

TRAVIS COUNTY EMERGENCY SERVICES DISTRICT NO. 8

Minutes February 24, 2026

A meeting of the Board of Commissioners of Travis County Emergency Services District No. 8 was held on Tuesday, **February 24, 2026, at 5:15 p.m.**, at Station 801, located at 801 Bee Creek Road, Spicewood, Texas 78669, for the following purposes:

1. Call meeting to order at 5:15 p.m.

Board Present in Person:

Debra Opdahl – President, Becky Wynn – Treasurer, Bruce Goodhartz- Secretary

Bruce Mills – Vice President, Charles Valadez – Asst. Secretary/Treasurer

Also present in person:

Chief Tony Haden, Asst. Chief Tye Prange, DOA Lynnette Courtney, Battalion Chief Matthew Montgomery, EMS Coordinator Clayton Blount, John Carlton, Battalion Chief Bruce Perkins

2. Public Comment: Members of the public may speak for up to three (3) minutes regarding general topics or specific agenda items. This may not exceed 30 minutes in total unless approved by the board at the start of the meeting. 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. This may not exceed 30 minutes in total unless approved by the board at the start of the meeting. 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 1/17/2026 and 1/20/2026 Board meeting;

President Opdahl asked if there were any changes to the meeting minutes from the 1/17/2026 and 1/20/2026 Board meetings. There being none, Commissioner Goodhartz made a motion to approve the 1/17/2026 and 1/20/2026 Board meeting minutes. Commissioner Wynn seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting minutes were then signed.

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

Director Courtney Reviewed:

- Approval of monthly bills, invoices, and checks, including processing of payroll.
 - Aflac
 - Blue Cross Blue Shield
 - Carlton Law Firm
 - Citygate & Associates
 - Dooley Tackaberry
 - Gear Wash
 - FGMArchitects
 - Hartford
 - Lexipol
 - Lion

- Paylocity
- TCDRS
- Approval of financial report.
 - Revenue
 - Property Tax
 - Sales Tax
 - Expenses
 - Cash Accounts
 - Capital Assets
- Review and approve quarterly investment reports.
None.

Commissioner Mills moved to approve all bills, invoices, checks, and payroll, including all expenses exceeding \$5,000.00 for the month ending January 2026, and to approve the financial report ending January 2026. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Valadez. The motion passed unanimously.

6. Review, discuss and consider action on special subcommittees, including:

- Explorer post
- Briarcliff ETJ
- Fire Wise Communities
- Public Speaking/ Presentations
- Legislative Support
- Wildfire Mitigation and Preparedness
- Community Partner and PFD Relations

Last month, the Board created subcommittees to support requests or complaints from citizens, elected officials, cities, or other entities that would require Board involvement. The Board agreed that no individual board member should respond unilaterally or work independently in the community without the direction of the Board. Included in the Board packet is a table created by Director Courtney of the subcommittees identified to date and board members who serve on those committees. Any board member wanting to propose a new subcommittee, please email Director Courtney to add to the agenda for discussion at future board meetings. As noted on the handout, in early 2025, the Board voted that no commissioner shall serve on more than 2 committees. The Board also discussed that some of the subcommittees seem more operational than strategic or fiduciary. Board members agreed to periodically re-evaluate our involvement in committees for when to step back.

Each subcommittee was then asked for updates.

- Explorer Post Subcommittee
 - Commissioner Valadez stated that he had no updates and thought the program was going well. Chief Haden confirmed that.
- Public Speaking/ Presentations Subcommittee
 - No requests have come to the Fire Chief in the past month
- Legislative Subcommittee – No update
- Briarcliff ETJ Subcommittee
 - Commissioner Valadez reported that he is working with Mayor Hostetler, and he believes that a positive response from Travis Club will happen and they are more apt to sign on within the next month to move forward with this project.
- Fire Wise Communities Subcommittee

- Commissioner Wynn explained that her role as Board representative is advisory, and that Lt. Barker and Chief Prange have been working on items that would affect life and safety in our communities. She turned the update over to Chief Prange:
 - He explained that staff are working to establish a process for assisting communities with Fire Wise implementation and community wildfire risk evaluation.
 - Once the Community Risk Reduction Officer is hired, this person will be handling wildfire planning and mitigation for the entire district.
 - Travis Club is also going to be a Fire Wise community
 - Staff are working with software that will be used county-wide for evacuation of communities.

