

City of Hempstead
Commerce and Civic Association Monthly August Minutes
Tuesday, August 18th, 2026

Call to Order:

President Cheryl Hardwick called the HCCA August monthly meeting to order at 6:06 P.M.

Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance:

The invocation was given by Board Member James Garfield and Treasurer Raul Villarreal led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call of HCCA Board Members:

HCCA Board Members present were President Cheryl Hardwick, Vice President Melissa Hegemeyer, Secretary Katherine Ward, Treasurer Raul Villarreal, and Board Members James Garfield and Vicki LeBlanc. Board Member Kenneth Pilcher was absent.

Welcome HCCA Members and Visitor's:

President Cheryl Hardwick welcomed all HCCA members and the visitor's present.

Sign In Sheet for Attendance and Door Prizes:

President Cheryl Hardwick asked everyone to please sign in so we would have a record of their visit and to sign up for the door prizes.

Approval of the June 2026 Monthly HCCA Monthly Minutes:

Secretary Katherine Ward made a motion to accept the HCCA June 26 monthly minutes, and a second motion was made by Board Member James Garfield. A vote was taken and the motion carried.

Approval of the August 2026 HCCA Treasurers Reports:

Board Member James Garfield made a motion to accept the HCCA August 2026 treasurer's report, and a second motion was made by Treasurer Raul Villarreal. A vote was taken and the motion carried.

Recognize and Honor Carolina Hernandez, Juan Munoz, Nayelia Reyes, and Stephanie Rodriquez the Prosperity Bank Employees for volunteering at the Watermelon Festival with the information booth:

President Cheryl Hardwick thanked the Prosperity Bank employees and stated that the HCCA would like to extend their heartfelt thanks to the wonderful employees of Prosperity Bank for volunteering their time and helping make this year's Annual Watermelon Festival a success.

Your willingness to give your time, energy, and talents to support our community is truly appreciated. Volunteers like you are what make it possible for us to provide a fun, family-friendly event that our community can enjoy free of charge.

We are grateful for Prosperity Bank's continued support of Hempstead and for your employees who have stepped up to serve our community. Thank you for being a valued community partner and for helping make the Watermelon Festival so special.

Recognize and Honor the Beta Club Members that won at the National Beta Convention:

Liliana Herrera – National Champion for Onsite Art and 7th Place for Drawing

Jose Cardenas – Second Place 11th Grade Spanish

Christian Vega Stephens – Second Place 11th Grade Psychology

President Cheryl Hardwick stated that the HCCA proudly recognizes and congratulates the outstanding members of the Hempstead High School Beta Club who represented Hempstead ISD at the Beta National Finals.

Advancing to the national level is a tremendous accomplishment and a reflection of your hard work, dedication, talent, and commitment to excellence. Competing against students from across the nation is an honor, and we are especially proud of you for placing in your competitions.

Your achievements bring great pride to your families, your school, and the entire Hempstead community. You have demonstrated that with determination, preparation, and perseverance, great things are possible.

Congratulations to each of our Hempstead Beta Club members. We celebrate your accomplishments and thank you for representing Hempstead ISD and our community with excellence at the national level.

We are proud of you and look forward to celebrating many more achievements in the future.

HCCA Donation to the Hempstead Beta Club in the amount of \$700.00 for helping with the Watermelon Growers Contest and Auction at the Watermelon Festival:

President Cheryl Hardwick stated that the HCCA would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to Christine Herbert and the Hempstead Beta Club members who generously volunteered their time and energy to help with the Watermelon Growers Contest. Your hard work, dedication, and willingness to serve helped make these important festival activities a success. We truly appreciate the time and effort you have made to help make the Watermelon Festival a special event for our community.

As a small token of our appreciation, the Hempstead Commerce and Civic Association is pleased to present the Hempstead Beta Club with a \$700.00 check in recognition of their outstanding volunteer service.

Thank you, Christine, and Beta Club members, for representing Hempstead ISD and demonstrating the true meaning of community service, leadership, and giving back. We are proud of each of you and grateful for all that you do for our community.

HCCA Donation to the Hempstead Theatre Club in the amount of \$700.00 for helping with the clean up after the Watermelon Festival:

President Cheryl Hardwick stated that the HCCA would like to extend our heartfelt appreciation to the Hempstead Theater Club for their outstanding volunteer work following this year's Watermelon Festival.

