

September 9, 2025

Parker County Commissioners Approve Resolutions for Proposed Justice Bond Package

Parker County commissioners voted unanimously Monday to approve two resolutions to use county assets to partially pay for debt incurred in the proposed Justice Bond package that county voters will decide on November 4.

One resolution committed the Commissioners Court to sell both the District Courts Building and the County Attorney's Office building, if the bond passes, and to put the entirety of the proceeds toward defraying the cost of the bond to the county's taxpayers.

The other resolution would require that, if the jail expansion bond passes, any money the county receives for leasing excess jail beds to other counties that exceeds the cost to the county for housing those inmates be used to reduce the bond's cost to county taxpayers.

Currently, the Parker County Jail is beyond its capacity and the county is paying multiple other counties to house its inmates. However, the proposed expansion would yield a jail size in excess of current jail population. Typically, extra beds are leased to other jails with excess inmates, just like Parker County is doing now.

On August 18, Parker County commissioners voted unanimously to submit two proposals to residents for their consideration. Proposition A would fund a \$104.7 million expansion of the Parker County Jail. This would include 336 beds built immediately as well as shell space, which could be completed later, to add an additional 384 beds. The current jail has space for 483 inmates.

Proposition B provides for a \$181.6 million justice center. If approved, that bond would fund the construction of a building with eight courtrooms and would include space for the judges of those courts as well as the office of the District Attorney, County Attorney, District Clerk, County Clerk and their respective staffs. The Parker County Sheriff's Office, adult probation and juvenile probation would also have satellite office space for court-related personnel. The proposal would also include a jury assembly room, a space currently lacking in any Parker County facility.

“The need for both of these proposals ties back to growth,” said Precinct 2 Commissioner Jacob Holt. “Along with the increasing population in our county comes an increasing need to house criminal offenders at the jail and a court system with the increased capacity to handle their cases as well as the civil cases. Today, Commissioners Court committed to using the county’s assets related to each proposition to offsetting as much of the tax burden as possible for our taxpayers.”

Also on Monday, architects with HDR Inc., which commissioners hired to assess needs and work on design for both proposals, released a preliminary rendering of what the justice center could look like. A different, more elaborate design was prematurely released last month regarding a larger structure than what commissioners ultimately approved. When cost figures become available, the Commissioners Court requested the HDR team to revamp the proposal to bring the price down.

“If the bonds pass, we will work closely with the Commissioners Court to finalize the plans for both the justice center and the jail expansion,” said HDR Architect Mike Brenchley. “These commissioners are committed to keeping costs down while providing the facilities the justice system needs and giving a nod to the county’s history.”

Sheriff Russ Authier emphasized the need for inmate space, noting that the jail has frequently been at 500 or more inmates, significantly more than the jail can currently accommodate. This has resulted in the county housing up to 50 inmates in other county jails, which costs substantially more than it would cost to house them in the Parker County jail.

District Clerk Sharena Gilliland said that case filings in her office, which include those for felony crimes, have grown 30% over just the past five years.

District Attorney Jeff Swain said that in his 30 years as a Parker County prosecutor, he has seen the caseload of the DA’s Office nearly triple. “Parker County is a law and order county,” Swain said. “If we want to maintain that level of justice, not only do we need a big enough jail ,we have to make sure that we have enough courtrooms, judges, and prosecutors to do the necessary work on those cases.

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