

THE STATE OF TEXAS X KENEDY COUNTY FIRE AND
COUNTY OF KENEDY X EMERGENCY SERVICES DISTRICT NO. 1

On the 10th day of October, 2023, at 6:30 o'clock p.m. a Regular Meeting of the Kenedy County Fire & Emergency Services District No. 1 was held at the Carriage House, 140 S. Mallory Street, Sarita, Texas.

Commissioners Present:

William Dieterle
Lorraine Burns
Rogelio Salinas
Daniel Alaniz

Also Present:

Leo Villarreal
Jose E. Mendieta, Fire Chief
Judge Charles E. Burns
Grace Salinas
Sylvia H. Villarreal
Louie Longoria
Margaret Kelly

Absent:

Melinda Vela

1. **Call Meeting to Order**

William Dieterle called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

2. **Public Comments**

No public comments were made.

3. **Discuss & Act on Minutes of September 11, 2023 and September 28, 2023**

William Dieterle presented the Fire Commissioners' Minutes of the regular Fire Commissioners' meeting of the regular September 11, 2023 and special Fire Commissioners' meeting of September 28, 2023.

Commissioner Lorraine Burns moved and Commissioner Daniel Alaniz seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that the September 11, 2023, minutes and the September 28, 2023 minutes of the Fire Commissioners Regular and Special Meetings be accepted as presented.

4. Receive Representative with TESRS Regarding Volunteer Retirement Benefits, and Act, If Necessary

Brent Zucker and Scott Miller with TESRS presented the Fire Commissioners with an overview of TESRS volunteer firefighter retirement system.

The Kenedy County Fire & Emergency Services District No. 1 (hereinafter referred to as ESD) may buy up to 15 years of back service; however, the volunteer firefighter must be on the roster when the contract is signed. The ESD has five years to enroll regarding buying a policy. Monthly contribution by the ESD is \$36.00 per member minimum and invoices are issued in February and August of each year. There must be at least seven active members in order to become a member of the TESRS system. If the ESD elects to participate in the TESRS system, it must decision upon entry whether to purchase up to 15 years prior service upon, but may delay the purchase up to five years and may finance prior service up to ten years. The monthly contributions are paid by the ESD; the minimum membership rate is \$36 per member per month and there is no maximum monthly contribution rate.

Each person who performs emergency services or support services as a volunteer or employee, regardless of compensation for the service, is qualified to be a member of the retirement system. The members must be age 18, and are not subject to a waiting period, but must receive a Certification of Physical Fitness and may not be a TESRS retiree.

Active member benefits consist of the following: On-Duty Death Benefits - \$100,000 plus monthly annuity; Off-Duty Death Benefits – Lump-sum benefit of monthly annuity; On-Duty Disability Benefit – Minimum - \$400 a month. Retirement Benefits: Monthly benefits begin at age 55; \$100% vested after 15 years; 50% vested after 10 years; and compounded annually by 6.2% after 15 years

The Fire Chief is the Participating Department Head (PDH) and has indemnification liability if actions are made in good faith. The PDH is responsible for managing the enrollment of department members entering the Retirement System; receiving the volunteer firefighters' certification of physical fitness; enrolling new department members into TESRS; terminating department members from TESRS; and maintaining current and accurate membership records and providing to TESRS.

Qualified service means service performed for a participating department by a member in good standing who attends at least 20 hours of annual training and attends 25% of the department's emergencies; attends at least 20 hours of annual training and provides support services for at least 25% of the department's emergencies, but may be absent due to military duty. Support service

members are volunteers who may direct traffic at scene, dispatch, drive, supply or maintain equipment, keep records or other similar services as determined by the PDH.

The ESD Commissioners selects a Local Board consisting of six members of the community. Three members of the Local Board must be active members of the TESRS chosen by a majority of the members in the fire department; one is the Fire Chief; and two who are representatives of the community chosen by the four members of the Local Board. The PDH may not serve as Chair of the Local Board. The Local Board is required to meet at least two times a year. In February, the Local Board must elect officers, review the Annual Report of Qualified Service, review TESRD roster member reconciliation report (MRR) and select two board members to access the TESRS online (TOL). In August, the Local Board must approve the MRR. The Local Board must also meet to review and take action regarding death and disability benefits; review and take action regarding contested applications for retirement benefits; and the Local Board must post 72 hours prior to a Local Board meeting, a public notice stating the date, time, and place of the meeting.

This being a report only, no vote was needed and none was taken.

5. Received Louie Longoria and Margaret Kelly with John Womack & Co., P.C. Regarding 2022 Audit and Act, If Necessary

Louie Longoria with John Womack & Co. presented the Fire Commissioners with the 2022 Audit report. Louie Longoria stated that there were no issues on the audit.

