

## COMMISSIONERS COURT MINUTES

Order # 26-007

March 23, 2026 Austin County Commissioners Court met in the 2nd floor Courtroom at the Austin County Courthouse with the following present:

### OPENING

### CALL TO ORDER

### INVOCATION

### PLEDGES OF ALLEGIANCE

### ROLL CALL AND CERTIFICATION OF QUORUM

Tim Lapham, County Judge  
Greg Mikel, Commissioner, Precinct 1  
Robert "Bobby" Rinn, Commissioner, Precinct 2  
Leroy Cerny, Commissioner, Precinct 3  
Chip Reed, Commissioner, Precinct 4  
Diane Day, County Clerk  
Allison Mican, Deputy Clerk  
Kayla Whitley, Deputy Clerk

### CONSIDERATION/ADOPTION OF AGENDA

*Motion to Approve: Commissioner Reed, 2nd Commissioner Mikel, passed (4-0)*

### OPEN AGENDA ITEMS

1. Proclamations and Special Recognitions

None.

2. Petitions or Requests from the Public

(In accordance with the Texas Attorney General's opinion, any public comment that is made on an item that is not on the posted final agenda will only be heard by the Commissioners Court. No formal action, discussion, deliberation, nor comment will be made by the Commissioners Court.)

None.

3. Collection Report presentation by Leslie Schkade with Perdue Brandon

Leslie Schkade (Perdue Brandon) presented a delinquent tax update.

The packet provided by Perdue Brandon was reviewed and discussed between the court and Leslie Schkade (Perdue Brandon).

Leslie Schkade (Perdue Brandon) presented Justice of the Peace, Precinct 3 and 4 funds and fees report.

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**4. Introduction of the new AgriLife hire**

Donnie Montemayor (AgriLife Representative) introduced Maddie Compton as the new Austin County 4H AgriLife Extension Agent. Maddie Compton is a Tarleton State Graduate, serves on the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo Committee and is a former Austin County 4H member. She will start on April 1, 2026, as the new Austin County 4H AgriLife Extension Agent.

**5. Discussion regarding Burn Ban and action as appropriate.**

Judge Lapham spoke about the structure fire in Cat Spring over the weekend. He stated Precinct 2 came out to assist with equipment and the Austin County Office of Emergency Management assisted in contacting the Forest Service for assistance also.

Judge Lapham presented a drought index map to court for review and inquired about the Commissioner's recommendations.

Commissioner Rinn and Commissioner Mikel stated to leave the burn ban in place.

No action.

**6. Discussion regarding the purchase of First Responder supplies using the Tobacco Funds and action as appropriate.**

Chief Walter Morrow (Austin County Emergency Medical Services) explained that to support volunteer firefighters, Austin County Emergency Medical Services has been looking at the fire department's trucks and equipment and many do not have equipment for first responder response to assist Austin County Emergency Medical Services.

Commissioner Reed motioned to approve the purchase not to exceed \$2,500.00 for First Responder supplies using the Tobacco Funds.

*Motion to Approve: Commissioner Reed, 2nd Commissioner Cerny, passed (4-0)*

**7. Discussion regarding Fiber Optic ROW for FiberLight, LLC on Taylor Street, New Ulm and action as appropriate.**

*Motion to Approve: Commissioner Rinn, 2nd Commissioner Mikel, passed (4-0)*

**8. Consideration to approve a Commercial Development permit for Electrical Substation Priority Power and action as appropriate.**

Jonathan Hopko (Austin County Engineer) explained that this site is located at the top of Substation Road and will be a Substation to increase capacity. This is not a data center or battery storage center. Infrastructure is provided by private companies. All criteria have been met and approval is requested.

Commissioner Rinn inquired about whom the consumer would be.

Ben Gibbons (Priority Power) stated the consumer is unknown. Priority Power only supplies the power through the electrical substation.

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*Motion to Approve: Commissioner Mikel, 2nd Commissioner Reed, passed (4-0)*

9. Discussion to approve an update to Austin County Employee Policy Section 5.9, Lateral Transfers, and action as appropriate.

Tara Wise (HR director) requested the Lateral Transfer Policy be replaced with an Internal Transfers Policy.

