

Minutes of the October 26, 2023 Special Commissioners Meeting

1. **Call to order:** 6:33 pm
2. **Establishment of a quorum:** Commissioner Mayberry, Commissioner Berumen, Commissioner Rankins, Commissioner Anaya and Commissioner Booth were present in person.
3. **Pledge of Allegiance:** The Pledge was recited.
4. **Public Comment:** None
5. **Consent Agenda:**
 - A. Review and approve minutes of the September 21, 2023 meeting.
 - B. Approve a Purchase order for \$24,000 to purchase consumable medical equipment from Life-Assist.
 - C. Approve the purchase of office furniture for the Administration office. - \$3,906.49, account 9001.01
 - D. Approve the purchase of computers for the Administration and Fire Marshal office. - \$7,143.31 – Account 9001.01 & 9000.03
 - E. Approve the repainting of Logistics trailer. - \$2,500 – Account 7950.02
 - F. Approve ground and apparatus annual ladder testing. - \$2,368.00 – Account 7850.02
 - G. Approve Equipment for Scott SCBA in house repair center. - \$23,455.12 – Account 81000.02

Commissioner Mayberry read the agenda item and asked if any Commissioner wanted to pull an item for discussion. No items were pulled. Motion to approve the consent agenda made by Commissioner Booth and seconded by Commissioner Anaya. Motion carried.
6. **Review and approve communications report on monthly calls as reported by Horizon City dispatch:** (Report was given by Elva Ramos, Dispatch Supervisor)
 - Call numbers reported consist of the following: Alarm 34, Assistance 18, Brush Fire 5, Car Fire 0, Water Leaks 13, Gas leaks 10, Medical 249, MVA 49, Structure Fires 5; Inspections 121.

Structure Fires

14313 Desert Point

- Dispatch received a call in reference to burning odor and a popping sound at 18:36.
- P403 enroute 18:38.
- Horizon, Clint and Socorro Fire Departments responded.
- SQ403 on scene 18:41.
- SQ403 reported the burnt smell was in the kitchen area.
- Additional responding units were requested to stand down.
- At 18:50, SQ403 reported the pop sound came from a water dispenser. The call was in reference to an appliance malfunction.
- All units cleared the scene at 18:55.

14255 Desert Cactus

- Dispatch received a call in reference to a refrigerator on fire at 1:51.
- P403 enroute 1:54.
- Horizon and Socorro Fire Departments responded.
- P403 on scene 2:02. P403 reported black smoke was visible at the front door.
- P403 initiated fire attack at 2:03.
- Water on fire at 2:11.
- A fire investigator was requested at 2:23.
- All units cleared the scene at 5:52.

645 Cedarwood

- Dispatch received a call in reference to large amount of smoke inside the residence at 14:18.
- P403 enroute 14:20.
- Horizon, Clint and Socorro Fire Departments responded.
- P403 on scene 14:25.
- At 14:27, P403 reported no fire and requested for additional responding units to stand down.
- All units cleared the scene at 14:41.

500 S Darrington @ Peter Duarte Headstart

- Dispatch received a call in reference to odor of smoke inside two classrooms at 13:44.
- P403 enroute 13:46.
- Horizon and Socorro Fire Departments responded.
- P403 on scene at 13:51.
- At 13:52, a Horizon City Police Officer reported the classrooms were full of smoke.
- At 13:54, P403 requested for additional responding units to stand down.
- At 14:11, P403 reported a shortage caused the fire alarm to active. The call was in reference to an electrical issue.
- All units cleared the scene at 14:21.

531 Bogota

- At 20:48, dispatch received a call in reference to odor of smoke inside the residence.
- P402 enroute at 20:50.
- Horizon and Socorro Fire Departments responded.
- P402 on scene at 20:56.
- At 20:58, P402 requested for additional responding units to stand down.
- At 21:17, P402 reported no fire. The call was in reference to an electrical shortage. The homeowner was advised to contact an electrician. All units cleared the scene.

1604 Hartsdale

- Dispatch received a call in reference to a grill on fire at 14:42.
- P402 enroute at 14:45.
- Horizon Fire Departments responded.
- Q401 on scene at 14:45.
- Water on fire 14:45.
- Fire out 14:45.
- Q401 requested for additional responding units to stand down at 14:46.
- All units cleared the scene at 15:06.

Search and Rescue

- **14151 Nunda**
- At 14:59, CH402 requested for a Search and Rescue call to be created in reference to Jeff Davis County requesting their assistance in regard to a 25 year old female.
- CH402/CH801/CH502
- At 15:09, CH402 requested for the call to be cancelled. The patient was extricated, and assistance was no longer be needed.

All units cleared at 15:10.

