

**MEDINA COUNTY EMERGENCY SERVICE DISTRICT #1  
PO BOX 1037  
CASTROVILLE, TEXAS 78009**

**MINUTES**

WEDNESDAY, March 9, 2022, 7:00PM

Meeting Location: Courtroom of the Medina County Sub Courthouse at Precinct 2, 8366 FM 471 S, Castroville, TX

**I. OPEN MEETING:**

**1. CALL TO ORDER and ROLL CALL:**

President Marvin Dziuk called the meeting to order at 7:00pm, and established a quorum with Board Vice President Rodney Hitzfelder, Board Secretary Tom Page, Board Assistant Treasurer Pam Mathis, and Board Treasurer Terry Beck present. Fire Chief Clint Cooke, District Administrator Polly Edlund, Administrative Assistant Lori Stein, and District Analyst Ronda McNew were also in attendance. Additional attendees were MCESD1 volunteer Firefighters Brian Anderwald, Dan Thornley, Lucas Lopez, Janna, Pangelinan, Al Niebruegge, Jay Dempsey, Chris Smith, Ernest Espinosa, Kevin Cody Jr., Billy-Jim Perez, Melanie Godwin, Ian Zabel, Mico VFD Chief Jamie Esquivel, Mico VFD Captain Susan Tinsley, Mico VFD Board President Destiny Phelps, and Allegiance Mobile Health representative Ramon Martinez.

**2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE and ANY SPECIAL GUESTS/RECOGNITION(S):**

President Dziuk requested all in attendance to rise, face the United States flag and then the State of Texas flag and pledge their allegiance to each, respectively. President Dziuk thanked all for their loyal and patriotic participation.

**3. CONCERNED CITIZEN COMMENTS:**

None.

**4. CONSENT AGENDA - DISCUSSIONS & POSSIBLE RESOLUTIONS ON THE FOLLOWING:**

**4 - A - 1. MINUTES, RESOLUTION OF ACCEPTANCE - (February)**

**4 - A - 2. Treasurer's Report - ACCEPT FINANCIAL REPORTS & APPROVAL FOR PAYING BILLS & APPROPRIATE TRANSFERS**

**4 - A - 3. SALES TAX REPORTS (February/YTD)**

**4 - A - 4. DISTRICT-WIDE FIRE & EMS RUN REPORTING & QUARTERLY FINANCIAL & OPERATIONAL REPORTS REQUIREMENTS**

Commissioner Beck moved to accept, adopt, and approve all reports as presented within Consent Agenda Items 4-A-1, 4-A-2, 4-A-3, and 4-A-4. His motion was seconded by Commissioner Mathis and the motion approved with a 4-0 vote.

**4 - B. CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS PULLED OUT FOR DISCUSSION:**

None.

**5. COMMITTEE/STAFF REPORTS - DISCUSSIONS and POSSIBLE RESOLUTIONS ON THE FOLLOWING:**

**5 - A. FACILITIES and FINANCE COMMITTEE - STATION CONSTRUCTION IN PROGRESS - COMMITTEE UPDATES:**

**5 - A - 1. MCESD#1 Rio Medina Station #15 - Project Updates, Budgetary Needs and Legal Agreement(s):**

Chief Cooke stated that Station 15 internet had been ordered, and installed today, Wednesday, March 9<sup>th</sup>. Chief Cooke noted that the delay did not reduce the operation at Station 15; however, the delay prevented the relocation of the third medic unit to Station 15. It is anticipated that the third medic unit will begin running calls out of Station 15 on Thursday, March 10<sup>th</sup>. Chief Cooke noted that a cellular modem is being discussed as a backup to fiber internet. Chief Cooke noted the wrong water heater voltage was installed at Station 15 in the EMS bay that supplied hot water to the gear washer and bay shower resulting in an ongoing water heater problem. The unit was under warranty, subsequently, a new replacement unit was ordered. Chief Cooke stated that he directed the fence around the utility yard needed to be repainted, as it showed rust already; Commissioner Page assured him that 'rust' was a characteristic of this type of fencing (heavy, punched metal). It was not rust rather a patina. Chief Cooke also stated he was working to get the correct controls for the garage doors.

