City of Hempstead
Commerce and Civic Association Monthly Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, September 15th, 2026

Call to Order:
The monthly HCCA meeting was called to order by President Cheryl Hardwick at 6:07 P.M.

Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance:
President Cheryl Hardwick gave the invocation, and the Pledge of Allegiance was led by Treasurer Raul Villarreal.

Roll Call of HCCA Board Members:
HCCA Board Members present were President Cheryl Hardwick, Vice President Melissa Hegemeyer, Treasurer Raul Villarreal, and Board Member Vicki LeBlanc. Absent from the meeting were Secretary Katherine Ward, and Board Members James Garfield and Kenneth Pilcher.

Welcome HCCA Members and Visitors:
President Cheryl Hardwick welcomed all HCCA Members and the visitors.

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 August 2026 Monthly HCCA Monthly Minutes:
A motion was made by Board Member Vicki LeBlanc to accept the August 2026 monthly minutes, and a second motion was made by Vice President Melissa Hegemeyer. A vote was taken and the motion carried.

Approval of the September 2026 HCCA Treasurers Reports:
A motion was made by Treasurer Raul Villarreal to approve the September 2026 HCCA Treasurers Report and a second was made by Vice President Melissa Hegemeyer. A vote was taken and the motion carried.

Recognize and Honor Ana Leach the Director of Bands for the Hempstead ISD and Erik Mott the Assistant Band Director:
President Cheryl Hardwick recognized and honored Ana Leach the new Director of Bands for the Hempstead ISD. Assistant Band Director Erik Mott was not at the meeting. President Cheryl Hardwick sincerely thanked the Band Director and Assistant for everything they do for our school district and, most importantly, for our band students. Your dedication, patience, hard work, and commitment do not go unnoticed. Thank you for giving our students opportunities to grow, build confidence, learn discipline, and create memories they will carry with them for years to come. We truly appreciate the time and effort you pour into our band program. Thank you for all that you do.

Recognize and Honor the Trinity Lutheran Church of Hempstead for volunteering for the watermelon eating and seed spitting contest at the Watermelon Festival:
President Cheryl Hardwick stated to the Trinity Lutheran Church of Hempstead that The HCCA would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to the church for volunteering again this year at the Annual Watermelon Festival. We truly appreciate the members of Trinity Lutheran Church for helping with the Watermelon Easting Contest and the Seed Spitting Contest. Your time, hard work, and willingness to volunteer helped make these fun festival activities a success. Thank you for continuing to support the HCCA and the Hempstead community. We are grateful for your partnership and dedication to making this Watermelon Festival a special event for everyone to enjoy.

Recognize and Honor Jacob Herbert for volunteering at the Watermelon Festival:
President Cheryl Hardwick stated that the HCCA would like to extend a heartful thanks to Jacob Herbert for volunteering his time and serving our community during the Hempstead Watermelon Festival. Jacob is an Eagle Scout and proudly served four years of active duty in the United States Marine Corps. His commitment to service began at a young age when he participated in placing American flags on the graves of veterans alongside his Boy Scout Troop and Mr. Travis Winfree, a World War II Veteran. It is especially meaningful to see that spirit of service continue throughout Jacob's life. From honoring our veterans as a young Scout to serving our country as a Marine and now volunteering his time to help make the Watermelon Festival a success, Jacob has demonstrated a true dedication to service and to his community. The HCCA sincerely appreciates Jacob Herbert for his time, hard work, and willingness to give back to Hempstead. We are proud to recognize and thank him for his outstanding service to our country and our community. Thank you, Jacob, for being an outstanding example of what it means to serve others.

HCCA to Donate to the Hempstead Athletic Booster Club as a Cats Platinum Sponsor:
President Cheryl Hardwick stated that the HCCA was proud to donate to the Hempstead Athletic Booster Club as a Cats Platinum Sponsor. The HCCA would like to express our sincere appreciation to the Athletic Booster Club for the countless hours of volunteer work and dedication they give to our school district, student-athletes, and our community. Your support helps provide valuable opportunities and resources for your students and athletic programs. We are grateful for all that you do to support the Hempstead ISD athletes and encourage our students to achieve their goals.

HCCA to Donate to the Hempstead Theatre Club as a Gold Partner:
President Cheryl Hardwick stated that the HCCA was proud to support the Hempstead Theatre Club as a Gold Partner. We would like to congratulate the Hempstead Theatre Club on all their hard work, dedication, and commitment to our community throughout the years. Your talent and volunteer spirit have made a lasting impact on Hempstead. The HCCA would also like to extend a special thank you to the Theatre Club for always being willing to lend a helping hand with the Annual Watermelon Festival. Your volunteers work hard to help make this special community event a success each year, and we truly appreciate everything you do. We are proud to partner with the Hempstead Theatre Club and wish you the very best as you prepare for this year's performances. We look forward to seeing you shine on stage. Congratulations, Hempstead Theatre Club, and thank you for all you do for our community.

Report on the Waller County VFW Firearm Raffle with VFW Representative Tanya Simons:

President Cheryl Hardwick introduced Tanya Simons with the Waller County VFW to talk about the VFW Firearm Raffle and upcoming events at the VFW. President Cheryl Hardwick stated that we are please to have Tanya with us today. She is here to share information about the Waller County VFW Firearm Raffle, including how you can participate and support the VFW. The VFW does so much to support our veterans and our community, and we appreciate Tanya taking the time to be with us today.

