

TRAVIS COUNTY EMERGENCY SERVICES DISTRICT NO. 8

**Minutes
November 19, 2025**

1. A meeting of the Board of Commissioners of Travis County Emergency Services District No. 8 was held on Wednesday, November 19, 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 5:20 p.m.

Board Present in Person:

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

Board Present Virtually:

Bruce Mills – Vice President.

Also present in person: Chief Tony Haden, Assistant Chief Tye Prange, General Counsel John Carlton, Battalion Chief Matthew Montgomery, EMS Coordinator Clayton Blount, Battalion Chief Wade Schmitzinsky, Lt. Jared Mikeska, Lt. Mike Barker, CJ Melton, Chase Brunnemann, Dylan Wall, Samuel Rajnoch, Lt. Charles.

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.

None.

Discussion/Action Items

4. Approval of Minutes of the 10/21/2025 Board meeting;
Commissioner Opdahl asked if there were any changes to the meeting minutes from the 10/21/2025 Board meeting. There were none. Commissioner Goodhartz moved to approve the 10/21/2025 Board meeting minutes. 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:

Chief Prange reviewed the following:

- a. Approval of monthly bills, invoices, and checks, including processing of payroll.

- Austin Fire Dispatch
- Blue Cross Blue Shield
- Carlton Law Firm
- Frontline
- HAAS Alerting
- Hartford
- Impact Promotional Services
- KS State Bank
- Mullen Firm
- Septic Pumping and Maintenance
- Paylocity
- Station Automation
- TCDRS
- VFIS
- Zoll

- b. Approval of financial report.

- Revenue
- Property Tax
- Sales Tax
- Expenses
- Cash Accounts
- Capital Assets

- c. Review and approve quarterly investment reports.

None.

Chief Prange noted that the District's insurance is preloaded in October and we have completely transitioned to the new payroll company.

Commissioner Wynn stated that she and Director Courtney had been over the finances and will have budget adjustments for the Board to review in December.

Commissioner Wynn moved to approve the monthly bills, invoices, checks, and payroll, including all expenses exceeding \$5,000.00 for the month ending October 31, 2025, and to approve the financial report ending in October 2025. Commissioner Goodhartz seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

6. Discuss and consider adopting a Resolution Establishing Monthly and Annual Limits on Time Spent by the District Personnel on Responding to a Requestor of Public Information.

Commissioner Opdahl stated that the Board started looking at this resolution a few months ago with the District's attorney.

John Carlton, General Counsel, stated that the resolution is based on the provisions of the Public Information Act that allow Districts to limit the amount of time spent on responding to any single requester of public information to 36 hours in the year or 15 hours in a month, in order to avoid a District's staff getting overwhelmed with requests. The resolution also talks about dealing with what are considered vexatious requests, meaning requests that are repetitive and/or cumbersome. The Carlton Law Firm drafted a resolution that sets limits as provided in Public Information Act. Mr. Carlton explained the requirements the District has to follow in order to be able to limit time spent on requests, and that responses must be consistent with the Attorney General's rules.

Commissioner Wynn asked whether this Resolution would address only staff costs or cost for copies. Commissioner Mills asked if this allowance in the Public Information Act is new, and if it applies to all governmental entities.

Mr. Carlton explained that the allowances are standard.

Commissioner Valadez asked if the District will charge for every request.

Mr. Carlton explained that very small, limited and precise requests will not incur a charge.

Commissioner Valadez asked if the limits apply per requestor.

Mr. Carlton clarified that the limit is 36 hours per requestor annually, or 15 hours per requestor per month.

Commissioner Valadez asked if the Carlton Law Firm currently handles District requests.

Mr. Carlton explained that all Public Information Act requests come into the District, and that the Chief handles them internally if it's a simple request like budget, agendas or minutes. If the request is more complex, the Carlton Law Firm handles the request.

Commissioner Goodhartz moved to adopt the Resolution Establishing Monthly and Annual Limits on Time Spent by the District Personnel on Responding to a Requestor of Public Information. Commissioner Wynn seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The Resolution was signed and notarized.

7. Discuss and consider adopting the Amended Resolution for Public Comment in Open Meetings.

Commissioner Opdahl explained that this is the same resolution that we

discussed in the meeting of Travis County Emergency Services District No. 16.

