

Butch and Bette Service  
Clark and Noel Tinkler  
Rinda L. Wojtek

**WCCHD board meeting minutes told**

By Pat Stephens

The Board of Directors of the West Coke County Hospital District convened July 30, 2024, in the Board Conference Room. President Beverly Burdett called the meeting to order at 9:40 am, declared a quorum was present, and Roger Alexander gave the invocation. Board members present were Betty Lewis, Roma McCarley and Noel Tinkler. Houston McGuire, Administrator, Roger Alexander and Janie Munoz were also present. Minutes from June meeting were approved. There were no visitors.

The administrator gave the staffing update; currently fully staffed. The census stands at 43 as of the meeting date.

Accounts Receivable were discussed and reviewed.

Financial statements were not available because ambulance runs have been taking such a hit on employees. 3 employees from RLCC currently cover the entire county. There will be a meeting on August 8, at 9 am in District Courtroom regarding ESD.

The Administrator gave his report, first giving the Board an update on QIPP/QUAPI, which is going extremely well, as the facility continues to meet all metrics.

The electrical work continues.

The work on the upgrades to the Coke Co. Food Pantry is nearing completion and the Board was given a tour after the meeting. It is looking great!

The upgrade to the a/c system in the front offices of the Care Center is complete.

Outside improvements: Should be completed soon.

Budget workshop set for August 6 at 9:30 am in the Board room.

Budget hearing will be August 27 at 9:30 am in the Board room, with meeting to follow at 10:00 am.

The Board appointed Gina Williams to calculate tax rates.

Future agenda items were discussed and the next regular meeting will be August 27, 2024, at 10:00 am. The public is invited and encouraged to attend.

Looking at the summer calendar for August, Sunday afternoon services continue, led by area churches, at 3:30 in the dining room, and there are Bible lessons at 11:00 am on Wednesdays. The weekly Singalong continues on Monday afternoons at 3:30. All are welcome to come and enjoy a time of good ol' gospel singing!

A shopping trip is planned for this Friday, Aug. 9, at 9 am.

The monthly birthday party will be held Aug. 13, at 3:30, hosted by the South Side Church of Christ. Happy birthday wishes go out to Martin Galvan and Winona

Wagner.

Everyone will enjoy an end of summer luau on the 19<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 and none other than Elvis himself will be entertaining at the party!!

The dog days of August will begin to wind down with the resident council meeting on the 26<sup>th</sup>, at 3 pm, followed closely by September and hopefully, some cooler days. Until then.....keep smiling!!



**One Year Later**

By James M. Decker

It has been said that “what doesn’t kill you only makes you stronger.” I don’t know who concocted that saying, but I’d like to have a word with them about their good sense. Personally, I prefer to become stronger without wondering whether the situation is going to kill me first.

One year ago, in late July 2023, the City of Stamford experienced one of those situations when we suffered a catastrophic equipment failure at our brand-new water treatment plant. This plant had recently opened as part of a multiyear, \$20 million project to upgrade our water supply and treatment facilities for decades

to come. When this equipment failure happened, we lived through a local crisis for almost a full week. It was, frankly, a nightmare.

I have a very short list of events that I rank as the worst experiences of my life. As I have aged, a few events dropped off the list, because I realized they really weren’t that bad after all. Today, there are only three such experiences on my list: 1) a sick toddler in the hospital for multiple days; 2) studying for and taking the Texas Bar Exam; and 3) Stamford’s 2023 water treatment plant failure. This problem began to affect our citizens on a Monday night late last July. It escalated into a crisis on Tuesday and Wednesday, and it continued until we restored the plant to full operation on Sunday night. Mentally, that week felt like a year.

We have all been affected in life by events that happen outside our control. It is a helpless feeling. You are desperate to do something and simultaneously unable to do anything. It is an even worse feeling when it is a crisis outside your physical control but within your area of responsibility which has been entrusted to you by your friends and neighbors. I could not do anything to immediately fix the City’s water treatment plant. Engineers, technicians, and chemists were working around the clock. I could not merely bang on the machine and shake the problem loose, though I did consider it. It filled me with anger, anxiety, and frustration for all our impacted citizens. Water is one of the few true essentials in life and it is one

of the most basic tasks of local government.