Recognize and Honor local Author Brian Di Iorio with his book series "Cody & Koda.":
President Cheryl Hardwick state that the HCCA would like to recognize and honor one of our own, Brian Di Iorio, a local author who grew up right here in Hempstead, Texas. Brian grew up on a farm, hauling watermelons every summer, watching storms roll across the fields, and learning what it truly means to belong to a community. Those experiences and memories became the inspiration for his first book, **Cody's Watermelon Summer**, the first book in a brand-new series following 9-year-old Cody and his dog, Koda, through the kind of summer that only happens when you are a small-town kid and the whole world feels like it fits inside a few square miles. Brian's story is a wonderful reminder that the places we grow up in can shape who we become and inspire us in ways we may not realize at the time. Brian graduated as Salutatorian of Hempstead High School and went on to attend Texas A&M University. While at Texas A&M, he was involved in student government for four years, gaining valuable leadership experience that has continued to be a part of his life.

Brian has continued his journey as an author. His newest book, ***The Disappearing Act***, has now been released, and he is already planning to release another book in December. The HCCA is proud to recognize Brian for his accomplishments and for bringing a little piece of Hempstead, Texas, to readers through his stories. We congratulate him on his success and wish him continued success with his writing and future books. Brian, congratulations, and thank you for helping share the spirit, memories, and heart of our hometown with the world.

Report on the HCCA Float winning 3rd Place for the Most Original Float at the Fayette County Fair Parade:
President Cheryl Hardwick Stated that the HCCA is proud to announce that our Watermelon Festival Float won 3rd Place for Most Original Float at the 99th Annual Fayette County Fair Parade. We would like to give a special thank-you to Melissa Carter and Tassidy Contreras, our Watermelon Royalty Committee, and Julian Alvarez**,** our float driver, for all their hard work and dedication in helping our Watermelon Royalty representing the City of Hempstead and the HCCA with such pride and enthusiasm. This past Saturday, our Watermelon Royalty and float also participated in the 157th Annual Washington County Parade**.** While that parade does not award trophies, we are proud that our group had the opportunity to represent the City of Hempstead and share our Watermelon Festival spirit with another community. Congratulations to everyone who helped make this another successful year for the HCCA Watermelon Festival Float! We are proud to bring home another trophy and continue representing Hempstead, Texas, and the HCCA wherever we go. Congratulations and thank you to everyone who made it possible.

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 welcomes businesses, nonprofit organizations, churches, and individuals to become members and be a part of our great organization. The HCCA is committed to giving back and supporting our schools, churches, nonprofit organizations, local businesses, and our community**.** Together, we work to make Hempstead a better place to live, work, and raise our families. Your membership and support

help us continue making a difference in our community through events, donations, recognition of local accomplishments, and community involvement. We would love to have you become a part of the HCCA family. Join us today and help us continue to support and strengthen the Hempstead community. The Hempstead Commerce and Civic Association — Working Together, Giving Back, and Building a Stronger Community.

Old Business:
No old business.

New Business:
No new business.

Next Meeting – Tuesday, October 20th, 2026, at 6:00 P.M. at the St Bartholomew's Episcopal Church at 811 14th Street, Hempstead, Texas.

Upcoming Events:

- 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.
- 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 & Rodeo Cornhole Tournament on Sunday, September 20th, 2026, at Edmonds Hall at the Waller County Fairgrounds.
- 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 26th, 2026, at 10:00 A.M. in downtown Hempstead.
- St Katharine Drexel Altar Society's Annual Turkey Dinner on Thursday, October 8, 2026, at the Hempstead Columbus Hall at 22892 Mack Washington Lane in Hempstead.
- Hempstead Theatre Company presents PEP the Story of a Brave Dog on Wednesday, October 14th at 6:00 P.M. and Saturday, October 17th, at 6:00 P.M. at the Hempstead High School Auditorium.
- St Katharine Drexel Catholic Church has their 26th Annual Bazaar on Sunday, October 18th, 2026, beginning at 11:00 A.M. at 22892 Mack Washington Lane in Hempstead, Texas.
- 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.

- Waller Sports Association's Fall Festival on Saturday, October 24th, 2026, from 11:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M. at 21514 Flukinger Road in Hempstead, Texas.
- 7th Annual Waller Brite Nites Trunk-R-Treat and Car Show at the downtown Marburger Plaza at 1218 Farr Street in Waller, Texas on Saturday, October 31, 2026, from 11:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M. with food, music, bucking bull and a car show.
- Waller Area Chamber of Commerce on Friday, November 6th, 2026, at 6:30 P.M. at the Edmonds Hall at the Waller County Fairgrounds.
- Knights of Columbus 17th Annual Benefit Quilt Show on Saturday, November 7th, 2026, at 22892 Mack Washington Lane in Hempstead from 10:00 A.M. to 7:00 P.M.
- City of Hempstead and the Hempstead Commerce and Civic Association Festival of Lights on Saturday, December 5th, 2026, beginning at 2:00 P.M. to 8:00 P.M. at the Downtown Gazebo.

Door prizes and refreshments will be served. The door prizes are being donated by Melissa Hegemeyer with Hegemeyer Realty and Associates and Julian Alvarez with Texas Premier Residential Services, LLC.:
President Cheryl Hardwick stated that the door prizes were donated by Melissa Hegemeyer with Hegemeyer Realty and Associates and Julian Alvarez with Texas Premier Residential Services, LLC. The door prize winners were Tristan Allen, Gabriel Arias, Jacob Herbert, Jawies, Joseph, and Shirley Russ. After the drawing refreshments were served.

Adjourn:
A motion was made by Treasurer Raul Villarreal that we adjourn the meeting, and a second motion was made by Board Member Vicki LeBlanc. A vote was taken and the motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 6:45 P.M.

Submitted by Secretary Katherine Ward_____

Approved and signed by President Cheryl Hardwick_____

HEMPSTEAD
TEXAS 1856
COMMERCE & CIVIC ASSOCIATION
TAKE ROOT.