

MINUTES

Meeting: Commission on Jail Standards

Place: Stephen F Austin Building
Room 170
1700 Congress Avenue
Austin, TX 78701

To obtain a recording of the meeting November 7, 2024, contact Richard Morgan, at Richard.morgan@tcjs.state.tx.us.

Time: 9:00 a.m.

Date: May 1, 2025

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Stoudt of the Texas Commission on Jail Standards at 9:00 a.m.

II. Roll Call of Commission Members

Judge Bill Stoudt, Chairman	Mr. Ross Reyes
Dr. Porsa, Vice Chairman	Ms. Monica McBride
Mr. Duane Lock	Sheriff Raul Gonzales
Ms. Patricia Anthony	Sheriff Kelly Rowe

Commission members present at roll call were Chairman Stoudt, Dr. Porsa, Mr. Duane Lock, Sheriff Kelly Rowe, Sheriff Raul Gonzales, Ms. Patricia Anthony and Ms. Monica McBride. Commissioner Perry was absent. Staff members attending in-person included Brandon Wood, Ricky Armstrong, Jason Jouett, Todd Allen, Michael Garrett, Michael Gravitt, Martin Arnold, Leslie Spear, Chris Keith, Clarissa Fasci, Zachary Aguirre, Lindsey Bailey, Stephanie Reneau, Courtney Elrod, Gabriel Farley.

Chairman Stoudt read aloud the guidelines for public comment at this time.

III. Approval of Minutes

Chairman Stoudt asked if there was a motion to approve the minutes for the meeting

conducted February 6, 2025, and the emergency meeting held April 11, 2025. A motion was made to approve by Dr. Porsa and seconded by Sheriff Rowe. The motion passed unanimously.

IV. Public Comment

Michael Mitchell (Harris County): Representing Evan Lee family, concerned about custodial death in Harris County Jail and preventing similar incidents from happening to other families.

Ms. Pritchard (Harris County): Spoke about her son's experiences in Harris County Jail, highlighting issues of inmates having to fight for food and lack of respect from officers.

Diane Bailey Rosenberg (Houston): Mother of Roman Kino Warren Thomas, who passed away in Harris County Jail. Emphasized the need for a mental health facility instead of jailing mentally ill individuals.

Ethel Green (Harris County): Spoke on behalf of other mothers, hoping the commission will address issues of inmates dying in county jails.

Reverend Jacelit Griffin (Sugar Land): Mother of Evan Lee, passed away in Harris County Jail. Called for better audits and enforcement of standards in Texas jails.

Sarah Knight (Harris County): Discussed her son Eric Carlson's death in LaSalle Correctional in Louisiana, urging the commission to use its power to ensure detainee safety.

Lydia Leos (Bexar County): Shared about her son Julian's death and 68 deaths in Bexar County Jail since 2020. Proposed a suicide hotline for inmates in single cells.

Tamara Ramsey (Tarrant County): Discussed her husband's death as the 67th death in Tarrant County Jail, highlighting medical care and living conditions.

Citterea McGregor (Harris County): Mother of Christopher McGregor, who died in Harris County Jail from a strep throat infection. Questioned how a mentally ill person could be allowed to starve to death.

Brad Smith: Represented William, who suffered severe medical neglect in Navarro and Ellis County Jails due to inadequate diabetic treatment.

Jess Hampton (Sabine County): A combat veteran describing mental health medication discontinuation and inhumane treatment in a Louisiana facility.

Sorcha Costigan (Sabine County): Spoke on behalf of her husband Jess, detailing civil rights violations and inhumane conditions in Sabine County and Louisiana facilities.

Brenda Osborne (Washington County): Mother of Brandon Walker, concerned about lack of communication regarding her son's hospitalization after being transferred from Harris County to LaSalle Correction Center.

Cassandra Johnson (Tarrant County): Mother of child who died in Tarrant County Jail from a fentanyl overdose. Demanded an independent investigation.

Dalila Reynoso (Texas Jail Project): Discussed mental health issues in county jails, highlighting gaps in competency restoration and lack of data collection.

Krish Gundu (Texas Jail Project): Shared a story about a veteran who died in custody, discussed the competency restoration audit, and called for meaningful change in mental health crisis management.

