

**TRAVIS COUNTY EMERGENCY SERVICES DISTRICT NO. 2**

**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

**March 10, 2022**

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The Board of Commissioners of Travis County Emergency Services District No. 2 held a meeting on Thursday, March 10, 2022, at 6:00 p.m. at the Travis County Emergency Services District No. 2 Headquarters located at 201 East Pecan Street, Pflugerville, Texas, for the following purposes.

Commissioners in attendance:

Mike Bessner Mike Howe April Griffin Robert Turner

Commissioners who attended via Zoom:

Rico Reyes

The following persons were also in attendance:

Rob Humphrey Nick Perkins Jessica Frazier Brian Fairbanks John Carlton  
Mark Moellenberg Sequina Allen Pat Burnett Victor Gonzalez

1. **Call regular meeting to order:** *The meeting was called to order by Commissioner Bessner at 6:00 p.m. and the minutes were recorded by mechanical means.* The meeting was held pursuant to a formal Notice of Meeting, which had been posted in accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act at the Travis County Clerk’s Office, in the offices of the Travis County Emergency Services District No. 2 Headquarters, and on the District’s website at <https://www.pflugervillefire.org/board-of-commissioners-agenda/>.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

2. **Public Comment:** *Commissioner Bessner recognized Patricia Burnett for public comment. Ms. Burnet introduced herself to the Board as a member of Congressman Pete Sessions’ office, and spoke briefly about Congressman Sessions’ Waco office, and the willingness to assist the District, if needed.*

**SPECIAL RECOGNITION**

3. **Celebrate special recognition of personnel for exceptional performance:**  
*Commissioner Bessner recognized the following individuals for their achievements:*  
*Battalion Chief Heath Doyle-Letter of Achievement*  
*Firefighter Jeremy Ayers-Letter of Achievement*  
*Firefighter Graham Norris-Letter of Commendation*  
*Firefighter/Paramedics Terry Seidenberger-Letter of Commendation*

## CONSENT ITEMS

4. **Approve minutes from the February 10, 2022; regular meeting, and February 21, 2022 special meeting:**

5. **Approve a resolution for the disposition of salvage and surplus property items:**

*Commissioner Griffin moved to approve the consent items as presented. Commissioner Turner seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

## REPORTS

6. **Commissioners' reports, responses to inquiries, including:**

- **Communications with the City Council of Pflugerville Public Safety Subcommittee:** *Commissioner Griffin reported that Commissioner Howe and herself had been appointed with City Councilman Ruiz and City Councilwoman Holiday to the City's Safety Subcommittee. Commissioner Griffin commented on the efforts made to increase communication and establish good rapport between the District's subcommittee members and the City's subcommittee members, as well as ways in which the District is capable of assisting the City with ambulance services and other services. Commissioner Griffin went on to discuss the recent City Council meeting that occurred earlier in the week, on March 8<sup>th</sup>, noting that Councilman Ruiz made a motion at that meeting to re-establish the contract for ambulance services with the District and Councilwoman Holiday seconded the motion; however, the motion failed to pass because the other City Councilmembers voted it down and instead continued the contract with Acadian. Commissioner Griffin expressed immense frustration and disappointment that the remaining City Councilmembers, who were not involved with the Public Safety Subcommittee, overrode the recommendations of the City's own Councilmembers. Commissioner Howe noted that Councilman Rogers stated at the City Council meeting that the City is looking to build a City-run fire department, as noted in the City's strategic planning documents. Commissioner Howe further stated that such an endeavor would likely require the City to increase property taxes by a minimum of \$0.20, based on his knowledge of departments in the area and in the State. Additionally, the City would be making such efforts even though the residents of Pflugerville have an ISO 1 rated fire department that already serves the northern part of Travis County. Commissioner Griffin added that it was stated at the meeting by Councilman McDonald that the City's own third-party suggested the City go with the District. Commissioner Howe stated that the City is looking to increase taxes, as well as raise water rates, wastewater rates, trash rates; however, the value of the services being provided by the City is decreasing. Commissioner Bessner commented that it appears the City is hung up on the District response time of eight minutes and asked about the national standard. Chief Perkins advised that there is not a national standard for EMS response time. Chief Perkins continued, noting that there is research and literature that addresses EMS response time, and, for transparency purposes, the total response time should include the approximately two minutes to take the call, as well as dispatch and travel time. Eight minutes is the goal for ALS first responders to arrive and that is the District's response time within the City. Commissioner Howe expressed concern that the City is using a for-profit organization, Acadian, for such an essential service – police, fire and most water companies are not-for-profit organizations.*
- **District Public Relations Committee:** *Commissioner Howe stated that he believes it is the roll of the Committee to help the public understand the level of service that is being provided by the District and the decisions that are being made by the City Council for the City of Pflugerville. Commissioner Howe further advised that efforts are being made to educate the public in response to the recent City Council meeting.*