Commissioner Lorraine Burns moved and Commissioner Roy Salinas seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that the 2022 Audit be accepted as presented.

6. Discuss & Act on Fire Chief's Report

- a. Training Drills**
- b. Meetings and Projects**
- c. Fire/Emergency Incidents Handled in September 2023**
- d. Fuel Consumption Report**
- e. Truck Repairs Report**

Jose E. Mendieta, Fire Chief, presented his Fire Chief's report to the Fire Commissioners. He reported the following:

Training:

09/05/23	Checked all the units
09/12/23	Class on pumping and using foam on brush trucks
09/19/23	Had a second class on pumping and working the tanker

09/26/23 Had a workshop with area fire chiefs

Meetings/Projects:

1. Attended a two-day Fire Chief Workshop in Falfurrias with area departments.
 - A. Each department discussed needs and wants for their departments.
 1. Several departments expressed:
 - a. Service needs on their own vehicles
 - b. Challenge of being shorthanded with volunteers
 - B. Discuss issues with Texas Forest Service and dozers
 2. Gulf Wind Farm scheduled a live training rescue drill
 - A. This was in coordination with Halo, Kenedy EDS1 and Border Patrol
 - B. It had been over a year since ESD1 had a training simulation with Halo
 3. Red Cross had a preliminary evaluation of the Sarita townsite to discuss installing smoke alarms
 - A. Next steps will be to schedule a meeting with Kenedy County Maintenance and ESD1 to go door to door explaining the project to the residents
 4. TDHS has tentatively scheduled a vaccination day for October 30, 2023
 - A. They mentioned a new covid booster but they did not give any details
 5. Meet with COOG Emergency District
 - A. Utilize SFFMA website to coordinate and track trainings of volunteers
 - B. Utilize 6204 funds to update training library
 - C. Formalize training schedule
 6. Plan to set a monthly meeting with the Kenedy County Sheriff's Department to improve interagency coordination (something new).

Fire Calls:

Vehicle Accidents	0
Vehicle Fires	0
Grass Fires	1
Others	1
Structure Fires	0
Medical Assistance	0
TOTAL FIRE CALLS:	2

EMS Calls:

Norias	0
Mifflin Armstrong	2
Kenedy County	0
Sarita	6
TOTAL EMS CALLS:	8

Jose E. Mendieta, Fire Chief, informed the Fire Commissioners that bids were needed for the replacement of the exterior and interior lights in the fire station.

Commissioner Lorraine Burns moved and Commissioner Rogelio Salinas seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that William Dieterle is authorized to approve a bid for the exterior and interior lights in an amount not to exceed \$4,000.00.

Commissioner Lorraine Burns moved and Commissioner Rogelio Salinas seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that the Fire Chief's report be accepted as presented.

7. Discuss & Act on Command Standby Officer Compensation

None

Jose E. Mendieta, Fire Chief, informed the Fire Commissioners that payment was not necessary for there had not been any standby/response coverage for the month of September 2023.

No action was needed; therefore, no vote was taken.

8. EXECUTIVE SESSION: Tex. Gov't Code, Sec. 551.074, Personnel – Jose E. Mendieta

William Dieterle informed the Fire Commissioners of the need to enter into an Executive Session at 8:00 p.m.

The Executive Session was adjourned at 9:22 p.m.

9. OPEN SESSION: Discuss & Act on Items Addressed in Executive Session

William Dieterle called the Open Session to order at 9:23 p.m.

Commissioner Lorraine Burns moved and Commissioner Daniel Alaniz seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that Jose E. Mendieta's probationary status be terminated and removed and that he return to his regular normal status as Fire Chief.

10. Discuss & Act on Date for Next Regular Meeting

William Dieterle informed the Fire Commissioners of the need to set a date for the next regular meeting.

Commissioner Lorraine Burns moved and Commissioner Rogelio Salinas seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that the next regular meeting be held on November 13, 2023, at 6:30 p.m.

11. Discuss & Act on Payment of Bills

William Dieterle presented the bills for the month ending September 30, 2023, to the Fire Commissioners and informed the Fire Commissioners that the bills should be considered for payment.

Commissioner Lorraine Burns moved and Commissioner Rogelio Salinas seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that the bills be paid as presented.

12. Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Commissioners, Commissioner Lorraine Burns moved and Commissioner Rogelio Salinas seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously passed that the Fire District's Commissioners' meeting be adjourned at 9:27 o'clock p.m.



William Dieterle, President

ATTESTED TO:


Melinda Vela, Secretary