

MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 29, 2024 MEETING
HARRIS COUNTY EMERGENCY SERVICES DISTRICT NO. 29

A meeting was duly called by the Board of Commissioners of the **Harris County Emergency Services District No. 29** on February 29, 2024 at **Fire Station 11**, located at **12730 Champion Forest Drive, Houston, Texas 77066**.

CALL MEETING TO ORDER.

The meeting was called to order at 2:00 p.m. by **Scott Morgan**, President and Chairman for the meeting.

ROLL CALL AND ESTABLISH QUORUM

President **Morgan** announced that a quorum was present. Those Commissioners present were:

Scott Morgan	Present
David Parker	Present
Jon Taylor	Present
Kenneth Latimer	Present
Bill Hogue	Present (arrived at 2:10 p.m.)

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE UNITED STATES FLAG AND TO THE TEXAS FLAG.

The District Commissioners and other persons present at the meeting joined together to recite the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States and the Pledge of Allegiance to Texas.

TO RECEIVE PUBLIC COMMENT.

The Board first opened the floor to public comment, though none was forthcoming.

The Board then took the meeting out of order, and addressed Agenda Item No. 16, to review, discuss and take action regarding Insurance matters.

TO REVIEW, DISCUSS AND TAKE ACTION REGARDING INSURANCE MATTERS.

Chief Shelor informed the Board that after having adopted supplemental insurance polices with Aflac in 2023, continuous issues had been experienced by personnel regarding claims and policy transfers between employers. The new Aflac representative assigned to the District is based in Las Vegas, and had not proved helpful. He further offered his own negative experience with customer service representatives as evidence of concern regarding the District's current coverage option. Alternative supplemental carriers including Colonial Life were therefore being researched to provide necessary benefits to District personnel.

Mr. Logan Mangold addressed the Board, providing a rate comparison for accident, cancer, and hospital coverage between Colonial Life and Aflac. He stated that accident and cancer

coverage were covered by the Department, though hospital coverage was provided on an individual basis. Though the two provider plans were similar, Colonial offered slightly cheaper rates, but also reduced benefits under cancer coverage. Claims through Colonial were also paid directly to the member in question, to be spent at his/her discretion. Mr. Coveler noted the difference between Aflac's \$1,500/month benefit policy, and Colonial's \$700/month policy, and asked if there was any way to cover the difference. Mr. Mangold stated that unfortunately, without going to individual cancer policies, there was no way to cover that difference. He then offered to become the District's authorized Aflac representative through VFIS to avoid the need for a carrier change.

Chief Shelor then asked if it could be possible to adopt accident policies through Colonial Life, Cancer policies through Aflac, and offer additional cancer coverage through Colonial Life as well, with Mr. Mangold as the District's representative. Mr. Mangold stated with Board approval, he would become the District's representative, and could provide information regarding that set up. President **Morgan** also stated the need for clear information and coverage differences to be provided for personnel who were interested in those options. After review, Mr. **Taylor** made a Motion, seconded by Mr. **Hogue**, to authorize Mr. Mangold to become the District's insurance representative for Aflac and Colonial Life through VFIS. Thereafter, President **Morgan** called for a vote and the Motion passed by a vote of 5 to 0.

Mr. **Taylor** next made another Motion, seconded by Mr. **Hogue**, to engage Colonial Life Insurance to provide certain coverages to District personnel. Thereafter, President **Morgan** called for a vote and the Motion passed by a vote of 5 to 0.

Lastly, Mr. Mangold presented information regarding HB471, related to a new requirement for Workers' Compensation coverage. Mr. Coveler explained the new law to the Board, and stated that the new law required employers to fully compensate injured employees up to one (1) full year of leave. That difference in compensation would be a payroll expense to the District. Mr. Mangold informed the Board that disability coverage was already held by the District, though it would fall under Hartford as of April 1, 2024. That coverage, however, would be in partnership with TexasMutual rather than 7710, which could pose additional concerns. Mr. Coveler requested that additional information be provided at the April meeting for additional review and discussion.