Benicia Johnson: Provided testimony as a licensed clinical social work regarding Harris County deaths in custody. Ms. Johnson encouraged leaders to help transform Harris County or to “disband” Harris County.

Caroline Crane: Provided testimony as a medical student regarding healthcare in county jails. Ms. Crane provided recommendations: provision of continuity of care for those with mental illness in county jails, provision of certain medications to those detained in county jails such as antipsychotics instead of anti-depressants.

V. Old Business

A. Harris County – Notice of Non-Compliance and Remedial Order

Director Wood advised that Harris County was in attendance due to notices of non-compliance as well as an in place remedial order. Director Wood provided the board members with an update on Harris County’s areas of non-compliance, and Harris County Jail Administrator Chief Bosquez provided additional information to the board. Director Wood advised that observation rounds, and staffing are the main area being reviewed by staff but have been able to attain compliance. Harris County has requested additional time before their next inspection due to possible issues in these areas. Director Wood discussed the motion at the previous meeting in which the Commission voted to refer the remedial order to the Office of The Attorney General.

Chief Bosquez provided the following updates. 175 new positions have been approved (split 150 detention officers and 25 deputies), with 115 open jailer positions, and 20 cadets awaiting academy training and 20-25 more for the class after that. Chief Bosquez advised that the Harris County population was just under 9700 in February 2025 and is currently approximately 7500 inmates, with staffing that matches that population. He also discussed the current outsourcing of inmates. He discussed the drop in court backlog over

the previous 180 days due to work with the District Attorney's office, discussed the drop in the average length of incarceration, and the increase in the number of paper-ready inmates awaiting transfer to TDCJ. Finally, Chief Bosquez discussed the issue of face-to-face observations and the fluctuations in compliance.

Commissioner Lock raised questions regarding efforts to bring inmates back from out-of-state facilities. Chief Bosquez advised that Harris County is not looking to increase the number of inmates housed out-of-state, and that Harris County's current goal is to return inmates to the Harris County Jail as opposed to finding additional outsourcing options and are not currently seeking new contracts. Commissioner Lock advised that he wants to see Harris County put effort into bringing out-of-state inmates back to Texas. Chief Deputy Thomas Diaz advised that he begin looking into it that day.

Commissioner Lock raised questions regarding staffing shortages and the impact on medical services at the Harris County Jail. Chief Bosquez advised that medical services were not significantly impacted and stated that supplemental staffing was covered with overtime deputies from the patrol division. He also advised that specific medical units, such as diabetic units, have nurses consistently present, and suggested bringing the director of medical services to the next Commission meeting to provide a more detailed response.

Director Wood discussed a report from the Office of Court Administration regarding judicial officer workload and identified that Harris County would require a minimum of 60 additional judicial officers in order to operate at an efficient level and encouraged Harris County to consider this information. Director Wood discussed the number of beds the Harris County Jail may need by 2035 and staffing concerns. Director Wood requested and recommended that staff be authorized to continue working with representatives from the Office of the Attorney General regarding Harris County. Chairman Stoudt requested that the remedial order contain language to address Commissioner Lock's concerns and Director Wood agreed. Commissioner Lock made a motion to approve the recommendations, and Commissioner Perry seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

B. Liberty County - Notice of Non-Compliance and Remedial order

Liberty County was in attendance due to the issuance of a remedial order. Director Wood provided an update, including Liberty County's request for a contested hearing regarding the remedial order, and that the remedial order has been stayed temporarily. Director Wood covered the items covered at the emergency meeting of the commission from April 2024. Director Wood's update included details on a riot incident and two fire incidents in addition to the notices of non-compliance.

Liberty County's counsel, Gunner Seaquist, provided an update. He advised that the county is actively addressing areas of non-compliance, the Commissioner's Court has held two special meetings, and approved emergency procurement exemptions. Additionally, approximately 1 million dollars has been allocated for repairs. He reported that the fire incidents were results of arson and requested to continue jail operations while addressing compliance issues. The Liberty County Fire Marshall provided an update regarding the fire panel and alarm system issues. He advised that the issues were related to the previous contractor technician's installation. Sheriff Rader advised that they have attempted to contract with other jails, but many facilities are reluctant to take inmates, especially those with mental health or medical issues leaving Liberty County Jail with approximately 50 inmates they are unable to place in other facilities.

