

**Meeting Minutes**  
**Harris County Emergency Services District No. 7**

The Board of Commissioners of **HARRIS COUNTY EMERGENCY SERVICES DISTRICT NO. 7** held a meeting on **August 19, 2021 at 6:30 p.m.** at the following location in the District, **Spring Fire Department Administration Building, 656 East Louetta Road, Spring, Texas 77373.**

**Due to the status of COVID-19 in the County, some people appeared via teleconference.**

<b>Melanie Gander</b>	<b>President</b>	<b>(Present at the meeting location )</b>
<b>Gayle Fuller</b>	<b>Vice-President</b>	<b>(Present at the meeting location)</b>
<b>Keith Willingham</b>	<b>Secretary</b>	<b>(Present at the meeting location)</b>
<b>Todd Anderson</b>	<b>Treasurer</b>	<b>(Present at the meeting location)</b>
<b>David Mills</b>	<b>Asst. Treasurer</b>	<b>(Absent)</b>

**Also in attendance:**

Scott Seifert, Fire Chief, Spring Fire Department - **(Present at the meeting location)**  
Robert Logan, Assistant Fire Chief, Spring Fire Department **(Present via Tele-Conference)**  
John Peeler, Coveler & Peeler, District Legal Counsel - **(Present at the meeting location)**  
Renee Butler, McLennan & Associates, District Bookkeeper - **(Present at the meeting location)**  
Dr. Ron Welch, Municipal Information Services - **(Present at the meeting location)**  
Miguel Villareal, Teal Construction - **(Present at the meeting location)**  
Greg Monroe, Spring FD Captain - **(Present via Tele-Conference)**  
Steve Schoonover, Spring FD Sr. Captain - **(Present via Tele-Conference)**  
Damaris Rolon, Spring FD Administrative Support Specialist - **(Present at the meeting location)**  
Tim Burke, Spring FD IT Manager - **(Present at the meeting location)**  
Shannon Taylor, HCESD7 Administrator - **(Present at the meeting location)**

**Call meeting to order.**

Commissioner Melanie Gander called the meeting to **ORDER** at 6:30 p.m.

**To receive public comment.**

Miguel Villareal with Teal Construction asked about the status of the W.W. Cotton Weaver Training Field project. Mr. Villareal was informed the project will be seeking bids from companies for a Construction Manager at Risk and details are forthcoming. Mr. Villareal was invited to stay for the duration of the meeting, he thanked the Board and Chief Seifert and left the meeting.

**3. To receive a report from Municipal Information Services, including but not limited to information on District property tax, District development and District growth.**

Dr. Welch discussed his in-depth report consisting of: Apartment construction, real estate growth, appraised values, lost jobs and their economic effects, increasing house values. The economy is slowly recovering and single family homes have increased. Tax revenue, aggregation of MUDs by census tracts, construction of taxable improvements in the ESD, estimated and projected taxable values and future growth are also included in the report.

**6:47p.m. ENTER CLOSED SESSION**

Closed Sessions, the Board included Legal Counsel John Peeler and Fire Chief Scott Seifert, (in person) and Assistant Fire Chief Robert Logan (Via Tele-Conference) for items 4, 5 and 6.

- 4. 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.**
- 5. To meet in Closed Session pursuant to Government Code §551.072 to deliberate regarding real estate matters.**
- 6. To meet in Closed Session pursuant to Government Code §551.074 to discuss personnel matters.**

**7:50 p.m. RECONVENE FROM CLOSED SESSION**

- 7. To review and act on any matters related to ongoing litigation/claims, including approval of settlement documents.**

No action taken by the Board.

**8. To review and act on financial matters including, financial report, investments, depository institutions, depository security agreements, audits, Investment Policy, and District bills.**

District bookkeeper Renee Butler, presented the monthly District financial reports, including the following items of note: General Fund Current balance is \$28,870,053.06 cash and investment reports from July to August were reviewed. A check to the Harris County Appraisal District for the 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter Assessment was approved (check #2296).