**5 - A - 1 - a. Apparatus Acquisition - Status to Completion Timeline:**

Chief Cooke reported that Brush 8115 was repainted the correct color of blue and will be redelivered by the end of the week. Chief Cooke reported that Tender 8115 is complete; however, unable to be delivered due to the nationwide microchip shortage. Chief Cooke noted that on March 21<sup>st</sup>, his staff vehicle is scheduled to have the required extra equipment installed. The installation is anticipated to be a two-week build process.

**5 - A - 1 - b. Apparatus Equipment, Specifications, Purchases, Funding Timelines - Status to Completion:**

Commissioner Mathis asked about a Grand Opening of Station 15. Chief Cooke stated that he was not a ceremonial type of person; leaving the Grand Opening to the wants of the Board. A Grand Opening requires a time commitment. Commissioner Hitzfelder suggested that the Board discuss a Grand Opening later. Commissioner Hitzfelder stated that Station 15 needs to have numbering/lettering/logo on the building that faces Potranco Road and Chief Cooke volunteered to work on the design and installation proposal.

**5 – A – 2. MCESD1 LaCoste North Station – A&E Site Planning Project Updates:**

Chief Cooke referred this agenda item to Commissioner Hitzfelder. Commissioner Hitzfelder noted that he had not met with the City of LaCoste's consultants due to time restraints. There are several items that need to be addressed i.e., utilities-water, sewer, electricity, orientation of the building, sprinkler system, looped water main, traffic flow, and other City of LaCoste requirements. A meeting with the city is still needed. Commissioner Hitzfelder also reported the initial soil testing was completed and tested favorable for the construction project to continue. The Committee is still looking into entrance and exits for the station site plan.

Commissioner Mathis questioned whether a different architect could be used for the design of the building and was there a separate contract for each Phase of the building. Commissioner Hitzfelder remarked that professional services for architectural services, like attorneys, are competitive and held pretty close in pricing. The standard is typically around 6% for the architectural costs. The programming phase is where discussions take place on what is needed; the number of people, beds needed, etc.

District Administrator Polly Edlund stated that the Board should be mindful of the fact that the fire station will be the first building people see when entering LaCoste, the main entrance as you approach, and that the facility needs to make a welcoming statement and be aesthetically appealing. Commissioner Beck concurred, and noted the need for a more eye-catching design, rather than the metal building built for station #15 on the side view of Potranco road.

**6. FIRE CHIEF'S REPORTS – DISCUSSIONS and POSSIBLE ACTIONS ON THE FOLLOWING:**

*The monthly Chief's Report and other official related documentation were included in meeting packets. Below are items from the report and communiques addressed during the MCESD1 meeting:*

**6 – A. FIRE CHIEF'S REPORT – PROJECT UPDATES:**

*Administration:*

- Chief Cooke noted Administration is working to update the website for a fresher, more modern look. He requested headshot photos of all Commissioners and an optional short bio.
- Chief Cooke attended the SAFE-D Conference in Round Rock, as did Commissioners and MCESD1 staff personnel.
- Chief Cooke continues to move the members of the Board to digital access documents; historical data to be available soon on digital devices.
- Chief Cooke noted that construction of the shelving in the Administrative Offices was complete and that he has met with Debra Dockery Architects et al regarding Station 11 replacement.
- Chief Cooke worked with FirstNet to set up the District's account allowing personnel to take advantage of the savings and benefits of FirstNet. Firefighters would be eligible for a cost-break on their cell service.

*(Per the internet, FirstNet is the only nationwide wireless broadband communications platform dedicated to America's first responders and public safety community. This dependable, highly-secure communications platform brings reliability to public safety agencies and first responders—helping them make faster and better decisions to keep themselves and the public safe. FirstNet is different from other carriers in that it has a dedicated public safety core that routes FirstNet traffic. It also encrypts network traffic within the core, creating the highly secure environment for public safety. FirstNet is the result of a public/private partnership between the First Responder Network Authority and AT&T. Based on recommendations from the 9/11 Commission Report, legislation was passed in 2012 to combine private sector resources, infrastructure, expertise, and economies of scale with government resources to deploy and operate a first responder network.)*

*Operations:*

- Chief Cooke stated that Dispatch remained a concern and continues to work with Medina County SO to adjust availability. Chief Cooke noted that to properly dispatch Fire and EMS from Station 15 a new emergency response district must be created.
- Chief Cooke continues to work on District-wide response guidelines (SOGs).
- Chief Cooke noted that Lieutenant Billy-Jim Perez is working on a state grant to have an EMT basic class funded/conducted for ESD personnel that Chief Cooke will teach.

