

**PUBLIC COMMENTS
COMMISSIONERS COURT MEETING
August 13, 2024**

My name is Claire Nybro, Burnet County voter and taxpayer.

Based on audio records, I believe that Judge Oakley owes Mr. Raymond Whelan a public apology and that the commissioners were remiss to allow Mr. Whelan to be mistreated last Wednesday during the Special Session.

I will play a condensed audio recording from the commissioners court meeting on July 23, 2024, when Judge Oakley said the Baker Tilly audit is "something that we can't talk about in open session, and we don't talk about it in Executive Session either.....but there's nothing to hide." This was correctly quoted by Mr. Whelan in an article dated July 26, 2024, that was printed in The Highlander.

Last Wednesday during the Special Session, Judge Oakley said he wasn't going to "sit there and take pie in the face", then he commenced to tell Mr. Whelan that he was misquoted because "I was saying that we couldn't talk about it during that open session because it wasn't listed as an agenda item..." The audio recording from last Wednesday clearly catches Judge Oakley in a lie.

And Judge Oakley does have to sit there and take pie in the face:

**GOVERNMENT CODE
TITLE 5. OPEN GOVERNMENT; ETHICS
SUBTITLE A. OPEN GOVERNMENT
CHAPTER 551. OPEN MEETINGS
SUBCHAPTER A. GENERAL PROVISIONS**

Sec. 551.007. PUBLIC TESTIMONY. (e) A governmental body may not prohibit public criticism of the governmental body, including criticism of any act, omission, policy, procedure, program, or service. This subsection does not apply to public criticism that is otherwise prohibited by law.

Burnet County divulges total cash and investments

By Raymond V. Whelan
Staff Writer

Burnet County commissioners received an update about their financial holdings July 23, during their regular meeting.

During her third quarter report for Fiscal Year 2024, County Treasurer Karrie Crownover announced the county counted a total cash and investment balance of more than \$64.7 million through the end of last month.

Furthermore, county holdings in the LOGIC, TexPool and Texas Co-operative Liquid Assets Securities System local government investment pools are yielding more than 5%, in tandem with the six-month U.S. Treasury Bill.

Also, commissioners

recognized the work of probation officers.

Texas Gov. Greg Abbott recently proclaimed July 21-27 as "Pretrial, Probation and Parole Supervision Week."

In turn, the commissioners applauded 33rd and 424th District Court probation officers.

"They all do a tough job," Burnet County James Oakley said.

In other business, the commissioners:

- Applied to the Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA) for temporary raw water irrigation no more than 10 acre-feet per year (about 3.2 million gallons) from October 2024 through September 2027;

- Approved a reimbursement grant of

\$35,000 from the Capital Area Council of Governments for county household hazardous waste collection events;

- Applied for the Fiscal Year 2025 Texas Rural Law Enforcement Grant Program authorized for the sheriff, county attorney and district attorney;

- Approved a work order for KC Engineering to provide construction costs for work on CR 114 from RM 690 to RM 2341, to be paid out of Fiscal Year 2022 tax notes;

- Approved bids for paving at CR 420; and

- Approved advertising for bids to construct the Development Services building next to the Burnet County Courthouse Annex on the square.

Moments before the

meeting ended, during time for "discussion regarding any previous agenda items" Bertram resident Charlie Parker approached the commissioners to discuss an ongoing independent audit of alleged payroll irregularities related to the sheriff's office.

Oakley ruled Parker out of order, because the subject matter was not appropriate for "old business."

Parker asked to discuss the issue under "public comment."

Oakley granted Parker permission to speak as such.

Then, Parker voiced questions related to an ongoing independent audit focused on alleged payroll regularities with-

in the Burnet County Sheriff's Office.

Last September, the commissioners hired the independent firm Baker-Tilly to conduct the audit.

According to his personal copy of the Baker-Tilly proposed schedule, the audit was planned for completion last November, Parker said.

"Has Baker Tilly complied with the terms of their contract and provided the results of their audit?" Parker asked.

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American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 will pay for the new software.

Since Parker posed his question during time set aside for public comment, by law, the commissioners could not respond.

After Parker finished his comment, Oakley spoke briefly.

"The Baker Tilly report will come forward when it is ready," Oakley said.

"We (the commissioners) cannot talk about it during open session nor during executive session. There is nothing to hide."

Also, the judge praised Ferguson and his election administration associates.

"I have all the confidence in the world in Doug and all the work they do," Oakley said.