At this time, the Board returned to the regular agenda order and addressed Agenda Item No. 4, to review, discuss and take action to cancel the election called for May 4, 2024.

TO REVIEW, DISCUSS AND TAKE ACTION TO CANCEL THE ELECTION CALLED FOR MAY 4, 2024.

Mr. Coveler informed the Board that as no additional applications for Commissioner positions had been submitted or received, other than those Commissioners up for reelection, the election could be canceled. After review, Mr. **Taylor** made a Motion, seconded by Mr. **Latimer**, to cancel the District's May 4, 2024 Commissioner Election. Thereafter, President **Morgan** called for a vote and the Motion passed by a vote of 5 to 0.

TO REVIEW, DISCUSS AND TAKE ACTION REGARDING ANY DISTRICT FINANCIAL INSTITUTION MATTERS.

The Board next discussed matters related to District Financial Institutions. Mr. **Latimer** stated approximately \$1,000,000 had been moved to TexPool as previously requested by the Board, though no updates were available from Texas Traditions Bank. Mr. Coveler stated he would reach out to Texas Traditions shortly to clarify the remaining issues with their proposed Intrafi system. No further action was taken.

TO RECEIVE A REPORT FROM BETTER BOOKKEEPERS, INC., THE DISTRICT'S BOOKKEEPER, AND TAKE ACTION ON THE TREASURER'S REPORT.

The Board then received the District Bookkeeper's report from Mr. Drew Hamilton, who began by questioning one expense in the amount of \$1,192.40 which had been deposited to the payroll account in December. Mr. Coveler advised if it was in fact a January expense, that it should be moved to January records. Mr. Hamilton next questioned payment allocations for TECC expenses, and was advised that it should remain as paid in January 2024 rather than being broken out across the year. No action was taken at this time.

TO PAY OR AUTHORIZE DISTRICT BILLS AND FUND TRANSFERS REQUIRED FOR OPERATIONAL EXPENSES, PAYROLL EXPENSES AND CAPITAL EXPENSES.

The Board then reviewed fund transfers required to address District bills and expenses. Mr. Hamilton stated transfers would need to be approved in the following amounts:

1. Operations - \$140,751.76
2. Payroll - \$413,900.17
3. Admin - \$25,649.50

The combined transfer requested totaled \$580,301.43. At this time, Mr. **Taylor** addressed payroll account holdings, stating a preference to increase payroll account holdings to cover costs in case of emergencies, or rescheduled meetings during which fund transfers were approved. President **Morgan** inquired as to the average payroll cost, and what the suggested holding would be. Mr. **Morgan** stated the average payroll cost totaled \$200,000, with a current balance of \$500,000 being held in that account. His suggestion, therefore, was to increase that total to \$750,000 in case of emergencies or for contingency needs. After review, Mr. **Taylor** made a Motion, seconded by Mr. **Latimer**, to increase the payroll account balance to \$750,000. Thereafter, President **Morgan** called for a vote and the Motion passed by a vote of 5 to 0.

With the additional approved funds, Mr. Hamilton then amended his previous transfers to reflect the following figures:

1. Operations: \$140,751.76
2. Payroll: \$663,900.17
3. Admin: \$25,649.50

The combined amended transfer request then totaled \$830,301.43. After review, Mr. **Parker** made a Motion, seconded by Mr. **Latimer**, to approve the report and authorize transfers as stated. Thereafter, President **Morgan** called for a vote and the Motion passed by vote of 5 to 0. President **Morgan** lastly requested an itemized list of ACH payments be provided to the Board for review and authorization in future meetings.

TO REVIEW, DISCUSS AND TAKE ACTION ON SUBMITTALS RECEIVED FROM THE DISTRICT COMMISSIONERS SEEKING COMPENSATION AS PERMITTED BY TEXAS HEALTH & SAFETY CODE §775.038 (A-1).

The Board next reviewed Commissioner submittals for compensation, though none were forthcoming. Upon inquiry, Mr. Coveler stated a form would be provided to the Board for future compensation claims to be submitted, prior to next month's meeting.

TO APPROVE THE DISTRICT MEETING MINUTES OF PRIOR MEETING(S).

The Board next reviewed minutes from the District's February meeting. After review, Mr. **Taylor** made a Motion, seconded by Mr. **Parker**, to approve the minutes as presented. Thereafter, President **Morgan** called for a vote and the Motion passed by a vote of 5 to 0.

TO RECEIVE, DISCUSS AND TAKE ACTION ON THE DEPARTMENT'S FIRE OPERATIONS REPORT PRESENTED BY CHIEF DAN SHELOR.

The Board next received the Fire Operations report from Chief Shelor. Chief Shelor began by recognizing community member, Ms. Elisa Hernandez, for her donation of the current Station holiday décor.

Next, Chief Shelor presented the January operations report stating ninety-seven (97) calls were made, twenty-three percent (23%) of which were EMS related. Seventy-eight (78) calls were In-District, and nineteen (19) calls were out-of-District. Average turnout time totaled one minute twenty-nine seconds (1:29), with travel time In-District totaling four minutes seventeen seconds (4:17). Twenty-seven percent (27%) of responses In-District had a turnout time below one minute (1:00). Initial apparatus arrived on scene within six minutes thirty-five seconds (6:35) for ninety percent (90%) of all In-District events. Average response times for emergency and non-emergency incidents In-District totaled five minutes forty-six seconds (5:46). Aid was given by the District nineteen (19) times, and received three (3) times.

After review, Mr. **Parker** made a Motion, seconded by Mr. **Taylor**, to approve the report as presented. Thereafter, President **Morgan** called for a vote and the Motion passed by a vote of 5 to 0.

TO RECEIVE, DISCUSS AND TAKE ACTION ON THE FIRE & LIFE SAFETY REPORT.

The Board then tabled discussion of the February Fire and Life Safety Report for presentation and review at the April Board meeting.

TO REVIEW, DISCUSS AND TAKE ACTION REGARDING THE APPROVAL OF AN ADDITIONAL FIRE & LIFE SAFETY OFFICER POSITION.

The Board next received a presentation regarding the potential addition of another Fire & Life Safety Officer ("FLSO") position from Captain Ledford. Captain Ledford advised the Board regarding early expectations of the position related to the creation and maintenance of pre-fire plans, and execution of fire safety surveys across the District. He noted however, that with the

current number of commercial properties in the District (868), it would take three (3) years to visit and create pre-fire plans for every commercial occupancy, not counting follow-up visits. An additional FLSO would help to reduce that time frame, while also reducing false alarm calls, aiding in providing updated information to District personnel for emergency responses in commercial areas, and building strong relationships with local businesses and community entities including schools and residential centers. The total estimated expense for this position would be approximately \$217,500 including salary, benefits, uniforms, equipment and vehicle costs.

Mr. **Hogue** then inquired as to the value and practical use of the additional FLSO. Captain Ledford explained that with an additional FLSO to complete fire plans and surveys, more information including floorplans and accessible entrance and exit points for commercial buildings would be uploaded to Responder 360 and available to District personnel during emergency or non-emergency situations around the clock. That information could be accessed through technical equipment in each apparatus, or advised through the District Chief involved at the time. Captain Ledford then pointed out that commercial properties were the greatest focus for surveys and fire plans, as emergency responses to commercial areas represented a larger loss of value and higher risk to first responders and citizens. The contributions to safety for both community members and District personnel would therefore be the greatest value in adding an additional officer.

After review, Mr. **Hogue** made a Motion, seconded by Mr. **Taylor**, to approve the creation of an additional Fire & Life Safety Officer position. Thereafter, President **Morgan** called for a vote and the Motion passed by a vote of 5 to 0.

TO REVIEW, DISCUSS AND TAKE ACTION REGARDING THE ACQUISITION OF A VEHICLE FOR THE ADDITIONAL FIRE & LIFE SAFETY OFFICER POSITION.

The Board then discussed the acquisition of a vehicle for the new Fire and Life Safety Officer. Chief Shelor advised the Board that if approved, a Chevy Tahoe would be purchased in the amount of \$75,000 which would include the purchase price and necessary outfitting. After review, Mr. **Latimer** made a Motion, seconded by Mr. **Hogue**, to approve the purchase of a new vehicle for the additional Fire & Life Safety Officer. Thereafter, President **Morgan** called for a vote and the Motion passed by a vote of 5 to 0.

TO REVIEW, DISCUSS AND TAKE ACTION REGARDING APPROVAL OF THE SYSTEMS INTEGRATION PROPOSAL RECEIVED FROM ADEPT CONTROLS.

The Board next discussed the Systems Integration proposal from Adept Controls. Chief Shelor informed the Board that the previous company used by the District to install and monitor control systems for the Stations was incapable of fulfilling that need. Adept Controls had already performed some work on the existing systems, and would be capable of completing necessary work including lighting and AC controls, and facilitating additional system access for the Chief for an estimated cost of \$2,600. After review, Mr. **Taylor** made a Motion, seconded by Mr. **Latimer**, to approve the proposal from Adept Controls in the amount of \$2,600. Thereafter, President **Morgan** called for a vote and the Motion passed by a vote of 5 to 0.

TO REVIEW, DISCUSS AND TAKE ACTION REGARDING THE DISTRICT'S CURRENT OPEN EMPLOYMENT POSITION POSTINGS.

The Board then discussed the District's current open employment postings. Chief Shelor requested permission to add up to three (3) additional postings throughout the year for internal applicants only. When asked by President **Morgan**, Chief Shelor advised that starting pay for firefighter positions was \$59,600 annually, up to \$81,000 where applicable with ten (10) or more years' experience. His goal was to employ eighteen (18) full-time personnel, along with part-time employees. Mr. **Hogue** questioned the need for so many full-time personnel, and was told the stability for shifts on each apparatus provided by full-time employees was invaluable to the District's operations. After review, Mr. **Taylor** made a Motion, seconded by Mr. **Latimer**, to authorize postings for an additional three (3) full-time firefighters throughout the year. Thereafter, President **Morgan** called for a vote and the Motion passed by a vote of 5 to 0.

TO REVIEW AND TAKE ACTION ON APPROVAL OF EXPENSES RELATED TO UPCOMING TRAINING CLASSES, COURSE MATERIALS, EQUIPMENT AND RELATED EXPENDITURES TO BE INCURRED BY THE DISTRICT.

The Board took no action regarding upcoming expenses for training.

TO REVIEW, DISCUSS AND TAKE ACTION REGARDING ANY MATTERS RELATED TO THE DISTRICT'S BUDGET.

The Board took no action regarding District budget matters.

TO REVIEW, DISCUSS AND TAKE ACTION REGARDING ADOPTION AND AMENDMENT OF DISTRICT POLICIES AND STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINES.

The Board took no action regarding the adoption or amendment of District policies, though Mr. **Parker** suggested a policy be discussed regarding the transport of patients on District apparatus. No such discussion was held at this time.

At this time, Mr. **Parker** requested to reopen Agenda Item No. 16 regarding Insurance matters to continue discussing HB471 as previously presented. Mr. **Parker** requested clarification regarding payments for disability based on a fifty-three (53) hour work week, presenting past practices of determining payment based on a yearly salary divided by twenty-six (26) pay periods. Mr. **Coveler** advised that payment depended on the insurance coverage adopted by the District, but that further discussion could be held at the April Board meeting. He further advised that payments were made to the injured party by the Department against whom the claim was made, and not by other parties, including other employers in the case of personnel employed by multiple Districts or entities. Additional clarification and discussion would continue at the April Board meeting after further review of HB471.

TO REVIEW, DISCUSS AND TAKE ACTION ON NEEDED IMPROVEMENTS OR REPAIRS TO THE DISTRICT'S STATION, RELATED FACILITIES, VEHICLES OR EQUIPMENT.

The Board took no action regarding improvements or repairs to District property.

REVIEW, DISCUSS AND TAKE ACTION ON SUBMITTALS BY THE DEPARTMENT OF THIRTY (30) DAY ADVANCE REQUEST(S) FOR NECESSARY PURCHASES RELATED TO THE PROVISION OF EMERGENCY SERVICES.

The Board took no action regarding Department submittals.

TO REVIEW, DISCUSS AND TAKE ACTION FOR THE SALE OR DISPOSAL OF SURPLUS AND/OR SALVAGE PROPERTY PURSUANT TO TEXAS HEALTH AND SAFETY CODE §775.0735.

The Board took no action regarding the disposal or sale of District property.

TO DISCUSS ANY NEW ITEMS THAT NEED TO BE ON THE AGENDA FOR THE SUBSEQUENT DISTRICT MEETINGS AND TO REVIEW THE DATE FOR THE NEXT REGULARLY MONTHLY MEETING CURRENTLY SCHEDULED FOR APRIL 4, 2024.

The Board then confirmed the April meeting scheduled for Thursday, April 4, 2024 at 4:00 p.m. An item to discuss matters related to HB471 would be added to that agenda.

TO MEET IN CLOSED SESSION PURSUANT TO GOVERNMENT CODE §551.071 TO CONSULT WITH LEGAL COUNSEL REGARDING PENDING OR CONTEMPLATED LITIGATION, SETTLEMENT OFFERS OR ON MATTERS WHICH REQUIRE CONFIDENTIALITY UNDER THE TEXAS DISCIPLINARY RULES OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT OF THE STATE BAR OF TEXAS AND TAX CODE §323.3022 TO DISCUSS SALES TAX MATTERS.

The Board entered into Closed Session at 4:01 p.m. to consult with legal counsel.

TO MEET IN CLOSED SESSION PURSUANT TO GOVERNMENT CODE §551.072 TO DELIBERATE REGARDING REAL ESTATE MATTERS.

The Board did not meet in Closed Session to discuss real estate matters.

TO MEET IN CLOSED SESSION PURSUANT TO GOVERNMENT CODE §551.074 TO DISCUSS PERSONNEL MATTERS.

The Board entered into Closed Session at 4:16 p.m. to discuss personnel matters.

The Board reconvened in Open Session at 4:43 p.m.

TO RECONVENE IN OPEN SESSION TO REVIEW, DISCUSS AND TAKE ACTION ON ANY REAL ESTATE OR PERSONNEL MATTERS.

Having returned from Closed Session, Mr. **Taylor** made a Motion, seconded by Mr. **Latimer**, to approve the salary increase for Chief Shelor as discussed in Closed Session, to be recognized in effect as of January 1, 2024. Thereafter, President **Morgan** called for a vote and the Motion passed by a vote of 5 to 0. President **Morgan** then thanked Chief Shelor for his continued service to the District, stating, “this organization has come a long way under your rule as Chief, and granted we have others who have helped, but without you, we wouldn’t be where we are.”

ADJOURNMENT.

There being no further business brought before the Board, President **Morgan** adjourned the meeting at 4:46 p.m.

The foregoing minutes were passed and approved by the Board of Commissioners on April 4, 2024.

**HARRIS COUNTY
EMERGENCY SERVICES DISTRICT NO. 29**

By:  _____
Jon Taylor
District Secretary