

Minutes of the September 21, 2023 Special Commissioners Meeting

1. **Call to order:** 6:30 pm
2. **Establishment of a quorum:** Commissioner Mayberry, Commissioner Berumen and Commissioner Rankins. Commissioner Anaya and Commissioner Booth were absent due to job commitments.
3. **Pledge of Allegiance:** The Pledge was recited.
4. **Public Comment:** None
5. **Review and approve minutes August 21, 2023:** Minutes were reviewed. Motion to approve the minutes made by Commissioner Berumen and seconded by Commissioner Rankins. 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 40, Assistance 27, Brush Fire 7, Car Fire 0, Water Leaks 17, Gas leaks 13, Medical 264, MVA 55, Structure Fires 1; Inspections 110.

Structure Fires

- **Grand River/Upsala**
 - Dispatch received a call in reference to a fire inside an abandoned residence at 20:45.
 - RT405 enroute 20:46.
 - Horizon, Clint, and Socorro Fire Departments responded.
 - At 20:55, RT405 arrived on scene and reported no signs of smoke or flames.
 - At 21:00, all additional responding units were requested to stand down.
 - At 21:03, RT405 reported was unable to locate the fire and would be clearing shortly.
 - All units cleared the scene at 21:05.

Search and Rescue

- **Kenazo/Fairwood**
 - Dispatch received a call in reference to a missing female possibly in the desert area at 13:38. The female had prior history of dementia.
 - SQ403 enroute at 13:40.
 - SQ403/CH402/ SAR401 (4 members on board)/CH401 responded.
 - CH402 on scene 13:46.
 - SQ403 on scene with the drone at 13:56.
 - Hasty Team was deployed at 14:34.
 - Female was found at 14:35.
 - All units cleared the scene at 14:53.
- **14800 Montwood**
 - Dispatch received a call in reference to a razor that was flipped over in the desert area at 11:52. The reporting party advised the female had been lost for approximately 30 minutes.
 - RP401/CH401/SQ403/CH402/SAR401 responded.
 - CH401 enroute 11:56.
 - Patient contact at 12:18.
 - Additional SAR responding members were requested to stand down at 12:18.
 - Both patients refused medical attention.

Structure Fires out of District

1. 10381 Valle Suave (Socorro)
2. 14631 Gib Mills (Montana Vista)
3. 754 Lico Ln (Socorro)
4. 14087 Pebble Hills (Montana Vista)

There were no questions or comments by Commissioners. Motion to approve report made by Commissioner Rankins 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): The budget closeout will be September 28th and there will be a lot of final checks to sign to complete the Fiscal year. The report was informational only and no action was taken.
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 August:** Station 1: 255 Station 2: 192 Total calls: 447
 - **Calls for the year 2023:** 3562
 - **Stipend:** \$40,170.40
 - **Hours:** 3,310.45
 - **Fire Marshal Office:** Office has been working on many projects. Home depo being one of them. Looking at hiring additional personnel, agenda item.

- **Training:** Tiller training has begun we are training the FF's from "A" shift. Training involves two members at a time and is 40 hours long plus 25 hours behind the front wheel and another 25 hours behind the tiller wheel.
- **Fleet:** Quint 401 is still out of service. They are currently working on it and expect it to be back in service by next week. All other units are up and running.
- **Personnel:** We had two members resign stating that regular job was becoming very demanding and they were required to work over time which interfered with the schedule here.
- **Response:** Units responded to a fire that occurred in horizon. Fure units on the scene were able to place the fire under control quickly and saved the house. Large recycling fire that occurred in Montana Vista. All the departments in the county responded including El Paso Fire. On that particular fire 325,000 gallons of water flowed through the aerial.
- **Special Operations:** Nothing new to report.
- **HQ:** Construction documents are at 90%, will be going out to bid soon. Information can be located in drop box.
- **Misc.:** Will be attending the fire fest this Saturday. Tiller 401 will be displayed. Location is at Pavo Real.

Commissioner Berumen asked if we had any calls regarding the smoke from the large fire that was in ESD #2 and Chief Menendez stated we did not. Motion to approve report made by Commissioner Berumen and seconded by Commissioner Rankins. 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 Fire Marshal Guillen)

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	2023
Construction	33	59	37	28	38	31	24	51	0	0	0	0	301

Total for 08/2022: **230** Total for 08/2021: **234**

- **Annual Fire Safety Inspections**
 - **62** = 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 = 90%
 - Home Depot = 80%
 - Wing Shack = 20%
 - Shopping Centers – UR
 - High Pile Combustible Storage Racking Systems
 - Tenant Improvements – Everywhere=UR

- Assorted Fire Protection Systems
- Residential Communities
- New Applicants: Wienerschnitzel (State St.); Pizza Hut (Eastlake); Julio's Café Corona (Eastlake); Boozy Taco (Eastlake); Quick Svc Oil Change (Eastlake); etc.
- **Personnel**
 - DFM Mitch Marquez returned to duty
 - Requesting additional FTE or PTE in FY24.
- **Training**
 - Nothing to report for August
- **Miscellaneous Activities & Information**
 - Our FMO furniture and fixtures are scheduled to arrive by next week.
- **Future Events:**
 - ** Making final preparations for the 2023 TX FMO Conference in San Marcos.