I do not write this for anyone to “feel sorry” for me. I sought the office of Mayor of Stamford on my own volition and I sought re-election with my own free will. Rather, I write this as a reflection over the last 12 months of thinking about this experience, how we responded, what we can do better, and how it made me feel. Candidly, I should say “how it makes me feel.” There is no past tense with this situation. I mentally live with it practically every day. I will never forget the feeling of being unable to provide water for our citizens. Unpleasant as that may be, it is a feeling I do not need to forget, so long as I am entrusted with the office of Mayor.

In an essay published the week after the crisis, I praised the neighborly spirit of our community. During those tense days, we saw the goodness of Stamford’s people. Sure, they were frustrated, and rightly so. It was the peak of summertime, so a lack of running water was a legitimate health issue. People of all ages and backgrounds volunteered and stood in the gap for the vulnerable. I was overwhelmed by the sheer number of volunteers who checked on people, delivered water and ice to the elderly and to our nursing/assisted living facilities, and lent a hand however they were able, with tasks great and small. I will never know just how many people helped that week, because so many people did not even ask me for a task. They just went and found a place to help.

Unfortunately, our world has experienced more than a few disasters in the past 12 months. Thanks to the “wonder” of television and the internet, those disasters and their aftermath are delivered into our homes and onto our handheld devices. Those events are filtered through television and internet outlets that profit from drama. I see a much greater percentage of the online commentary about a local event than a disaster that occurs elsewhere so I cannot intelligently say whether Stamford’s people responded “better” in that situation than any other group of people. That does not matter. It is not a competition. I will simply say that I could not be more proud to live in Stamford and be part of this community. It was not just \*this\* event, either. When Stamford’s people are in need, whether individually or collectively, our community rises to the occasion.

Four months after the initial crisis, we had another smaller issue with our plant. We had devised some long-term solutions in July that were still under construction, but they were rushed into emergency service and helped fix the problem in just over 24 hours. As projected, those measures resolved the source of our woes and have prevented further issues.

An effective leader should not look back on a crisis event and relish the positive aspects without considering what they can do better. Over the last 12 months, it has weighed on me that catastrophes should be treated as a lesson and a warning. Our citizens were incredibly supportive, but we cannot take that good nature for granted.

*(Continued on page 7)*

**SALARIES FOR COUNTY ELECTED OFFICIALS SET BY COURT**

**(beginning October 1, 2024, previous fiscal year - includes Longevity)**

NAME	2023-24 SALARY	PROPOSED 2024-25 SALARY
Hal Spain, County Judge	\$39,607.08	\$41,608.44
Hal Spain, State Supplement	\$25,200.00	\$25,200.00
Donald Robertson, Commissioner, Precinct 1	\$40,111.72	\$42,156.32
Henry Chisholm, Commissioner, Precinct 2	\$39,691.72	\$41,676.32
Marshall Millican, Commissioner, Precinct 3	\$40,711.72	\$42,756.32
George Ray Sparks, Commissioner, Precinct 4	\$39,691.72	\$41,676.32
Nick Arrott, County Attorney	\$38,130.77	\$40,076.32
Nick Arrott, State Supplement	\$25,665.84	\$25,665.84
Gina Williams, Tax Assessor/Collector	\$38,900.77	\$39,816.32
Wayne McCutchen, Sheriff	\$50,721.11	\$53,211.42
Wayne McCutchen (MHMR Grant)	\$ 3,252.84	\$ 3,252.84
Wayne McCutchen (Law Enforcement Grant)	\$24,278.88	\$24,278.88*
Jennifer Burdett, County & District Clerk	\$38,010.77	\$39,956.32
Therese Emert, County Treasurer	\$38,010.77	\$39,956.32
<b>JPs and CONSTABLES</b>		
Russell Johnson, JP Precinct 1	\$38,305.77	\$40,251.32
Marty Boyd, Constable, Precinct 1	\$21,599.54	\$22,682.52

*\*Dependent upon continued funding.*