- **Travis County ESD Commissioners' Council report:** *Commissioner Bessner reported that he and Commissioner Turner attended the recent Travis County ESD Commissioners' meeting that was led by Chuck Brotherton, which included discussion of COVID protocols, as well as an update on the Interlocal Agreement with Austin-Travis County EMS. It was also reported that Austin-Travis County EMS recently appointed a new chief. Commissioner Bessner further advised that he was approached about presenting to the Council on the "do's and don'ts" with regard to the District's experience with creating ESD No. 17. Commissioner Turner commented that Travis County Commissioner Ann Howard attended a portion of the recent SAFE-D conference and reported that it was very informative and helpful in understanding the needs of an ESD. Commissioner Howe briefly discussed his interaction with County Commissioner Howard at SAFE-D, noting that she asked about the requirements of administering the statement and oath to appointed commissioners. John Carlton of The Carlton Law Firm, P.L.L.C. advised that the oath is required to be given by an authorized individual and it could occur at the County Commissioners Court meetings.*

**7. Receive report from treasurer and consider taking related action:**

**A. Approval of monthly bills and invoices:**

**B. Approval of financial report, including processing of payroll:**

**C. Receive monthly sales tax analysis report:**

**D. Approval of purchases of for items included in the District's approved budget:**

*Commissioner Howe briefly discussed the monthly bills and invoices. Victor Gonzalez addressed the Cloudflare expenses, stating that Cloudflare is a new vendor handling the District's IT needs. The District's website domain was held in the name of the prior IT vendor, and ownership of the domain was transferred to the District at Cloudflare's recommendation. Victor stated that expenses associated with that transfer of ownership were charged to the District's credit card. Commissioner Howe noted that there was a slight difference for payroll, in that the March 31<sup>st</sup> payroll included three weeks of pay for 40-hour employees. Commissioner Howe further noted that on the sales tax report there were really high variations from last year, but it has dropped to eight percent and the expectation is it will flatten. With regard to the cash balance, Commissioner Howe reported that the District currently has the largest amount in its account it expects to have for the year, since most ad valorem taxes have been deposited; however, that amount will quickly be expensed given the capital expenditures the District has planned for Station 6 and the Station 7/ Training Field project. Commissioner Griffin asked how the permitting process for the construction projects were coming. Chief Perkins responded, stating that one more easement is needed for Station 6, which is expected to go before the School Board on March 17<sup>th</sup>. Chief Perkins noted that he has spoken with members of the School Board and the easement is needed for the school that is being constructed, as well. Commissioner Howe noted that there is an expense listed for a retaining wall for the back of Station 5 in the amount of \$50,000 and asked Chief Perkins to explain that expense. Chief Perkins stated that Station 5 is constructed at the base of an incline and the significant elevation going down into the station has caused a lot of water to go through the parking lot. The plan is to address landscaping and the retention wall to reduce and prevent that from occurring. Commissioner Howe then asked Chief Perkins his opinions about the refurbished trucks. Chief Perkins responded, stating that it may be too early to tell but the trucks look good and are running well. Chief Perkins will monitor the refurbished trucks for at least another quarter or two. Commissioner Howe inquired as to how much a new fire engine is currently costing, versus the cost spent on a refurbished engine. Chief Perkins estimated a new truck to cost at least \$750,000 to \$800,000 and a refurbished truck to cost about \$250,000. Commissioner Howe moved to approve the payment of monthly bills and invoices, the financial report, including payroll, and the monthly sales tax*

analysis report, and the purchase of items included in the District's approved budget. Commissioner Griffin seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Chief Perkins discussed the approval of purchases for items included in the District's approved budget, specifically the costs in excess of \$50,000 associated with Frontline Mobile Health which handles the District's physicals, including cardio-pulmonary testing, as well as the District's immunization program. Previously, grants and other circumstances reduced the amount paid to Frontline Mobile Health; however, the full \$114,000 is currently due to the company, and that amount is expected to be a part of the budget in future years. Commissioner Griffin asked if the requested amount covers all employees and if it included new-hires. Chief Perkins advised that the amount covers all incumbent personnel and new-hires are handled from a different fund. Commissioner Howe moved to approve the payment of \$114,000 to Frontline Mobile Health; Commissioner Griffin seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

**8. Receive monthly report from the Fire Chief regarding emergency operations, response times, call volume, training, management activities and personnel to include:**

- **an update on the District's EMS billing policy:**
- **an update on the District's planning development:**
- **and consider taking any related action:**