Commissioner Gander moved to approve the bookkeeper's report as presented and pay District bills as presented. Second by Commissioner Fuller. Motion approved 4-0.

Ms. Butler informed the Board BBVA has decided to stop securing government funds, thereby necessitating a change in banking procedures by the District. The Board and Ms. Butler generally discussed options including moving funds beyond FDIC limits to Texas CLASS or Amegy Bank, as the District already has accounts with those institutions. Motion by Commissioner Gander and second by Commissioner Willingham to move funds to Amegy and set up Amegy as the bank to receive tax deposits, pending confirmation of depository pledge agreement with Amegy. Motion approved 4 to 0.

**9. To review and take any action regarding construction, improvements, repairs, renovations to real property, facilities and stations, including construction payments, change orders, permits, engaging architect(s) or engineer(s), and selecting contractor(s), including but not limited to administrative or maintenance facilities, training facilities and all emergency services stations.**

Chief Seifert updated the Board on a recent meeting with Mr. Abercrombie. The Education building is updated with a streamlined floor plan for better use of space with more focus on training. Square footage was shaved off to save costs, the building is about 69,000 square feet. Discussion included the possibility that the project would be less expensive if the District schedules it as one major project, including a single loan for the whole amount vs. completing the project in phases.

No action taken by the Board.

**10. To review and take any action regarding real estate, including sale, purchase, lease, platting, utilities, encumbrances and legal actions related to real estate.**

The Board reviewed information on the sale of the Leo property and the progress towards completing the project. Commissioner Gander moved to extend the platting Feasibility Period to October 31, 2021 and approval of any amendment to the sale contract that would be necessary. Second by Commissioner Fuller. Motion approved 4-0.

**12. To propose the District 2021 Tax Rate.**

District legal counsel, Mr. Peeler discussed the 2021 tax rate scenarios. Commissioner Gander moved to propose a tax rate at \$0.0975/\$100. Second by Commissioner Willingham. Motion approved 4-0.

**11. To propose the District 2022 Budget.**

Chief Seifert discussed the proposed changes to the budget from the earlier drafts discussed. Commissioner Willingham asked about the increase in the Health Insurance budget. Chief Seifert replied that an increase in firefighter personnel and rising healthcare costs add to the higher number. The proposed Total Operating Expenses for the District are \$24,274,196.03.

Commissioner Gander moved to approve the 2022 District Budget. Second by Commissioner Anderson. Motion approved 4-0.

**13. To schedule public hearing or other meetings regarding final adoption of the District's 2021 tax rate and authorize publication of required notices for same.**

At the next regular meeting September 23, 2021 at 6:30 p.m.

**14. To review and act on matters related to financing, payment and acquisition of capital items, including equipment and vehicles, and action on acquisition/construction financing of same, including retiring or incurring financing for the construction of District facilities or acquisition of vehicles and equipment.**

No action taken by the Board.

**15. To review and act on sales tax matters.**

Chief Seifert provided a sales tax report for the Board to view payments, trends, projections.

No action taken by the Board.

**16. To review and act regarding insurance.**

No action taken by the Board.

**17. Fire Department report on activities, including current and long-range information exchange.**

Fire Chief Scott Seifert presented information on the following:

