

**THE STATE OF TEXAS
COUNTY OF ZAPATA**

IN THE COMMISSIONERS COURT OF ZAPATA COUNTY, TEXAS

Be it remembered, that on this the 31ST day of March, A.D., 2020, the Commissioners Court of Zapata County, Texas convened in **EMERGENCY SESSION** of said Court, at the regular meeting place thereof, in the Courthouse of Zapata, Texas, with the following members of said Court, to-wit:

PRESENT:

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| Hon. Paco Mendoza | Commissioner, Precinct No. 1 |
| Olga M. Elizondo | Commissioner, Precinct No. 2 |
| Eddie Martinez, Presiding | Commissioner, Precinct No. 3 |
| Norberto Garza | Commissioner, Precinct No. 4 |
| Celica A. Rodriguez | Chief Deputy County Clerk and Ex-Officio Clerk of the Commissioners Court |

ABSENT:

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| Joseph Rathmell | County Judge |
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VISITORS: Romeo Salinas, Triunfo Gonzalez, Monica Alanis, Juan J. Meza, Nellie R. Treviño, Daniel Arriaga, Amado R. Ramirez, Romeo Mercado, Ruby Villarreal, Vicki Benavides, Roger Miller, Ramon E. Montes, Jose A. Solis, and Ralph Trevino.

WHEREUPON, the following Orders and Proceedings were had by said Court, to-wit:

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER AT 9:00 A.M.

**ROLL CALL BY CELICA A. RODRIGUEZ, CHIEF DEPUTY COUNTY CLERK AND
EX-OFFICIO CLERK OF THE COMMISSIONERS COURT
INVOCATION BY REV. ROGER MILLER
PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

COMMUNICATIONS

Chief J.J. Meza recommended that we continue with restrictions for 7-14 additional days. Asked for persons entering the County to be quarantined. President has extended restrictions until April 30. A shelter in place can be adopted. We have a youth curfew approved by the judge. Commissioner Martinez spoke to Laredo Health Department and it was suggested that we follow the ordinance that Laredo adopted and that is a shelter in place. Chief stated that we have been lucky and not had any positive cases. Commissioner Martinez stated that if we use the national model it would be an estimate that 8-9 people would die if we do everything right, but if we do nothing then 40-50 persons would die, this are national statistics and it is not for anyone to panic.

Chief Meza gave the S.O. 700 face shields and he still has chemicals that he got from Commissioner Elizondo and from Tony Gonzalez, the chemical is industrial strength bleach, they just need to take containers. Commissioner Elizondo said that Judge Tano Tijerina is going to donate disinfectant to Zapata.

Conference call with Oscar Buitron and Gabriel Cabrera with Gateway Clinic. They are screening patients by asking questions and reducing visitors and patients. They are calling patients over 60 to see if they want to reschedule. They are also having patients wait in their cars and are being called when rooms are ready. Covid-19 tests are available but are only testing those that meet criteria. They are waiting for the rapid test, right now it takes from 5-10 days to get results. If a patient is tested too early, it can get a false negative. There is a lot of strep and influenza going on right now. Current numbers in Laredo are as follow: 267 tested 127 negative and 37

positive results. Elmo Lopez asked if we are working closely with EMS. Elizondo asked if any of the positive tests are from Zapata, Mr. Lopez responded that they are not. Health Department will report by County, even if testing is done in other counties.

Vicki Benavides of the Falcon Lake Nursing Home stated that the nursing home is on lockdown and they have been doing tests regardless of flu shot or not. They will continue lockdown and they are screening everyone that comes in. They are still unable to get masks. They need a letter of support to qualify for beds through Medicaid.

Danny Arriaga addressed the court on item #8, they have been asking to place item on the agenda for some type of hazard stipend pay for first responders. Item will be placed on next agenda.

Triunfo Gonzalez will find out if hazard pay can be paid out of Tobacco fund. Neighboring counties have a line item for such scenario. If Tobacco fund is available, it can be used.