Structure Fires out of District

1. Zabel/Glaze (Socorro)
2. 15211 Radlite (Clint)
3. Krag/Buffalo Bill (Montana Vista)
4. 201 Bauman (Socorro)
5. 421 Old Hueco Tanks (Socorro)
6. 205 Buford (Socorro)

There were no questions or comments by Commissioners. Motion to approve report made by Commissioner Anaya and seconded by Commissioner Berumen. Motion carried.

7. **Review and approve financial report on monthly bills and invoices, monthly report, sales tax analysis report, purchases for items in the District's approved budget, and budget reallocations:** (Presented by Administrator Katherine Ames)

4th Quarter Financial Report - 07-01-23 to 09-30-23

	<i>4th Quarter 07-01-23 to 09-30-23</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>4th Quarter 07-01-22 to 09-30-22</i>
ESD Income			
Budgeted Tax Collection	\$4,976,382.49		
Actual Collection	\$5,036,272.37	101.20%	101.90%
Difference	\$59,889.88		
Expense			
ESD Budgeted Amount	\$8,546,993.31		
ESD Budget Spent	\$6,766,240.42	79.20%	83.70%
Remain ESD Budget	\$1,780,752.89		
HFD Budgeted Amount	\$996,538.18		
HFD Budget Spent	\$908,475.67	91.20%	88.50%
Remain HFD Budget	\$88,062.51		
Total Budgeted Amount	\$9,543,531.49		
Total Operating Spent	\$7,674,716.09	80.40%	84.40%
Total Operating Available	\$1,868,815.40		
FM Income	\$771,578.80		\$854,399.42
		Dec. \$82,820.62	
Expense			
Budgeted Amount	\$766,800.17		
FM Budget Spent	\$672,603.26	87.70%	85.70%
Remaining Budget \$\$	\$94,196.91		
Construction Account			
Construction Budget Amount	\$191,190.42		
Construction Spent			
Construction Remaining:	\$191,190.42		
ESD Reserve Balance:	\$1,314,983.80		

Sales Tax Collection:	\$4,877,639.23		\$2,022,340.23
------------------------------	-----------------------	--	-----------------------

Over Collection

Interest Earned:	\$833,103.91		
-------------------------	--------------	--	--

The financial report was reviewed and the ESD ended the year with unspent funds that have been allocating for FY 24' towards the reserve and additional projects such as the ESD Headquarters. Budget Reallocations were reviewed by Administrator Ames. The amount requested for reallocations is \$34,252.04 for the Fire Marshal budget, \$89,205.04 for the Fire Department budget and \$101,915.03 for the ESD budget. Motion to approve the financial report and budget reallocations as presented made by Commissioner Rankins and seconded by Commissioner Booth. Motion carried.

8. Review and approve Chief's report on run volume, stipend, training, fleet, personnel, fire response, building construction and additional fire information: (Report given by Chief Menendez)

- **Calls for the month of September:** Station 1: 231; Station 2: 185; Total calls: 416
- **Calls for the year 2023:** 4014
- **Stipend:** \$62,751.56
- **Hours:** 5,016
- **Fire Marshal Office:** All the Fire Marshal's are now in one office. We had two complaints that were handled with no further action needed.
- **Training:** Received the new flash over prop, that will be called the red dragon. This prop allows the firefighters to see flames roll over and proper ventilation practices. We recently trained in the unit and all those who attended were very impressed. The roof props are almost complete and have been placed on the top of the containers.
- **Fleet:** Quint 401 is back in the shop; we have leaks in the steering boxes and repair is covered under warranty. Rescue 405 had a steering hose rupture; the unit was fixed the following day. Brush 402 has U bolts that are damaged and are being replaced. Squad 403 has been in the shop for a few weeks and is expected to be there for a few more days to replace the fuel system.
- **Personnel:** We are down one full time Deputy Fire Marshal in FMO. We are going to start interviewing for the full-time positions in the coming weeks. Kathrine and I are going to review the applicants for Administrative Assistant III. We hope to have this position filled by the next Commissioner meeting. Test for the 8 hires for Operations will be given on November 13, From there we will start the next phase for all those that pass which is the Fire Ground Performance Evaluation.
- **Response:** Crews responded to a house on fire on 10/20/23. The possible cause was Lithium-Ion Batteries.
- **Special Operations:** No training was held this month.
- **HQ:** Will be meeting to discuss the process for bids and finalization of any necessary changes. We did move all dates by one week as county planning had an issue with receiving our plans.
- **Misc.:** Flu vaccine clinic was a success, Administered 199 vaccines to the public. We will be doing another sometime in November at Station 2. Halloween is upon us and we will be out on patrol giving out glow sticks. National Night out that just passed was a hit, by far the most people we have seen. We are doing a lot of displays and career days this month crews are busy.

