

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

**PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES**

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 20, 2024 7:00PM

Meeting Location: Medina County Precinct 2 Bldg., Courtroom, 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 commissioners Tom Page, Jenny Ferren, and Jason Bertie present. Commissioner Hitzfelder was not in attendance. Fire Chief Clinton Cooke, Assistant Chief Sarah Windsor, Deputy Chief of Operations Jamie Esquivel, District Administrator Polly Edlund, Administrative Assistant Lori Stein were also in attendance. Additional attendees were Lieutenant Zabel, Lieutenant Ward and Firefighters Rios, Ferris and Maurer.

**1 – A. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO UNITED STATES AND TEXAS FLAGS:**

President Dziuk requested all in attendance to rise, face the United States and Texas flags and pledge their allegiance to each. President Dziuk thanked all for their participation.

**1 – B. INVOCATION:**

At President Dziuk's request, Fire Chief Cooke led the assembly in prayer giving thanks to God and asking for His guidance for the Board and His protection for first responders.

**1 – C. INTRODUCTION OF ANY SPECIAL GUEST(S)/RECOGNITIONS:**

Chief Cooke explained that two prior members of the MCESD#1 team had been invited to attend the meeting to receive special recognition. Unfortunately, neither were able to attend tonight's meeting. The Board thanked Chief Cooke for making sure they both received the recognition they deserved.

**1 – C – a. Prior Board Commissioner – Terry Beck:**

Terry Beck had been a MCESD#1 Commissioner, a past firefighter and Board President of the Castroville Volunteer Fire Department, and a longtime supporter of the fire services for the district. The MCESD#1 recognized him with a plaque and Castroville Fire Department Helmet for his dedication and long years of service.

**1 – C – b. Past Service Provider – Ronda McNew:**

Ms. Ronda McNew was recognized for her long-time service with the district. She had taken minutes at almost every MCESD#1 meeting and had provided administrative assistance with fire run reporting and sales tax reporting over the years. Ms. McNew left the district in January to pursue other endeavors with a neighboring ESD.

**2. CITIZEN COMMENTS**

None.

**3. ADMINISTRATION – DISCUSSION AND RESOLUTIONS/ACTIONS ON THE FOLLOWING:**

**3 - A. MINUTES, RESOLUTION OF ACCEPTANCE – (February 15<sup>th</sup> Minutes)**

Commissioner Page moved to accept the February 15<sup>th</sup> minutes as written. Commissioner Bertie seconded his motion, and the motion passed 3-0.

**3 - B. TREASURER'S REPORT – FINANCIAL REPORTS, APPROVAL FOR PAYING BILLS AND APPROPRIATE TRANSFERS:**

The February 2024 financial report was presented to the Board. Chief Cooke highlighted the following: The district had received 91.87% of the Ad-Valorem property tax revenues. The Sales tax report for December through March reflected 30.13% of the budgeted sales tax revenues received. Chief Cooke noted the investment account had earned \$251,666.00 in investment revenues, and the budgeted amount was \$225,000 for the year, so the district was in a very positive position and would exceed the income amount budgeted. This amount will decrease as monies are spent on the new station 11 project. Twelve pay cycles have been completed, accruing 46.15% of payroll expense. This does not count the deployment revenues the district gets reimbursements on. Chief Cooke stated the MCESD1's budget had no accounts out of line or that he had concerns with. The Board was also provided a budget vs. actual from October 1 through March 19<sup>th</sup>, a list of current month's



transactions, and all fund account balances, with total fund balances in all funds as of March 19<sup>th</sup> at \$11,827,119.04. (This amount did not include March 20<sup>th</sup> bills and transfers approved during the meeting). The district had open purchase orders to the sum of approximately 3.4M on apparatus and medical supplies, and pending station expenditures at 3.2 million, leaving unencumbered funds estimated at 5.2 million. Commissioner Ferren moved to approve the treasurer's report as presented, to pay the bills, and make the appropriate transfers. Commissioner Bertie seconded her motion, the motion passed with a 3-0 vote.

### **3 - C. Discussion and Action on SSFCU CD with Maturity Date of 04-05-2024**

Commissioner Ferren stated the fifteen-month CD with Security Service Federal Credit Union had a maturity balance of \$264,125.26 and was currently earning 4.41% and was quickly coming to its maturation date on April 5, 2024. She presented a recommendation from the finance committee to close the CD with SSFCU, and not renew the CD and move the funds to the money market account at Castroville State Bank where the interest rate was higher. After Board discussion on current rates, Commissioner Ferren moved to cash out the CD at SSFCU when it matures and deposit the money into the CSB account that is earning the pool group rates. Commissioner Page seconded her motion and the motion passed 3-0.

### **3 - D. Sales Tax Report (February/YTD)**

Chief Cooke reported that four months of sales tax had been collected at a total of \$753,165.27 December-March. Compared to last year's amount for this same period it was slightly less. The March net deposit was down from last March month's deposit. The HdI data reflecting the reasons for the decrease had not arrived yet. Once the data is received the administration team will review it to determine the reason.

### **3 - E. Station 11 CIP Monthly Draw Approval, YTD Project Costs & Any Construction Project Updates**

Commissioner Page moved to approve the draw request (pay app #6) for \$195,918.50 as submitted by the architect, Commissioner Ferren seconded the motion and the motion passed 3-0.