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

- 10. Discussion and take action on amending the Consent Agenda procedure for Board of Commissioner meetings:** Chief Menendez presented a new form that would be used for the consent agenda. The items in the consent agenda would not get further discussion unless a Commissioner requested that an item be pulled into the regular agenda for discussion. The board would like to see a funds line item, annual requirement, maintenances. Legal would also like something about purchasing requirements on the form. Motion to approve form with corrections and make changes to the agenda procedure by Commissioner Rankins and seconded by Commissioner Berumen. 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:** The building committee will meet next week and there have been no additional changes. The plans are 90% complete and the project will be going to bid soon. The report was information only and no action was taken.
- 12. Discussion and take action on revising the Drug Testing Policy:** Chief Menendez asked for the item to be tabled because the board did not have adequate time to review. Motion to table made by Commissioner Berumen and seconded by Commissioner Rankins. Motion carried.
- 13. Discussion and take action on surplus of department equipment:** The Chief presented the surplus form with the camper shell from the SAR vehicle. The recommendation is to sell it at auction. Motion to surplus the camper shell and sell at auction made by Commissioner Rankins and seconded by Commissioner Berumen. Motion carried.
- 14. Discussion and take action on the Horizon City Police Department Communications Amendment:** Chief Menendez presented the new amendment for dispatching service. They are proposing a decrease in dispatchers to 3.06 for a total cost of \$180,171.89 per year. The Town of Horizon has approved a large leveling raise for next year for dispatching. Motion to approve the amendment made by Commissioner Berumen and seconded by Commissioner Rankins. Motion carried.

- 15. Discussion and take action on the approval of the Texas County & District Retirement System (TCDRS) FY 2024 Plan:** Administrator Ames presented the proposed TCDRS plan with one recommended change of moving from an eight-year vesting to a five-year vesting. This recommended change is to continue to keep the ESD more competitive in the Fire employment market. Commissioner Rankins asked more questions about the purpose of changing the vested years. Commissioner Rankins made a motion to table the item till the next meeting when all the Board members can be present to vote on the change. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Berumen. Motion carried.
- 16. Discussion and take action on a Sick Leave policy for full-time employees:** Chief Menendez presented the proposed sick leave policy for ESD employees. They reviewed the policy and that it would come into effect on January 1st. Commissioner Rankins made a motion to approve the sick leave policy and to delete the Employment medical absences or hospitalizations section of the Employee Handbook. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Berumen. motion carried.
- 17. Discussion and take action on amending the Uniform Personnel Pay Scale:** Chief Menendez presented the revised Operations PayScale. The previous step one was removed, all the steps were moved down, and a new tenth step was added. There was discussion about the need to increase the starting pay to be competitive with other fire departments. Motion made to approve the amended pay scale to take affect 10/01/23 made by Commissioner Berumen and seconded by Commissioner Rankins. Motion carried.
- 18. Discussion and take action on adopting an Administrative Pay scale with change of position titles:** Chief Ames presented the new Administration pay scale. Currently there is not a scale for these staff. The scale was built on agency comparison with like positions in the area. The pay range for each level was discussed and some recommended changes were made. There was also a change in a few of our personnel's job titles. Motion to approve the PayScale and the new positions titles made by Commissioner Rankins and seconded by Commissioner Berumen. Commissioner Mayberry abstained from voting. Motion carried.
- 19. Disucssion and take action on approval of Employee Cost of Living Adjustments for the Fire Chief, Administrator and Fire Marshal:** The Chief presented a proposal to give these three positions a 3% COLA. The chart of what the percentage would be for each employee was also presented. The Commissioners spoke about giving the same dollar amount to all three people versus 3% of their current rate. There was discussion on the topic by the Commissioners. Commissioner Berumen made a motion to give each person a \$2,500.00 COLA to take effect 10/01/23. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Rankins. Motion carried.
- 20. Discussion and take action on approval of Leveling raises for administrative staff:** Chief Menendez presented leveling raises for the Admin Assistants, Public Relations Specialist and Employee Health nurse. These raises are to align the positions to the correct years of service and hourly rate with the new PayScale. Motion to approve the leveling raises as presented to take effect 10/01/23 made by Commissioner Rankins and seconded by Commissioner Berumen. Commissioner Mayberry abstained. Motion carried.
- 21. Discussion and take action on approval of sixteen (16) new El Paso County ESD #1 employment positions for Operations:** Chief Menendez is requesting to hire eight new operations staff January 1st. Discussion about hiring an additional eight if the department

is awarded the SAFER grant. There was a discussion by the Board members. Motion to approve the eight new positions made by Commissioner Rankins and seconded by Commissioner Berumen. Motion carried.