Commissioner Goodhartz suggested using a sign-up method for public comment.

Commissioner Wynn stated that this can cause issues with people not knowing they could sign up beforehand, and all the slots being filled.

Commissioner Opdahl stated that she thinks this is a great idea however, this would require significant administrative oversight and tracking. The Board discussed what time limits, if any, should be set on public comment.

Commissioner Opdahl stated that the District may amend their Resolution regarding public comment at any time.

Commissioner Wynn moved to amend the resolution to allow the public to speak on agenda and non-agenda items for up to 3 minutes, for a total of 30 minutes. Commissioner Valadez seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

8. Review, discuss and consider taking action on special projects.

- Explorer Post
 - Chief Haden reported that LT. Brown continues to be a vital piece of this program.
- Briarcliff ETJ Project
 - No update.

9. Receive monthly president's report and consider taking related action.

This item was tabled.

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

Chief Haden updated the Board with the department's on-going research and stated that the feasibility study is completed. Chief Haden handed out a packet for review. The presentation references the first 16 pages of the packet.

- The packet was jointly produced with Travis County ESD6 and presented with Local 4820 on behalf of all employees at the meeting.
- Executive Summary
 - In March of 2025, both ESD8 and ESD 6 Boards voted unanimously to direct the Fire Chiefs to conduct a joint fact-finding and feasibility review.
 - The 3 key areas of analysis include:
 - Financial health of both Districts;
 - Pension and Retirement systems; and
 - Labor, Legal, and Governance Considerations.
 - Key Considerations:

- Solutions must be good for the taxpayers of both districts;
 - No employees from either District should be harmed financially; and
 - No employees from either District should lose rank.
- Option Overview
 - #1 Enhanced Shared services
 - Currently done now;
 - Keeps Districts and Fire Departments separate;
 - Easy implementation;
 - Interlocal Agreement;
 - Limited long-term efficiency gains;
 - Duplicated governance;
 - Low cost: operations savings may be possible with implementation.
 - #2 Creation of Shared Department
 - Formal Interlocal Agreement under Chapter 791 of the Texas Government Code to share operations and management;
 - Improves efficiency, maintains both Districts with different taxing entities, serves as a pathway to future district merger;
 - Requires legal coordination, shared governance framework, and workforce assistance for implementation;
 - Cost To Be Determined: driven by pension decisions.
 - #3 Full Merger under Section 775 of the Texas Health and Safety Code
 - Combine both ESDs into a single district with unified governance, finance, and pension;
 - Maximizes efficiency, unified leadership, streamlined budgeting, enhanced service delivery;
 - Complex legal process, community vote required, pension integration challenges;
 - High cost increase if this is delayed.

- **Fact finding process**
 - Both Districts have worked together through this process which includes:
 - Participation from IAFF Locals 4820 (ESD8) and 4117; (ESD6)
 - Reviewed 10-year financial plans for both departments;
 - Pension system analysis of merger model; and
 - Consultation with district attorneys and finance officers.
- **Financial Health**
 - **ESD 8**
 - **Revenue:** Tax revenue is projected to grow from 10.3 mil in FY 2024 to \$19.4 M by 2034.
 - **Expenditures:** Expenditures are projected to grow from \$10.2M to \$20.6M over the same period.
 - **Capital Improvements:** New facilities and apparatus financing are planned.
 - **Reserves:** Debt services maintained under 8% of annual revenues; dedicated 6- month run rate for reserve funding.
 - **ESD 6**
 - **Revenue:** steady growth supported by a diverse and maturing tax base;
 - **Expenditures:** Balanced growth between personnel and capital investments; long- term wage commitments;
 - **Capital Improvements:** structured apparatus replacement, new facilities, and technology enhancement;
 - **Reserves:** healthy fund balance and adherence to the reserve policies.
- **Pension**
 - **ESD6**
 - Established in 2007 under Texas Local Fire Fighter Retirement Act (TLFFRA);
 - Employee contributions: 20%; Employer contribution: 19.2%;
 - Features: defined benefit system with death, disability, and DROP provisions; age 52 retirement eligibility; vested at 10 years;

- Fund assets (April 2025): \$57.4 million; 7.69% net nominal rerun since inception;

- ESD8

Established in 2020 through Texas County and District Retirement System (TCDRS); which is a state-administered, cash-balance defined benefit system

- Employee contribution: 7%; Employer match: 250%;
- Note:
 - ESD8 employees are also Social Security participants where ESD6 employees are not.
 - ESD8 457 plan: 1:1 5%; 2:1 at 5% at 10 years of service.