On Sunday after the festival, the Theater Club members generously gave their time to help fold and put away tables and chairs, take down decorations, and pick up sponsor signs. Their hard work and willingness to serve helped make the cleanup process much easier and is truly appreciated.

The HCCA is proud to recognize the Hempstead Theater Club for their dedication to our community. In appreciation for their outstanding volunteer service, the HCCA is pleased to present the Hempstead Theater Club with a check for \$700.00.

Thank you for giving your time, energy, and talents to help make the Watermelon Festival a success. We are grateful for organizations like the Hempstead Theater Club that continue to step up and support our community.

Report on the previous HCCA 2025 Watermelon Royalty parades:

President Cheryl Hardwick stated that the Hempstead Commerce and Civic Association would like to extend our sincere appreciation to Melissa Carter, Chairperson of the Watermelon Festival Royalty, Co-Chairperson Tassidy Contreras; and Float Driver Julian Alvarez for their dedication and hard work in representing the City of Hempstead and the Watermelon Festival throughout the past year.

Because of their commitment, our 2025 Watermelon Festival Royalty was able to travel to and participate in parades throughout many towns, proudly representing Hempstead and our beloved Watermelon Festival.

Their hard work and dedication also helped our HCCA float receive two outstanding recognitions:



Mayor's Trophy at the 73rd Annual Luling Watermelon Thump



First Place – Best Out-of-Town Float at the 78th Annual McDade Watermelon Festival

These honors are a wonderful reflection of the time, effort, and pride that Melissa, Tassidy, Julian, and our 2025 Watermelon Festival Royalty put into representing our community.

Thank you for helping carry the spirit of Hempstead and the Watermelon Festival wherever you went. We are proud of each of you and grateful for your service to our community!

Recognize and Honor the 2026 Watermelon Festival Royalty:

President Cheryl Hardwick stated that the Hempstead Commerce and Civic Association is proud to introduce the 2026 Watermelon Festival Royalty.



Watermelon Queen – Karlea Cruz



Watermelon Princess – Alexa Grimaldo



Watermelon Duchess – Cay-Driann Tucker



Little Miss Watermelon – Skylar Smith

These young ladies worked very hard to earn sponsorships and sell tickets for the Watermelon Festival drawing. Their dedication, enthusiasm, and commitment are truly appreciated.

The HCCA congratulates each of them on a great job and looks forward to seeing them represent the Hempstead Commerce and Civic Association, the City of Hempstead, and our wonderful community throughout the coming year.

Please join us in congratulating our 2026 Watermelon Festival Royalty and wishing them a wonderful and successful year as they proudly represent Hempstead.

Congratulations, ladies, and thank you for your hard work.

Recognize and Honor the winners of the 2026 Watermelon Festival Parade Awards:

President Cheryl Hardwick stated that the HCCA would like to recognize Skylar Smith for winning Most Creative Entry in the Watermelon Festival Parade and Neysa Aguero for winning the Best Decorated Vehicle. Your hard work, creativity, and dedication truly paid off. We are so proud of you both and we appreciate you helping make our Watermelon Festival Parade so special.

Congratulations, Skylar, and Neysa! We are proud of you.

House of Help will be having “The Best Hempstead Gala” on Saturday, September 12th, 2026, at 6:30 P.M. at the Red Oak Ranch in Hempstead. The House of Help needs canned goods for their food pantry:

The House of Help in Hempstead is a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping individuals and families in our community who are in need. Each month, the House of Help provides food and other essential items to hundreds of people throughout our community.

The House of Help needs canned goods and non-perishable meats. Donations of canned vegetables, cereal, tuna, Spam, canned stews, other canned meats, and other non-perishable food items are greatly appreciated.

Sid and Tim Chipman have volunteered their time and worked tirelessly to help our community for many years. Their dedication and compassion have made a tremendous difference in the lives of so many local families.

We encourage our businesses, organizations, churches, families, and individuals to come together and support the House of Help. Every donation, large or small, can help put food on someone's table and make a difference in the life of a neighbor in need.

Please consider donating canned goods and non-perishable food items to the House of Help. Together, we can continue to support Sid and Tim Chipman in their mission of helping those in need and making our Hempstead community a better place for everyone.

The House of Help will be having their "The Best of Hempstead Gala" on Saturday, September 12th, 2026, at 6:30 P.M. at the Red Oak Ranch in Hempstead. You can go online to donate and buy tickets by going to www.hohgala.org.

