

BE IT REMEMBERED that on the 20th day of March, A.D. 2020 the Commissioner Court of Howard County met in Special session at 1:00 PM with **KATHYRN G. WISEMAN**, County Judge as the Presiding Officer. The following members were present: **OSCAR GARCIA**, Commissioner Precinct No. 1, **CRAIG BAILEY**, Commissioner Precinct No. 2, **JIMMIE LONG**, Commissioner Precinct No. 3 and **JOHN H. CLINE**, Commissioner Precinct No. 4.

The meeting was called to order @ 1:02 PM.

Judge Wiseman asked Terry Chamness, Emergency Management Coordinator, to speak concerning COVID-19 pandemic. Mr. Chamness stated that there are now cases in Midland and Lubbock, therefore, with cases moving closer the County needs to be ready. In addition, he stated that Government Code 418.108 should be going into effect today and the County could do a Declaration of Local Disaster in order to be eligible for any Government funding.

Sarah Smith, registered speaker as well as County employee, addressed her concerns to the Commissioners stated she would like to see all doors locked and let customers call the office they need to do business with and let that office determine if that person needs to enter the building to do business or if the business can be conducted in other ways. In addition, Ms. Smith asked if employees had to be quarantined would they be paid without using their sick time?

JoAnna Gonzales, registered speaker and Howard County District Clerk, asked about new employees with young children out of school that have no sick time due accumulated being paid or allowed to work from home. No decision made at this time.

Commissioner Bailey discussed his thoughts and concerns about the COVID-19 pandemic and how he feels the County should handle the situation.

Brent Zitterkopf, Howard County Clerk, and Tiffany Fernandez, Howard County Tax-Assessor Collector, both discussed their plans for handling the situation. Both plan to have their doors locked and encouraging people to do their business by mail. Customers can call their offices for assistance and they will find a way to assist them with the least amount of contact.

Judge Wiseman discussed her plans for handling things in her office. They are already limiting the amount of scheduled hearings and looking at doing some court proceedings by video conferencing.

Jodi Duck, Elections Administrator, told Commissioners the effects it would have on her office if the closure of the Courthouse were to extend past April 20, as Early Voting for the May 2 Election will begin on April 20, 2020. There will also be a Primary Runoff Election on May

26, 2020. If it should extend past the 20th of April, she will have to find alternate locations for Early Voting.

Sharon Adams, County Treasurer, stated that the Attorney General has guidelines concerning Emergency Sick Leave in times of disaster. Once she gets more information on that, she will get that information to the Commissioners.

Brian Klinksiek, County Road Administrator, told Commissioners his department is considered essential and must continue to operate as normal. He will make any changes in his department as needed and is strongly encouraging his staff to stay home if sick.

Commissioner Long discussed his feelings about the situation. He stated there is not a “fix all” solution and feels the Courthouse needs to remain open and do business in the best way possible.

Commissioner Cline commended the Department Heads on the plans they have made to take care of their customers in the best way possible with the least amount of contact possible and encouraged them to implement these plans during this time.

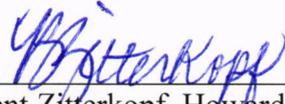
Judge Wiseman encouraged the public to call the office in which they need to do business with and let that office work with them to do the best they can to help them. In addition, Judge Wiseman discussed the possibility of a Declaration of Local Disaster with the Commissioners as well as getting additional input from Terry Chamness, Emergency Management Coordinator.

A motion was made by Commissioner Long and seconded by Commissioner Bailey to approve a Declaration of Local Disaster for Public Health Emergency for Howard County, Texas (COVID-19). A vote was taken and the members of the Court unanimously voted “AYES”. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Commissioner Long and seconded by Commissioner Garcia to adjourn. A vote was taken and the members of the Court unanimously voted “AYES”. Motion carried.

STATE OF TEXAS
COUNTY OF HOWARD

I, Brent Zitterkopf, Howard County Clerk, attest that the foregoing is a true and accurate accounting of the Commissioners Court authorized proceedings for March 20, 2020.



Brent Zitterkopf, Howard County Clerk
Clerk of the Commissioners Court
Howard County, Texas

