



MINUTES

MAY 22, 2025

BRAZOS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT

WORKSHOP SESSION

1. Call to Order

A workshop session for the Commissioners' Court of Brazos County, Texas was held in the Brazos County Commissioners Courtroom in the Administration Building, 200 South Texas Avenue, in Bryan, Brazos County, Texas, beginning at 9:00 a.m. on Thursday, May 22, 2025 with the following members of the Court present:

Duane Peters, County Judge, Present at 1:32 pm;
Bentley Nettles, Commissioner of Precinct 1;
Chuck Konderla, Commissioner of Precinct 2, Presiding;
Fred Brown, Commissioner of Precinct 3;
Wanda J. Watson, Commissioner of Precinct 4;
Karen McQueen, County Clerk; Absent

The attached sheets contain the names of the speakers and officials that were in attendance.

2. Presentation and discussion on Community Support Contract requests for the proposed budget FY 2025-2026:

- a. Mental Health Mental Retardation Authority of Brazos Valley
- b. Voices for Children
- c. Dispute Resolution Center – Central Brazos Valley, Inc.
- d. Amber Alert Network Brazos Valley
- e. Big Brothers Big Sisters of South Texas Serving the Brazos Valley
- f. Boys & Girls Club of Brazos Valley
- g. Keep Brazos Beautiful, Inc.
- h. Brazos County Crime Stoppers, Inc.
- i. North Bryan Community Center
- j. Bryan/College Station Chamber of Commerce, Inc.
- k. The Aggieland Humane Society, Inc.

- l. Arts Council of Brazos Valley
- m. Brazos Valley Council of Governments
 1. Membership Dues
 2. Wide Area Communications System
 3. Indigent Health Care
- n. Brazos Transit District
- o. Brazos Thin Blue Line Foundation
- p. Brazos Food Bank, Inc.
- q. Brazos County Historical Committee
- r. Brazos Valley Veterans Memorial
- s. Greater Brazos Partnership
- t. Brazos County Soil & Water Conservation District #450
- u. Brazos County Health Department
- v. Health for All, Inc.
- w. Easter Seals Greater Houston

Commissioner Konderla called the workshop to order at 9:02 am.

Budget Officer Nina Payne then welcomed the outside agencies in attendance and called on the first presenter, Voices for Children.

1. Voices for Children

Executive Director Amy Faulkner explained that the mission of their organization is to recruit, train and support Court Appointed Special Advocates for children in the Brazos Valley. She then reported on the services provided within the last year. Ms. Faulkner requested continued support from the County in the amount of \$60,000.

Commissioner Brown questioned where the other portion of their funding comes from. Ms. Faulkner explained that they receive Federal, State and other local funding. The remainder comes from community generated fundraisers.

2. Dispute Resolution Center

Executive Director Tori Ellis shared that the mission of their organization is to help resolve conflicts in Brazos County, primarily through mediation. The funding received from Brazos County helps to cover cost of rent for their facility. Ms. Ellis stated that they are requesting funding from Brazos County in the amount of \$60,000. This would be a \$10,000 increase over the funding received for Fiscal Year 2025.

Commissioner Brown asked whether the two cities provide funding to the organization. Ms. Ellis shared that they do not.

3. Mental Health Mental Retardation Authority of Brazos Valley (MHMR)

Executive Director Bill Kelly provided a brief history of how MHMR came to provide services within the Brazos Valley. Mr. Kelly shared that their organization assists adults and children with severe and persistent mental illness. He shared that it is imperative to receive local funding as a match to draw down State funding. Mr. Kelly then explained that MHMR is requesting increased funding from Brazos County to compensate for the additional services that they will be providing to the Jail. The funding requested for Fiscal Year 2026 is \$478,708.

4. Amber Alert Network Brazos Valley

Commissioner Konderla stated that he would be abstaining from any future votes on this matter due to his position as a Board Member for Amber Alert Network.

Executive Director Chuck Fleeger stated that their organization provides protection for children, training for responders and education for the public in the matters of missing children. Mr. Fleeger stated that the County has funded the organization for the past 5 years and they are requesting continued support in the amount of \$5,000. He then reported the services provided over the last fiscal year.

Commissioner Brown questioned whether the cities provide funding to the organization. Mr. Fleeger shared that both cities contribute \$5,000.

Commissioner Konderla called for a recess at 9:33 am, to reconvene at 9:45 am.

At 9:48 am Commissioner Konderla announced that the meeting would reconvene. Ms. Payne called up the next agency, Keep Brazos Beautiful.