- 22. Discussion and take action on approval of revised manning table for the Fire Marshal office:** Chief Menendez is proposing an increase in full time equivalent staff from 7.5 to 8.9. These positions have been budgeted for next year. This will allow the hiring of any combination of part-time and/or full-time positions. Motion to approve the new positions made by Commissioner Berumen and seconded by Commissioner Rankins. Motion carried.
- 23. Discussion and take action on the approval of one new El Paso County ESD #1 employment position for administrative staff:** Chief Menendez is proposing to create a new Administrative Assistant III position. The job description was presented as well as the starting pay rate based on the new PayScale. There was a discussion on job qualifications, particularly in the education and experience area. The Board would like the qualifications to be changed to college experience preferred and two years of experience as required. Motion to approve the revised job description and new position made by Commissioner Rankins and seconded by Commissioner Berumen. Motion carried.
- 24. Discussion and take action on the purchase of AED 1000's from FY 23' funds:** Assistant Chief Ames presented a quote for the purchase of three Life Pak 1,000's with a price reduction from trading in three old AED's. The total cost is \$10,149.27 to come from account 9500.01. Also is the addition of the service contracts in the amount of \$4,408.00 to come from account 5705.02. Motion to approve both quotes for a total amount of \$14,557.27 made by Commissioner Berumen and seconded by Commissioner Rankins. Motion carried.
- 25. Discussion and take action on the purchase of Life Pack 15's and Service contracts for AED's from FY 24' funds:** Assistant Chief Ames presented a quote to purchase 5 Life Pak 1,000's and 3 Life pak 15's and their corresponding service contract to be purchased from the Fiscal Year 24' budget. The cost for the five AED 1,000's is \$17,315.45 to come from account 9500.01. Cost of the three AED 15's will be \$124,493.62 to come from account 9500.01. The service contract for all equipment is \$12,471.85 to be paid from account 5705.02. The total purchase is \$154,280.92 to be paid from FY 24'. Motion to approve purchases made by Commissioner Rankins and seconded by Commissioner Berumen. Motion carried.
- 26. Discussion and take action on approval of \$10,000.00 contribution to the Texas Emergency Services Retirement System pension for volunteer Fire Fighters:** The Chief is asking the board to approve an annual one-time payment of \$10,000.00 for the Volunteer Firefighter pension. Motion to approve the contribution made by Commissioner Berumen and seconded by Commissioner Rankins. Motion carried.
- 27. Discussion and take action on approval of the ESO Contract:** Chief Menendez discussed the ESO agreement and that our current reporting system will be sunsetting soon so we have to make a change to a new company. The new service will be \$19,515.70 and a portion will be paid for by the Fire Marshal's office. This new platform is best suited for our Companies. Motion to approve the purchase made by Commissioner Rankins and seconded by Commissioner Berumen. Motion carried.

- 28. Discussion and take action on approval of Employee Physicals from FY 24' funds:** Chief Menendez presented the spreadsheet prepared by our Employee nurse on the projects number and cost of physicals for this next Fiscal Year. The total amount for physicals will be \$42,375.00. Motion to approve the cost of physicals made by Commissioner Berumen and seconded by Commissioner Rankins and will be paid for and occur in Fiscal Year 2024.
- 29. Discussion and take action on the installation of a rear driveway on the training land:** Chief Menendez would like to install a secondary driveway at the back of the training land. The Town of Horizon is currently paving the street behind our property and this would be the easiest time to add the driveway. The cost will be \$3,446.00 for the 35' driveway. Motion made by Commissioner Rankins and seconded by Commissioner Berumen to approve the purchase. Motion carried.
- 30. Discussion and take action on the purchase of new uniforms for Fire and Fire Marshal staff:** Chief Menendez is proposing a full uniform change for the operations, volunteers and Fire Marshal office in the amount of \$38,533.00 to come from account 7005.02 and 7005.03. The change in uniform is to standardize the look for all employees. Motion to approve the purchase made by Commissioner Rankins and second by Commissioner Berumen. Motion carried.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – None

- 31. For the Good of the District:** The Chief stated that we were awarded a \$20,000.00 PPE grant that will be discussed on a future agenda. El Paso Fire Fest was discussed. National Night out will be October 3rd from 5-9pm. Chief discussed the progress on the paramedic program; Will be doing Halloween patrol on October 31st; Chief spoke about Chief consortium meeting.
- 32. Set date and time for next meeting in October:** Regular meeting will be October 26, 2023 at 6:30 pm.
- 33. Adjourn:** Motion to adjourn made by Commissioner Rankins. Meeting adjourned at 9:13 pm.

Submitted by: Katherine Ames, Administrator

Reviewed by: Diana Hernandez, Administrative Assistant