

**Monday Musing:
Rural Life and
Civic Responsibility**

by James M. Decker

Over the weekend, my friend Erica Grieder, columnist for the Houston Chronicle and one of Texas' best political commentators, opined on Twitter about the importance of reasonable-minded folks running for office. This applies to all levels of government, but her thoughts were primarily directed at the local level. This got me to thinking about involvement in local communities, not just as an important task, but as a responsibility.

It's no secret that Theodore Roosevelt is an all-time favorite of mine. His unabashed curiosity, passion, leadership, and sense of duty to country and fellow man are qualities that we desperately need in America and are qualities that we should all strive to emulate. In a speech entitled "The Duties of American Citizenship," given in Buffalo, New York in 1883, Roosevelt spoke pointedly about the importance of involvement in local affairs:

"It ought to be axiomatic in this country that every man must devote a reasonable share of his time to doing his duty in the Political life of the community. No man has a right to shirk his political duties under whatever plea of pleasure or business." He concludes this thought with a pointed flourish, stating that anyone who shirks his duty to the state in time of peace shall be regarded as "only one degree worse than the man who thus shirks it in time of war."

As a society, we rarely think of local community involvement as a "duty," particularly not on par with wartime duty. We tend to view community involvement as a volunteer opportunity that we might participate in later, if it is convenient, and if we don't have anything else going on. It's high time we stop that attitude.

As I've written in the past, we stand at a particularly crucial time for rural America. State, national, and global economic forces are not particularly friendly to us. Our local budgets are tighter, as revenues decline and expenses go up. We continue to have less and less representation on the state and national political levels. New vision, new direction, and

innovative ideas are necessary to ensure that our rural communities survive, and even more necessary if we want our communities to truly THRIVE for current and future generations. Not since our forefathers tamed and settled these rural lands has it been so critical for strong voices to step up and lead in rural communities.

I know you're busy in life. I am too. We're all busy. But in our local community, SOMEONE is going to get involved, whether you like it or not, whether you have time or not. Whether it's an elected office, taking leadership in a community organization, or devoting your resources or voice to impact the community's direction, what will you do? Will you heed the call of Roosevelt and devote a reasonable share of your time to do your duty? Or will you simply leave your community's fate to the whims of those who didn't have anything else to do?

James Decker is a lawyer, farmer, and city councilman in Stamford, and the creator of the forthcoming "West of 98" podcast and website. He may be contacted through Facebook at facebook.com/james.decker.

**Bronte ISD
School Board**

**Meeting minutes told
November 14, 2017**

The Bronte ISD Board of Trustees held a regularly scheduled meeting on November 14, 2017. Those in attendance were:

Board Members: Shane Kelton, David McWright, Blake Braswell, Jodie Arrott, Ashley Braswell, Josh Schoenfield, John Seales;

Administration: Tim Siler, John Phillips, Jenny Baker;

Guests: Maureen Youngblood, Heather Middleton.

Prayer: The meeting was opened at 7:03 pm with prayer by David McWright.

Roll Call and Establish Quorum: Quorum was established at 7:03 pm with seven members present.

Canvas Results of the November 7, 2017, Tax Ratification Election: The Tax Ratification Election passed with 110 votes for and 77 votes against for a total of 187 votes. Ashley Braswell made the motion to accept the results of the election. Blake Braswell seconded. Ayes: 7, Nays: 0.



Officer Installation! Debbie Childers installs the 2018 Vision with a Purpose officers during the group's January meeting. They include (from left) Leta Caston, Jeffie Roberts, Sheri Millican, Beverly Burdett, Dianne Hefner, Crystal Stanford, and Floyd Pettitt.

Motion passed.

Reading and Approve Bill Listing: Jodie Arrott made a motion to approve the bill listing. David McWright seconded. Ayes: 7, Nays: 0. Motion passed.