Judge Lapham explained that the lateral transfer policy was holding employees from moving.

Commissioner Reed motioned to change the Lateral Transfer Policy to an Internal Transfers Policy.

*Motion to Approve: Commissioner Reed, 2nd Commissioner Rinn, passed (4-0)*

**10. CONSENT AGENDA**

- a. Consideration and action to approve Required Schooling Request for Jesse Skinner, Assistant District Attorney, to attend the Texas Annual Meeting, June 11-June 12, 2026, in Houston, Texas.
- b. Consideration and action to approve Required Schooling Request for Lance Johnson, Pct. 1 Constable, to attend PIO training, April 13-April 15, 2026 in Conroe, Texas
- c. Consideration and action to approve temporary access agreement on Spiess Rd, Austin County, Pct. 2, and Tegeler Chevrolet
- d. Consideration and action to accept interlocal agreements for street maintenance
  - i. Austin County, Pct. 1 and City of Bellville
  - ii. Austin County, Pct. 2 and City of Industry
  - iii. Austin County, Pct. 3 and City of Sealy
  - iv. Austin County, Pct. 3 and City of San Felipe
  - v. Austin County, Pct. 4 and City of Sealy
  - vi. Austin County, Pct. 4 and City of San Felipe
  - vii. Austin County, Pct. 4 and City of Wallis
  - viii. Austin County, Pct. 4 and City of South Frydek
  - ix. Austin County, Pct. 4 and City of Brazos Country
- e. Consideration and action to accept special donation(s), per local government code 81.032:
  - i. \$100- West End Library
  - ii. \$100- West End Library
  - iii. \$1,000- West End Library
- f. Consideration and action to approve right of way installation by ITG communications on Borgel, Peschel, Woody, and Jackrabbit Rd, Sealy.
- g. Consideration and action to approve drainage study for Bellville Solar.

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*Motion to Approve: Commissioner Rinn, 2nd Commissioner Mikel, passed (4-0)*

**11. BUDGETARY AND FINANCIAL CLAIMS - action as appropriate**

**a. Payment of Claims**

Total: \$1,000,100.93

*Motion to Approve: Commissioner Cerny, 2nd Commissioner Mikel, passed (4-0)*

**b. Fund transfers**

Total: \$17,474.87 (3.13.2026)

Total: \$497,768.55 (3.23.2026)

*Motion to Approve: Commissioner Reed, 2nd Commissioner Rinn, passed (4-0)*

**c. Budget Amendments**

The Budget Amendment was provided to the court.

*Motion to Approve: Commissioner Reed, 2nd Commissioner Cerny, passed (4-0)*

**d. County Auditor's Review of Finances**

Billy Doherty (Austin County Auditor) stated that the 2022-2023 Audit is currently being processed.

**e. County Treasurer's**

**i. Payroll and Escrow Report**

1. 03.06.2026

2. 03.20.2026

*Motion to Approve: Commissioner Reed, 2nd Commissioner Cerny, passed (4-0)*

**ii. Monthly Report - February 2026**

*Motion to Approve: Commissioner Cerny, 2nd Commissioner Reed, passed (4-0)*

**12. Written end-of-the-month reports submitted by County Offices**

- a. Constable Pct. 1 - January 2026
- b. Constable Pct. 1 - February 2026
- c. Constable Pct. 2 - February 2026
- d. Constable Pct. 4 - February 2026
- e. Justice of the Peace, Pct. 2 - February 2026
- f. Justice of the Peace, Pct. 4 - February 2026
- g. Criminal Court - January 2026

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- h. Civil Court - January 2026
- i. Family Court - January 2026
- j. AgriLife Extension Report
  - i. February 2026 - FCH
  - ii. February 2026 - ANR

*Motion to Approve: Commissioner Reed, 2nd Commissioner Mikel, passed (4-0)*

Court Recessed at 9:52 am.

**13. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

A closed meeting (in accordance with Texas Local Government Code, Section 551.087) will be held concerning the following items:

start 9:48 am

- a. Economic Development Matter - BW
- b. Personnel Matter - VSO

Court Reconvened at 11:39 am.

**14. Action as appropriate on Executive Session.**

No action.