Director Wood requested permission from the Commission to have the Office of the Attorney General file a petition for temporary and permanent injunctive relief to ensure compliance and enforcement of minimum jail standards. Dr. Porsa requested that the motion include language that if Liberty County is able to meet minimum jail standards be allowed to continue operations. Director Wood was discussing the possibility of Liberty County meeting minimum jail standards and addressing non-compliance areas. He suggested that if Liberty County could meet all minimum standards, including fire safety requirements, before the next commission meeting, they might be able to revert the current decision.

However, Director Wood emphasized that the commission would still request the Attorney General to file a petition and application for temporary and permanent injunctive relief. Dr. Porsa made a motion to approve the recommendations, and Commissioner Perry seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

C. Shelby County Jail – Notice of Non-compliance

Shelby County was in attendance due to their placement in enhanced enforcement due to notice of non-compliance and remedial order. Director Wood advised that Shelby County regained compliance in January 2025 and may be removed from enhanced enforcement after passing another inspection prior to the August 2025 Commission meeting. Shelby County Sheriff Gerald Corbell provided an update, including their efforts to maintain compliance regarding maintenance and cell checks.

Director Wood advised that staff will continue to monitor Shelby County's compliance, and recommended that no additional action be taken at this time. Dr. Porsa made a motion to approve the recommendation, and Commissioner Perry seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

D. Falls County Jail – Notice of Non-Compliance and Remedial Order

Falls County was in attendance due to being in enhanced enforcement and under remedial order from November 2024. Director Wood advised that Commission Staff conducted an on-site inspection in April 2025 and noted significant improvement. Falls County Sheriff Jason Campbell provided an update to the Commission. He presented staffing analysis to the county commissioners, has received five additional positions, and expects five more in October.

Director Wood recommended keeping the remedial order in place, and that staff continue working with Falls County to regain compliance. A motion to approve the recommendation was made by Dr. Porsa and was seconded by Commissioner Perry. The motion was approved unanimously.

E. Jim Hogg Temporary Processing Facility

Director Wood advised that no additional action is needed on this item and provided a reminder that the Jim Hogg Temporary Processing Facility received a one-year extension at the previous meeting. No action taken.

VI. New Business

A. Cherokee County – Notice of Non-Compliance

Director Wood advised that Cherokee County was in attendance due to a notice of non-compliance and enhanced enforcement. Cherokee County passed their first inspection in enhanced enforcement but failed the second inspection. Cherokee County Sheriff Brent Dickson provided an update regarding their efforts to regain compliance. He advised that the efforts include a new jail administrator who began working in January 2025, and they have implemented new software to integrate cell checks and medical technology.

Director Wood recommended issuing a remedial order requiring Cherokee County to comply with minimum jail standards, and for staff to continue monitoring Cherokee County. A motion was made by Dr. Porsa and a second by Sheriff Rowe and the motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Stoudt advised that the Commission would now discuss Cherokee County and its variances (agenda item VII B). Director Wood recommended that, due to the issuance of a remedial order, Cherokee County Jail's variances be canceled. Director Wood and Cherokee County Sheriff Dickson discussed the variance and how it has been historically used at the jail. A motion to approve the recommendation was made by Dr. Porsa and seconded by Commissioner Anthony. The motion passed unanimously.

B. Rains County – Notice of Non-Compliance and Remedial Order

Rains County was in attendance due to issuance of notice of non-compliance and an in place remedial order, and enhanced enforcement. Director Wood advised that Rains County's areas of non-compliance include generator logs, medication administration records, and staff training. Rains County Sheriff Hopkins provided additional updates on the efforts that the Rains County Jail has made to regain compliance. He also advised that he is currently serving as the jail administrator while his current jail administrator is unavailable.

Director Wood recommended that a remedial order be issued to require Rains County to comply with minimum jail standards and continue working towards regaining compliance. Dr. Porsa discussed medication distribution training for officers with Sheriff Hopkins. Dr. Porsa made a motion to approve the recommendation, and Sheriff Rowe seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

C. Leon County – Notice of Non-compliance and Remedial Order

Leon County was in attendance due to the issuance of a notice of non-compliance. Director Wood provided an update regarding Leon County's areas of non-compliance and inspection history, placing them in enhanced enforcement. Leon County Sheriff Kevin Ellis provided an update on efforts to regain compliance and discussed the new jail administrator.

