

ESD 8 Minutes February 24, 2014 at PFD Station One, 801 Bee Creek Road, Briarcliff, TX. 78669

ESD 8 Board Members Present: Russ Munsch, Gail Zahara, David Streilein, Kristy Quigley
Karen Fromel not present

Staff Present: Chief Gerry Deming, ESD Manager Mike Claypool, Lieutenant Justin O’Baugh.

Citizens present: Bob Dilley, Charles Bush, and four other citizens.

- 1) Call to Order by Board President Russ Munsch at 6:30 P.M.
- 2) The meeting began with two recognition activities:
 - a) Justin O’Baugh presented to a citizen an award for providing invaluable assistance to the department in locating another citizen needing emergency medical services. Due to HIPAA regulations, the record cannot note the name of the citizen who was recognized, nor the individual who was treated. Nonetheless, the citizen that worked with our department was present and expressed his pride in being of assistance in a rescue situation. The citizen who was treated also attended, with his wife and daughter, all of whom expressed their heartfelt thanks to the citizen and our department for the treatment he received.
 - b) Charles Bush, representing the Sons of the American Revolution, presented a plaque to Justin O’Baugh as the 2013 Firefighter of the Year for the Pedernales Fire Department. It was duly noted That Mr. O’Baugh has been a strong leader and dedicated firefighter in the department.

OLD BUSINESS:

- 3) Secretary’s Report: Minutes of the previous Board meeting had been sent to the Commissioners prior to the meeting. Motion by Mr. Streilein, second by Ms. Zahara to approve the **January minutes with the addition of the budget amendment approval** . Approval of minutes 4-0.
- 4) Treasurer’s/Manager’s Financial Report (with the assistance of Bob Dilley, volunteer accountant): Year to date expenses and revenue were presented by Mr. Claypool. It was noted that Property Tax collections were lower than estimated at the end of January (year to date), but payments appeared to be picking up in early February. Sales tax as of 1/31 was \$11,527 ahead of budgeted projections; as well, the February payment has been received and is a considerable increase in revenue from the previous year. In budget expense categories, payroll and benefits were running a bit over budget. Administrative expenses were very modestly under budget. Other budget categories showed no current budget issues.
- 5) The Fire Chief presented the Pedernales Fire Department Annual Report. It contains substantial factual information regarding the activities and performance of the department in 2013. The Commissioners noted how valuable the information is for public knowledge and praised the Chief on this thorough report and valuable information. The Commissioners especially noted how the information is of assistance to them in their function as Board members. Chief Deming also spoke to improving access to water resources in ESD 8. The Chief reported that water tanks are the best alternative for water storage and access; he has researched alternative equipment such as portable pumping units, but noted there are no easily accessible water sources for pumping purposes. The Chief noted that the addition of another tender would

increase our capacity to deliver water in an emergency, but stated finances do not currently allow for that expenditure. There was also discussion of the department boat, which is currently out of the water for repairs. The Chief noted that Travis County plans on extending a boat launch in Pace Bend Park into the lake, which would give the department access to the lake and would increase our involvement in lake related incidents.

The Chief also reported that a secure email upgrade has been completed, and that he now has a new laptop. The Chief and staff recognized the contribution of Tobe Cozby, Lieutenant, in accomplishing the email upgrade at a very reasonable cost and with strong technical competence.

Chief Deming also provided the status of STRAC, which is the regional reporting system for fire and emergency services. He stated that the department is in training on the system, and it should be in use in the near future.

- 6) Kristy Quigley and Mr. Claypool reported on the latest meeting of the ESDCC (county wide association of ESD's). They reported that Danny Hobby has come forward with a proposal for a Unified Fire Service for the county ESD's. This outline of a plan has many questions to be answered, but the two representatives do view it as a tentative first step that could have the potential to result in improved service for our area, and a stronger foundation for our employees. Although Mr. Hobby has a start time for the UFS of October 1, 2014, both representatives really view this proposal as a longer term project.
- 7) Staff and Board members discussed the Station 3 Open House. Many thanks to David Hamm and the Auxiliary for providing food and beverages. Attendance was quite steady throughout the afternoon. Citizens complimented the renovation of the station, enjoyed inspecting one of the new engines, and were pleased to meet staff. The Open House also introduced local citizens to members of the fire department. The Chief, Manager and several Board members were in attendance. As well, members of the Westlake Fire Department dropped in, since they had been at Station 2 on a joint human resources activity with our department.

NEW BUSINESS:

- 1) Chief Deming and Mr. Claypool discussed their involvement with the Texas Commission on Environment Quality regarding water releases from the highland lakes to rice farmers downriver. After an initial hearing that Mr. Claypool attended, there was an administrative hearing held to resolve the issue of a "trigger point" for release of water for irrigation downstream. The Central Texas Water Coalition requested that PFD provide input to the administrative judges regarding the eminent threat to health and safety created by low water levels in the highland lakes.

Chief Deming developed and delivered a presentation to the hearing officers that clearly explained the fact that ESD 8 and PFD have only one source of water for fighting fires; namely, the Briarcliff water system. With great detail, the Chief described our former resources in Lake Travis, all of which have now gone dry. It is our belief that this presentation, and the efforts of many other presenters, made a very compelling case. After deliberations, the administrative judges recommended to the TCEQ that a trigger point of 1.4 million acre feet of water in the

highland lakes would then allow water releases for irrigation purposes. This water level/trigger point, which is considerably higher than the recommendation of the LCRA (1.1 million acre feet), was presented to the TCEQ for a final decision.

- 2) The matter of the public being able to rent the fire station facility for private, governmental, or community activities was discussed. In particular, a former volunteer for the department asked if the family could hold a wedding at the station. It was estimated that 90 people would be in attendance. There was discussion of this matter, especially noting that such a large crowd could impede the performance of the department in a response situation. The Board and staff commented that a smaller group might be possible, and could possibly use the administrative and kitchen area which is out of the way of the staff in a response. However, the issues of parking, alcohol consumption, supervision and cleanup, and departmental liability all are major factors to consider. This item was tabled with no decision. It was noted that guidelines for use could be proposed by the administration for future review.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 P.M.