

Public Comment Handout for Jack County Commissioners Court

Consent Agenda Item 2(h): Ratification of the Bohner Law Firm Engagement PLLC Letter

I am not opposed to Jack County getting legal advice when legal advice is needed. My request is that the Court make the public purpose, authority, scope, cost, and reporting process clear before ratifying an attorney engagement. This is about clarity for taxpayers, not opposition to legal counsel.

KEY QUESTIONS BEFORE RATIFICATION

- 1. WHY:** What specific county need or legal matter requires this outside attorney?
- 2. WHAT:** What is the written scope of representation, and what issues may the attorney work on?
- 3. WHO:** Who is the client: Jack County, Commissioners Court, the County Judge, a department, or individual officials?
- 4. AUTHORITY:** Who authorized the engagement before ratification, and under what authority?
- 5. PROCESS:** Is this being ratified because work has already begun? If so, when did the work begin and why could it not wait for Court approval?
- 6. SELECTION:** Was this attorney selected because of specific expertise? Were other options considered?
- 7. COST:** What are the hourly rates, retainers, expected total cost, and not-to-exceed amount?
- 8. FUNDING:** What budget line will pay for the engagement, and will future invoices return to Court for approval?
- 9. CONFLICTS:** Has the attorney disclosed conflicts involving county vendors, developers, tax abatement applicants, elected officials, or pending county matters?
- 10. TRANSPARENCY:** What portions of the engagement letter, invoices, and work product will be public records, while still protecting legitimate attorney-client privilege?

Requested on the record

If the Court moves forward, please state on the record: the public purpose, the client, the scope, the cost controls, the funding source, the conflict disclosures, and how invoices will be reviewed.

Taxpayer bottom line

Our taxes are high enough when y'all get things right. We cannot afford to pay for mistakes too.

Reference: Jack County Commissioners Court agenda, June 22, 2026, Consent Agenda Item 2(h). Submitted by John Barry, Jack County Democratic Chair.

Agenda Item 11: Strategic Communications Consultant

Questions and requested guardrails before taxpayer money is committed

Submitted by John Barry, Jack County Democratic Chair

I support clearer County communication. But the agenda does not tell residents whether the Court already has a consultant in mind, whether this is only the start of a search, or what specific county need this would address. Before action, the Court should define the public purpose, cost, scope, and election-season guardrails on the record.

Core concern: County communications should serve Jack County as a public institution. They should not become campaign support, personal reputation management, political messaging, or advocacy for any officeholder. This matters because the County Judge and Precinct 4 Commissioner positions may face write-in campaigns.

Key questions for the Court

- 1. What county need or problem is this consultant meant to solve?**
- 2. Is this for general public information, or for a specific issue such as the data center, tax abatement, public records, or emergency services?**
- 3. Is the Court hiring a specific consultant today, or only starting a search or request for proposals?**
- 4. Who will the consultant work for: Jack County as an institution, the Commissioners Court, the County Judge, or individual officials?**
- 5. What written scope of work will define the role, deliverables, approval process, and limits?**
- 6. What will it cost, what is the term, what is the not-to-exceed amount, and what budget line pays for it?**
- 7. What conflicts must be disclosed, including work for county vendors, developers, tax abatement applicants, or campaigns?**
- 8. Will the contract prohibit campaign work, election advocacy, personal political messaging, and reputation management for individual officials?**
- 9. Will invoices, drafts, talking points, emails, and deliverables be retained as county records?**
- 10. Who approves public statements, and what safeguards prevent the consultant from acting as a go-between for Court members outside a posted meeting?**

Requested guardrail: Do not commit public funds until the purpose, scope, cost, records rules, conflicts, and election-season limits are clear. Public money should buy public information, not political advantage.