Chief Perkins reported to the Board and advised that the COVID-19 pandemic is now at Stage 2 and has been for the past 10 days. Chief Perkins commented that the District is in a really good place with staffing; just over 30 days ago, the District was in a very difficult place with regard to staffing. The Curative Testing site at the District main facility remains operational, and Austin Public Health ("APH") is operating its vaccination clinic two days a week. APH also has an operational drive thru testing site at Heritage Park. Chief Perkins stated that it is his intention to make PPE a permanent part of the budget, going forward. Chief Perkins further stated that he intends to start discussions and planning in preparation for the next major pandemic or event. Chief Perkins reported to the Board on hiring and stated that there were 15 graduates out of the most recent class that went to shift. In addition, there is a 45-member cadet class that is currently ongoing. Commissioner Howe asked about the expected attrition rate for the cadet class, and Chief Perkins responded that the attrition rate is expected to be 50%. Chief Perkins advised that Station 7 is almost operational. With regard to Station 8, the pad has been prepared and the mobile home building is scheduled to be delivered during Spring Break to avoid school traffic. Chief Perkins informed the Board that he expects Station 8 to be operational in April or May and will begin deploying ambulances to the Howard Lane / Dessau Road area.

Chief Perkins informed the Board that there will not be a presentation on the District's EMS billing policy this month; however, he expects to have final drafts of the billing policy for the Board's review at the next regular meeting. Chief Perkins advised that the policy will address the fee structure for residents and non-residents, noting that the residents of Travis County ESD No. 17 are not expected to receive a balance bill and non-residents will receive a bill.

With regard to the District's strategic planning, Chief Perkins advised that the consultants are continuing with the small workgroup phase and informed the Board members that PCG will be contacting them to conduct stakeholder interviews. Chief Perkins stated that community surveys will also be sent out to the general public. Chief Perkins then discussed the strategic planning meeting to be scheduled in July and conducted at the Central Station, in lieu of going to New Braunfels as has been done in the past. After discussion, it was determined that July 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> would be the preferred dates for conducting the meeting.

*Chief Perkins went on to discuss upcoming events, noting that since the COVID-19 restrictions are now at Stage 2, an open house has been scheduled for April 9<sup>th</sup> at the Central Station. Additionally, the Awards Banquet is scheduled for April 22<sup>nd</sup>. Chief Perkins also discussed scheduling an open house at Station 2 in October for Fire Prevention month.*

*Chief Perkins then advised that he recently spoke with Commissioner Reyes regarding the need to analyze the risk associated with a possible cyber security attack on the District, given world events. The District is working to arrange for the current IT company to conduct a deliberate review of its systems and prepare an analysis and recovery plan. Commissioners Reyes commended Chief Perkins on his efforts to evaluate the risk and develop a plan. Commissioner Reyes noted that a cyber attack is another potential disaster for which the District should be prepared; further, the public should be informed that the District is developing a plan to address any potential attack. Commissioner Turner also commended Chief Perkins on his efforts and noted that evaluating such risk and developing any additional plans should be a regular part of District operation on an ongoing basis. Commissioner Reyes requested Chief Perkins include a section in his monthly report that addresses cyber security.*

*Commissioner Turner noted that Robert Luckritz was recently appointed as Chief of Austin-Travis County EMS. Commissioner Bessner discussed a charity walk/run event that is scheduled for April 30<sup>th</sup> and asked if there were firefighters willing to volunteer their time to provide emergency medical care at the event, if needed. Chief Perkins asked where the event is supposed to take place, and Commissioner Bessner responded that it is in the City of Pflugerville. Chief Perkins advised that Acadian would likely handle it. Commissioner Bessner stated he would discuss it with the organizer of the event.*

