

## **FORT BEND COUNTY EMERGENCY SERVICES DISTRICT NO. 7**

Minutes for the regular Meeting of March 11, 2025

1. **CALL MEETING TO ORDER AND OPENING PRAYER.** The meeting was called to order at 11:30 AM by Commissioner **Lopez** at the District Fire Station, 1834 W. Sycamore, Fresno, TX. The Commissioners in attendance were **Freddy Lopez, Sr., Barbara Hamilton, Janet McClain, Ruston Hughes,** and **Ferrel Bonner.** Also present were Fire Chief Anthony Bates, Assistant Chief Tom Henderson, Office Manager Esmeralda Mendez, and other Fire Department Staff; District Legal Counsel John Peeler of Coveler & Peeler, P.C and Jessica Adkins of Coveler & Peeler, P.C.; Garrett Tabor of Municipal Accounts & Consulting (via phone); Marian Guirguis of Martinez Architects; Justin Waggoner of Touchstone District Services, and Paul Hamilton, President of Fresno Volunteer Fire Department.
2. **TO RECEIVE PUBLIC COMMENT.** The Board opened the floor to public comment. Paul Hamilton, President of the Fresno Volunteer Fire Department stated there are some IRS and legal issues still to resolve regarding the VFD's corporate dissolution before the VFD can provide remaining funds to the District. He anticipates additional legal fees to complete the dissolution.
3. **TO REVIEW AND ACT TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF PRIOR MEETINGS.** A motion was made by **Commissioner Hughes,** seconded by **Commissioner Hamilton,** to approve February 11, 2025, meeting minutes as presented. With a vote of 5 to 0, the motion carried.
4. **TO ACT ON FINANCIAL MATTERS, INCLUDING FINANCIAL REPORT, INVOICES/BILLS, INVESTMENTS, INVESTMENT POLICY, FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS, CREDIT CARDS, REQUIRED REPORTS, AND REVISIONS TO BUDGET(S).** Garrett Tabor presented the monthly report noting: 84.27% of the 2024 ad valorem taxes had been collected. There was a brief discussion on the types of revenue accounts. The budget versus actual reports and sales tax reports were reviewed with Chief Bates noting the much higher sales tax for the month of February. The upcoming loan payments were also reviewed. A motion was made by **Commissioner Hughes,** seconded by **Commissioner Hamilton,** to approve the reports and pay District bills as presented. With a vote of 5 to 0, the motion carried.
5. **TO REVIEW AND ACT ON GRANTING PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTIONS FOR 2025.** John Peeler gave a presentation. After a short discussion, a motion was made by Commissioner Lopez, seconded by Commissioner Hamilton, to keep the exemptions the same as the previous year, with Homestead receiving 0.00%, Over 65 receiving \$5,000 and Disabled receiving \$5,000 exemption. With a vote of 5 to 0, the motion carried.
6. **REVIEW AND ACT ON DISTRICT WEBSITE AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH MATTERS.** Justin Waggoner presented the monthly update. He noted that there were 685 new users. He also noted that he updated the website with Commissioner Bonner's information and added the Advanced Life Support ("ALS") transition article.



7. **TO RECEIVE A REPORT FROM THE FIRE CHIEF AND COMMAND STAFF REGARDING FRESNO FIRE AND RESCUE OPERATIONS AND ACTIVITIES, TO REVIEW REQUESTS FROM THE FIRE DEPARTMENT ON OPERATIONAL EXPENSES.** Chief Bates and Ms. Mendez presented the monthly updates noting 236 calls for service for the month of February. He noted that they have started the hiring process and that open positions have been posted. The reported the administration team held their first quarterly meeting, and the staff will be meeting on various projects for fiscal year 2025. Chief Bates also noted that he has started looking at strategic planning and financial options, and that he's going to have a meeting with Fort Bend County Office of Emergency Management. Chief Bates stated that he met with County Commissioner Prestage to provide a quarterly update on District activities, and the staff will be participating in a community outreach event in the City of Arcola on March 19<sup>th</sup>. He also noted that they are looking for a contract grant writer and that some of the FEMA grants and programs are currently paused by the Federal Government. Chief Henderson gave an update of the permit date for Station 52, which would be sometime in April. He also noted that L51 is out of service and is in need of long-term repairs, Booster 52 should be arriving in late March or early April, TIFMAS program is moving forward, the newly promoted Captains are doing well, and they are continuing work at Lexipol. Chief Bates also mentioned that policies will be reviewed on an annual or biannual basis moving forward. It was also stated that a weather station was installed at Station 51.
8. **TO RECEIVE A REPORT FROM OFFICE STAFF REGARDING ADMINISTRATIVE OPERATIONS AND ACTIVITIES.** This item was presented with Item 7 above.
9. **TO REVIEW AND ACT ON MATTERS RELATED TO CONSTRUCTION, RENOVATION, REPAIR, MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVEMENTS TO DISTRICT FACILITIES AND REAL PROPERTY, INCLUDING ENGAGEMENT OF DESIGN PROFESSIONALS OR ENGINEERING SERVICES, SELECTION OF BUILDERS/CONTRACTORS AND COOPERATION WITH OTHER COUNTY ENTITIES REGARDING THE DEVELOPMENT OF STATIONS, INCLUDING ACTION ON CONSTRUCTION FINANCING.** Chief Henderson presented an update noting that the permit filing for Station 52 would be sometime in April, the current estimate is \$5,000,000 and they are hoping to have a general contractor by the middle of May. District Counsel John Peeler reminded the Board that there will be some federal law requirements for bidding due to ARPA funds being involved. Commissioner Bonner inquired about the elevations for the site and had some "fill" questions that were answered by Chief Bates.
10. **TO ACT ON REAL ESTATE, INCLUDING SALES, PURCHASES, LEASES, PERMITS, ENCUMBRANCES, PLATTING, SURVEYING, UTILITIES AND ACQUISITION FINANCING.** District Counsel John Peeler presented an update on the current purchase of the 0.8322-acre land noting that the District has closed on the purchase and his office is working on updating the Appraisal District records to reflect the District's

name as the owner. Chief Henderson noted that the re-plat should be completed during construction.