Chief Menendez and Captain Kovach just returned from water rescue training in which Captain Kovach is now a state instructor. Chief read a letter from the Candlelighters thanking the ESD for the money donated from the patch sales. Commissioner Berumen stated he walked the grounds of the fire station, and everything is looking great at Station #1. He did ask about the steel structures on the training land and the Chief explained that it belongs to the church, who are building a new building. Commissioner Berumen also asked about the smell of smoke in the Fire Marshal's office from the new burn prop. The Chief addressed this and explained that they will be using the prop when the Fire Marshal's are not in the office. Motion to approve report made by Commissioner Berumen and seconded by Commissioner Anaya. Motion carried.

9. Review and approve Fire Marshal's report on operational & construction permits, annual fire safety inspections, new building construction, personnel, training miscellaneous activities & information: (Report given by Assistant Fire Marshal Mike Franco)

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	2023
Construction	33	59	37	28	38	31	24	51	46	0	0	0	347

Total for 09/2022: **230** Total for 09/2021: **269**

- **Annual Fire Safety Inspections**
 - **49** = FMO Annual Fire Safety Inspections for August '23, as per Emergency Reporting (Report #1764)
 - **0** = SWO issued
- **New Building Construction**
 - FMO is continuously working with on-going projects: ##% = Completion; UR=Under Review; PR=Permit Released
 - Walgreens = 95%
 - Home Depot = 90%
 - Wing Shack = 30%
 - Shopping Centers – UR
 - High Pile Combustible Storage Racking Systems
 - Tenant Improvements – Everywhere=UR
 - Assorted Fire Protection Systems
 - Residential Communities

New Business Open to the ESD: Taco Tote; Charley's Philly Steak cheese Sandwiches & Wings; CupBop; New Applicants: AutoZone (Darrington); Wienerschnitzel (State St.); Self-Storage Facility (Windermere); Quick Svc Oil Change (Horizon); etc.

- **Personnel**
 - DFM Raul Hernandez was terminated by the ESD. Thus, FMO is now short (1) FTE.
 - Received several ESD FMO Applications. Going filtering through applicants.
 - (2) FMO employees were under the Covid CDC regulations.
- **Training**
 - Weekly FMO training session when staff are abundant.
- **Miscellaneous Activities & Information**

- Our FMO furniture and fixtures arrived and FMO Division Heads were relocated to FMO Mobile Office.
- The FMO Mobile Office layout was revamped for the efficiency of our daily workflow and operations.
- Attended the September's Building Committee Meeting -- FMO Plan Review is in process.
- National Night Out 2023's Firework Display was a success.
- **Future Events:**
 - ** Getting ready to hire new FTE's & replace the (1) FTE vacancy.

Commissioner Booth asked about the collections process, and it was explained by Administrator Ames and AFM Franco. Motion to approve the report made by Commissioner Booth and seconded by Commissioner Rankins. Motion carried.

- 10. Discussion and take action on a Resolution of the Board of Commissioners of El Paso County Emergency Services District No.1 regarding a loan:** Adrian Galvan from TGL Financial consulting presented a financing plan for the new pumper/brush truck loan. The amount of the loan will be \$1,415,000. He is recommending we borrow the money from Amegy bank, who is offering a 5.05% interest rate for 10 years and is callable anytime. Mr. Galvan spoke about the ease of working with Mrs. Ames and her active role is preplanning for financing loans. The loan will be funded on 11/2/23 and this loan will hit our targeted tax rate that we budgeted for. He spoke about the loan and what it is funding. Motion to approve the loan in the amount of \$1,415,000 with an interest rate of 5.05% for 10 years and callable anytime from Amegy bank made by Commissioner Booth and seconded by Commissioner Rankins. All Commissioner voted in favor. Motion carried.
- 11. Discussion and take action on ESD Headquarters Construction project on approval of change orders and associated fees, project status, project requests, and approval and change of architecture design/plans:** Chief Menendez spoke about the bidding schedule and that we will be publishing the request for bids soon. Ther schedule has been pushed back a week from the original schedule due to a delay with the county plans submittal. Chief Menendez explained the process that we will follow as explained to us by BRW. The attorney asked if there was room in the schedule for the Board to have a few meetings to decide if needed. The schedule would allow for an additional meeting before the regular meeting in December if necessary. All the information from the bidding process will be shared with the board via email to keep them informed of the progression. There was discussion on the scoring process and that BRW will take the lead in this process. Administrator Ames will work with legal on the bidding process as well. Commissioner Mayberry is recommending that Administrator Ames be given the ability to make minor decisions on the project and questions that may come up during the process. There was discussion about this. No action taken as this item was informational only.
- 12. Discussion and take action on revising the Drug Testing Policy:** Chief Menendez spoke about the revised policy that the board has had time to review. Attorney Estrada spoke about the process and why it has taken longer than anticipated, mostly due to the complexity of the policy. He also spoke about what changes were needed. Mr. Estrada soke about the references for CDL's and the requirements in Texas for these licenses. Those sections were removed because Fire Departments are exempt from the CDL requirement. There were no questions from the board. Motion to approve the revised Drug policy made by Commissioner Rankins and seconded by Commissioner Booth. Motion carried.