*Chief Perkins then discussed the EMS Performance Report, noting that the report is split into three categories: (1) emergency communication; (2) emergency operations; and (3) clinical. With regard to emergency communications, there were 26 reported issues or problems, ranging from not being to get ahold of Acadian dispatch on the radio to complete 9-1-1 failures, where Acadian does not answer on the first ring. A complete 9-1-1 failure was addressed in the January report; however, for the month of February, there were two complete 9-1-1 failures reported, which, while ultimately dispatched, did delay the ambulance response time. Chief Perkins then addressed issues with emergency operations, noting that there were 80 reported issues during the month of February. The reported issues range from an ambulance being dispatched to the wrong address to delayed responses, where the District's responding crew noted a delay in the arrival of the ambulance. Chief Perkins also noted that the District is still not getting dispatched to certain calls, commenting on a recent event that was just three blocks from Station 4, but Station 4 was not dispatched and patient care was delayed. Chief Perkins reported that Acadian's response time at the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile was estimated to be 18 minutes and 17 seconds, meaning 90% of the time, Acadian arrived on scene in 18 minutes and 17 seconds, or less. Commissioner Griffin asked if information regarding these reported issues is being shared. Chief Perkins advised that information is shared with the City of Pflugerville, the City's consultant, and Acadian, noting that it usually takes about two weeks, sometimes longer, to compile the report. Chief Perkins additionally stated that when critical issues occur, such as the 9-1-1 failures, he immediately reports those incidents directly to the City Manager. With regard to clinical matters, Chief Perkins advised that there were six reported issues for the month of February. The reported issues include a failure to assess and intervene, several reported issues with equipment, and one event where therapies were discontinued to a negative outcome. Chief Perkins then briefly addressed the action taken by Pflugerville City Council to terminate the contract with Acadian. Commissioner Turner asked if the District would be able to step in and provide City residents EMS services as a stop-gap if Acadian were to issue a 30-day termination. Chief Perkins advised that the District would be able to provide those services in that circumstance. Commissioner Turner asked if the City were to change its private provider for EMS services, how long would that transition take. Chief Perkins responded that six months for a transition would be best, but that it could be accomplished in 90 days.*

9. **Receive monthly report from the District’s legal counsel regarding pending litigation matters, contract issues, and legislative efforts and consider taking related action:** *John Carlton, the District’s legal counsel, advised that he had nothing to report, and any comments will be addressed under the appropriate agenda item.*
10. **Receive report from the Pflugerville Professional Firefighter’s Association, Local No. 4137 and consider taking related action:** *Not in attendance, and no report presented. Commissioner Bessner took this opportunity to publicly recognize the Association on the efforts made to communicate to the Pflugerville City Council and the public on the need for quality EMS services. Commissioner Bessner specifically acknowledged and thanked Trevor Stokes and Josh Stubblefield for their efforts.*

#### **DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS**

11. **Discuss and consider approving updated fire code adoption and take any related action:** *Chief Perkins briefly discussed the updated fire code and the appeals process, noting that the appeals process is being updated and will be posted to the District’s website. John Carlton acknowledged that the fire code was almost complete and will likely be presented for adoption at the District’s regular April meeting. Chief Perkins commented that the version of the fire code that the District is adopting is the same version that the City of Pflugerville is expected to adopt.*
12. **Discuss and consider authorizing an amendment to the Pfluger Hall standard rental contract to reflect the upcoming Fire Code changes and take any related action:** *Chief Perkins discussed Pfluger Hall, noting that over the past few years use of the building has gone from predominantly civic purposes to more of a party venue. With the intent for the Hall to return to civic events, an amendment has been added to the rental contract that removes alcoholic beverages from the venue. Commissioner Howe asked if such an amendment would impact any events that are currently scheduled for Pfluger Hall. Chief Perkins stated that the matter had been investigated and, given the timing, it would not have an impact. Commissioner Howe moved to approve the amendment, subject to review by the District’s attorney. Commissioner Turner seconded and the motion passed unanimously.*
13. **Discuss and consider strategic planning for the District related to financial and operational projections, including:**
  - **review of projected growth in revenue, population, service demand, and impact on response times and provision of service:**
  - **reports from the commissioners concerning community interactions and relations:**
  - **and take any related action:**

*Matter was addressed previously in the meeting, under other items.*
14. **Discuss and consider the proposed provision of emergency medical services to other governmental entities and take any related action:**

*At 7:26 p.m., Commissioner Bessner stated that the Board would convene in Executive Session to receive advice from the District’s attorney regarding matters on the agenda.*

*At 8:22 p.m., Commissioner Bessner reconvened the Board in open meeting, and stated that no action was taken in Executive Session.*

*Chief Perkins stated that an Interlocal Agreement had been received from Chuck Brotherton of Travis County. John Carlton, the District's legal counsel, advised that the Agreement has been reviewed and is, generally, fine – though revisions will need to be made addressing operational matters. The Board discussed the Agreement and the contracting process between governmental entities. After discussion, Commissioner Turner moved to approve the Interlocal Agreement with Travis County for the provision of advanced life support services and ALS transport to the area outside of the City of Pflugerville and outside ESD 17 boundaries, but inside the boundaries of the District (ESD 2) , subject to the review and revisions by the Fire Chief and District's legal counsel, and to continue providing services until that agreement has been executed. Commissioner Griffin seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

- 15. Discuss and consider activity in support of operations combatting the COVID-19 pandemic, and take any related action:** *Matter was addressed previously in the meeting, under other items.*

**16. Adjourn the meeting:**

*President Bessner adjourned the meeting at 8:29 p.m.  
The next Board meeting is scheduled for April 14, 2022 at 6:00 p.m.*

Respectfully Submitted By:

Sequina Allen  
Board Recorder