Court Recessed at 11:41 am.

Court Reconvened at 1:30 pm.

**15. Workshop regarding backup internet and connectivity options.**

Judge Lapham requested Brandon Hoff (Austin County IT) to explain the fiber we use currently.

Brandon Hoff (Austin County IT) explained our current fiber provider and provided the option of trying to make an interlocal agreement with the City of Bellville.

Commissioner Reed inquired if any wire was currently being placed in the courthouse.

Brandon Hoff (Austin County IT) stated that we currently have radio wire in the courthouse.

Commissioner Reed inquired about using Starlink as a secondary provider.

Brandon Hoff (Austin County IT) explained that Starlink wouldn't support numerous people and would only work for a few. The Austin County IT Department is checking to see if our current software program can have additional IP addresses added to assist during outages.

Roy Mercer (Emergency Management Coordinator) inquired if Starlink would work if the county lost fiber like last time.

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Greg Henry (Xpernet Services) explained that Starlink would work for the courthouse only.

Jeremy Pietsch (Industry Communications CTO) said Starlink can work in some cases but does not offer IP addresses.

Roy Mercer (Emergency Management Coordinator) inquired which would be better.

Jeremy Pietsch (Industry Communications CTO) said the hardened fiber is great for primary.

Roy Mercer (Emergency Management Coordinator) stated that in an emergency situation the courthouse would need something that kicks in right away and wants to know what is best for the courthouse to have continuous workability.

Jeremy Pietsch (Industry Communications CTO) stated that hardened fiber with backup would be best.

Judge Lapham inquired as to what the fees would be to do hardened fiber with backup.

Brandon Hoff (Austin County IT) stated the IT department would need to look and see what is all needed, then let a company like AT&T do their research, then provide those fees based off what is all needed.

Judge Lapham inquired about what could be an option for more speed and volume.

Brandon Hoff (Austin County IT) stated we could work with the City of Bellville to spring private fiber where they have fiber currently, then we would only be paying one fiber bill. However, the county would be subject to pay to have it fixed if cut because it is private. A quote has been requested for upping the speed with our current provider.

Roy Mercer (Austin County Emergency Coordinator) is confused about the need for 24/7 capability but believes we need the best.

Commissioner Reed inquired about a timeline.

Jeremy Pietsch (Industry Communications CTO) stated it would be an 8-week install but 4 to 5 months if it needs to be built.

Johnathan Hopko (Austin County Engineer) recommended the county look at it as a big picture.

Brandon Hoff (Austin County IT) stated that if the county is going to spend the money to put fiber in the courthouse, money would also need to be spent to change the infrastructure of the building. This was suggested when offices were moved to the Justice Center, but a decision was made not to do it. Austin County IT will work on getting estimates together for all options and bring it back to court in 3 weeks on April 13, 2026.

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16. **Commissioners' Court Inquiry.**

*(Pursuant to Texas Government Code Section 551.042, the Commissioners Court may inquire about a subject not specifically listed factual information given in response to the inquiry. Any deliberation or decision shall be limited to a proposal to place the subject on the agenda of a future meeting.)*

*Motion to Adjourn: Commissioner Reed, 2nd Commissioner Mikel, passed (4-0)*

*Court adjourned at 1:59pm*

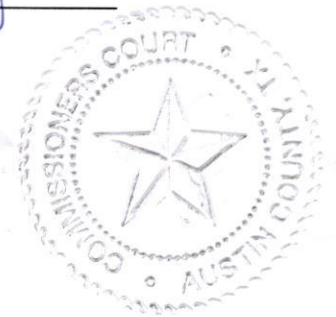
**ALL SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS ON FILE WITH COUNTY CLERK AS PROVIDED  
BY  
COMMISSIONERS COURT**

**I, Diane Day, Austin County Clerk, attest to the minutes of the Commissioners Court proceedings for March 23, 2026.**

Date: 4.21.2026

Diane Day, Austin County Clerk  
Clerk of Commissioners Court  
Austin County, Texas

By: Kayla Whitley  
Deputy Clerk



**FILED**

**APR 21 2026**

*Diane Day*  
County Clerk, Austin County, Texas

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