- Options

- 1: No changes.
 - Maintain separate plans; dual annuities;
 - Employees would be either an employee of ESD8 or ESD6 and be a member of that accompanying plan;
 - Not an option with a full merger of districts.
- 2: Recognize prior service for vesting only
 - Allows ESD8 members to count prior service towards vesting; not benefit accrual;
 - Would require a vote of ESD6 employees.
- 3: Permit Service Purchase
 - ESD8 members purchase prior service credit;
 - Highest parity, greatest cost.
- 4: Termination of TCDRS
 - ESD8 board termination of the plan;
 - Immediate vesting of all employees; all employees would go into TLFFRA;
 - ESD8 and TCRDS need to determine liability.
- 5: Join Texas Proportionate Retirement Program (PRP)
 - Shares vesting credit between plans; limited flexibility, not recommended;
 - Not currently an option with ESD6 plan;
 - Would have an impact to employees from each

District.

Note that all these options are viable, however, we do not recommend all of them. The one that is most appealing as we've looked at this is to make no changes and allow ESD8 employees to determine whether they're going to remain in the TCDRS retirement plan or move over to the ESD6 model. The ESD6 employees would not have the option to switch plans.

- Labor and Legal Considerations
 - Joint collaboration with IAFF Locals 4820 and 4117 to review contractual and statutory implications with attorneys;
 - Goal to explore merger feasibility while ensuring protection of employee rights and benefits;
 - Topics for legal review
 - Applicability of Chapter 775 of the Texas Health and Safety Code;
 - Procedural requirements'
 - Impacts on CBA under chapter 174;
 - Authority of ESD Boards;
 - Responsibility for existing contracts.
 - IAFF merger agreement
 - Provides guidance for merging locals;
 - May be voluntary or involuntary;
 - Membership representation guidelines;
 - Seniority and rights preserved.
- SWOT analysis of Options 2 or 3
 - Strengths:
 - Strong financial health and stable reserves in both districts;
 - Aligned missions and service standards;
 - Shared values of collaboration and professionalism;
 - Sustainable growth trajectories and compatible CIPs;
 - Weaknesses:
 - Pensions systems disparity complicates merger timing;
 - Full merger of districts requires complex legal and voter process;

- Collective bargaining and varying labor statutes;
 - Merging admin systems may initially increase cost.
- Opportunities:
 - Economies of scale through unification function;
 - Streamlined governance and service delivery;
 - Ability to strengthen long-term regional response capabilities;
 - Long-term security for community and employees.
- Threats
 - Delay of merging increases pension cost;
 - Potential public misunderstanding or resistance to change;
 - Possible legal or funding hurdles;
 - Fiscal strain based on timeline.
- Finding Options

Based on all the information reviewed, both ESD8 and ESD6 are financially and operationally stable with compatible service philosophies. Pension harmonization, while complex, is achievable through multiple legal and actuarial pathways.

 - Option 1- Enhanced Shared Services
 - Continue separate department operations but expand administrative and operational integration where efficiency gains exist.
 - Option 2- Creation of a Shared Department
 - Formalize a shared management structure through an interlocal service agreement under Chapter 791 of the Texas Government Code, allowing a single department to exist while maintaining separate taxing authority.
 - Option 3- Full Merger under Chapter 775 of the Texas Health and Safety Code
 - Purposeful consideration of governance, finance, and operations into a single ESD with unified pension and labor frameworks. Requires legal, financial, and voter review.
- Next Steps and Recommendations
 - Option 1
 - Board directs the Fire Chiefs to proceed with option 1:

- Fire Chiefs explore the services to be shared, and the cost associated for those services;
- ESD boards enter interlocal agreements for new service agreements.
- Option 2
 - Boards directs the Fire Chiefs to proceed with option 2:
 - District Boards should identify the preferred pension solution;
 - Engage in actuarial services.
 - Fire Chiefs should work to establish a timeline for the new interlocal agreement to take place;
 - Consider the creation of a joint steering committee.
- Option 3
 - Boards direct the Fire Chiefs to proceed with option 3:
 - District Boards should identify the preferred pension solution;
 - Engage in actuarial services.
 - Direct legal counsel to prepare a procedural roadmap and timeline under Chapter 775 of the Texas Health and Safety Code.
 - Consider the creation of a joint steering committee.

