THE STATE OF TEXAS \* COMMISSIONERS COURT

COUNTY OF KENEDY \* OF KENEDY COUNTY, TEXAS

On the 10th day of July, 2023, at 1:30 o'clock p.m., a special meeting of the Commissioners Court of Kenedy County, Texas, was held in the Kenedy County Courthouse.

**Commissioners present:**

Charles E. Burns, County Judge

Joe Recio, Commissioner, Precinct No. 1

Sarita Armstrong-Hixon, Commissioner, Precinct No. 3

**Also present:**

Veronica Vela, County & District Clerk

Sheriff Ramon Salinas

Leo Villarreal, Administrative Assistant

Grace Salinas, Administrative Secretary

Stephanie Garza, Elections Administrator

Jose E. Mendietta, Fire Chief

JP Jana Norrell

Seferino Gutierrez, Maintenance Supervisor

Manuel Garcia

William Dieterle

JP Cecilia Schulz

Mr. Barney

**Absent**:

Israel Vela, Jr., Commissioner, Precinct No. 2

Jose Salazar, Commissioner, Precinct No. 4

Allison Strauss, County Attorney

Irma Longoria, County Tax Assessor/Collector

Cynthia Salinas, County Treasurer

1. **Call Meeting to Order**

Judge Charles E. Burns called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

1. **Discuss & Act on Developing a Hurricane Preparedness Plan**.

Judge Charles E. Burns led the Commissioners Court and those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Judge Charles E. Burns addressed the Commissioners Court, Department Heads and members of the public present and informed them that the purpose of the Special Meeting was to develop hurricane plans for 1) preparation for the storm; preparation during the storm; and 3) preparation after the storm.

FEMA Dome: Judge Burns proposed a Hurricane Dome. Gary Barney stated he will have to look into the specifications for the use of the FEMA domes. Gary Barney stated he thinks the dome would be a fantastic answer and would take several years, but the cost is uncertain. Judge Burns stated a dome would be great because he would like to stay close to home. The Judge told Mr. Barney that he will get together with him sometime next week to get this plan together.

Cots: Judge Burns addressed the cot issues. He stated the purchasing nor the storing of the cots was necessary. The Red Cross would provide and bring cots to Kenedy County. They have cots stored and the Red Cross would provide them free of cost and they could provide them if they are able to get into the area. Gary Barney suggested for the Judge reach out to Red Cross to get them now. Further, Kenedy County may go to the Red Cross headquarters and pick up the cots and bring them to Kenedy County.

School Cafeteria: Judge Burns stated the County would like to have use of the school cafeteria and personnel to prepare the meals. Gary Barney stated schools are ideal locations to assist with these issues Judge Burns asked Manuel Garcia if he had an opportunity to speak with the school staff about assisting with creating meals. Mrs. Garcia was still working on it.

Hurricane Stocking of Needed Items: Judge Burns asked Manuel Garcia how much storage is available at the school, i.e., refrigerators and freezers. Manuel Garcia stated that there was not much storage space. Jose E. Mendietta, Fire Chief, recommended a walk-in cooler be installed, just cold enough to maintain the food.

Sand Bags: Judge Burns asked Seferino Gutierrez regarding sand and sandbags. Mr. Gutierrez stated that the sand is being delivered on Friday and that the Maintenance Department has a lot of sandbags and that he will be ready to place the sand bags wherever they are needed.

Fuel: Judge Burns asked Seferino Gutierrez regarding the amount of fuel needed. Mr. Gutierrez stated the butane tanks are at 69% and some are at 75%, but that they will be topped off. Mr. Barney stated they have contracts in place if the county needs fuel. He will put in a request for fuel, if needed. One of the entities he relies on is TXDOT. Judge Burns stated the County already has a trailer and can place a fuel tank on it. Judge Burns asked Seferino Gutierrez and Jose E. Mendietta to work together regarding the tank and the dimensions of the trailer to ensure the trailer is capable of carrying the tank and its weight.

Judge Burns asked that if the County buys 1000 gallons of fuel, what would the County do with the fuel because it does not have a long storage life. Mr. Barney stated that many of the items are storm-related and there are several requirements for the governor or the President to assist from FEMA. The County threshold for Kenedy County is approximately 18000. The State’s threshold is approximately 52 million.

Portable Generators: Judge Burns asked Gary Barney regarding portable generators.

Purchase of a New Generator: Judge Burns stated he would like to wire a strobe light on the generators to see if the generator is working properly. Jose E. Mendietta, Fire Chief, stated the City of Kingsville has a contract with a vendor and generators around the city to use. Commissioner Sarita Armstrong-Hixon requested the vendor be called and to ask for annual service.

Evacuations: Judge Burns proposed an evacuation plan to include school buses and designate counties where to go to. Mr. Barney stated he encourages the County to enter into an agreement with another county. Residents should call 211 to register for assistance to evacuate. Evacuation routes depend on the track of the storm and encourages the County to move residents as far inland as possible and to prepare for the worst-case scenario of not having power for at least 60 days. Further, he stated that THE COUNTY JUDGE HAS THE FINAL SAY ON WHETHER TO DECLARE AN EVACUATION.

Mr. Barney stated that rain.gov/hurricanes has checklists and other items for residents to use; that it takes about three days when water is not working and things start to get dire with water shortage; and that there are many good plans available regarding items for residents to use so that the County does not have to start from scratch.

Available Plans: Judge Burns informed those present that there is hurricane data and the 2023 Hurricane Conference data that will be used to prepare the Kenedy County 2023 Hurricane Plan.

1. **Adjournment.**

There being no further business at this time to come before the Commissioners Court, Commissioner Sarita Armstrong-Hixon moved and Commissioner Joe Recio seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that the Commissioners Court be adjourned at 2:32 p.m.

/s/ Charles E. Burns\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Charles E. Burns, County Judge

ATTESTED BY:

/s/ Veronica Vela\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Veronica Vela, Clerk of Commissioners Court