- Chief Cooke stated that all stations have volunteer members who have applied to be rostered on the ESD Fire Department. Chief Cooke noted that call volume continued steady and he would like to address this increase with a proposal to staff two stations during the daytime hours. (See agenda item 6-C).

*Insurance Services Office (ISO):*

- Chief Cooke reported the continued evaluation of the District's apparatus, to determine if the required equipment was carried on each apparatus to obtain the optimum number of points. (For scoring process for ISO audit).
- Chief Cooke restated his ISO concern from January. Chief Cooke noted that up until now he could manage the ISO process without outside assistance. After consulting with his prior ISO Consultant and the current rating challenges, Chief Cooke reasoned that engaging a consultant to represent MCESD1 with ISO will give the best results. The ISO consultant discussed performing a regrade within a brief period to determine areas that would need to be improved based on the regrade. The quick regrade could improve the scoring in all areas initially; however, the regrade will show defined improvement gaps. Chief Cooke recommended engaging National Fire Services Office (Harold 'Skip' Starling, Director, 1622 Airport Road, Sylvania, GA 30467, to represent MCESD1 in the audit. (See also agenda item 6-B for an action item). Chief Cooke stated that an Improved ISO rating is an area that will save our residents significantly on insurance. Chief Cooke reported that he continues to receive multiple phone calls daily, from concerned citizens and insurance agents regarding fire protection, homeowners' insurance, and questions why Station 15 does not help lower their insurance costs. Current ratings are 5 (LaCoste), 7 (Castroville), and 9/10 (remainder of the District, rural areas). Chief Cooke hopes for a 4 or 5 rating across the District for any house within five driving miles of a fire station.
- Chief Cooke has contacted water providers with no success to date on obtaining information on water related issues. Commissioner Hitzfelder stated that he would be able to assist with this situation, and contacts for several providers.

*EMS:*

- Chief Cooke reported ordering the Lucas CPR Devices with delivery scheduled for Monday, March 14<sup>th</sup>. Chief Cooke remarked, that following training, the Lucas CPR devices will be placed on the medic units/ambulances for use the next day.

*Status of District Assets:*

- Chief Cooke reported one of LaCoste Station #11's heavy brush trucks is out of service due to mechanical problems and repair parts have been ordered.
- Chief Cooke stated that Station 15 had ordered internet and it was installed on Wednesday, March 9<sup>th</sup>. Chief Cooke noted that the delay did not reduce the operation at Station 15; however, the delay prevented the relocation of the third medic unit to Station 15. It is anticipated that the third medic unit will begin running calls out of Station 15 on Thursday, March 10<sup>th</sup>. Chief Cooke noted that a cellular modem would be installed as a backup to fiber internet.
- Chief Cooke noted that all District facility access is now systemwide and active with all generic codes removed at all four stations. Chief Cooke will assign codes for the Commissioners' use.
- Chief Cooke noted there was an issue with the water heater installation at Station 15, the EMS bay that supplied hot water to the gear washer and bay shower resulting in an ongoing water heater warranty problem; currently, awaiting the replacement unit. See also above discussions related the fence around the utility yard.
- Chief Cooke reported that the Fire/EMS ATV has been ordered.

*Recruitment:*

- Chief Cooke noted that MCESD1 has opened the application process for volunteer members of the ESD Fire Department and presently thirty-three individuals have submitted their applications for volunteer membership.
- Chief Cooke stated that he has evaluated current funding and prepared a proposal to switch the District to a combination agency providing response staff during the day from 6:00AM to 6:00PM. (See agenda item 6-C).

