

TRAVIS COUNTY EMERGENCY SERVICES DISTRICT NO. 8

Minutes September 23, 2025

1. A regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners of Travis County Emergency Services District No. 8 was held on **Tuesday, September 23, 2025, at 5:15 p.m.**, at Station 801, located at 801 Bee Creek Road, Spicewood, Texas 78669, for the following purposes:

Call meeting to order at 5:25 p.m.

Board Present in Person:

Debra Opdahl – President, Charles Valadez – Asst. Secretary/Treasurer, Becky Wynn – Treasurer, Bruce Goodhartz- Secretary

Board Present Virtually:

Bruce Mills – Vice President

Also present in person: Chief Tony Haden, Assistant Chief Tye Prange, Director of Administration (DoA) Lynnette Courtney, Battalion Chief Matthew Montgomery, EMS Coordinator Clayton Blount, Local 4820 President Jared Mikeska, Anthony Peek, Cody Fojtik, Colin Gray, Chase Brunnemann, Paige Bushnell, Kaleb Thomas, Matt Brown, Allen Fulbright, Marc Talamantez, Brent Lafour, William Banda, Brian Breen, Al Hostetler, Ed Walker, Jean Walker, John Carlton, Kevin Mullen, Chuck Brotherton, Melody Hostetler

2. Public Comment: Members of the public may speak for up to three (3) minutes regarding general topics or specific agenda items. In accordance with the Texas Attorney General's opinion, any public comment that is made on an item that is not on the published final agenda will only be heard by the Board of Commissioners. No formal action, discussion, deliberation, nor comment will be made by the Board of Commissioners.

None.

3. Public Comment on Agenda items: Individual members of the public may address the Board for a maximum of three minutes per person per agenda item. Individuals may address the Board once per item. Members of the public will speak on agenda items before the Board consideration of the item. Members of the public who wish to speak on agenda items or make a public comment must complete speaker cards prior to the beginning of the Board meeting.

Al Hostetler Spoke on item 12.

Mr. Hostetler stated, "I am Al Hostetler and I want my comments to be posted verbatim in the minutes. I have been told by some firefighters and some residents of Briarcliff that Chief Haden has told many people that everyone in Briarcliff is in favor of the proposed ESD 8 & ESD 6 merger. As the Mayor of Briarcliff, I have talked to numerous residents, and I have not heard any resident of Briarcliff say that they are in favor of the merger. Therefore I suspect the Chief's claim is a huge exaggeration. I also suspect that when the idea of a merger between ESD 8 & ESD 6 comes to a vote of the district residents, which is what is required by State law, it will fail miserably. Board, I suggest that you tell Chief Haden to go back to running the fire department and quit trying to do your job of running the ESD. Oh yeah, and by the way, the Village Council is adamantly opposed to the merger. The Chief is destroying the fine relationship that the Pedernales Fire Department and the Village of Briarcliff have always enjoyed."

Melody Hostetler spoke on item 12.

Ms. Hostetler stated. "I am Melody Hostetler. I would like my comments to be posted in the minutes verbatim. As President of the Pedernales Fire Department Auxiliary I feel this needs to be said. Linda Egan and myself were called to Station 801 by Chief Haden to discuss the rumors of a possible merger of ESD8 and ESD6. After leaving the meeting the five Auxiliary members that attended all agreed that we would remain neutral on the issue until we better understand the situation. The next afternoon I got word that Chief Haden had announced to fire fighters that the auxiliary was 100% in favor of the merger. You can imagine our surprise since we had not discussed anything regarding the merger among ourselves. This has put us in a very bad position

with the firefighters. They are afraid to speak to us about anything. This is not acceptable. Just to be very clear, the Auxiliary is NOT, I repeat, NOT 100% in favor of a merger. Please pass this on to the firefighters. Thank you for your time."

These comments were addressed by Chief Haden and Pedernales Fire Local 4820 President Jared Mikeska during item 12.

