



## **MINUTES**

**APRIL 4, 2017**

### **BRAZOS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT**

#### **WORKSHOP SESSION**

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1. Call to Order

The Commissioners' Court of Brazos County, Texas met in a Workshop Session in the Commissioners' Courtroom in the Brazos County Administration Building in Bryan, Brazos County, Texas, beginning at 4:00 p.m. on Tuesday, April 4, 2017 with the following members of the Court present:

Duane Peters, County Judge, Presiding;  
Steve Aldrich, Commissioner of Precinct 1;  
Sammy Catalena, Commissioner of Precinct 2;  
Nancy Berry, Commissioner of Precinct 3;  
Irma Cauley, Commissioner of Precinct 4;  
Karen McQueen, County Clerk.

Attached is a list of the citizens and officials in attendance.

Commissioner Cauley called the meeting to order for the County Judge, who was in another meeting.

The County Judge arrived and invited others to speak.

2. Discussions about the possibility, requirements, and impact of transitioning to paperless with judicial cases on Brazos County.

District Clerk Marc Hamlin began the discussion about Brazos County going paperless on judicial cases. Mr. Hamlin said that currently the District Clerk's office has E-File Texas and they are obligated to identify and verify the documents that come through his office. His office documents fees, prints the documents and enters the cases into the Odyssey program. Documents may go to and from the Court to the District Clerk's

office several times. Mr. Hamlin said that several Court staff members and county employees went to Montgomery County to observe how their county is handling the paperless process. Mr. Hamlin said that it is not a good comparison because Montgomery County has more courts and personnel than Brazos County. He said that some have also visited Williamson County and plan to visit Jefferson County next. Mr. Hamlin stressed that in order for the conversion to be successful everyone involved would have to be on board.

Commissioner Catalena asked Mr. Hamlin how safe are the files electronically.

Mr. Hamlin said he can not say they are absolutely secure but they are more secure than the files that leave his office and go back and forth to the courtrooms.

Commissioner Berry asked what are the short comings of the Odyssey program.

Mr. Hamlin said that one problem was that they were not ready to go paperless when the Odyssey program went live.

Judge Peters asked what needs to be done to get us ready to go paperless.

Mr. Hamlin said we already have the software but they need the Commissioners' Court on board by approving more personnel.

Commissioner Berry commented that going paperless should be more efficient; therefore, you would not need more personnel.

Mr. Hamlin said he does not have a Deputy District Clerk in his office as most counties do and that on occasion he has deputized court staff. He said that if they go paperless he would need additional staff to be in the courts, and if they do not go paperless he will need additional staff to keep up with the additional paper work.

Commissioner Cauley asked if going paperless would keep the courts moving cases or would it slow them down.

Mr. Hamlin said that there will be a learning curve. He said the courts are overwhelmed and also need additional staff.

Commissioner Berry asked that if Montgomery County is using Odyssey and it is working for them, is this a training issue or are people reluctant to use the program.

Mr. Hamlin answered that he did not believe it was a training issue but a leadership issue. He said that Montgomery County has great communication between their court offices and staff. He said that is something we need to improve on.

Judge Peters said that we have no choice but to go paperless. He said the county purchased the Odyssey program thinking it would be a seamless transition into paperless. He asked if there is another program or software that needs to be added to it.

Mr. Hamlin said his office was part of the problem by not acting quick enough to move toward going paperless.

Commissioner Aldrich asked Mr. Hamlin if he was wanting the Court to give him a definite date to go paperless, or what does he need from them. He also stated he was glad they are going to observe Jefferson County. He wants justice in Brazos County to be efficient and effective.

Mr. Hamlin said the main reason he is here today is to get everyone involved to have the same goal and to accomplish it as quickly as possible.

Budget Officer Irene Jett asked if Mr. Hamlin is asking for additional staff.

Mr. Hamlin said additional staff would be needed in the courts by October 1, 2017.

Commissioner Berry asked Judge Matzke if she was also experiencing problems with the Odyssey program.

Judge Matzke said yes, there are a lot of problems that need to be addressed before they can go paperless. She also said that the amount of time they spend on a case has doubled in using the Odyssey program.

