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WOOD COUNTY CLERK

**RULES OF PROCEDURE, CONDUCT, AND DECORUM  
AT THE MEETINGS OF THE  
WOOD COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT - 2023**

- I. All Regular, Special, Emergency and Executive Session Meetings of the Wood County Commissioners Court will be called and conducted in accordance with the provisions of the Texas Open Meetings Act, Chapter 551, Government Code.
- II. Regular, Special, and Emergency Meetings of the Wood County Commissioners Court are open to the public and to representatives of the press and media. Executive Sessions of the Commissioners Court are not open to the public, the press or the media and only those individuals expressly requested or ordered to be present are allowed to attend Executive Session.
- III. The Wood County Commissioners Court meets in Regular Session every other Tuesday of each month. In order for a matter or issue to appear as an agenda item on the Agenda of any Regular Meeting of the Commissioners Court, a request must be filed with and approved by at least one member of the Commissioners Court and/or the County Judge by 12:00 p.m. (noon) on the Wednesday immediately preceding the next Regular Meeting of the Commissioners Court.
- IV. The business of Wood County is conducted by and between the members of the Wood County Commissioners Court and by those members of the County staff, elected officials, department heads, consultants, experts, and/or members of the public requested to be present and participate. While the public is invited to attend all meetings of the Commissioners Court (except Executive Sessions) the public's participation therein is limited to that of observers unless a member of the public is requested invited to address the Commissioners Court on a particular issue, or unless the member of the public completes a Public Participation Form and submits same to the County Judge's Office prior to the time the meeting begins. A sample of the Wood County Commissioners Court Public Participation Form is attached hereto as Exhibit "A".
  - a. Each member of the public who appears before the Commissioners Court shall be limited to a maximum of ~~five (5)~~ three (3) minutes to make their remarks. Time for each speaker shall be maintained by the County Judge or other such designated representative of the Commissioners Court. Members of the public who have properly completed a Public Participation Form and submitted same to the County Judge must wait to be recognized before they will be allowed to address the Court.
  - b. Maximum discussion in any agenda item, regardless of the number of members of the public wishing to address the Commissioners Court on such agenda item shall be limited to thirty (30) minutes. If more than six (6) members of the public wish to address a particular agenda item, then time allocated to members of the public recognized to speak shall be divided equally between those members of the public wishing to speak for the agenda item and those members of the public wishing to speak against the agenda item.

- c. In matters of exceptional interest, the Court may, by the majority vote of the members of the Court in attendance at the meeting, either shorten or lengthen the time allocated for a particular member of the public, all members of the public and/or the amount of time allocated for all agenda items and/or a specific agenda item.
- d. It is the intention of the Court to provide an open access to the citizens of Wood County to address the Commissioners Court and express themselves on issues of County Government. Members of the public are reminded that the Wood County Commissioners Court is a Constitutional Court, with both judicial and legislative powers, created under Article V, Section 1 and Section 18 of the Texas Constitution. As a Constitutional Court, the Wood County Commissioners Court also possesses the power to issue a Contempt of Court Citation under ~~Section 81.024~~ §81.023 of the Local Government Code. Accordingly, members of the public in attendance at any Regular, Special and/or Emergency Meeting of the Court shall conduct themselves with proper respect and decorum in speaking to, and/or addressing the Court; in participating in public discussions before the Court; and in all actions in the presence of the Court. Proper attire for men, women, and children is mandatory. Those members of the public who are inappropriately attired and/or do not conduct themselves in an orderly and appropriate manner will be ordered to leave the meeting. Refusal to abide by the Court's Order and/or continued disruption of the meeting may result in a Contempt of Court Citation.
- e. It is not the intention of the Wood County Commissioners Court to provide a public forum for the demeaning of any individual or group. Neither is the intention of the Court to allow a member (or members) of the public to insult the honesty and/or the integrity of the Court, as a body, or any member or members of the Court, individually or collectively. Accordingly, profane, insulting, or threatening language directed toward the Court and/or any person in the Court's presence and/or racial, ethnic, or gender slurs or epithets will not be tolerated. These Rules do not prohibit public criticism of the Commissioners Court, including criticism of any act, omission, policy, procedure, program or service. Violation of these rules may result in the following sanctions:
- i. Cancellation of a speaker's remaining time;
  - ii. Removal from the Commissioners Courtroom;
  - iii. A Contempt Citation; and/or
  - iv. Such other civil and/or criminal sanctions as may be authorized under the Constitution, Statutes and Codes of the State of Texas.

V. All members of the Court and public are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that demonstrates respect towards others and the Court itself. Behavior that impedes or disrupts the business of the Commissioners Court while in session is prohibited and unlawful pursuant to Texas Penal Code § 42.05. It is the intention of the Wood County Commissioners Court to attend to County business effectively and efficiently, without undue interruption. Cell phone usage during Commissioners Court is strictly

prohibited. All cell phones, pagers, and other mobile communication devices should be in "silent" mode at all times while Court is in session.