Discussion/Action Items

Commissioner Opdahl introduced Chuck Brotherton, the County Executive for Travis County Emergency Services.

4. Approval of minutes from August 20, 2025 Board Meeting;

Commissioner Opdahl asked if there were any changes to the Board meeting minutes for the August 20, 2025 Board meeting minutes. There were none. Commissioner Mills moved to approve the meeting minutes from the August 20, 2025 Board Meeting. Commissioner Wynn seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting minutes were signed.

5. Receive report from the Director of Administration and consider taking related action, including:

Director Courtney presented the following:

- Approval of monthly bills, invoices, and checks, including processing of payroll.
 - Aflac
 - Amcheck
 - AT&T
 - Access Hose and Ladder
 - Bank of America
 - Blue Cross Blue Shield
 - Carlton Law Firm
 - City of Austin Wireless
 - Gear Cleaning Solutions
 - GS Apparel
 - Frontline Mobile Health
 - FGMA
 - Humana
 - Hartford
 - HVAC Cowboy
 - KS State Bank
 - Mullen Firm
 - McCoys
 - MES
 - NAFECO
 - Sales Tax Assurance
 - PEC
 - TCDRS
 - Travis County Appraisal
 - Texas Rescue Med
- Approval of financial report.
 - Revenue
 - Property Tax
 - Sales Tax
 - Expenses
 - Cash Accounts
 - Capital Assets

- Review and approve quarterly investment reports.
None.

No questions were asked.

Commissioner Wynn moved to approve and pay all bills, invoices, checks, and payroll, including all expenses exceeding \$2,000.00 for the month ending August 31, 2025, and to approve of the financial report ending August 2025. Commissioner Mills seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

- Discuss and consider approval of a resolution regarding authorized access and signatories for District Texpool account; and authorized limits for signatories; and

Director Courtney explained that the changes to the resolutions were at the direction of our attorney from the August meeting. John Carlton, General Counsel, stated there are two resolutions, and this one is for the Board of Commissioners to be authorized signers for the Texpool, Wells Fargo and Plains Capital accounts. Mr. Carlton further explained that this resolution was just for the Board Members to be authorized signers.

Commissioner Wynn moved to approve the resolution regarding authorized access for the board and signatories for District accounts. Commissioner Goodhartz seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

- Discuss and consider approval of a resolution regarding authorized access and signatories for bank accounts with Plains Capital; and authorized limits for signatories; and

The Board then discussed Agenda Item #7 ahead of this second resolution.

7. Discuss and consider taking related action on revision of District's Chiefs and Director of Administration spending authority and approval thresholds;

Commissioner Wynn stated that she met with Director Courtney as well as Financial Consultant Kyle Bolls and reviewed the new legislation in regard to spending limits and authority. She made a motion to increase the spending threshold for the Fire Chief and the Director of Administration to \$5,000 (previously \$2,000). There would be no change to the competitive bid threshold of \$50,000. Commissioner Valadez seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The Board then returned to Agenda Item #5(e), Discuss and consider approval of a resolution regarding authorized access and signatories for bank accounts with Plains Capital; and authorized limits for signatories; and

Commissioner Wynn moved to approve the resolution regarding authorized access and signatories for bank accounts for the district with the spending limits established. Commissioner Goodhartz seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

6. Discuss and consider taking related action on Medack and Oltmann engagement letter for FY 2025 audit services;

Commissioner Opdahl presented that there were no changes to the engagement letter and recommended signing the engagement letter for FY 2025 Audit services with Medack and Oltman. Commissioner Mills moved to authorize the Board President to sign the engagement letter with Medack and Oltmann for FY 2025 audit services. Commissioner Wynn seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

8. Discuss and consider taking related action on electronically recording Board Meetings;

Commissioner Opdahl stated that this would help staff accurately document motions and high-level discussions of board meetings. Commissioner Wynn moved to electronically record board meetings for accuracy of meeting minutes and not to keep those recordings for more than 90 days after the approval of the official meeting minutes. Commissioner Mills seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

9. Review, discuss and consider taking action on special projects, including:

- Explorer Post;

- Utilization of our crosslay prop.
- Joint community effort
- LT. Matt Brown reported that 14 people are participating in the explorer post. It is just like a light fire academy.
 - Chief Haden thanked LT. Brown for his leadership in this project.