*Additional Activities:*

Chief Cooke had many discussions and meetings with individuals regarding the operation of the District. A listing of notable meetings included:

- Conducted a Countywide Chief's meeting which resulted in requests for Dispatch to initially page out multiple stations on reported high risk calls.
- Served as a guest instructor for Devine Fire one evening.
- Visited the Microsoft build site with other community and county representatives.

*Public Education and Outreach:*

- Chief Cooke remarked that ESD1 currently has no defined program for public education or outreach. This will be established in the future and included with statistical data.
- Chief Cooke continues to maintain an active social media presence (Facebook – Medina County ESD1 FIRE/EMS) and continues to seek other options for public outreach.

**6 – B. CONSIDER AND APPROVE PROPOSAL FROM NATIONAL FIRE SERVICES OFFICE TO PREPARE FOR ISO AUDIT:**

*Recap from Chief's Report:* After consulting with his prior ISO Consultant and the current rating challenges, Chief Cooke reasoned that engaging a consultant to represent MCESD1 with ISO will give the best results. The ISO consultant discussed performing a regrade within a brief period to determine areas that would need to be improved based on the regrade. The quick regrade could improve the scoring in all areas initially; however, the regrade will show defined improvement gaps. Chief Cooke recommended engaging National Fire Services Office (Harold 'Skip' Starling, Director, 1622 Airport Road, Sylvania, GA 30467, to represent MCESD1 in the audit. Chief Cooke stated that an Improved ISO rating is an area that will save our residents significantly on insurance. Chief Cooke reported that he continues to receive multiple daily phone calls from concerned citizens and insurance agents regarding fire protection, homeowners' insurance, and questions why Station 15 does not help lower their insurance costs. Current ratings are 5 (LaCoste), 7 (Castroville), and 9/10 (remainder of the District). Chief Cooke hopes for a 4 or 5 rating across the District for any house within five driving miles of a fire station.

Chief Cooke submitted the proposal for a pre-ISO inspection review to the Board prior to the meeting. Commissioner Beck moved to consider the proposal from the National Fire Services Office to prepare for an ISO audit as presented. Commissioner Hitzfelder seconded his motion. Discussions continued. Chief Cooke noted that ISO was a large concern of the Castroville Council and of other communities. Chief Cooke reviewed the National fire Services Office proposal which stated that there would be consultant services for a fee of \$12,800 plus expenses for airfare, lodging, and car rental (page 5 of proposal). The fee would be paid in three payments (page 8 of proposal). This service does include representation during an ISO inspection – the regrade and the follow-up inspection. This service does not include an Alternate Water 50-Year Drought Study. Following discussion, clarification of concerns, and questions addressed by Chief Cooke, a vote was taken on the motion which was approved with a 4-0 vote. The contract was dated with a March 10<sup>th</sup> start date.

**6 – C. CONSIDER AND APPROVE PROPOSAL TO HIRE PERSONNEL FOR DAYTIME STAFFING AT STATION 10 and STATION 15:**

Chief Cooke stated that the time has come to begin the conversion to a Combination Fire Department. Chief Cooke noted that the average response time is close to twenty minutes or more, the number of fire calls are increasing, and the District is asking volunteers to maintain and increase their service level without providing them support. Chief Cooke proposed to add two fire fighters per day, seven days a week to Station 10 Castroville and Station 15 Rio Medina. These stations are to be staffed by career personnel 6:00AM to 6:00PM (06:00-18:00), seven days per week thus placing four personnel on duty in the District during peak hours of limited volunteer availability. These crews would welcome volunteers to ride with them and the District would encourage volunteers to relieve them at 6:00PM (18:00) for a dedicated shift until 6:00AM; hence, having both stations staffed twenty-four per day. These career personnel or full-time employees would be responsible for additional administrative roles/duties assigned and deemed necessary.