Chief Ray Del Bosque has also ordered masks and other essential for deputies to use for their protection.

Manuel Gonzalez, School Board Member, stated that the school superintendent will be making an announcement soon. They have been passing out approximately 1300 meals per day.

Ralph Trevino, Water Plant Director, stated that their lobby is shut down, fees are waived for phone and online payments. They have three positive cases of strep throat. Mr. Trevino added that the water is safe to drink.

Adriana Figueroa, Tax Assessor - Collector, Tax Office is closed. DAV is closed. They have a drop box and are receiving mail in payments, pay online, phone payments. They are not allowing face to face transactions, since it would go against guidelines of social distancing. Most people are coming in for stickers. All of Texas has closed doors to public since March 18, their help desk is open. They can do renewals for license plate stickers through the mail also. Tax collections are sent through the mail by tax attorneys. As of tomorrow, the interest rate is going up, if payments are left in the drop box today, they will be processed with today's date. Payments should be made with check, money order, debit, or credit cards. Laredo and Rio Grande are also closed; 90% are doing the same as here. Chief Meza offered face masks, etc.

ORDER APPROVING TO EXTEND THE DECLARATION OF LOCAL DISASTER FOR PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY UNTIL APRIL 30

Motion was made by Commissioner Mendoza, seconded by Commissioner Martinez, to approve to extend the Declaration of Local Disaster for Public Health Emergency until April 30 as requested by Hon. Joe Rathmell, County Judge.

The above motion, being put to a vote, was approved by the affirmative vote of all members of the Court.

ORDER TO APPROVE TO AMEND ORDER REGARDING PUBLIC AND PRIVATE GATHERINGS

Motion was made by Commissioner Garza, seconded by Commissioner Mendoza, to approve to amend the order regarding public and private gatherings as requested by Hon. Joe Rathmell, County Judge. Retail establishments are to limit number of patrons to 10 at a time. Non-essential businesses must be closed.

The above motion, being put to a vote, was approved by the affirmative vote of all members of the Court.

ORDER APPROVING TO ADOPT A PAID LEAVE POLICY FOR ZAPATA COUNTY EMPLOYEES FOR REASONS RELATED TO COVID-19

Motion was made by Commissioner Mendoza, seconded by Commissioner Elizondo, to approve to adopt a Paid Leave Policy for Zapata County employees for reasons related to COVID-19 as requested by Hon. Joe Rathmell, County Judge.

The above motion, being put to a vote, was approved by the affirmative vote of all members of the Court.

ORDER TO TABLE REQUEST BY JUDGE RATHMELL IN REGARDS TO DETERMINE WHICH ZAPATA COUNTY EMPLOYEES WOULD BE CONSIDRED ESSENTIAL EMPLOYEES

Motion was made by Commissioner Garza, seconded by Commissioner Elizondo, to table request by County Judge in regard to determine which Zapata County employees would be considered essential employees.

The above motion, being put to a vote, was approved by the affirmative vote of all members of the Court.

ORDER TO TABLE REQUEST BY JUDGE RATHMELL ON REQUEST TO DEVELOP APPROACH TO CONTINUE COUNTY SERVICES IN EVENT OF SHELTER AT HOME ORDER

Motion was made by Commissioner Garza, seconded by Commissioner Elizondo, to table request by Judge Rathmell on request to develop an approach to continue county services in the event of a shelter at home order.

The above motion, being put to a vote, was approved by the affirmative vote of all members of the Court.

ADJOURN

Motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Garza, seconded by Commissioner Elizondo, and being put to a vote, was approved by the affirmative vote of all members of the Court.

There being no further business for disposition at this term, the Court adjourned.

JOSEPH RATHMELL, COUNTY JUDGE
OF ZAPATA COUNTY, TEXAS

ATTEST:

MARY JAYNE VILLARREAL-BONOAN,
COUNTY CLERK AND EX-OFFICIO
CLERK OF THE COMMISSIONERS
COURT OF ZAPATA COUNTY, TEXAS