- 13. Discussion and take action on the approval of the Texas County & District Retirement System (TCDRS) FY 2024 Plan:** Administrator Ames met with our TCDR rep to be able to provide more information on the recommended change of going to a 5-year vesting. There will not be a change in employer contribution but will help the ESD's be more competitive in the job market by having a five-year vested time frame that will be the same as many other ESD's in the state. Motion to approve the plan with changing the vesting time to five years and allowing Commissioner Ames to sign the agreement because she is the plan administrator made by Commissioner Rankins and seconded by Commissioner Anya. Motion carried.
- 14. Discussion and take action on making the Fire Marshal a salaried position:** Chief Menendez spoke about moving the Fire Marshal position from an hourly to salary position. Two other division heads are salaried already and the Fire Marshal position meets the same qualification for the change. This change will benefit the ESD due to a reduction in overtime pay for overtime and weekend inspections. HR also stated that this is the best option for Department heads who typically must be available more hours and need flexibility in their schedule to assure coverage of department needs. Motion to approve the change for the Fire Marshal position from hourly to salary effective 11/5/23 made by Commissioner Rankins and seconded by Commissioner Anaya. Motion carried.
- 15. Discussion and take action on a trip request for Fire Service Chief Executive Officer Training:** Chief Menendez provided information on this training and that he has to apply and be chosen to take the training. He is asking for an approval of the training cost of \$2,500.00 and once he is accepted the item will come back to the board for the travel expense approval. Motion to approve the training made by Commissioner Berumen and seconded by Commissioner Anaya. Motion carried.
- 16. Discussion and take action on the revised quote for installation of a rear driveway on the training land:** Chief Menendez explained the City has come back with an official proposal and an increase in cost for the project for a total of \$4,758.00. This is an increase of \$2,498.00 from the originally quoted price. The difference in cost will be covered by the Construction budget. There were some questions about a few items in the agreement. Motion to approve with the contingency that the concrete grade be what we need with final approval by Chief Menendez as well as the local agreement made by Commissioner Booth and seconded by Commissioner Rankins. Motion carried.
- 17. Discussion and take action on the purchase of Fire Equipment to include Fire Fighter Equipment, Tactical Equipment, Communication Equipment and General Fire Department supplies:** Motion to delete made by Commissioner Rankins and seconded by Commissioner Berumen. Motion carried.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – Commissioner Anaya made a motion to retire into executive session. Motion seconded by Commissioner Booth. Motion carried and Commissioner retired into executive session at 8:32. Motion to return from executive session at 10:13 pm made by Commissioner Anaya and seconded by Commissioner Booth. Motion carried.

- 18. Discussion and take action on employee evaluation and compensation for Chief Kris Menendez:** Commissioner Anaya made a motion to approve the evaluation for Kris Menendez and to approve a salaried pay compensation of \$118,000.00 per year to take effect 11/5/23. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Booth. Motion carried.

- 19. Discussion and take action on employee evaluation and compensation of Assistant Chief Daniel Ames:** Commissioner Anaya made a motion to approve an hourly compensation for the Assistant Chief's position to \$43.51 per hour to be effective 11/5/23. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Berumen. Motion carried.
- 20. Discussion and take action on employee evaluation and compensation of Administrator Katherine Ames:** Commissioner Anaya made a motion to approve a salaried pay compensation of \$96,000.00 per year to take effect 11/5/23. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Berumen. Motion carried.
- 21. For the Good of the District:** We will have crews patrolling on Halloween and passing out glow sticks to children in our community. We will also have a truck on display at the Horizon Baptist church on Halloween. Our department will be participating in the El Paso Thanksgiving parade and the Horizon Christmas parade. The paramedic class is going well, and all students are passing and the School of EMS is asking to start another class in March of 2024.
- 22. Set date and time for next meeting in November:** Due to the Thanksgiving holiday the meeting will be changed to November 16, 2023, at 6:30 pm.
- 23. Adjourn:** Motion to adjourn made by Commissioner Booth. The meeting adjourned at 10:20 pm.

Submitted by: Katherine Ames, Administrator

Reviewed by: Diana Hernandez, Administrative Assistant