Judge Peters asked if others using the program are having the same issues or is it something we need to change.

Bryce Ratcliffe with the Information Technology Department said yes there are a variety of issues.

Commissioner Berry asked Judge Matzke if having a clerk in her courtroom would help.

Judge Matzke said that Judge Hawthorn could answer that better since he is already going paperless on his own.

Judge Hawthorn said some personnel re-arrangements or additions may be needed, but did not know if issues could also be solved through IT. He said that Montgomery County is very efficient without needing several different staff members. Judge Hawthorn said he is about 90 percent paperless in his office, but is still experiencing difficulties with Odyssey, and believes they can be fixed. He also said he believes Tyler Industries has left us with a program that is not streamlined to what we need. Judge Hawthorn told the Court that every court will need faster computers with additional memory and additional monitors.

Commissioner Catalena said he is in favor of going paperless but feels these issues with Odyssey need to be addressed first. He asked Information Technology Director Eric Caldwell if he had anything to add.

Mr. Caldwell said that they are having problems with the product. Some of those issues are data conversions and some are functionality issues that we do not have control over. He said he knew that Colin County was having the same issues we are and would like to

see how they address those issues. He said it may be beneficial for us to wait. Mr. Caldwell also stated that all the courts need to move forward going paperless at the same time. He also feels that he will need at least one additional staff member in his department to assist the courts.

Commissioner Cauley asked how can we make this work.

Judge Hawthorn said he would hate to see a transition period that lingers on because that would just create more problems. He said he would like for the Court to send out an Order stating that Brazos County is going paperless and everyone will need to get on board.

Judge Matzke commented that she would like to see the issues with Odyssey fixed and the next step would be for all departments to come together to set up a procedure policy.

Lena Miller who is the Court Coordinator for Judge Hubacek said she previously worked in the Attorney General's Office and they have gone paperless. She said it was an adjustment, but they had a program in place that took them step by step. She feels we need the same kind of plan in place.

County Attorney Rod Anderson said that they were advised by Tyler Industries to not go paperless at the same time Odyssey was implemented. He said they suggested learning the program first and said we are still trying to learn the program. Mr. Anderson said that not all counties do things the same way and that is why we are still trying to get Odyssey to work. Mr. Anderson said that in order for the county to go paperless there will need to be budgeting for more equipment and the work flow needs to be coordinated. He said right now each office is trying to figure it out on their own.

Judge Peters asked if we have purchased all the software that Tyler offers for the program.

Eric Caldwell answered yes we have. He said again that it was recommended to us to not do everything at one time and to work our way to the next level. He said he would contact Tyler again to see if they have someone that could come and assist with the problems.

Judge Hawthorn disagreed with work flow being a problem. He said it should be the same as before but how it is entered into the system that has changed. He feels that is where IT can come in to assist staff by educating them on the product.

Commissioner Cauley said she would like to hear from Mary Blankenship with the Information Technology Department.

Mrs. Blankenship said that Tyler can assist us but can not tell us how to make Odyssey work for Brazos County. She also mentioned that her office is frustrated by lack of participation from everyone this involves. Mrs. Blankenship said there needs to be regular meetings between everyone to make a consolidated decision.

Commissioner Aldrich asked what the next step should be.

Judge Peters said that if we are going to move forward we will need a list from IT to know exactly what will be needed for each court.

Judge Hawthorn's Court Coordinator, Kristie Evans reminded everyone that the mailing costs for court notices will be reduced by going paperless.

Commissioner Berry asked if we could be ready to go paperless by January 1, 2018.

Mr. Hamlin said he believes we could be ready by October 1, 2017.

Commissioner Aldrich asked what do we need to do to help get people on board.

Commissioner Berry said that if the Commissioners' Court says we are going paperless by a certain date, then the people will get on board.

Eric Caldwell asked if another workshop could be scheduled.

All of the Court members said yes another workshop would be needed.


Mary Blankenship said that she would try to contact everyone to get more information for the next meeting.

Mr. Hamlin said that we need to encourage all the departments to have a least one representative in attendance at the next meeting.