- Briarcliff ETJ Project;

No update

10. Receive monthly President's report and consider taking related action;

No update

11. Review, discuss and consider taking action regarding the attendance of legal counsel at future board meetings;

Commissioner Opdahl stated that with all the projects going on it makes sense to ask the District's attorney to attend future board meetings. Commissioner Wynn asked how long this would be. The board discussed leaving this open-ended for now. Commissioner Valadez asked Mr. Carlton if this was possible.

Commissioner Mills moved to approve legal counsel to attend all future board meetings. Commissioner Goodhartz seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

12. Update on the feasibility study for sharing services or merging with other ESDs.

- Includes quarterly update from District employees

- Commissioner Opdahl gave some background information on this item. She explained the following:

- Local 4820 provides feedback to the board from members and non-members once a quarter in regard to the merger feasibility;
- All district employees give an update to the board once a quarter;
- When these discussions started in March the board voted unanimously to allocate \$25,000 towards this study and directed Chief Haden to find the top three top priorities established by the board; Financial health, Pension, and Labor;
- This is probably the 5th time merger discussions have happened in Commissioner Opdahl's 10 years of being on the Board. They are usually spun up around the legislative sessions. None of the previous merger discussions have ever reached the point where community involvement or input was requested;
- Chief Haden commented in response to the public comments on the item. He said he has enjoyed building strong relationships with Mayor Hostetler and the Auxiliary leadership of Melody Hostetler and Linda Egan both personally and professionally. This is because we all care about this community. Chief Haden stated that he has never suggested that anyone is for or against any

conversations that the Pedernales Fire Department has with our partners about how to best serve our community. He stated that we will always be expected to look for the best ways to serve our community as a department, and that the men and women present in uniform tonight also care about serving the community in the best ways possible. Chief Haden told the room that he never said that the residents of the Village of Briarcliff support a potential merger, nor did he ever say that the PFD Auxiliary supports a potential merger. Chief Haden apologized for any misinformation that caused those concerns, stating that this situation is unhealthy for the community and the department. He thanked both speakers for being willing to make their comments tonight to allow him to better understand the concerns. Chief Haden stated that his ask for everyone has always been to have an open mind as we look at the best ways to serve the community. That is his approach, and it will remain his approach as the department completes the study that he was directed to do by the board. This concept has been discussed for years, and Chief Haden stated that he believes that the discussions will always continue for years because in the fire service, service is more important than the patch on our sleeve. We are about public safety, and we are about serving you, our community, and every single person in our department wants to serve you. Chief apologized again to Mayor Hostetler that he was in a position that he felt the need to speak up for the Village of Briarcliff, and to Mrs. Hostetler for feeling the need to speak on behalf of our Auxiliary that is getting ready to celebrate 50 years of service to the community, which should be what we focus on when we discuss their organization, not concerns based on mis-information. Chief Haden assured them that he has an open door to them to address any further concerns.

Commissioner Mills thanked Chief Haden.

Commissioner Goodhartz commented that every District Commissioner lives in the District, and they share the same concerns as the Briarcliff community about having a great fire department. He said that while all of the commissioners live in different parts of the community, that none of the commissioners should be a representative for one area and not the others. He stated that he is a representative for the entire area that the District serves, not just for his neighborhood. His goal is to be a representative for everyone in the community.