11. **TO REVIEW AND ACT REGARDING OUT OF DISTRICT SERVICES AGREEMENT(S) WITH MUD 189 FOR SERVICE TO DISTRICT STATION(S).** Chief Henderson noted that they are waiting for documents from MUD 189. He said for now they are only planning on water service and may potentially add sewer service later as MUD expands that service into the area. There was no action taken on this item.
12. **TO REVIEW AND ACT REGARDING EASEMENTS ON DISTRICT PROPERTY RELATED TO UTILITY SERVICES.** Chief Henderson stated that they are still waiting on the MUD and then the easements will be reviewed. He mentioned a possible "fill easement" involving the neighbor. There was a short discussion on the possible use of dirt from the detention pond. There was no action taken on this item.
13. **TO REVIEW AND ACT ON THE ACQUISITION OF EQUIPMENT AND VEHICLES, INCLUDING APPROVAL OF ACQUISITION FINANCING FOR SAME AND TO DISCUSS AND ACT ON DISPOSITION OF SURPLUS OR SALVAGE PROPERTY PURSUANT TO TEXAS HEALTH AND SAFETY CODE §775.0735.** Chief Bates stated that Captain Nowetner is scheduling to pick up the boat from Harris County and the motor has not been released yet.
14. **TO REVIEW AND ACT ON THE ACQUISITION OF A MODULAR BUILDING TO HOUSE DISTRICT PERSONNEL AT NEW FIRE STATION FACILITIES.** Chief Henderson reached out to the manufacturer and noted there will likely be a price increase of 3-5%, and that the utilities will be included in the cost of the whole station.
15. **TO MEET IN CLOSED SESSION PURSUANT TO GOVT. CODE §551.071 TO CONSULT WITH LEGAL COUNSEL ON LITIGATION, SETTLEMENTS OR CONFIDENTIAL MATTERS UNDER TEXAS BAR RULES.** No Closed Session was held under Section 551.071.
16. **TO MEET IN CLOSED SESSION PURSUANT TO GOVT. CODE §551.072 REGARDING REAL ESTATE MATTERS.** No Closed Session was held under Section 551.072.
17. **TO MEET IN CLOSED SESSION PURSUANT TO GOVT. CODE §551.074 REGARDING REAL ESTATE MATTERS.** No Closed Session was held under Section 551.074.
18. **TO REVIEW AND TAKE ACTION ON PERSONNEL MATTERS, INCLUDING DISTRICT ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF, FIRE SUPPRESSION STAFF, COMMAND STAFF AND FIRE CHIEF, INCLUDING COMPENSATION, BENEFITS, JOB DUTIES, SCHEDULING, HIRING AND RETENTION.** Chief Bates provided updates on some budgeted staffing changes including additional Battalion Chief, they would like to add a Community Risk Reduction (Public Relations) Specialist



and also add a Deputy Chief of Training. He also presented a revised organizational chart showing the changes.

19. **TO REVIEW AND ACT REGARDING THE TRANSFER OF VEHICLES OR EQUIPMENT FROM OTHER POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS.** This item was presented with Item 13.
20. **TO REVIEW AND ACT REGARDING IMPLEMENTATION OF DISTRICT EMPLOYEE HEALTH AND WELLNESS PROGRAM, INCLUDING PRESENTATION BY STAFF AND ACTION ON RELATED VENDOR CONTRACTS FOR CARRERA COUNSELING SERVICES, PLLC AND ALINEA PHYSIOTHERAPY AND WELLNESS REGARDING PHYSICAL FITNESS AND NUTRITION.** Chief Henderson presented information on Carrera Counseling services. He reported that it focuses on mental health, the first 5 visits for each employee will be fully covered by the District contract, it's completely confidential, the services will be reviewed in 2026 and amended as necessary. He also noted that the Department would like to cover as much of the cost as possible. After a short discussion a motion was made by **Commissioner McClain**, seconded by **Commissioner Hamilton**, to approve the contract with Carrera as presented. With a vote of 5 to 0, the motion carried. Chief Henderson then presented information on Alinea Physiotherapy services noting that they had budgeted \$30,000 for the services and Alinea will come in and develop work out and nutrition plans for full-time employees. He also noted that Captains will be trained as Peer Counselors and there are options for in-person and online and the Alinea app. Lastly Chief Henderson noted that they are waiting for contract updates from Alinea. A motion was made by **Commissioner Bonner**, seconded by **Commissioner Hughes**, to authorize Chief Bates to approve and execute the contract, pending review by legal counsel. With a vote of 5 to 0, the motion carried.
21. **TO REVIEW AND ACT TO ENGAGE CONSULTANT(S) FOR LONG TERM STRATEGIC, OPERATIONAL AND FINANCIAL PLANNING.** Chief Bates presented information on wanting to work in some long-term planning for the District. **Commissioner Hughes** noted he was interested in seeing some proposals. After discussion, the Board gave Chief Bates authority to seek options to bring back to the Board for review. There was a short discussion on the RFP/RFQ process and whether it was needed.
22. **TO DISCUSS FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS AND SET FUTURE MEETING DATES.** The next regular meeting will be held on April 8, 2025.
23. **ADJOURNMENT.** There being no further business brought before the Board; the meeting was adjourned at 1:02 PM.

  
Janet McClain, Secretary