Commissioner Goodhartz asked about areas in the District that do not have an HOA or POA. Chief Prange stated that these communities will focus of the new Community Risk Reduction Officer once hired.

- Wildfire Mitigation and Preparedness Subcommittee
 - President Opdahl added this subcommittee for discussion by the Board after she heard from Travis County ESD6 that Commissioner Valdez had asked them about their program. The Board discussed that the necessity of this committee, its scope, and the Board's involvement should be agreed on by the entire Board not a single individual. Commissioner Valadez said he has been speaking with Commissioner Howard, and she is very interested in wildfire mitigation, and she needs to know about any activities in our area. Chief Haden stated that he meets monthly with Chuck Brotherton and area ESDs on this very topic. Chief said the County and Commissioner Howard are heavily involved and well aware of our activities. Chief Haden assured the Board that no opportunities have been missed.

John Carlton, General Counsel, stated there seemed to be no difference between Wildfire Mitigation and Fire Wise Community and wondered why these two committees would not be combined. He cautioned the Board that if conversations about the same topic were being discussed by multiple board members with Commissioner Howard or other ESDs, a potential for a walking quorum exists. Mr. Carlton advised that Commissioner Wynn, in her role on this committee, should be the only board member communicating with Commissioner Howard or with other districts about this topic.

After discussion, the Board decided to expand the Fire Wise Committee to include wildfire mitigation and preparedness. Commissioner Wynn, as the board's representative on this committee, will be the sole board member communicating with Commissioner Howard, the County, and other ESDs on this topic. Once the new Community Risk Reduction Officer is hired, Commissioner Wynn will be the board's sole conduit with them.

- Community Partner and PFD Relations
 - This is the only committee the Board has not formalized with a Board representative. This committee will work with the Chief to build healthy relationships within our community as well as determine partnering with developers on how they can assist PFD in protecting their developments.

Board members discussed that it is very important that no single board member acts on their own without Board direction. The Board wants this to be the first process documented. President Opdahl suggested at the March meeting, the Board should work with legal counsel to begin developing processes for how all subcommittees function. With these policies, we need to ensure consistency, transparency, and compliance in our governance. Commissioner Valadez requested that the community be allowed to send their ideas about interacting with the Board and asked if Chief Haden could gather that information. President Opdahl reminded everyone that the community has the opportunity at every Board meeting to express their opinions through the public comment process. Once the Board begins to deliberate on any agenda topic, the public does not participate in that

process.

Chief Haden posted his contact information for the community.

7. Review, discuss and consider taking action regarding Board policies, including:
 - 10-year financial planning;
 - Strategic Service Goals;
 - Debt use/limit;
 - Purchasing Policy;
 - Fiscal Reporting/transparency;
 - New member orientation; and
 - Review of policies with quarterly reporting metrics.

During the Strategic Planning Workshop, Citygate suggested the Board implement policies for a multitude of things. Citygate sent a list of suggested Board policies. President Opdahl asked how the Board would like to move forward with reviewing and creating these policies.

Chief Haden stated that staff are already tailoring the policies to fit the District. Commissioner Goodhartz asked that the Board gets to see the Citygate policies prior to any updates.

The Board directed staff to send these policies to the Board, and the Board should review these for further discussion at the next Board meeting. Commissioner Goodhartz asked that Board members review these prior to the meeting.