- VI. The County Judge is the presiding officer of the Wood County Commissioners Court and is a fully participating member thereof. In the event of the absence of the County Judge, the senior member of the Commissioners Court (in terms of total number of years as an elected representative) present at the Regular, Special, Emergency Meeting or Executive Session, ~~shall serve as the Judge Pro Tem of the Court, shall~~ preside over the Court meeting. However, nothing herein shall prevent the senior member of this Commissioners Court from delegating this duty to another member of the Commissioners Court.
- VII. ~~The County Judge (or designated Judge Pro Tem of the Commissioners Court), as presiding officer~~ presiding officer of the Commissioners Court is responsible for conducting all meetings, and members of the public who have properly completed a Public Participation Form and submitted same to the County Judge's Office must wait to be recognized before they will be allowed to address the Court.
- VIII. Special Rules for the Press and Media:
- a. No media personnel or equipment, including lights, cameras or microphones will be located on the Commissioners Court bench nor closer than five feet (5') in front of the Commissioners Court bench.
  - b. Reporters and media technicians are required to structure their movements, equipment set-up and take-down and adjustments, etc. in such a manner as to not disrupt the Commissioners Court deliberations or the ability of the public to see, hear, and participate in the proceedings.
  - c. Interviews shall not be conducted inside the Commissioners Courtroom during the time the Court is in session.
  - d. Media interviews which are conducted outside the Commissioners Courtroom should be conducted in such a manner that the interview does not disturb, impede or disrupt the proceedings of any Regular, Special, Emergency and/or Executive Session Meeting of the Court.
- IX. The Sheriff of Wood County, Texas, or his designated deputy, shall serve as the Bailiff at all Regular, Special and Emergency Meetings of the Court. However, in the event of the absence of the Sheriff, or in the event that there exists a conflict of interest between the Sheriff, any member of the Sheriff's Department, and the Commissioners Court, or in the event of an Executive Session of the Court in which the Sheriff is not an authorized participant, then in such an event, the Court shall appoint other such commissioned peace officers to serve as Bailiff as may be necessary.
- X. From time to time, the Commissioners Court may conduct town meetings and/or public hearings. These rules of procedure, conduct and decorum shall also apply to such town meetings and public hearings. However, the Commissioners Court may

adopt such additional and supplemental rules for such meetings as may be necessary and appropriate to conduct such meetings in an orderly, efficient and proper manner.

- XI. These Rules of Procedure, Conduct and Decorum at Meetings of the Wood County Commissioners Court shall be effective immediately upon adoption by the Court and shall remain in full force and effect until amended or repealed by a majority vote of the Commissioners Court. These Rules may be temporarily suspended by majority vote of the Court in a manner that does not conflict with the Texas Open Meetings Act.

ADOPTED BY THE UNANIMOUS VOTE OF THE WOOD COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT on this the 24<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2023.

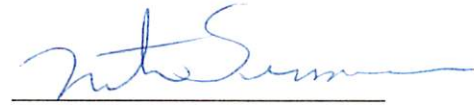
Wood County Judge

  
Kevin White

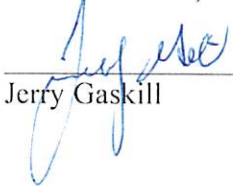
Commissioner, Precinct #1

  
Virgil Holland

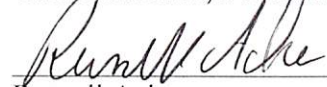
Commissioner, Precinct #3

  
Mike Simmons

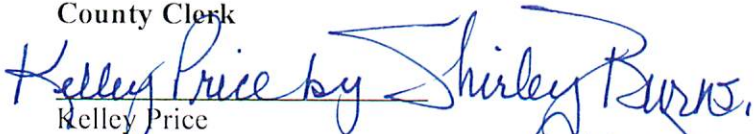

Commissioner, Precinct #2

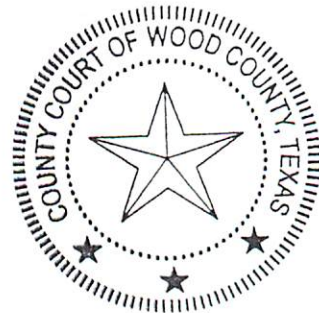
  
Jerry Gaskill

Commissioner, Precinct #4

  
Russell Acker

ATTEST:  
County Clerk

  
Kelley Price  
  
Chief Deputy



# EXHIBIT A

## WOOD COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT

### Public Participation Form

Instructions: Fill out all appropriate blanks. Please print or write legibly.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

HOME ADDRESS (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

HOME TELEPHONE (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

Do you represent any particular group or organization? \_\_\_\_\_

If you do represent a group or organization, please state the name, address and telephone number of such group or organization. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Which agenda item (or items) do you wish to address? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

In general, are you for or against such agenda item (or items)? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**NOTE:** This Public Participation Form must be presented to the County Judge's Office prior to the meeting.