

Perhaps most importantly, what does it say to our young people who are trying to decide their future path, and whether their hometown will have a place in their life or not? If the leaders don't appear to love the place, why should anyone else love it?

If we care about our rural places, we surely want to see them survive and thrive into the future. We know that goal takes more than just us. It requires inspiring others to invest in that goal. But first, we have to inspire them to love our place. In the words of Christian Beckwith, people will not fight for something that they don't love.

I leave you with this: if you love your place, show it. Don't just assume that your role in that place expresses your love to others. If you use more words on the warts than your love, think about how to change that. As a thought exercise, spend a few minutes writing down all the reasons you love the place. You'll be surprised how much love you do have. After you do, don't be afraid to show that love to others. You might inspire some others to love it and fight for it just as much as you 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.*

**Commissioners Court meeting minutes told**

The Coke County Commissioners Court met in special session January 23, 2018, at 9 am in the County Courthouse. Those in attendance included County Judge Roy Blair, Commissioner Precinct 2 Paul Williams, Commissioner Precinct 3 Marshall Millican, Commissioner Precinct 4 Joe Sefcik, and Deputy Clerk Monica Reyes.

The meeting opened with the pledge to the flag and prayer was offered by Judge Blair.

Judge Blair announced the presence of a quorum.

The burn ban continues to remain in effect.

Commissioner Williams moved to approve the minutes. The motion, seconded by Commissioner Sefcik, carried.

Commissioner Williams moved to approve the payroll. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Sefcik and the motion carried.

Commissioner Williams moved to approve Accounts Payable for payroll. The motion, seconded by Commissioner Millican, carried.

Commissioner Robertson moved to approve the quarterly state fees. Commissioner Millican seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Commissioner Williams moved to approve the amended personnel policy. Commissioner Sefcik seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Commissioner Millican moved to approve the resignation of Carlene Bounds as Robert Lee Park Caretaker. The motion, seconded by Commissioner Sefcik, carried.

The new County Trapper, Billy Moore, was introduced.

The Interlocal Agreement with Veterans Services will be put back on the agenda at a later date. Judge Blair will be in communication with Veterans Services to get more information.

Judge Blair reported on the Stock Show. Entries were down but it seems as though the Bar-B-Que went really well.

Commissioner Robertson reported that the Rec Hall had problems with the heater, but it had been fixed.

Judge Blair stated that he has an appointment with an attorney who is representing Texas Wind Energy. Judge Blair will be filled in on some of the planning.

Judge Blair adjourned the meeting at 9:38 am.

**Bronte City Council Meeting minutes told**

The Bronte City Council met in regular session on Thursday, December 14, 2017, at 6:30 pm at Bronte City Hall.

Those present included Mayor Gerald Sandusky, Mayor Pro Tem David Bedford, Council Member Paul Gohman, Council Member Santiago Rodriguez, Council Member Wade Stautzenberger, Council Member Stormy Vaughn, City Secretary Crystal Blevins, City Attorney Eileen M. Hayman, and Utilities Director Ricky Royall.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited and prayer was given by Mayor Pro Tem David Bedford.

The Bronte ISD Lady Longhorn volleyball team was recognized for competing at the



**Accident!** The Coke County Sheriff's Department, West Coke County EMS, and Robert Lee Volunteer Fire Department responded to a one vehicle crash on February 17, 2018. The rollover occurred one mile south of FM 2262 on State Highway 208. The driver was ejected and transported to Shannon Medical Center. The accident is being investigated by the Texas Department of Public Safety.

2017 UIL State Volleyball Championship Tournament.

Citizen Comments were then heard, with Lee Wommack giving his resignation from the Economic Development Corporation.

The minutes from the November 16, 2017, meeting were discussed. Changes from the minutes are as follows:

3.2 - Mayor Pro Tem David Bedford abstained, not Council Member Paul Gohman;

4.3 - Crystal Blevins presented the Code Enforcement Report, not the Sheriff's Department Report;

4.4 - Bill Torres has not resigned as Fire Chief;

4.23 - Remove Gerald Sandusky and add Paul Gohman as voted against.

A motion was made by Mayor

Pro Tem David Bedford to approve of the November 16, 2017, City Council meeting minutes with changes and was seconded by Council Member Paul Gohman. The motion carried, 5 - 0.

A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem David Bedford to approve of the monthly report and seconded by Council Member Stormy Vaughn. The motion carried, 5 - 0.

Council Member Santiago Rodriguez made a motion to approve of the bills paid and was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem David Bedford.

A motion was made by Council Member Stormy Vaughn to approve of the revenue and expenditures report and was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem David Bedford. The motion carried, 5 - 0.

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**Citizens of Coke County**

The exchange of services between County and City is governed by law in the Texas Constitution, Article III Section 52, which prohibits one governmental entity from making a gift to another entity. From time to time, it is important for our elected officials to review exchanges to ensure all entities are within the law. It's my opinion that in the past, County Commissioners violated this law by maintaining the streets in the City of Bronte without "fair compensation" as required by our Constitution.

However, in the past three years, the Bronte City Council and the Coke County Commissioners Court have agreed upon a new Interlocal Agreement and set policies that have been adopted by both to address how Coke County can help Bronte with its municipal streets. I believe this new agreement helps ensure that Bronte and Coke County are now in legal compliance. Neighboring counties are also going through similar challenges, and are adapting new ways and in some cases, new fees to generate revenue for city street repairs.

For Bronte property owners, the portion of your property taxes that goes to Coke County covers a variety of services mandated by State law, including all the functions of the Courthouse (Judge, Clerk, Auditor, Tax Assessor, Treasurer, et al.) and the Sheriff's office. Additionally, part of your taxes covers the cost of non-mandated services like your park, Senior Citizens Center, and rural transportation. What they do not cover (legally) is the municipal streets in the City of Bronte.

Please be assured of our desire to continue to work together for the finest, most efficient services possible within the framework of the law. Contact me if you would like more information on this topic. It has been an honor to serve you, and I would appreciate your vote!

**Paul Williams**  
*Commissioner, Precinct 2*

*See also: Article XI, Section 2; Title 6 of the Transportation Code, 251.012*

Paid Political Advertisement by Paul Williams

I would sincerely appreciate your vote and support in the upcoming Republican Primary election on March 6, 2018.

Thank you,  
**Russell Johnson**  
Candidate for  
**Justice of the Peace**

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