

ESD 8 Minutes March 17, 2014 at PFD Station One, 801 Bee Creek Road, Briarcliff, TX. 78669

ESD 8 Board Members Present: Russ Munsch, Gail Zahara, Karen Fromel, David Streilein (absent), Kristy Quigley (arrived late)

Staff Present: Chief Gerry Deming, ESD Manager Mike Claypool, Bruce Perkins, Battalion Chief Bruce Perkins

- 1) Call to Order by Board President Russ Munsch at 6:32 P.M.
- 2) Secretary's Report: Mike Claypool had sent the minutes to Commissioners prior to the meeting. Motion by Mr. Streilein, second by Ms. Zahara to approve the minutes. Approval of minutes 3-0.) (Kristy not present yet)
- 3) Budget talk with Mike. Sales tax is increasing. We are on target to be on budget. Station repairs need to be done and budget still has funds to cover them.
- 4) Fire chief report with Gerry Deming. A) Strategic Plan will be in May. Going well so far.
B) The department priced new boats, with a cost ranging from \$35,000 to \$60,000. Fixing existing 20 year old boat will be approximately \$3000, with second gas tank installed. Motion amendment to repair old boat, Russ 1st, Gail 2nd, all approved 4-0.
- 5) Chief Deming, Mr. Claypool and President Munsch discussed the recent activity regarding water releases by the LCRA to downstream rice farming. Mr. Claypool attended a TCEQ hearing on the standards set by the LCRA to release irrigation water; namely, no water would be released if the highland lakes have less than 800,000 acre feet of water. The current level (March 1, 2014) is 570,000 acre feet. At the conclusion of the hearing, the TCEQ Board was unable to make a decision on the matter and referred it for consideration by an administrative judges panel. The Central Texas Water Coalition requested that Chief Deming testify to the administrative judges regarding the "eminent threat" to public safety created by the current drought. After thorough preparation, Chief Deming addressed the panel – including presenting evidence that showed there is currently only one water source for fire fighting from Lake Travis, when historically there have been at least 17 water sources. After due consideration, the administrative judges issued a statement recommending that water be released for irrigation only when there is 1.3 million acre feet of water available in the highland lakes. This recommendation was considered by the TCEQ Board, and their decision was to take no action regarding this issue. Therefore, there are no guidelines in place regarding release of water from the highland lakes for irrigation of rice farms.
- 6) Gail Zahara, Mike Claypool and Chief Deming recommended closing the American Express charge card account, and establish a credit card with our current bank, Wells Fargo. The Board agreed to this change.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:40, and the next meeting is scheduled for 4/28/14 at 6:30p.m.