Director Wood recommended the issuance of a remedial order requiring the Leon County Jail to comply with minimum jail standards and pass two comprehensive inspections within the next 12 months. A motion to approve the recommendation was made by Dr. Porsa and seconded by Sheriff Rowe. The motion passed unanimously.

D. Val Verde Temporary Processing Facility

Director Wood advised Commission members that the Val Verde Temporary Processing Facility (VVTTPF) is due for review for continuance. The Sheriffs of Val Verde County, Kinney County, and Zavala County were in attendance to provide testimony regarding the VVTTPF, and request approval for continued operations.

Director Wood recommended approving the extension of the facility operation by one year based on the function the facility serves and the need it meets. Sheriff Rowe made a motion to approve the recommendation, and Dr. Porsa seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

E. Variance Subcommittee

Director Wood discussed the Texas Commission on Jail Standards variance subcommittee. The subcommittee was expired, and Director Wood recommended discontinuing the subcommittee with the option to reestablish if needed. Commissioner Perry made a motion to approve the recommendation, and Sheriff Rowe seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

F. TDCJ – OLS 259.600 Qualifications for use

Director Wood provided an update regarding Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) Operation Lone Star (OLS) facilities and the role they play in supporting county jails during OLS and advised that TDCJ representatives were in attendance to request a continuation to remain open and operational. TDCJ representatives provided answers to operational questions and provided updates on their facilities.

Director Wood recommended that the request to continue operations for a year be approved. Commissioner Lock made a motion to approve the recommendation, and Sheriff Rowe seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

G. Tarrant County District Attorney Request for Attorney General Opinion (RQ-0590-KP) regarding § 511.021(a)

Director Wood provided an update to the Commission regarding the Tarrant County District Attorney's request for an Attorney General Opinion regarding § 511.021(a),

Independent Investigation of Death Occurring in County Jail. Director Wood advised that the opinion was not expected until September 2025 and would be reviewed at that time. No action taken.

H. Legislative Update

Director Wood provided a brief update on the legislation that the agency is tracking. No action taken.

VII. Variances

A. Brooks County (P)

Director Wood discussed the variances that Brooks County was requesting. Those variances were:

- 259.135 Dormitories
- 259.143(b) Toilets and Lavatories
- 259.143(c) Showers
- 259.143(d) Tables and Seating

Director Wood recommended that the variances previously granted to Brooks County be canceled. Dr. Porsa made a motion to approve the recommendation and Commissioner Perry seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

B. Cherokee County

Cherokee County variances were covered during new business.

C. Dallas County

Director Wood discussed the variances that Dallas County was requesting. Those variances were:

- 259.143(b) Toilets and Lavatories
- 259.135 Dormitories
- 259.136 Dayrooms

Director Wood recommended that the variance be extended for one year. Dr. Porsa made a motion to approve the recommendation, and Commissioner Perry seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

D. Galveston County

Director Wood discussed the variances that Galveston County was requesting. Those variances were:

- 259.143(b) Toilets and Lavatories
- 259.143(c) Showers

Director Wood recommended and requested that staff be allowed to approve the variance after background issues were corrected. Commissioner Perry made a motion to approve, and Sheriff Rowe seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

E. Hudspeth County

Director Wood discussed the variances that Hudspeth County was requesting. Those variances were:

- 259.114(d) Segregation
- 259.143(b) Toilets and Lavatories
- 259.143(c) Showers
- 259.143(d) Tables and Seating

Director Wood recommended continuing the variance for six months. Dr. Porsa made a motion to approve the recommendation and Commissioner Anthony seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

F. Sabine County

Director Wood discussed the variance that Sabine County was requesting. Those variances were:

- 259.134 Multiple Occupancy Cell

Director Wood recommended extending the variance for one year. A motion to approve the recommendation was approved by xxx and seconded by xxx. The motion passed unanimously.