The Board thanked Chief and everyone that was involved in the fact finding for all their hard work. The Board also acknowledged the factual presentation of the study, specifically, that during the presentation neither Chief Haden nor President Mikeska expressed any type of bias towards the 3 options.

Commissioner Opdahl proposed that the Board study the information given to them and send their questions in writing to Chief Haden so he can answer them at the next meeting. The Board requested a workshop to be scheduled in January for further discussion. They also directed the Chief to place the feasibility study on the district website.

11. Identify, prioritize, and consider taking action on strategic management activities, including;

- Department relations with district entities;
 - Travis Club
 - The District is working on temporary water supplies training for Operations crews;
 - Water treatment facility expected to go live in May with

fire hydrants.

- Thomas Ranch
 - The District is working on temporary water supply options;
 - Water treatment facility expected to go live in Fall of 2026 with fire hydrants.
 - Operations tour of temporary golf facility last week;
- Village of Briarcliff
 - Presentation for Village of Briarcliff Council on the feasibility study.
 - Well received by council and community;
 - Asked to return with updates as appropriate.
- Commissioner Howard attended the Community BBQ Event.
 - Commissioner Howard explained that the event was a good opportunity to build relationships.
- Strategic planning
 - Citygate is reviewing our uploaded documents;

Meetings will be set with Board members and stakeholders involved with the strategic plan.

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

- Emergency operations, response times, call volume.
- Training.
- Management activities, personnel, amendments to budget FY2024-2025, and community impact, 801 remodel updates; and
- Apparatus needs.

Assistant Chief Prange presented the report as follows:

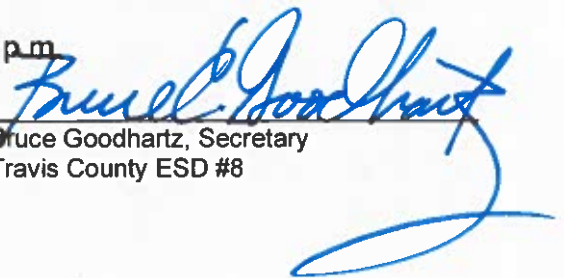
- October 2025
 - 94 Total Calls.
 - Calls spread across all three shifts more evenly;
 - Response time on non-EMS call of 7:13 minutes.
- Training.
 - TCFP certification renewal for the department
 - CE requirements met for all members
 - PFD scored a 96% completion on "new Certification Goal";
 - 750 hours of training logged which includes:
 - Alamo Fire Conference

Front right seat by Central Texas Regional Training Academy For their conference

- Management activities, personnel, amendments to budget FY2024/2025 or FY2025/2026, community impact.
 - Updates to policies;
 - Strategic planning packet updated.
 - Personnel
 - New temporary employee- Susan Carter.
 - Station 801
 - Sub-contractors visited and a construction start date is being determined.
 - Apparatus
 - Boat 801
 - At Lake Assault for full evaluation.
 - Community Impact
 - Hosted a community partners group with members from multiple organizations in attendance.
13. 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.
- No updates.
14. Discuss and consider taking action on establishing an agenda items submission policy, including:
- Review process of potential agenda items regarding District funds and personnel matters; and
 - A creation of Board Calendar
- This item was tabled.
15. Discuss and consider taking action on establishing review logs for personnel grievances.
- This item was tabled.
16. Receive monthly report from the District's attorney regarding pending litigation matters, contract issues, and legislative efforts and consider taking related actions;
- No updates.
17. Discuss and consider commissioners' terms of office expiring at year end;
- Commissioner Wynn and Commissioner Goodhartz' terms will expire at the end of the year.
18. Discuss agenda, time, and date for next meeting; and

The next regular meeting will be held on December 16, 2025 at 5:15 p.m. at 801 Bee Creek Road Spicewood, Texas 78669

19. Adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 7:29 p.m.


Bruce Goodhartz, Secretary
Travis County ESD #8