There being no further discussions, Judge Peters adjourned the meeting at 6:02 p.m.

### 3. Adjourn

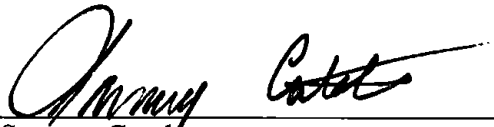
The foregoing minutes of the Commissioners Court Workshop Session held April 4,  
2017, have been examined and are approved in open Court this the 2nd day of  
May, 2017, in Bryan, Brazos County, Texas.



Duane Peters  
County Judge



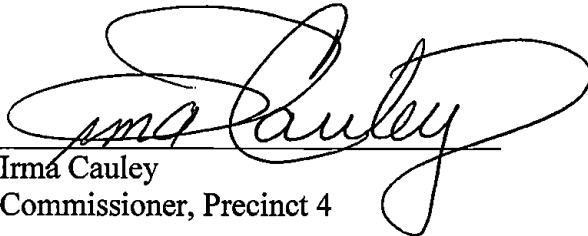
Steve Aldrich  
Commissioner, Precinct 1



Sammy Catalena  
Commissioner, Precinct 2

Absent

Nancy Berry  
Commissioner, Precinct 3

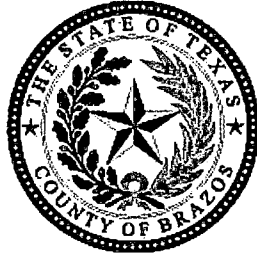


Irma Cauley  
Commissioner, Precinct 4

Attest:



Karen McQueen  
County Clerk



**BRAZOS COUNTY  
BRYAN, TEXAS**

FILED

2017 MAR 31 P 2:12

KAREN McQUEEN, COUNTY CLERK  
BRAZOS COUNTY, BRYAN, TEXAS

**NOTICE OF MEETING AND AGENDA**

**WORKSHOP SESSION**

**BRAZOS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT**

**BRAZOS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS WILL MEET IN A WORKSHOP SESSION AS FOLLOWS:**

**MEETING DATE:** April 4, 2017  
**MEETING TIME:** 4:00 PM  
**MEETING PLACE:** Commissioners Courtroom of the County Administration  
Building, 200 South Texas Ave., Suite 106, Bryan, TX 77803

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1. Call to Order
  2. Discussions about the possibility, requirements, and impact of transitioning to paperless with judicial cases on Brazos County.
  3. Adjourn

The Commissioners Courtroom of the County Administration Building, 200 South Texas Ave., Suite 106, Bryan, TX 77803 is wheelchair accessible. Handicap parking spaces are available. Any request for sign interpretive services must be made two working days before the meeting. To make arrangements, please call (979) 361-4102.

BRAZOS COUNTY  
 COMMISSIONER'S COURT

4th DAY OF April, 2017  
4:00 AM/~~PM~~, \_\_\_\_\_

workshop

Name (PLEASE PRINT)	Organization (PLEASE PRINT)
KAREN McOUGEN	Co CLERK
Shelby Wilma	County Clerk's Office
MARC HAMLIN	DC
Lena Miller	Judge Hubacek's office
Emily Webster	District Clerk
Kristie EVANS	85th D.C.
Nina Means	Budget
Mary Blankenship	BCIT
Bryce Ratcliffe	BCIT
Bill Ballard	CA
ERIC CALDWELL	BCIT
Bill Holland	BCIT
Drian Poaff	Auditor
MISH SWAN	Juvenile
Wendy Jett	Budget



BRAZOS COUNTY  
COMMISSIONER'S COURT

~~4<sup>th</sup>~~ DAY OF April, 2017  
4:00 AM/~~PM~~, \_\_\_\_\_

Name

(PLEASE PRINT)

Organization

(PLEASE PRINT)

Leslie Contreras

Purchasing

Amel Mout

CCJ

Tiffany Newton

CAJ

Orlando

CA

Katie Conner

Auditor

K. Hawthorn

ES<sup>TH</sup>

Cheryl Coffman

Comm. Court

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