These career personnel would have a guaranteed 48-hours per week of scheduled time; scheduling will be an administrative-type nonrotating or guaranteed process, where some weeks they may work 60-hours and other weeks 36-hours. The District's payroll policy includes a 207K exception (IRS exemption) defining our work cycle as 28-days to allow this manner of scheduling and various other labor/work scenarios/situations. Further details and pay scale are detailed in the attached Chief's Career Personnel Communication. Commissioner Beck moved to consider the proposal to hire personnel for daytime staffing at Station 10 and Station 15. Commissioner Page seconded his motion. Discussion continued. Commissioner Mathis inquired about the SAFER Grant and its potential funding, and physicals. Chief Cooke stated that the SAFER Grant would enhance this situation and there was no process in place for physicals. Chief Cooke noted that MCESD1 would have paid fire and EMS and response to the level of training. As they become certified as an EMT, the goal is they will respond to Fire and EMS. He noted that in NFPA 1720, a total of 6 responders must respond within a certain amount of time. Following discussion, clarification of concerns, and questions answered by Chief Cooke, a vote was taken on the motion, and it was approved with a 4-0 vote

Following the approval of this proposal, the members of the public in attendance and the Board applauded and gave their overwhelming approval. Commissioner Beck thanked all that worked together tirelessly to make sure that this MCESD1 combination fire department happened. He continued his remarks that he was excited about the District's action, the time was now. He asked everyone to continue the positive communications that were taking place now, and to continue the process toward the new MCESD#1 combination fire department, a major achievement and accomplishment for the District. Chief Esquivel also commented that the time was now, and he thanked the board for the approval.

**7. MASTER PLANNING/NEEDS ASSESSMENT/STRATEGIC PLANS/DISCUSSION and ACTIONS ON:**

**7 – A. PLANNING FOR LAND ACQUISITION(S), FUTURE STATIONS, DONATIONS, DEMOGRAPHIC REPORTS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT and OTHER FINANCIAL MASTER PLANNING RELATED ISSUES – Any Updates:**

Commissioner Hitzfelder stated that he spoke with the developer of the subdivision in the CR 371 and FM 1283 area about the possibility of a temporary station for now, like the Rocky Creek Station. A temporary station would give the required ISO coverage needed to help the insurance cost of the homes in this area of the District. The developer was receptive to this idea. Commissioner Beck reported to the Board, the cleanliness, upkeep, and overall maintenance of Station 10 continues to improve. He had recently dropped by the station and felt the improvements were worth mentioning. He was ok with the suggested living quarters.

**8. OLD BUSINESS – DISCUSSION and POSSIBLE RESOLUTIONS ON THE FOLLOWING:**

**8 - A. SAFE-D conference Training Hours and Follow-up:**

Chief Cooke stated that District Administrator Edlund submitted all the required documentation from those who gave it to her to get the respective CEU hours for all classes attended. Administrator Edlund noted that all Commissioners should have received an e-mail confirmation that their hours had been submitted. If they did not receive an e-mail confirmation, please let her know as soon as possible.

**9. NEW BUSINESS – INTRODUCTION OF ANY NEW BUSINESS:**

**9 - A. SET NEXT MONTH'S MEETING(s) – April 13, 2022:**

The next proposed regular meeting of MCESD1 will be at 7:00pm on Wednesday, April 13, 2022, in the Courtroom of the Medina County Sub Courthouse at Precinct 2, 8366 FM 471 S, Castroville, TX. Exact date and time will be confirmed when the agenda is posted.

**9 - B. SAFE-D 2023 ANNUAL CONFERENCE:**

Save the Date! SAFE-D's 2023 Annual Conference, Kalahari Resort and Convention Center, Round Rock, Thursday, February 2 – Saturday, February 4, 2023. Administrator Edlund made a note to please let her know as early as possible if Commissioner's planned on attending, due to the short window of opportunity to secure hotel rooms. The hotel normally sells out within the first 3 hours on the date reservations open.


**9 - C. Public PR Event announcement - Wild Game Dinner:**

Commissioner Beck announced that Saturday, March 12<sup>th</sup>, the men's group from Castroville's St. Louis Catholic Church was hosting the annual wild game dinner at Koenig Park which included an all-you-can-eat meal for \$25 per person. The men's organization uses part of the proceeds to fund scholarships. It was a pretty large event and a great way for ESD members and FF's to meet and greet people.

**10. ADJOURN (MOTION):**

Commissioner Beck moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Mathis seconded his motion, and the motion passed with a 4-0 vote. President Marvin Dziuk adjourned the meeting at 8:25pm.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

  
POLLY EDLUND

MCESD1 PRESIDENT

  
MARVIN DZIUK