5. Keep Brazos Beautiful

Board President John Burrescia stated that Keep Brazos Beautiful is requesting a \$1,000 funding increase over Fiscal Year 2025 and they are also in need of a Brazos County representative on their Board. He provided an overview of the services that the organization provided through the last fiscal year and thanked the Court for their continued support. Mr. Burrescia specified that they are requesting a total of \$16,000 in funding from Brazos County.

Ms. Payne requested that the organization update their website and Executive Director Brooke Arellano stated that their website is currently under construction and they would make the requested changes.

Commissioner Watson asked how often the Board meets. Ms. Arrellano stated that they have 6 meetings per year.

6. Big Brothers Big Sisters of South Texas Serving the Brazos Valley

Board President Hunter Shurtleff stated that their organization is designed to help children become productive citizens through their match with a carefully selected volunteer. He then explained how their program works. Big Brothers Big Sisters is requesting support from the County in the amount of \$40,000.

Commissioner Watson thanked the organization for all that they do, noting the importance of mentorship in the lives of youth.

7. Boys and Girls Club of the Brazos Valley

CEO Rhonda Watson thanked the Court for their ongoing support of the organization. She stated that they currently have a waiting list for the children that they can serve and they would like to continue to expand. She then provided an overview of the services they currently provide and the additional services they would like to be able to provide. Commissioner Brown suggested that they work with Brazos Transit District to increase transportation abilities.

Annual Fund Associate Madison Little then offered her perspective on the impact that the Club has on the youth that they serve. The organization is requesting County funding in the amount of \$70,000.

Commissioner Watson thanked the organization for all that they do, noting the need in the community is great.

8. Brazos County Crime Stoppers

Lt. David Villarreal stated that he has been designated as the Sheriff's Office Liaison for Crime Stoppers. He explained that the organization is in a transitional period and they

are requesting \$5,000 in funding from the County.

Ms. Payne questioned their original request of \$22,000 in their budget response and Lt. Villarreal clarified that they are only requesting \$5,000.

9. North Bryan Community Center

Board President Mattie Carter thanked the County for their continued support and shared that with the funding, they were able to establish a STEM program at the North Bryan Community Center. Ms. Carter highlighted the services that were provided to children within the community over the last year.

Commissioner Brown questioned if they receive funding from City of Bryan or Bryan ISD. Ms. Carter shared that Bryan ISD supports the meals provided to the kids during the summer, but that is the only additional help they receive. He then asked why they are requesting \$90,000 from the County. Ms. Carter shared that they need to increase salaries to remain competitive and the funding also goes toward insurance costs for their vans.

Searcy Toliver with the North Bryan Women's Club announced the 80 year banquet on August 9, 2025 at 7:00pm at the Brazos Center.

10. The Aggieland Humane Society

Executive Director Katrina Ross stated that they are requesting funding from the County in the amount of \$261,250 as the shelter continues to grow and expand. She explained the need for the increase and shared that they would be unable to continue their "no kill" mission without local funding.

11. Arts Council Of Brazos Valley -

Executive Director Leslie Bowlin stated that she is excited about what the Arts Council program provides to the Brazos Valley community. She highlighted several of the programs that they offer and explained that they are requesting a \$2,500 increase over Fiscal Year 2025 funding in order to add a photography component to their program. The Arts Council requested funding from the County in the amount of \$14,500.

Commissioner Konderla announced that the Court would break for lunch at 11:12 am, and will reconvene at 1:30 pm.

Judge Peters reconvened the meeting at 1:32 pm.

Ms. Payne invited Chamber of Commerce to present.

12. Chamber of Commerce

Chamber President Glen Brewer asked for continued sponsorship from the County for the Chamber Day event. Mr. Brewer stated that the County allows the Chamber to utilize County facilities for events such as Chamber Day, Taste of Aggieland, the Crawfish Boil and the Career Fair. He then thanked Commissioner Brown for the idea to hold a Vendor Fair this year and stated that he would love to partner again in that endeavor.

13. Brazos Valley Council of Governments

Chief Financial Officer Janet Dudding provided information on the Membership Dues request. Ms. Dudding explained that membership dues have not increased in the last 15 years however, results of a study from last year show a need for an increase. The requested funding for BVCOG Membership Dues from the County for Fiscal Year 26 is \$76,349. A \$3,316 increase over funding from Fiscal Year 2025.

Harold Womble discussed the Indigent Health Program. He explained the return on investment that the County receives in partnering with BVCOG. Commissioner Brown questioned how the Indigent Health Program works in regards to inmates at the Brazos County Jail and Mr. Womble explained the process.

Judge Peters stated that the BVCOG does a great job and their request for an increase is not unreasonable. Ms. Payne agreed with Judge Peters' comments, noting how much the County saves in using their program.

