19 information – how much for each voter, what the funds can be used for.**

**Tucker – I have used for supplies and workers. I know Kolette bought a scanner but I don't know which one it is.**

**Mueck – we can look into it. We have \$3139.81 there but the checkbook says \$5.00. You have to spend the money to get it.**

**Tucker – should be a wash out.**

**Vansa – so the money you get has to be spent in a certain amount of time.**

**Tucker – yes, usually 2 years. I didn't keep up with it, Kolette did.**

**Mueck – be aware in August 2016 you will get a big lump sum.**

**Shuffield – I think you know how I feel. I would like to see the transfer go straight over. It is stressful, and if it is any way possible to bring Nancy over, if you bring someone else in, you still have to train. If it doesn't work out then you could hire.**

**Vansa – I have no problem taking Nancy over. I had some judges concerned with Nancy. I did talk to some of them yesterday and today. They all said they feel with the right supervision Nancy might be okay. If under my roof, I want things to be a smooth transaction.**

**Fisher – There is nothing that's says you have to go out for applications?**

**Vansa – no I was just using the handbook. When an office is hiring they post notice for 3 days in case a current employee is interested in a transfer, if not run I the newspaper.**

**Shuffield – if we voted on the next meeting, explain the timeline again.**

**Vansa – I said the minutes, I meant just the order signed and the minutes (not approved minutes)**

**Judge – I want to state, about who other Elected Officials need to hire and fire. I got myself reported to the ethics commission about making a statement to another elected official who they should hire and fire. So I learned early on telling Elections Officials on who they can hire and fire. They need to run their own offices.**

**Mueck – so you are saying the Commissioners Court cannot tell Barbara who to hire?**

**Shuffield – That is not what I said. I said I would like to see Nancy go over.**

**Mueck – So we already talked about what happens for Barbara with the transition but what about me. If I send over Nancy I am losing an employee. I would like to get a part time employee with 28 hours. Judge said the money is not there. Barbara has offered to give me her part time money. I would like to see eventually a full time employee. I know not this year. But as you know the Tax Office and County Clerk took the brunt of losing an employee.**

**Vansa – right now I have \$19,391 left in the part time funds.**

**Lara - \$18,500**

**Vansa – Esther has been working some and she has this paycheck so could be \$17,500 left.**

**Mueck – then January the \$21000 would come to me.**

**Tucker – I felt from the get go this should have been. I am willing on taking the job. I am thankful for Barbara talking to me. I am okay if I am hired or not.**

**Muegge – this is a transition, I think it should slide right over.**

**Mueck – There was no guidance, Nancy did all she knew what to do. I don't think these employees had that. Regardless, she (Nancy) will have to step up.**

**Muegge – I am ok as long as it's a transition.**

**Mueck – It will hurt to lose an employee but it is what's best for the voters.**

**Vansa – I have a comment on the Judge's comment about hiring and firing an employee. Everyone wanted to know why the Judge let Sherry go. I defended him and said Judge cut the money not Sherry. That was my decision.**

**Shuffield – If you decide to put on the Agenda Monday I am good with it.**

**Mueck – what happens with the salary? Do we work up something to present to the Court about salary and part time money?**

**Lara – yes, we will need something.**

**Vansa – I will prepare the order but I need an effective date. Then read the order to the court.**

**Orsag – start with the pay period.**

**Vansa – lets state June 13<sup>th</sup> the effective date for business. Just keep doing what you (Nancy) are doing under Sherry's supervision.**

**Watkins – what about the wall? I think it should be done before moving.**

**Vansa – I have not talked to guy since he gave me the bid. He is a former employee of EBCO and worked for EBCO when we did he work in the office.**

**Judge – put on the agenda for Monday.**

***Motion made by Commissioner Shuffield, seconded by Commissioner Muegge to adjourn the meeting at 11:05 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 11th day of April 2016.**

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**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 April 07 2016.**

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

**STATEMENT OF APPROVAL**

**April 07 2016**

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**Commissioner of Precinct No. 1**

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**Commissioner of Precinct No. 3**

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**Commissioner of Precinct No. 2**

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**Commissioner of Precinct No. 4**

**SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS**

**Election Workshop items to discuss - dated April 07 2016**

**Timeline for Transfer of Voter Registration Duties**

**Christina Adkins, SOS email dated April 01 2016**

**County Progress - Key Concept - Elections Administrator**

**Voter Registration - List from Sherry Mueck, Tax AC regarding inventory of  
equipment, furniture and money**

**Chapter 19 Funds Defined**

**Minutes from the April 07 2016 Milam County Commissioners Court meeting ends on**