

STATE OF TEXAS

COMMISSIONERS' COURT SPECIAL WORKSHOP
MEETING MINUTES

COUNTY OF COLLIN

JUNE 9, 2015

On Tuesday, June 9, 2015, the Commissioners' Court of Collin County, Texas, attended a meeting of the Republican Women of North Collin County at Stonebriar Country Club, 5050 Country Club Drive, City of Frisco, Texas, with the following members present, and participating, to wit:

Judge Keith Self

Commissioner Susan Fletcher, Precinct 1

Commissioner Cheryl Williams, Precinct 2

Commissioner Duncan Webb, Precinct 4

Absent: Commissioner Chris Hill, Precinct 3

The Commissioners' Court was invited to a meeting of the Republican Women of North Collin County to explain the components of the Court and what projects they are currently working on. The Republican Women of North Collin County meeting was called to order at 12:00 p.m. by Glynis Chester, President. Ms. Chester invited the Court members to come forward for their presentation.

Judge Self thanked Ms. Chester and the Republican Women for the invitation and gave an overview of the functions of the Court. The Commissioners' Court is the governing body of Collin County. Every member of the Court is an elected official. The Judge is elected countywide and the four Commissioners are elected by precinct, all for four-year terms. This governing body is in charge of the County budget which is a \$300 million a year enterprise. The Court retains authority to design many programs in the County. For example, vetting and approving grants for elected officials such as the drug courts and Veterans courts. The Court approves software, budgets and some of the hiring for the 35, soon to be 38, elected officials' offices. The elected officials are then free to run their offices the way they choose under state law. The five members of the Commissioners' Court and all the elected county officials work directly for the citizens of Collin County.

Judge Self said one issue he is focused on for the upcoming budget session is the large and growing unrestricted fund balance otherwise known as surplus. There is \$153 million in the unrestricted surplus. Even though the County has the highest credit rating of AAA, the rating agencies do not like surplus spent on salaries or ongoing operations and maintenance; therefore, the Court has to find large one-time capital expenses. Judge Self feels most of the large one-time capital expenses will be on transportation. Last year \$20 million was set aside to buy rights-of-way for the Outer Loop. Very little was spent leaving \$15 million in the Outer Loop fund. This means there is close to \$170 million in surplus. The Court must decide how the unrestricted funds will be spent.

Commissioner Fletcher stated she is the newest member of the Commissioners' Court for Precinct 1. The Commissioner represents the Collin County side of Frisco, Prosper and Celina as well as the northwest section of Plano and McKinney. She shared some of the research she did while running for the Precinct 1 office. McKinney is the county seat and was named the Best Place to Live in 2014 by Money Magazine. Collin County was named after Collin McKinney who was a pioneer and land surveyor who helped draft and sign the Texas Declaration of Independence. Frisco was named after the St. Louis–San Francisco Railway. It is one of the fastest growing cities and is known for the \$5 Billion Mile. The \$5 Billion Mile area will bring tremendous economic development and tax dollars into Collin County. Plano set the bar in 1994 by being named an All-American City. Plano is the home of many corporations and is in the process of welcoming Toyota. Plano was also the first city in the County to adopt a master plan for its road system. Prosper was incorporated in 1914 with a commission form of government with a population of 500. It is the home of numerous full-service equestrian farms and promotes resident input when it comes to planning and zoning. Celina is 78 square miles and will likely have a larger population than Frisco when built out. Celina is part of the Upper Trinity System and developers are looking to build there because of its access to water. Someday the Outer Loop will reach Celina as well as the northern extension of the Dallas North Tollway.

Commissioner Williams said she represents Precinct 2 which is the southeast quadrant of Collin County, east of US75. The cities in Precinct 2 are very diverse ranging from large suburban cities like Plano, Allen and Richardson to smaller cities like Josephine, Nevada and Lavon. All have unique issues and demands to address which the Commissioner enjoys working on. The primary issue she focused on during the legislative session was providing the provision of mental health. For the last 15 years Collin County has been in a pilot program called NorthStar with seven other counties. All funds were combined and had a single private entity managing mental health. It became clear over the 15 years that Collin County residents were not getting their share of available dollars with most of the providers located in Dallas County. With Collin County growing at a rapid pace this was not a solution that was working. There was an opportunity with the Sunset Commission and Health and Human Services to extricate the County from NorthStar. Judge Self and Commissioner Williams spent a lot of time in Austin working on this issue with legislators including Representative Matt Shaheen. In January 2017 Collin County will have its own mental health authority. The challenge now will be to build this up over the next year, but the Commissioner believes it will provide better services to the County, particularly the indigent population. Focus will be given to reduce the cost to the taxpayer in the long run by tailoring services for indigent individuals who are at the county and city jails and emergency rooms.

Commissioner Webb said he represents Precinct 4 which is the southwest corner of Collin County. Precinct 4 includes Plano and Dallas. It is one-fourth to one-eighth the size of the other precincts, but represents the same number in population. Commissioner Webb's focus is on the bigger picture of transportation infrastructure for the County as a whole and as a region.

The question is how we are going to move the growing population with limited transportation funds in order to avoid congestion and the ceasing of growth in the County. The County has SH121, US75, President George Bush Turnpike and the Dallas North Tollway, three of which are tolled roads. Toll roads are not the direction for the future. State legislation recently passed, and assuming the constitutional amendment passes in November, there will hopefully be enough money coming in to make major strides on transportation infrastructure. The Commissioner is also a proponent of using the fund balance to push forward major transportation projects.

Judge Self added Collin County has the fifth lowest county tax rate in the state. The Commissioners' Court is the body who sets the tax rate and the body who spends it. The other major legislative initiative the County had was the addition of three new courts. Those include one County Court at Law Court, which will be a general jurisdiction/misdemeanor court, and two District Courts, which will hear only family law cases. Citizens will see a change in the speed cases are heard with the addition of the three courts. Judge Self also stated most of the County budget goes to the justice system which is a core function.

Judge Self asked for questions from the audience.

Pam Little thanked the Court members for sending regular emails out to constituents keeping them informed. Ms. Little asked if the new County Court at Law vacancy will be filled with an appointed judge or will it go to election. Commissioner Fletcher stated the position will go to an election and be appointed after a winner is chosen. The Court is still in discussion on whether to have a visiting judge until the election.

Beverly Yoehle asked if the Commissioners' Court has anything to do with the positioning of the driver's license offices. Judge Self stated the Court advocated for the Department of Public Safety Mega Center to be located in Collin County, but the Legislature decided it would be located in Denton County.

Ms. Chester thanked the Court members for attending the meeting. (Time: 12:47 p.m.)



Keith Self

Keith Self, County Judge

Susan Fletcher

Susan Fletcher, Commissioner, Pct. 1

Cheryl Williams

Cheryl Williams, Commissioner, Pct. 2

Chris Hill

Chris Hill, Commissioner, Pct. 3

Duncan Webb

Duncan Webb, Commissioner, Pct. 4

ATTEST:

Stacey Kemp

Stacey Kemp, Ex-Officio Clerk
Commissioners Court
Collin County, TEXAS