- Transaction list of all expenses paid for July.
- July's Profit and Loss Reports. The Department is currently \$1,930,918.84 under budget.
- A few Firefighter personnel have left the Department, more will be hired later in the year.
- The Splash Town chemical release resulted in 3 weekends of lost revenue, due to the mishap.
- The ("TECC") Texas Emergency Communications Center is on schedule and close to completion. September 2, is the planned "go live" date. All parties have signed the Memorandum of Understanding, for the Greater Harris County 9-1-1 Emergency Network.
- The First Responder and Provider Agreement with Harris County Emergency Services District 11 is signed, with a medical director change.
- The 2020 audit is nearing completion - SVFA assets include the firefighter honorarium and the BBQ trailer.
- A town hall meeting is planned regarding a proposed low income apartment complex near Old Town Spring and the W.W. Cotton Weaver Training Facility.
- The Training Division may move to the Old Town Spring building, due to COVID-19 restrictions and the need for more space.
- COVID-19 cases are increasing in the department, 15-20 positive cases are confirmed.
- A modified version of working from home for Administrative staff.
- Chief Seifert will not attend the SAFE-D fall event in Fort Worth, Texas.
- The Spring Fire Department 2020 Annual Report is at the printer. The electronic version is on SFD's website.
- A fence at Station 76 is falling apart. Facilities Maintenance Coordinator, Donald May is obtaining a survey on the property to add a new fence.
- Fire Report 536 total incidents

No action taken by the Board.

**18. To review, discuss and take action on mutual aid or interlocal agreements, including those regarding emergency services or disaster operations.**

No action taken by the Board

- 19. To review, discuss and take action to approve the medical first responder agreement between Harris County Emergency Services District No. 7 and Harris County Emergency Services District No. 11 and delegate management of first responder operations to District Command Staff.**

Commissioner Gander moved to approve the first responder agreement with ESD 11, pending final legal review and to delegate to Chief Seifert authority to preliminarily approve the agreement in order to ensure that the agreement is in place when ESD 11 becomes the direct provider of EMS services Second by Commissioner Willingham. Motion approved 4-0.

- 20. To review and take action regarding the disposition of surplus and salvage property.**

No action taken by the Board

- 21. To review and act on matters related to communications, dispatching, or traffic preemption, including approving interlocal agreements, contracts regarding dispatch services or purchasing equipment.**

Chief Seifert updated the Board on the TECC project noting that it should go live as the dispatch center for the District on September 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Mr. Peeler presented the Interlocal Agreement with several other districts regarding the joint project for dispatching fire services in northern Harris County, including delegation of the services to the not-for-profit TECC. Motion by Commissioner Gander and second by Commissioner Willingham to approve the interlocal agreement, noting some minor revisions will be made later. Motion was approved by a vote of 4 to 0.

Motion by Commissioner Gander and second by Commissioner Willingham to name Department Assistant Chief Logan as the District's representative on the TECC Board. Motion was approved by a vote of 4 to 0.

- 22. Receive ESD committee reports.**

No action taken by the Board.

- 23. To review and act on any issues related to the District's transition to become the direct provider of fire protection services, including: financial issues; acquisition of assets.**

No action taken by the Board.

**24. To review and act on personnel matters, including policies, scheduling, evaluations, benefits, compensation, hiring, retention and evaluation of District employees, including District command staff, administrative staff, and suppression personnel.**

No action taken by the Board.

**25. To review and take action on Records Management and Records Retention matters.**

No action taken by the Board.

**26. To review and approve minutes of prior meetings.**

Commissioner Gander moved to approve the July 15, 2021 meeting minutes as presented. Second by Commissioner Fuller. Motion approved 4-0.

**27. To review and act to schedule the next regular monthly meeting date as well as any items that need to be on the next meeting agenda.**

The next regular meeting is September 23, 2021 at 6:30 p.m.

**28. To review and act on matters related to COVID-19, and other emergencies, including but not limited to meeting procedures, emergency expenditures and continuity of functions per Government Code Chapter 418.**


District Legal counsel Mr. Peeler discussed options for holding meetings since the COVID-19 virus is increasing again.

**8:58 p.m. RE-ENTER CLOSED SESSION TO CONSULT WITH LEGAL COUNSEL**

**9:18 p.m. RECONVENE FROM CLOSED SESSION**

There being no further business brought before the Board, or any further public comment. Motion to adjourn made by Commissioner Gander. The meeting is adjourned at 9:18 p.m.

  
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Commissioner Keith Willingham  
District Secretary

  
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Shannon Taylor, Preparer