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

President Opdahl expressed concern that there seems to be some misinformation about the Board's budget, tax rate setting, and procurement processes. She decided the President's Remarks would be a good opportunity to get our mandated processes on record. The District's fiscal year begins each October 1. Prior to that date, the Board begins a process that culminates in an approved budget and tax rate for the new fiscal year.

The Budget Process

- Throughout the year, the Board and staff develop a draft budget that is discussed at a budget workshop held in the month of July and also discussed at additional public meetings. During the budget process, board members can add or delete items from the draft budget. During the workshop:
 - Executive staff and the Board have detailed discussions on department needs and proposed expenditures.
 - Various committees comprised of fire fighters and executive staff provide input to the board on apparatus needs, proposed expenditures, and staff pay structure and benefits. The pay structures of staff and the Chief's salary are based on salary surveys we regularly participate in, with a specific emphasis on other Travis County ESDs. PFD salaries and benefits aren't the highest in the county and aren't the lowest at any position, but we have a goal to be competitive to help with staff retention and recruiting.

When the Board is satisfied with the document, a vote is taken. Once the budget is approved, the board begins the tax rate setting process.

Tax Rate Setting Process

- The tax rate setting discussions occur in a series of public meetings and public hearings. The Board follows a very strict process on setting the tax rate. The tax rate process is defined in Texas Tax Code Chapter 26. and every step is overseen by the District's General Counsel. This process includes tying the proposed tax rate back to the approved budget, publishing the

proposed tax rate in printed media, and holding at least 2 special meetings for the public to ask questions. Only after this process does the board vote to approve the tax rate.

- The Board approved tax rate and Board approved budget are submitted to Travis County prior to the beginning of the fiscal year. On October 1, the department begins to operate under the new Board approved budget. No procurements are made by the Chief or department staff that have not been approved by the Board.

Expenditure Process and Monthly Board Updates

- At every public board meeting, the Director of Administration presents a budget overview. This presentation includes expenditures over a certain amount, funds available, and any capitol items that are in the budget approved by the Board. Any expenditures tie back to the approved budget. No Capital expenditures or items over \$5,000 are completed without Board approval. After Board approval, the president or their designee signs any documents necessary for the expenditure. If budget adjustments are needed during the fiscal year, the Board will make changes to allow for purchases that were not included in the initial budget. Although it seldom happens, the Board has the option of pulling funds from reserves to allow for department operations.

Audit Process

- Every year, the Board is mandated to provide Travis County with a financial audit conducted by an outside firm. The CPA and auditing firm of Medack and Oltman has conducted the audit for several years. Once completed, the yearly financial audit is presented to the Board in a public meeting, and the audit becomes public record. After the audit is presented to the Board, a copy is sent to Travis County for review by their auditor. The financial auditors have never found any evidence of malfeasance.
- As a side note, in addition to the yearly outside audit, in the last 2 years the board has had the following accountants assist with PFD's financials. None of these CPAs have ever reported any irregularities.
 - Jeff Hunt, CPA
 - Kyle Bolls, CPA
 - Sharon Smith, CPA

By law, the approved yearly budget and tax rates, monthly budget and expenditure reports, the financial audit and any meetings related to these are all posted on our website.

No action taken.

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

Chief Haden reported:

- Briarcliff
 - Village of Briarcliff Administrator, Aaron Johnson assisted with Station 801 water issue.
Construction crews broke a water line and water was turned off. Mr. Johnson took our after-hours calls and helped to quickly get the water back on. Chief Haden thanked the Mayor of the Village of Briarcliff for Mr. Johnson's assistance.
- Thomas Ranch
 - Continued discussions with developers and TCFMO for fire safety plans during construction.
 - Temporary water systems and facilities continue until hydrants are installed and functioning

Commissioner Wynn asked about the relationship and regulations on the Burnet County side. Burnet County ESD 9 has their own fire code, and they are looped in with fire safety plans on the Burnet County side.