Chief Cooke reviewed change order #2 on the LaCoste station 11 CIP for the purchase and installation of additional fire dampers. The change order totaled \$3,210.47. It included the one-year labor warranty with Diamondback A/C and standard manufacturing warranty. After the construction oversight team answered the Board's questions related to engineering oversight on original drawings, the change order was approved.

The project was running to schedule and progressing with the expectation that it would be completed by late summer.

### **3 - F. Consider, discuss, and adopt a Homestead exemption as an MCESD1 property tax exemption**

MCESD1 has the legal authority to set a homestead exemption for its tax rate. Chief Cooke presented a table noting the district's current 6,132 homesteads, and average homestead valuations, and was proposing a \$20,000 exemption per homestead. This exemption has the potential to decrease revenue by approximately \$150,000 per year. He asked if the board chose to approve the exemption that they be mindful of what tax rate they adopt next year. The highest rate that can be adopted without an election would be preferred, the ESD cap was at 10 cents per hundred, so as not to cause future budget limitations. Some discussion was held on whether the \$20,000 amount would be an acceptable number being compared to a school district's \$100,000, which had recently become law, by State legislation. Commissioner Ferren echoed Chief Cooke's concern that the tax rate adopted for next year needed to be carefully considered, as the growth and expansion of the district continues, and the district's needs would only become more expensive. President Dziuk asked if the exemption is bound to the district for more than a year. Chief Cooke explained that this exemption must be adopted yearly to allow for adjustments. Commissioner Ferren moved to adopt a \$20,000 homestead exemption. Commissioner Page seconded her motion and the motion passed 3-0.

### **3 - G. Consider, discuss, and adopt an over age 65 exemption as an MCESD1 property tax exemption**

The Board discussed both exemptions and all the values associated with each exemption under the prior agenda item. There were approximately 2,165 total properties affected by this exemption currently. Commissioner Page moved to adopt an over age 65 exemption at \$20,000. Commissioner Ferren seconded the motion. Discussion continued regarding what the acceptable amount was to reflect to the constituents the district did have their best interests in mind, yet still having the funds to meet the needs of growth and development. After much dialog, President Dziuk called for a vote. The motion passed 3-0.



### **3 - H. Consider and approve the purchase of 3.25-acre feet of water rights and transfer to City of LaCoste**

The item was tabled.

### **3 - I. Consider and approve the acceptance of the 2023 Fire Administration Annual Report**

Chief Cooke presented the first ever annual report for MCESD1. This report is to memorialize the district's events and growth over the year and serve as a tangible historical record. While many people had a part in making the report happen, Chief Windsor was the main author of the project. Chief Cooke expressed great appreciation for the work she put in to accomplish the report and is very pleased to be able to have this available for everyone to see this year. The online versions will be available to the public on social media. President Dziuk commended the team on a great job on this project and it was very well done. Administrator Edlund concurred that this historical document was very well written and complimented the master plan to show the public all the progress and follow-up that had been completed. Commissioner Page moved to accept the 2023 annual report. Commissioner Bertie seconded the motion and the motion passed 3-0.

## **4. Fire Chief's Report – Discussions and Actions on the Following:**

### **4 - A. Fire Chief's Report – Project updates**

Chief Cooke gave the Fire Chief's Report for February 2024, see report for details. Notes of interest or additional board discussion included:

- Drawings for Station 12 remodel had been finalized – a project that the Mico 501c3 Board had agreed to fund in totality that may get started mid-summer.
- Drawings for Station 10 remodel had been finalized, the process for acquiring subs had begun, and the project was ready to start soon.
- The purchase contract had been received for the Station 14 acquisition project (2 acres) and an escrow check was prepared for the purchase. The escrow check could be taken to the title company following tonight's meeting. RESPEC's engineering opinions were expected by the end of week. There was also a lease check for April and half of March rent presented to the board for signing to go with the executed lease agreement.
- Work on the temporary housing facility for station 14 had already begun, moved in the beds, lockers, etc..., to prepare it for responding crews by mid-April. The trucks would be outside until the metal building is finished.
- Planning meetings have taken place for the Eclipse event in April, and the district will plan for an increased personnel availability for that day.

### **4 - B. Consider and approve the posting and hiring of a Training Officer for the District**

Chief Cooke explained that a big gap in the district right now is training. The largest need for the district is our training program. It had been very piecemeal thus far, creating an inconsistency of learning. We have no single uniform approach as the current responsibilities of all our staff are full and the continued increase in volunteers who are looking for solid training remains. Hiring a person whose singular job is to create, execute and monitor a training program at this juncture, before EMS is in full effect, would be greatly beneficial. The budget will allow for the payroll of this position, the amount dependent upon the caliber of applicant hired. Commissioner Bertie moved to approve the hiring of a Training Officer with Commissioner Page seconding his motion. Discussion was had to clarify the specifics of the position. Having a start and stop point for everything training related was imperative to the district's ability to stay standardized and organized. Following Commissioners' discussions related to overall payroll expenses, both current and future, President Dziuk called for a vote; the motion passed 3-0.

### **4 - C. Consider and Approve Proposal from Debra Dockery for Design Services for Station #10 Annex**

Chief Cooke explained that the first proposal option came in with a design fee included at approximately \$16,000 and the committee looked at it and decided all that was needed was the bare minimum. The law required an architect of record. They decided to take the design portion out, and the proposal presented tonight was for architectural only \$6,435. