

**MINUTES OF APRIL 4, 2024 MEETING
HARRIS COUNTY EMERGENCY SERVICES DISTRICT NO. 29**

A meeting was duly called by the Board of Commissioners of **Harris County Emergency Services District No. 29** on Thursday, April 4, 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 4:02 p.m. by **Scott Morgan**, President and Chairman for the meeting.

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	Absent

Also present at the meeting were Fire Chief Dan Shelor, Melissa Wiggins and Ira Coverler of Coverler & Peeler, P.C., legal counsel, Drew Hamilton of Better Bookkeepers, Emmett Rhodes, David Roth, and Scott Bales of Texas Traditions Bank, and other members of the Department and public.

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.

At this time, the Board took the meeting out of order to address Agenda Item No. 5, to receive the District Bookkeeper's report.

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

The Board next received a report from representatives of Texas Traditions Bank ("TTB"), regarding the District's account creation and investment matters. Mr. Emmett Rhodes advised the Board that all funds held by TTB would be covered, even over the \$250,000 limit, as all funds above that point would be spread across multiple banking institutions while still considered "belonging to" TTB. "For example, if we have \$500,000, and someone else has \$500,000, and we both want Full coverage, we split the funds so we each have two (2) \$250,000 accounts with full

coverage.” When asked, Mr. Rhodes stated an inventory or list would be available to show the location of all funds held by other institutions, but would be covered by TTB.

He then requested a complete list of current District banking institutions to avoid potential coverage issues on existing accounts. President **Morgan** inquired as to access issues if TTB became unstable or unable to return the funds held in other institutions, and was told those institutions would return all funds, as the District remained the legal owner of those funds, rather than TTB. Mr. Coveler next requested information regarding interest rates to be paid on such accounts, and was told interest payments would be covered and determined by TTB, though they could vary depending on the account type being used. President **Morgan** then requested clarification on withdraw coverage for requests in excess of immediate funds held by TTB, and was told the bank would satisfy all withdraws based on the total funds owned by the District regardless of which institution currently held them.

Mr. Coveler lastly advised that any initial deposit over \$250,000 should be made incrementally, to avoid coverage issues at the time of deposit. The Board was then assured, however, that transfers could theoretically be completed and covered in any amount depending on the time of day that transfer was received. They were cautioned that large amounts requiring additional transfers to outside institutions could be delayed by uncontrolled variables in processing by those institutions. The Board thanked the bank representatives for their presentation, and no further action was taken at this time, as an initial deposit amount had already been approved in a prior meeting.

The Board then returned to the regular meeting order and addressed Agenda Item No. 11, regarding prior meeting minutes.

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

The Board next received a report from Mr. Hamilton of Better Bookkeepers, Inc., who stated that financial matters were normal, though he noted one (1) large purchase pertaining to the new 2024 Tahoe. Mr. Hamilton also advised the Board of extra funds present in the Operations account due to March ACH payments being drawn from the District’s HCAD account. After review, Mr. **Parker** made a Motion, seconded by Mr. **Latimer**, to approve the report as presented. Thereafter, President **Morgan** called for a vote and the Motion passed by a vote of 4 to 0.

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 bill and expenses. Mr. Hamilton stated transfers would need to be approved in the following amounts:

- 1. Operations – \$192,926.91
- 2. Payroll – \$431,067.12
- 3. Admin - \$32,761.36

The combined transfer requested totaled \$270,901.57. After review, Mr. **Parker** made a Motion, seconded by Mr. **Latimer**, to approve the transfers and authorize bill payments as

presented. Thereafter, President **Morgan** called for a vote and the Motion passed by a vote of 4 to 0.

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).

Mr. Coveler addressed the Board, reviewing opportunities for Commissioners to claim compensation and reimbursement for participation in District related events, including trainings, meetings, conferences, and similar events. He then advised that, regarding compensation, the Board would also need to decide how to file taxes, using either a W2 or 1099 form. After review, the Board agreed to use 1099 forms for tax purposes.

The Board then discussed payment options regarding compensation rates. Mr. Coveler advised that previously, the law allowed for Commissioners to claim up to \$150 per day for compensation by the District, with a yearly income cap of \$7,200. Due to changes in the law, Commissioners could now claim \$221 per day in compensation from the District, though the yearly maximum remained \$7,200. The Board requested forms to claim compensation be distributed prior to the upcoming May meeting, at which time they would discuss and take action to adopt a compensation rate. In the future, compensation claims by the Board would be submitted to Chief Shelor prior to approval at forthcoming Board meetings.

TO REVIEW, DISCUSS AND TAKE ACTION ON GRANTING EXEMPTIONS FOR 2024.

Mr. Coveler then advised the Board regarding tax exemptions. In 2023, exemptions were granted in the following amounts:

Homestead:	0%
Disability:	\$100,000
Age Over 65:	\$100,000

He then reviewed the potential impact of raising exemption rates on the District's tax rate cap, and recommended maintaining the current rates to avoid those complications. After review, Mr. **Parker** made a Motion, seconded by Mr. **Taylor**, to maintain the current tax exemption rates through 2024. Thereafter, President **Morgan** called for a vote and the Motion passed by a vote of 4 to 0.

TO REVIEW, DISCUSS AND TAKE ACTION REGARDING DISTRICT INSURANCE MATTERS.

The Board requested this item be held over for discussion in May. No further action was taken at this time.

TO REVIEW, DISCUSS AND TAKE ACTION REGARDING INSURANCE MATTERS RELATED TO HB471.

Chief Shelor next advised the Board that short term and long-term disability insurance coverage had been moved to Hartford policies, at a much lower rate than the previous policies. Concerns regarding coverage for part-time personnel were still being addressed. He stated that accident coverage was covered by Provident, but again was unsure if that coverage applied in full

to part-time personnel. When asked, Chief Shelor advised that the new guidance under HB471 required Districts to address all firefighters, though questions remained regarding the definitions of “permanent” versus “paid” firefighters. At this time, the Board requested further action be held over for additional discussion in May. No action was taken at this time.

At this time, the Board returned to Agenda Item No. 4 regarding financial institutions.

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

The Board then reviewed minutes from the February 29, 2024 “March” meeting. After review, Mr. **Latimer** 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 4 to 0.

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

Chief Shelor presented the February operations report stating ninety-two (92) calls were made, thirty percent (30%) of which were EMS related. Average turnout time totaled one minute thirty-five seconds (1:35), with travel time In-District totaling four minutes twenty-six seconds (4:26). Mutual Aid was given by the District seven (7) times to Northwest, Klein, and Cypress Creek Fire Departments, and received three (3) times. When asked, Chief Shelor informed the Board that the new report system did not break out Emergency and Non-Emergency response times, though the average response time in-District for the month totaled six minutes one second (6:01).

After review, Mr. **Taylor** made a Motion, seconded by Mr. **Latimer**, to approve the report as presented. Thereafter, President **Morgan** called for a vote and the Motion passed by a vote of 4 to 0

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

Chief Shelor next provided the Fire and Life Safety reports from February and March, as Captain Ledford could not attend the meeting. He first noted events that Champions ESD had participated in, including an educational event with Precinct 3’s Public Safety Forum on Community Risk Reduction, a structure fire at Arden Greenwood Apartments, and a structure fire at Klein Forest High School which was attributed to arson. He then informed the Board that reset keys for pull station fire alarms had been received, and assigned to front-line apparatus and Chief’s vehicles to be used when resetting fire alarm systems during response events. Those keys had been obtained by the same company which previously donated smoke detectors to the District for community use.

Regarding property intervention events, Chief Shelor advised that access issues at the Champion Oaks and Providence at Champions Apartment complexes were being addressed. Vehicle fire at Shiloh Church. Additional incidents noted included illegal burning in Bourgeois Forest, water flow alarm calls from Hobby Lobby, and a review of the Fire Marshal’s Office (FMO) records showed that a local donut shop was cleared to re-open, after a previous fire safety survey was completed and submitted to the FMO. Pre-fire plans were also conducted with the Fire

Marshal HazMat team at Harris County Water Control & Improvement District 116. District personnel also identified businesses with potential impediments to rescue efforts in the case of such events, and further reported illegal business operations at a local sports bar which led to an investigation by the Fire Marshal's office and Precinct 4 Deputies, ultimately resulting in the closure of that business.

Recently, Captain Ledford attended both the annual SAFE-D and Texas Fire Chiefs Association conferences. Chief Shelor also noted Captain Ledford's participation as part of the Texas Line of Duty Death Task Force after the death of a North Texas Fire Chief in the line of duty. During February and March, twenty-five (25) run reports were reviewed for accurate coding and billing, fifteen (15) pre-fire plans and surveys were completed, and multiple forms and policies had been drafted to address notification and inspection matters.

After review, Mr. **Taylor** made a Motion, seconded by Mr. **Latimer**, to approve the Fire & Life Safety Report as presented. Thereafter, President **Morgan** called for a vote and the Motion passed by a vote of 4 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 expenses related to upcoming training classes.

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

The Board took no action regarding the District's budget.

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

Chief Shelor next informed the Board that a draft of guidelines regarding HB624, allowing patients to be transported via fire apparatus, had been submitted to ESD 11 for review, though no reply had been received as of this meeting. Mr. **Parker** agreed that a policy was necessary, advising against allowing any such transportation. No action was taken at this time.

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 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 thirty (30) day advance requests from the Department.

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 sale or disposal 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 MAY 2, 2024.

The Board then confirmed the date of their next meeting as Thursday, May 2nd, and requested items be added to the agenda for that meeting, including those related to District insurance and policy matters, and also to receive a presentation regarding the new property tax dashboard program from HdL.

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 did not meet in Closed Session 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 deliberate real estate matters.

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

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

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


The Board took no action regarding real estate or personnel matters.

ADJOURNMENT.

There being no further business brought before the Board, Mr. **Taylor** made a Motion, seconded by Mr. **Latimer**, to adjourn the meeting at 5:12. Thereafter, President **Morgan** called for a vote and the Motion passed by a vote of 4 to 0.

The foregoing minutes were passed and approved by the Board of Commissioners on May 2, 2024.

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

By: 

Jon Taylor
District Secretary