

**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 15, 2024, at 6:30 p.m.** at the following location in the District, **Spring Fire Department Administration Building, 656 East Louetta Road, Spring, Texas 77373.**

<b>Melanie Gander</b>	<b>President</b>	<b>(Present)</b>
<b>Gayle Fuller</b>	<b>Vice-President</b>	<b>(Present)</b>
<b>Keith Willingham</b>	<b>Secretary</b>	<b>(Absent)</b>
<b>David Mills</b>	<b>Treasurer</b>	<b>(Present)</b>
<b>Bob Schmanski</b>	<b>Assistant Treasurer</b>	<b>(Present)</b>

**Also in attendance:**

Scott Schoonover, Spring FD Deputy Chief  
Jerod Davenport, Spring FD Deputy Chief  
Michelle Jahr, Spring FD Finance Director  
John Peeler, Coveler & Peeler, District Legal Counsel  
Jill Henze, Breedlove & Co., P.C.  
Ricardo Martinez, Martinez Architects, LP  
Steve Schoonover, Spring FD Quality Assurance Analyst  
Chris vonWiesenthal, Spring FD District Chief  
Chris Torres, Spring FD Captain  
Donald May, Spring FD Facilities Manager  
Alex Bregenzer, Spring FD Director - Community Risk Reduction  
Angie Honeycutt - Spring FD Multimedia Coordinator  
Shannon Taylor, Spring FD Administrative Specialist

**1. Call meeting to order.**

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

**2. Roll call and establish a quorum.**

All HCESD 7 Commissioners were present, except for Commissioner Keith Willingham.

**3. To receive public comment.**

Alex Bregenzer, Spring FD Director - Community Risk Reduction and Angie Honeycutt, Spring FD Multimedia Coordinator introduced themselves to the Board and discussed their occupations with Spring FD.

**4. To propose the District 2025 Budget.**

Spring FD Finance Director, Michelle Jahr presented the 2025 proposed Budget, discussed establishing three funds - Maintenance and Operations, Debt Service, Capital Projects Funds. The budget proposed for each fund was \$38,112,986.00 Maintenance and Operations, \$3,123,043.00 Debt Service and \$29,581,981.21 Capital Projects respectively.

Commissioner Gander moved to approve the 2025 Budget as presented. Second by Commissioner Schmanski. Motion approved 4-0.

**5. To propose the District 2024 Tax Rate.**

District Legal Counsel, John Peeler presented information regarding the tax setting process. Mr. Peeler recommended the Voter Approval Tax Rate of \$0.095775/\$100 which would not require an election.

Commissioner Gander moved to propose the Voter Approval Tax Rate of \$0.095775/\$100 for the District 2024 tax rate. Second by Commissioner Schmanski. Motion approved 4-0. The Board noted that the rate includes the debt rate of \$0.012377/\$100 and maintenance and operations rate of \$0.083398/\$100.

**6. To schedule a public hearing regarding the District's 2024 tax rate and the date of the meeting to adopt the tax rate and authorize publication of required notices.**

The Board unanimously authorized Mr. Peeler's office to publish the required notices in the Houston Chronicle advertising the Notice of Tax Adoption at the next HCESD 7 meeting on September 19, 2024.

**7. To review and take action on matters relating to an election to be held on November 5, 2024:**

- a. Approve an Order of Election under Texas Tax Code Section 26.07.**
- b. To review and take action to hold an election jointly with other jurisdictions.**
- c. To review and take action to contract with Harris County Elections Office for election services.**
- d. To consider and take action on such other Orders, Resolutions and related matters as required or appropriate to call for the District election.**

Mr. Peeler noted that the proposed rate does not require an election. No action taken by the Board.

**8. To meet in Closed Session under 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.**

No closed session was held under Item 8 of the agenda.

**9. To meet in Closed Session under Government Code §551.072 to deliberate on real estate matters.**

No closed session was held under Item 9 of the agenda.

**10. To meet in Closed Session under Government Code §551.074 to discuss personnel matters.**

No closed session was held under Item 10 of the agenda.

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

The Board received information from Ricardo Martinez with Martinez Architects, LP and acted on the following matters:

Station 72 - Mr. Martinez discussed soils testing and his conversation with the contractor to get MUD tap fees. The District would pay a fee to the MUD to have utility lines ran on the property. Completed activities include: Drilled piers and grade beams, underground plumbing, underground electrical, Northcrest road work is complete and the road is open. Current activities regarding the building pad - Framing and rebar for concrete building slab. Pay Application 9 for \$134,646.88 is ready for Board review and approval. The Board unanimously approved Pay Application 9.

Station 77 - The asbestos survey shows no issues and was filed with the State of Texas. Owner move out is complete. Construction Masters is working on cleaning out the station and beginning interior demolition.

Training Center - Two permits have been approved, a third permit is pending. MUD 249 will be sending the cost to the District - waterline tap, TV&S, meter and vault. Construction activities include: Light pole base installation 60 out of 66 complete. Perimeter fencing is ready for installation. Two Telecom box locations have been excavated for CenterPoint Energy connection. Contractor coordinating open electrical and natural gas items with CenterPoint Energy.

Commissioner Mills voiced his concern to hire an Owners Representative who would facilitate and be on site to oversee the daily progress of construction. There were mixed opinions from the Board. The Board will table this discussion for next month's meeting when Fire Chief Scott Seifert is present. Pay Application 7 for \$670,344.43 regarding the Logistics and Burn Buildings is ready for Board review and approval. The Board unanimously approved Pay Application 7.