Lieutenant Jared Mikeska thanked the Board and attendees for being present, as well as for their participation in the appeal process held the previous week. Lieutenant Mikeska spoke about the deep bond shared among firefighters, emphasizing that within the fire service, members support one another just as much as they serve the community. He highlighted the dedication of Pedernales Fire Department personnel, noting that while none of the staff live within the District, each member is deeply committed to and is proud of serving the community. He read the Firefighter's Oath, underscoring the department's devotion to public service. Lieutenant Mikeska explained that as firefighters progress through the ranks, their responsibilities and perspectives broaden, but their mission—to provide the best possible service to the community—remains unchanged.

Addressing the topic of merger discussions, Lieutenant Mikeska noted that such conversations have taken place for many years but have never come to fruition. He commended Chief Haden and Chief Prange for exploring opportunities to improve service delivery to the community and stated that the allegations made against them are false. He praised their leadership for fostering a positive and professional culture within the department—one that firefighters are proud to be a part of and do not want to lose.

To illustrate this point, Lieutenant Mikeska shared a video by Chief Frank Viscuso, which drew parallels between the culture at Disney—where employees want to come to work—and the type of culture being built at Pedernales Fire Department. He candidly reflected that there were times earlier in his career when he was not proud to say he worked for Pedernales Fire Department, but that is no longer the case. Today, he is proud of the department's growth, professionalism, and accomplishments over the past two years, including representation at SAFE-D, chiefs speaking at conferences, and outside training programs requesting participation from Pedernales Fire

Department members.

Chase Brunnemann walked the Board through step one, Financial Health, and explained to the Board that there are options with the pension that allow both pensions to exist. Mr. Brunnemann explained that they are still in the very early stages of fact finding, and no decisions have been made. The Local 4820 is committed to gathering the facts, listening to all questions or concerns from all members local or not, and addressing them. In closing, Lieutenant Mikeska reaffirmed the department's unwavering commitment to providing the highest level of service to the residents of the District. He stressed the importance of being proactive rather than reactive in emergency services—because once you fall behind, it becomes impossible to catch up.

13. Discuss and consider approval of a Dispatch Interlocal Agreement with the City of Austin and other Travis County ESDs;

This item was tabled.

14. Identify, prioritize and consider taking action on strategic management activities, including:

- Department relations with district entities;
- Legislative update;

Strategic Plan:

- Contract was executed
- Kick off meeting on 9/18
 - Document request
 - Need each board members availability for the fall to plan meetings
- Community input QR Code

Commissioner Goodhartz stated that community involvement is necessary to make our strategic plan the best and most effective for all communities in our District. This strategic plan is a stand-alone document and is broader than the initiative to evaluate shared services or merger, it is our plan with our community.

Travis Club-

- Met with their team on water facilities and roadways
- Permitted for vertical construction

Burn ban was placed in effect today.

Legislation -

Senate Bill 10 did not pass.

Cyber security and AI training will be available to all board members and staff with our new payroll/HR company.

15. Receive monthly Fire Chief report and consider taking appropriate actions.

- Emergency operations, response times, call volume;
- Training;
- Management activities, personnel, amendments to budget FY 2024/2025, and community impact, 801 remodel updates; and
- Apparatus needs.

Chief Prange gave a presentation, which included:

- Emergency operations, response times, call volume.
 - August
 - 97 Total Calls.
 - 56 Medical Calls
 - Average response time of 7:26 minutes.
 - 12 mutual aid calls with ESD 6

- Training.
 - Continued regional partnerships with hosting our 2nd Driver Operator Class
 - New-Hire Orientation was completed.
 - Q3 Westside 5 MCDs- Auto-Aid Drills
 - 540 hours of training logged
 - 81% of the department has obtained a new certification this year.
- Management activities, personnel, amendments to budget FY 2024/2025, community impact, 801 remodel updates; and
 - Management:
 - Met with Travis Club this week
 - Continue to meet with our community leaders
 - Attended the Burnet County Fire Chief's meeting
 - Personnel:
 - All new hires are fully on shift.
- Community Impact:
 - Station 801
 - Construction is set to start after the Fire House Feast
- Apparatus needs:
 - Boat 801 is in the process to get on the road for evaluation from Lake Assault.
 - Interlocal Agreement with Travis County for a loaner boat was executed. Staff is working with Travis County to get a PM complete and training for our staff.
- Budget Adjustments

Commissioner Wynn and Director Courtney presented the following budget adjustments. These were reviewed line-by-line. These adjustments are to cover overages in categories and will not move money that was not already allocated within the previously approved budget.