HCCA Membership - \$100.00 for businesses, \$50.00 for non-profit organizations, and \$25.00 for an individual:

President Cheryl Hardwick stated that the HCCA is an organization dedicated to supporting and strengthening our community. Through the generosity and hard work of our members, we are proud to give back to our schools, churches, nonprofit organizations, and community initiatives.

We are honored to welcome and recognize new businesses, to celebrate the achievements of our school district, students, teachers, and individuals and acknowledge the outstanding accomplishments that make our community such a special place to live and work.

We invite you to join us at HCCA and become a part of a group that is committed to service, community pride, and investing in the future of Hempstead. Together, we can continue to make a difference. Join us today and help us build an even stronger community for tomorrow.

Old Business:

President Cheryl Hardwick stated that the Watermelon Festival was a huge success. She thanked the sponsors and all the volunteers for helping with the festival.

New Business:

President Cheryl Hardwick stated that the HCCA had been contacted by the Southern Living Magazine to do a story of Hempstead and the Watermelon Festival, and they had asked for pictures of downtown Hempstead and the Watermelon Festival. Board Member Vicki LeBlanc, the HCCA's official photographer, has already sent pictures to the Southern Living Magazine. We look forward to seeing the story in an upcoming magazine.

Next Meeting – Tuesday, September 15th, 2026, at 6:00 P.M. at the St Bartholomew's Episcopal Church at 811 14th Street, Hempstead, Texas.

Upcoming Events:

- Meet the Bobcats to kickoff the 2026-2027 school year with Bobcat Pride on Wednesday, August 19th, 2026, at Bobcat Stadium. Gates open at 5:30 P.M. and the pep rally begins at 6:00 P.M.
- Praise in the Park by the Hempstead Church of Christ on Sunday, August 30th, 2026, at the City Park located at 250 Blasingame Road in Hempstead. Join us for an evening of worship and fellowship.
- Hempstead American Legion Post 459 located at 31667 FM 1736 in Hempstead and next to the fire station. Meetings are held each month on the second Monday of the month at 6:00 P.M.
- Waller County VFW Meets the first Tuesday of each month at the VFW Hall located at 1236 New Orleans in Hempstead. Doors open at 6:30 P.M. and the meeting starts at 7:00 P.M. All Veterans, auxiliary members, and supporters are welcome.
- Waller County VFW Firearm Raffle – Runs from July 26th to September 26th, 2026.
- Waller County Fair Kickoff Dinner and Auction on Friday, September 11th, 2026, at the Edmonds Hall at the Waller County Fairgrounds in Hempstead.
- House of Help – “The Best of Hempstead Gala” on Saturday, September 12th, 2026, at the Red Oak Ranch located at 52715 US 290 in Hempstead. You will be able to enjoy food and vote for your favorite restaurant. For donations and tickets go to www.hofgala.org.
- Mount Corinth Missionary Baptist Church will honor Pastor Clarence Talley, Sr and First Lady Carolyn Talley on their 13th Anniversary serving as Pastor and First Lady of the Mount at 11:00 A.M. at the church located at 807 7th Street in Hempstead.
- Waller County Fair & Rodeo BBQ Cook-off on Friday, September 18th and Saturday, September 19th, 2026, at the Waller County Fairgrounds in Hempstead.
- Waller County Fair and Rodeo runs from Thursday, September 24th until Saturday, October 3rd, 2026, at the Waller County Fair Grounds.
- Waller County Fair Parade on Saturday, September 16th, 2026, at 10:00 A.M. in downtown Hempstead.
- Friends for Wishes BBQ Cook-off 2026 on Friday, October 23rd and Saturday, October 24th, 2026, at the Waller County Fairgrounds in Hempstead. For more information go to www.friendsforwishes.org/bbqcook-off2026.

Door prizes and refreshments were served:

The door prizes were donated by Melissa Hegemeyer with Hegemeyer Realty and Associates and Julian Alvarez with Texas Premier Residential Services, LLC. The winners of the door prizes were Juana Herrera, Miguel Montero, Perfecto Ortiz, Tanya Simons, Tanna Thiel, and Cay-Driann Tucker. Congratulations to the winners and refreshments were served after the door prizes.

Adjourn:

Board Member Vicki LeBlanc made a motion to adjourn the monthly meeting, and a second motion was made by Board Member James Garfield. A vote was taken and the motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 6:44 P.M.

Submitted by Secretary Katherine Ward_____

Approved and signed by President Cheryl Hardwick_____