Thomas Gilbert with Brazos Valley Wide Area Communication System stated that he took over management of the system 2 years ago and due to covering a larger area and more devices added to the Brazos County system, they are requesting an increase in the amount of \$1,301 from the County.

14. Brazos Transit District

CEO Wendy Weedon provided a brief history of the Brazos Transit District and explained the services that they provide. Ms. Weedon reported that the ridership in 2024 was 260,000 and it has increased 26 percent in the past 6 months. She discussed the justification for the request for County funding in the amount of \$400,800.

Commissioner Brown requested clarification on the ridership number, noting that the number provided indicates the number of people that board and de-board the bus.

Meaning that half of 260,000 would be the true number of riders for the year. Ms. Weedon confirmed that to be true.

Commissioner Brown then urged Ms. Weedon to work together with several of our other local organizations to see if partnerships could be created to enhance their services. Ms. Weedon agreed to do so.

15. Thin Blue Line

Dale Cuthbertson thanked the Court for their support of the Brazos Valley Thin Blue Line organization. He stated that their mission is to allocate funds to first responders for catastrophic illness or injury. Essentially, filling in the gaps where traditional insurance coverage does not handle. Mr. Cuthbertson noted that they do not have any paid staff members and 100 percent of the donations goes to the first responders in need. They requested support from the County in the amount of \$5,000.

16. Historical Commission

Vice Chair Vicky Smith-Dicky shared what the Historical Commission does for the community and noted that the County is their sole source of funding. They are requesting support in the amount of \$9,500, a \$1,200 increase over Fiscal Year 2025. The increase would allow a member of the Historical Commission to attend a conference.

17. Greater Brazos Partnership

President and CEO Susan Davenport shared that the Greater Brazos Partnership, formerly the Brazos Valley Economic Development Corporation, was established in 1989. They strive to bring capital investments and more jobs to the community. Ms. Davenport went over some of the opportunities they have helped bring to Brazos County.

Commissioner Brown asked questions related to the economic development opportunities they have facilitated and asked for further information on how many jobs they have brought to the community.

Ms. Davenport thanked the Court for their partnership.

Greater Brazos Partnership has requested funding from the County in the amount of \$350,000.

18. Brazos Valley Veterans Memorial

Board President Michael Bottligieri discussed the 5 year plan for their organization. Steve Beachy, part of the design team committee, shared details on the enhancements planned for the Veterans Memorial. They then explained that all funding received goes directly to the projects and does not cover any operations or administrative costs.

Commissioner Brown thanked them for what they do.

Brazos Valley Veterans Memorial requested continued support from the County in the amount of \$30,000.

19. Brazos Valley Food Bank

Communications Director Amanda Stark requested continued funding for the Backpack Program. Ms. Stark stated that the County has funded the Food Bank for 20 years, allowing the organization to provide students with food-filled backpacks each weekend. Last Fiscal Year they were able to supply 2,000 kids with backpacks. The Brazos Valley Food Bank requested continued support from the County in the amount of \$15,000. A \$5,000 increase over Fiscal Year 2025.

Ms. Payne requested a recess until 3:30 pm.

Judge Peters recessed the meeting and reconvened at 3:32 pm to hear the remaining group of agencies.

20. Brazos County Soil and Water Conservation District

Board Chair Kent Dunlap stated that the Brazos County Soil and Water Conservation District is requesting continued support from the County in the amount of \$5,000. Mr. Dunlap shared that their efforts to promote and educate on the importance of soil and water conservation began in 1939. The local funds provided allow for matching funds from the State.

21. Brazos County Health District

Director Santos Navarrette shared the potential impact of Federal Budget cuts to the Health District funding. He then provided a report of calendar year 2024, highlighting many services and programs provided by the Health District. The Brazos County Health District requested support from the County in the amount of \$478,029.

Commissioner Brown questioned whether lower costs on medication would help the Health District. Mr. Navarrette shared that they are already received medication at a reduced cost.

22. Health for All

Executive Director Liz Dickey explained that their organization serves adults that are ineligible for government assistance healthcare. Last year they served 750 unique patients and provided 4,000 exams. Ms. Dickey specified that 80 percent of patients are Brazos County residents. Health for All requested continued support from the County in the amount of \$30,000.

23. Easter Seals

Executive Director Dana Day stated that Easter Seals serves roughly 352 children per month and have given around 10,000 hours of direct therapy sessions. The funding

allows for staff training and nutritional services. Easter Seals requested continued support from the County in the amount of \$35,000.

Ms. Payne thanked the Court and organizations. She stated that the workshop would resume tomorrow, May 23, 2025 at 9:00 am, with the remaining agencies requesting funding.

Judge Peters adjourned the meeting.

3. Adjourn