

## Credit monitoring for county employees exposed by Treasurer's Office release to be considered by court

By Catherine Dominguez, cdominguez@hcnonline.com Published 2:09 pm, Saturday, March 24, 2018



Photo: Jason Fochtman, Staff Photographer

Montgomery County Precinct 3 Commissioner James Noack

After taking no action regarding the recent release of personal information of current and former employees after executive session last week, Montgomery County commissioners will consider a credit monitoring service for those 79 people involved. The commissioners will meet at 9:30 a.m. Tuesday on the fourth floor of the Alan B. Sadler Commissioners Court Building, located at 501 N. Thompson.

"I want the county employees to know I take this matter seriously and want them to know what steps will be taken to protect them and their personal information," Precinct 3 Commissioner James Noack said.

The Commissioners Court members, except for Commissioner Jim Clark who was absent from the meeting, convened into the closed session Tuesday to discuss the recent release of 79 current and former employees' personal information by County Treasurer Stephanie Davenport's office.

Noack, who walked out of that executive session stating he did not want to be a part of a discussion he believed should be done in open session, placed the item on the agenda. Davenport and Deputy Treasurer Judy Tarango were in the executive session with commissioners. Once Davenport and Tarango left the closed session, Noack rejoined the commissioners for the remaining discussion behind closed doors.

Before the closed session, Noack asked for the court to remove the item from the executive session and discuss it in open session. However, County Attorney J D Lambright told the court due to the way the item was placed on the court agenda, they would need to meeting in closed session. But Lambright did say the court was free to discuss the issue in public after the executive session.

However, that did not happen. After the lengthy closed session, the court took no action and had no discussion before adjourning the regular meeting, leaving the vulnerability of those 79 current and former employees' private information up in the air.

The issue centers around Davenport's release of her department's procedure manual following an open records request from challenger Melanie Bush in the March 6 Republican primary election. After delaying the release almost three months, Davenport finally released the documents March 8 at the direction of the state Attorney General's Office, but she did not redact some personal information of those 79 current and former county employees.

Of the dozens of names, some of the documents show the entire Social Security number, date of birth and names of 16 people. The remaining names have the Social Security number partially redacted. In the release of the documents, the list of names, Social Security numbers and birth dates appears four separate times in the hundreds of pages released.

Since the release, the County Attorney's Office has been working to contact all the employees involved in release.