Reading and Approval of Minutes: Minutes for the Regular October Meeting were presented and read. The motion to approve as corrected was made by Blake Braswell and seconded by Josh Schoenfield. Ayes: 7, Nays: 0. Motion passed.

Discuss/Approve 2016-2017 Audit by Burl Lowery, CPA: Mr. Lowery presented the 2016-2017 audit. He advised there were no questionable costs or findings and there was an excess in revenue over expenditures. David McWright made a motion to approve the audit as presented. Ashley Braswell seconded. Ayes: 7, Nays: 0. Motion passed.

Audience Items: No audience items.

Principals Reports

Update on Student Activities: Mr. Phillips presented a quick update on activities. BISD has finished the second 6 weeks and both the Band and Volleyball advanced to State.

Student Counts and ADA: BISD's current enrollment is 248 students total; ADA is at 96%.

Superintendent's Report

Finance Update: Mr. Siler

gave an update on school finances. He advised BISD is approximately 40% through the school year and went over the most realized functions to date and the least realized. Some functions are more realized than normal due to conference travel and bus problems.

Facilities Update: Mr. Siler gave an update on the facilities. He is continuing to monitor the HVAC and have budgeted for 4 units to be replaced this year. BISD has also entered into an agreement with Patriot Mechanical on preventative HVAC maintenance. Mr. Siler is also looking into a possible telephone and intercom replacement. The current intercoms are still analog, but Voice Over IP might be a possibility and he is going to get some quotes on this.

Transportation Update: BISD has had many issues in regards to busses and Mr. Siler advised this is something that will need to be addressed in the near future.

Discuss/Amend 2017-2018 Budget: Mr. Siler advised the budget will need to be amended \$198,854 on both the revenue and expenditures sides due to the passing of the TRE. David McWright made a motion to amend as presented. Josh Schoenfield seconded. Ayes: 7, Nays: 0. Motion passed.

Discuss/Approve by Resolution to Cast Ballot for Board Director for the Coke

County Appraisal District: Bronte ISD has 830 total votes to allocate. David McWright made the motion to allocate by resolution 427 votes to Michael Cervenka and 403 votes to Orlando DeLaGarza. Blake Braswell seconded. Ayes: 7, Nays: 0. Motion passed.

Executive Session: These items require a closed meeting a authorized by Section 551.001 through 551.146 of the Texas Government Code. The Board entered into Executive Session at 8:11 pm and came out at 8:43 pm.

- Discuss Personnel Matters with Superintendent, evaluation, reassignment, duties, discipline or dismissal of a public officer or employee.

- Consult with attorney regarding legal issues related to bus transportation - Texas Government Code, sections 551.071 and 551.129.

Consider Possible Action on Matters Discussed in Executive Session, If Needed: No action needed.

Set Date and Time of First Rating Hearing and December Board Meeting: First Rate Hearing will take place December 14, 2017, at 6:30 pm with board meeting immediately following.

Correspondence: None.

Adjournment: Blake Braswell made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Josh Schoenfield seconded. Ayes: 7, Nays: 0. Motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 8:46 pm.

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**2018 Midessa Boat, RV
Sport & Gun Show**



Ladies Night Friday 9th • 5 pm - 8 pm "Ladies Free"
Adults: \$7 • Seniors: \$5 • Children: \$3 (3yrs. - 11yrs.)

Friday February 9th • 10am - 8pm
Saturday February 10th • 10am - 8pm
Sunday February 11th • 10am - 5pm

Ector County Coliseum
42nd & Andrews Hwy. • Odessa, TX
www.midessaaboatshow.net



Emergency Siren Signals

Cities of both Bronte and Robert Lee

1 Long Ring - Wind Advisory over 60 mph

2 Rings - Fire or VFD Meeting

Another 2 Ring - Call for Additional Firefighters

3 Rings - Tornado Warning

1 Long Continuous Ring - All Clear for Tornado

4 Rings - Alarm Test