- o Strategic Plan
 - Workshop was held on January 17th.
 - Incident analysis and GIS modeling continues and should be completed in February
 - Project is on schedule and on budget

10. Receive monthly Fire Chief report and consider taking appropriate action.

- a) Emergency operations, response times, and call volume.
- b) Training.
- c) Management activities, personnel, amendments to budget FY2025/2026, and community impact, 801 remodel updates; and
- d) Apparatus needs.

Chief Prange gave a PowerPoint presentation which included:

- a. Emergency operations, response times, and call volume.
 - i. January 2026
 - 1. 113 Total Calls.
 - a. 70% EMS Calls
 - 2. Response time on non-EMS call of 8:50 minutes.
 - a. Ice Storm was a factor of this
 - i. COOP plan is being developed for events like this
 - ii. Extra staffing was on duty to help
 - 3. EMS continues to be the majority of calls
- b. Training.
 - i. 977 hours of training logged
 - ii. Probationary employees are wrapping up
 - iii. 100 hours of outside training were complete
 - iv. Continuing Regional training- IC Training.

President Opdahl asked that staff give a presentation on the capabilities of the reporting software in the future.

President Opdahl also commended Battalion Chief Montgomery and the department on the success of our training division. The commitment of the entire department is very exciting, and the board is very proud of our firefighters and our command staff for implementing a first-class training program.

- c. Management activities
 - i. Attended and presented at SAFE-D
 - ii. Annual Banquet
 - iii. Department meeting- BELIEVE- word of the year
- d. Personnel
 - i. Community Risk Reduction Officer had 2 internal candidates
 - 1. Assessment Center- March 10, 2026
 - ii. Smoke detector installation- Station 801- February 5th
- e. 801 Remodel
 - i. Permit was issued
 - ii. Electrical rough-in underway
 - iii. Pads are complete
 - iv. Reconfiguring rooms
 - v. Kitchen and bay wall demos
- f. 805-
 - i. AC repairs- out for quotes
- g. Facilities

- i. Generator Pms this week
- h. Fleet
 - i. Pump testing this week

11. Discuss and consider taking action on Boat 801 Refurbishment;

Chief Prange reviewed the executive summary of the RFP findings. Only one viable response was received. Staff recommends that the Board approve the refurbishment of boat 801 with Lake Assault within the already approved budgeted amount.

Commissioner Wynn made a motion for staff to move forward with the Boat refurbishment with Lake Assault within the approved budgeted amount. Commissioner Valadez seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

12. 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.

None.

13. Receive a monthly report from the district's attorney regarding pending litigation matters, contract issues, and legislative efforts and consider taking related actions.

John Carlton reported that primaries are coming up and that SAFE-D was a huge success. Mr. Carlton thanked all Commissioners and staff for their attendance and support.

Chief Haden also announced that the Pedernales Fire Department received an award at SAFE-D for the activities of our legislative education team.

The Presentation the District gave at SAFE-D was well received and hopefully encourages more departments to be present at the Capitol.

The Board also stated that they would like to see more staff continue to attend SAFE-D.

14. Discuss and consider taking action on approving submission of the Texas Comptroller Special Purpose District Financial and Tax Reporting submitting required annual report to the Division of Emergency Management.

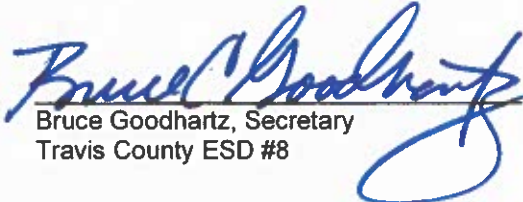
Director Courtney reviewed the report and stated the District's General Counsel had reviewed the report as well.

Commissioner Wynn made a motion to direct staff to submit the legally required Texas Comptroller Special Purpose District Financial and Tax Report. Commissioner Goodhartz seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

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

- The next meeting will be held Wednesday, March 18, at 5:15 p.m. at 801 Bee Creek Road, Briarcliff Texas 78669.

16. Adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 6:17 p.m.


Bruce Goodhartz, Secretary
Travis County ESD #8