Category	Original Budget	New Budget Amount
5001.2 overtime	300,000.00	600,000.00
5001.1 Salaries	5,472,000.00	5,172,000.00
5002.3- Disability & Life	17,901.31	40,000.00
5002.6 Workers Comp	92,400.00	140,368.00
5002.4 VFIS CAFCA	29,040.00	0.00
5002.7 Annual Physicals	92,400.00	43,773.31
5050.1 Advertising	2,000.00	543.87
5050.2 Bank service charge	306.00	600.00
5050.5 dues and subscriptions	3,000.00	4,162.13
5051.4 Property & Liability Insurance	150,410.32	139,489.97
5051.5 tc appraisal fees	13,453.13	20,966.62
5052.0 lexipol	10,000.00	13,406.86
5100.1 Technology Upgrades	6,000.00	1,098.28
5100.2 active 911	1,200.00	2,298.28
5100.4 cable and phone	22,560.00	33,000.00
5100.3 Cell Phones/Modems	24,240.00	15,740.00
5100.5 Communications Repair	10,756.00	8,000.00
5101.2- software	22,000.00	24,520.77

5101.1- Email, Web, Intra Web	8,332.00	6,520.77
5200.1- employee recon	15,000.00	25,765.76
5200.4 recong	0.00	400.00
5200.2 Community Outreach	25,000.00	19,165.76
5200.5- TRAVEL/MEETINGS	5,000.00	8,000.00
5200.6 Prevention	20,000.00	18,841.75
5200.7 Awards	8,000.00	5,000.00
5400.1 Fire Equip	69,500.00	48,443.71
5400.6 HAZMAT	1,500.00	2,297.89
5401.0 Equip Repairs	9,741.60	30,000.00
5500.3 SAFE-D	8,000.00	9,158.25
5600.23 Feet Repairs	275,000.00	274,600.00
5600.4- VEHICLE TAX- Registration	0.00	400.00

Commissioner Wynn moved to approve the budget adjustments as presented by Director Courtney. Commissioner Goodhartz seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. After this motion unanimously passed, Commissioner Valadez expressed confusion and commented he didn't understand the need for the budget adjustments and stated to Commissioner Goodhartz that this was just so staff could buy more vehicles. Director Courtney pointed him to the documents in his board packet and offered to schedule a meeting with Commissioner Valadez and Commissioner Wynn to further explain how these adjustments were to last year's board approved budget.

16. Receive report from Pedernales Association of Firefighters regarding fundraising efforts, social and membership events, and unresolved issues discussed at the Chief/Association/Board (aka "CAB") Committee meeting.

This item was tabled.

17. Receive monthly report from the District's attorney regarding pending litigation matters, contract issues, and legislative efforts and consider taking related actions;

The Board left regular session at 6:41 p.m. and entered into executive session to consult with legal counsel.

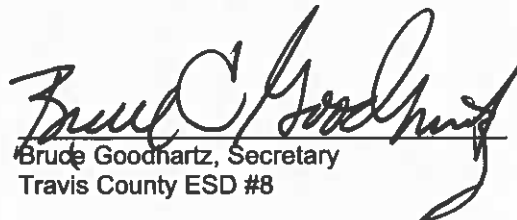
The Board exited executive session at 8:11 p.m. and reentered regular session.

No action was taken during executive session.

18. Discuss agenda, time, and date for next meeting; and

The next regular meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 21, 2025 at 5:15 p.m. at 801 Bee Creek Road Spicewood, Texas 78669.

19. Adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 8:13 p.m.


 Bruce Goodhartz, Secretary
 Travis County ESD #8