Spring FD Facilities Manager, Donald May updated the Board on:

James C. Leo property - A tree blew over on the fence surrounding the property. A section of the fence was taken down and a drainage pipe was placed on the property. Special legal counsel for real estate, Greg Thrower is reviewing the matter.

Station 76 - Power lines behind the station were dug up. CenterPoint Energy will need to come out to correct the error. The station is running on power from the outside generator.  
No action taken by the Board.

- 12. To review and act on agreement(s) with Harris County Municipal Utility District ("MUD 249") regarding annexation of Harris County Emergency Services District No. 7 ("ESD 7") property into MUD 249 and provision of utility services to ESD 7 facilities by MUD 249.**

Mr. Martinez reported that they have an engineer preparing a proposal to conduct a study regarding the ability to develop water supply onsite.

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

Jill Henze with Breedlove & Co., P.C. presented the 2023 Audit. Spring FD Deputy Chief Scott Schoonover, noted the audit was missing two communication towers from the vendor SBA Communications. The agreements for the two towers will be provided to Ms. Henze to update the audit. Commissioner Gander moved to approve the 2023 Audit with the two communication towers included. Second by Commissioner Mills. Motion approved 4-0.

Spring FD Finance Director, Michelle Jahr presented the Monthly Budget to Actual reports from the Operating account. The department is \$15,907,699.63 slightly below 55% of the budget. Ms. Jahr included financial reports for loans, capital projects expenses, and Texas CLASS. Commissioner Gander moved to approve all financial reports, and pay applications as presented and to pay District bills as presented. Second by Commissioner Fuller. Motion approved 5-0.

- 14. To review and act on amendments to District budgets.**

No action taken by the Board.

- 15. To review and act on administrative matters related to meeting documents, including approval of agreements and costs for software.**

Spring FD Director - Community Risk Reduction, Alex Bregenzer discussed a quote from Nearmap orthogonal imaging software that provides near-real-time aerial imagery of SFD's territory, which will improve the quality of damage assessments, flood assessments, and other risk reduction and operational mapping abilities. A yearly subscription is \$6,000.00. The cost is in 2024's budget, as well as 2025's. Commissioner Mills moved to approve the Nearmap imaging software quote for \$6,000.00. as presented. Second by Commissioner Gander. Motion approved 4-0.

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

Mr. Peeler presented a proposal from South Texas Surveying Associates, Inc. to obtain updated surveys for 5 tracts of land which are being transferred from Spring Volunteer Fire Association to the District. Commissioner Gander moved to approve the proposal from South Texas Surveying Associates, Inc. for an estimated total of \$9,400.00. Second by Commissioner Schmanski. Motion approved 4-0.

Spring FD Deputy Chief Scott Schoonover advised the Board the lease for the Maintenance Facility is due to expire on 09/30/24. Chief Schoonover discussed a proposal for lease options. The Executive Staff feels the 24-month option is the best choice. The 24-month option will start on 10/01/24 - 09/30/25 with base rent \$7,528.65 and 10/01/25 - 09/30/26 with base rent \$7,754.51. Commissioner Gander moved to approve the 24-month option of the proposal for the lease renewal for the Maintenance Facility, with review by legal counsel and allowing Commissioner Gander to sign the lease renewal. Second by Commissioner Schmanski. Motion approved 4-0.

- 17. To review and act on interlocal agreements, with other emergency services districts regarding the use or lease of facilities and maintenance of same.**

No action taken by the Board.

- 18. To review and act on interlocal agreements with other governmental entities regarding the use of district property or facilities.**

No action taken by the Board.

- 19. 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.

- 20. To review and act on sales tax matters.**

A sales tax report for August was presented for the Board to review monthly sales tax revenue, trends and projections. Sales tax revenue

for August is \$1,830,235.85 up 2.6% from last year.

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

Commissioner Schmanski reported that he is working with VFIS representatives and the Department regarding vehicle claims due to having several over the last few years. He is also talking to them about adjusting deductibles to reduce insurance costs. He thinks these two issues could help reduce large increases in premiums.

No action taken by the Board.

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

In Fire Chief Scott Seifert absence, Deputy Chief Scott Schoonover presented information on the following:

- The new Engine 71 was struck by lightning, modules and components that operate the vehicle are not working. The vehicle is currently at Siddons Martin for assessment.
- Station 75 - TVs are not working due to the recent lighting storm.
- Administration Office - Thermostats, and electrical components were not working due to the recent lighting storm.
- Still gathering information to submit damage claims to FEMA.
- July's Incident Report includes a double fatality, due to burn injuries resulting from a house fire.

**23. To review and act regarding the disposition of surplus and salvage property.**

Commissioner Schmanski moved to approve the Surplus and Salvaged Equipment list as presented authorizing disposing of items as allowed by the Health and Safety Code. Second by Commissioner Fuller. Motion approved 4-0.

**24. To review and act on matters related to communications, dispatching, or traffic preemption, including interlocal agreements, contracts or purchasing equipment.**

No action taken by the Board.

**25. Receive ESD committee reports, including Legislative and Governmental Relations matters.**

No action taken by the Board.

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

No action taken by the Board.

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

Commissioner Schmanski moved to approve the August 6, 2024 Special Meeting Minutes as presented and the July 18, 2024 Meeting Minutes as presented. Second by Commissioner Gander. Motion approved 4-0.

**28. To review and act to schedule the next regular monthly meeting date and discuss the addition of items to place on the next meeting agenda.**

The next regular meeting is scheduled for September 19, 2024.

There being no further business brought before the Board, or any further public comment. Motion to adjourn made by Commissioner Gander. The meeting was adjourned at 8:34 p.m.

  
acting District Secretary 

  
Shannon Taylor, Preparer