

**Rules of Procedure, Conduct and Decorum at Meetings of the Mills County
Commissioners' Court
Updated May 27, 2025**

- I. All Regular, Special, Emergency and Executive Session Meetings of the Mills 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 Mills 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 Mills County Commissioners' Court meets in Regular Session as published annually on the County Website – generally on the second and fourth Monday of each month. If the Monday falls on a County Holiday, the regular Sessions are scheduled for the next business day.
 - a. 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.
 - i. Mills County endeavors to publish its' Commissioners' Court agenda in the weekly newspaper in addition to posting it at the courthouse and on the county website.
 - ii. Items to be included on the Agenda should be submitted to the County Judges office 6 business days before each meeting to accommodate the time needed to format and meet the weekly newspaper's publishing deadlines.
 - iii. When necessary, Agenda items may be added as an Amended Agenda late as 12:00 p.m. (noon) on the Thursday immediately preceding the next Regular Meeting of the Commissioners' Court the Amended Agenda will be posted but not published in the local paper. In the event that the Regular Meeting is moved, this requirement will be interpreted as noon of the third business day before the meeting.

IV. The business of Mills County is conducted by and between the members of the Mills 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 is limited to that of observers unless requested to address the Commissioners' Court on a particular issue or issues or unless the individual completes a Public Participation Form and submits same to the County Clerk prior to the commencement of the meeting. A sample of the Mills County Commissioners' Court Public Participation Form is attached hereto as Exhibit "A".

- a. Any individual addressing the Commissioners' Court pursuant to a Public Participation Form shall be limited to a maximum of five (5) minutes. Time for each speaker shall be maintained by the County Clerk or another designated timekeeper. Maximum discussion on any agenda item, regardless of the number of individuals wishing to address the Commissioners' Court on such agenda item, shall be limited to thirty (30) minutes. In the event that more than six (6) individuals 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 (or items) and those members of the public wishing to speak against the agenda item (or items).
- b. In matters of exceptional interest, the Court may, by the majority vote of the members of the Court in attendance at the meeting, lengthen the time allocated to a specific item for a particular individual, all individuals and/or the amount of time allocated for a specific agenda item.
- c. It is the intention of the Court to provide an open access to the citizens of Mills County to address the Commissioners' Court and express themselves on issues of County Government. Members of the public are reminded that the Mills 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 Mills County Commissioners' Court also possesses the power to issue a Contempt of Court Citation under Section 81.024 of the Texas 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 who 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.

- d. It is not the intention of the Mills County Commissioners' Court to provide a public forum for the demeaning of any individual or group. Neither is it the intention of the Court to allow a member (or members) of the public to insult the honesty and/or 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 criticisms 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.
 - e. Cellular phones, radios and paging devices must be silenced prior to entering the Commissioners' Court room. Response to a silent alert from an electronic device must occur after leaving the Court room.
- V. The County Judge is the presiding officer of the Mills County Commissioners' Court and is a fully participating member thereof. In the event of the absence of the County Judge, the senior member (in terms of total number of years as an elected representative) of the Commissioners' Court present at the Regular, Special, Emergency Meeting or Executive Session, shall serve as the Judge Pro-Tem of the Court. However, nothing herein shall prevent the senior member of the Commissioners' Court from delegating this duty to another member of the Commissioners' Court.
- VI. The County Judge (or the designated Judge Pro-Tem of the Commissioners' Court), as presiding officer of the Commissioners' Court, is responsible for conducting all meetings. Members of the public who have properly completed a Public Participation Form and submitted same to the County Clerk must wait to be recognized before they will be allowed to address the Court.

VII. As Commissioners' Court is both recorded and streamed over the internet all parties speaking (Members of the Court, other elected officials or employees, invited participants or the properly participating public shall speak into a provided microphone. A podium and microphone is provided at the front of the court room for the general public and elected officials lacking a table microphone.

a. The court may at its option use remote technology for permit remote participation when deemed appropriate, This can range from teleconferencing to video conferencing.

b. Members of the Court may participate using remote technology subject to the rules of the Open Meetings Act and any applicable emergency orders.

VIII. Special Rules for the Press and the 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' Court room during the time the Court is in session.

d. Media interviews which are conducted outside the Commissioners' Court room 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 Mills 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 event, the Court shall appoint such other commissioned peace officers to serve as Bailiff as may be necessary.

- X. From time to time, the Commissioners Court shall conduct town meetings and 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 Mills 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.

ADOPTED BY THE UNANIMOUS VOTE OF THE MILLS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT on this the 27th day of May, 2025.


County Judge


Commissioner, Pct. 1


Commissioner, Pct. 2


Commissioner, Pct. 3


Commissioner, Pct. 4

Attest:


County Clerk



Exhibit A

MILLS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT

Public Participation Form

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

NAME: _____

HOME ADDRESS: _____

PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT: _____

EMPLOYMENT TELEPHONE: _____

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 the 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)?

(Printed Name)

(Signature)

NOTE: This Public Participation Form must be presented to the County Clerk prior to the commencement of the meeting.