G. Starr County

Director Wood discussed the variance that Starr County was requesting. Those variances were:

- 259.133 Single Cells
- 259.135 Dormitories
- 259.136 Dayrooms
- 259.143(b) Toilets and Lavatories
- 259.143(c) Showers
- 259.143(d) Tables and Seating

Director Wood recommended that the variances be extended for one year. Sheriff Rowe made a motion to approve the recommendation, and Dr. Porsa seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

H. Trinity County

Director Wood discussed the variance that Trinity County was requesting. That variance was:

- 259.134 Multiple Occupancy Cells

Director Wood recommended canceling the variance until Trinity County can show progress on construction projects. Sheriff Rowe made a motion to approve the recommendation, and Dr. Porsa seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

I. Wharton County

Director Wood discussed the variances that Wharton County was requesting. Those variances were:

- 259.134 Multiple Occupancy Cells
- 259.143(b) Toilets and Lavatories
- 259.143(c) Showers
- 259.143(d) Tables and Seating

Director Wood recommended that the variance be extended for one year. A motion was made to approve the recommendation by Commissioner Perry and was seconded by Dr. Porsa. The motion passed unanimously.

VIII. Administrative Rules Advisory Committee

A. Rules for Adoption – None

B. Rules for Public Comment

Director Wood provided Commission members with a list of proposed changes to administrative rules. The rules with proposed changes were:

- Chapter 297.1 Sanitation Plan
- Chapter 263.1 General Purpose
- Chapter 263.12 Additions/New Construction
- Chapter 263.15 Illumination of Exits
- Chapter 263.19 Hazardous Area Protection
- Chapter 263.30 General
- Chapter 263.32 Periodic Testing
- Chapter 263.33 Notification of Others
- Chapter 263.50 Emergency Electrical Power
- Chapter 263.51 Smoke Management
- Chapter 263.52 Standpipes and Hoses
- Chapter 263.53 Portable Fire Extinguishers

Director Wood recommended publishing these proposed changes to rules to the Texas Register for public comment. Sheriff Rowe made a motion to approve, and Dr. Porsa seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

C. Public Petition for Change to Minimum Jail Standards

- a. Director Wood advised that one petition for changes to standards had been received and requested permission to refer to petition to the Administrative Rules Advisory Committee. A motion was made to approve the recommendation by Dr. Porsa and seconded by Sheriff Rowe. The motion passed unanimously.

D. Four-year Rule Review

- a. Chapter 277.1 through 277.11
 - b. Chapter 265
 - c. Chapter 267
- No action taken.

IX. IDD Advisory Committee – None

Director Wood provided an update on the state of the IDD Advisory Committee and legislation related to the advisory committee.

X. Staff Report

A. Completed Jail Projects

Director Wood reported that the completed projects are listed in the commission meeting book provided to commission members.

B. Jail Planning and Construction List

The 4-page construction report is included in the packets.

C. Jails in Compliance/Noncompliance

Director Wood referred Commissioners to the list in their book.

D. Status of Remedial Orders

Director Wood listed the counties currently under remedial order. This information was provided in the commission members' books.

E. Status and Composition of Jail Population

Director Wood advised members that this information is provided in a one-page report in the commission members books.

F. Staff Training/Activities

Director Wood advised members that a list of training performed by staff members is provided in their book.

G. Financial Report/Budget

Director Wood directed all to the current budget expenditures for FY 2024 in their books.

H. Inmate Complaint Report

Included in their book is the three-month report on complaints. Non-jurisdictional complaints continue to be prevalent.

I. State Auditor's Office Audit

Director Wood provided an update regarding the ongoing audit by the State Auditor's Office.

XI. Other Business

- Commission-sponsored Events and Workshops

- Commission Staffing

- Off Duty Employment

No events to report.

- Miscellaneous Letters of Comment

None

XII. Adjourn

By appropriate motion to adjourn by Sheriff Rowe and a second by Commissioner Lock, the meeting was adjourned at 12:53 PM.

XIII. Next Commission meeting is tentatively scheduled for:

- Thursday, August 7th, 2025, William P Clements Building
- Thursday, November 6th, 2025, Stephen F. Austin Building

The Board may meet in Closed Session on any item listed above if authorized by the Texas Open Meetings Act, Texas Government Code Ann. Ch. 551.

Persons with disabilities who plan to attend this meeting and who may need auxiliary aids or services, such as interpreters or persons who are deaf or hearing impaired, readers, large print or Braille, are requested to contact Carol Bernhard (512) 568-8029 two (2) working days prior to the meeting so that appropriate arrangements can be made.



Brandon Wood, Executive Director



Carol Bernhard, Secretary of the Commission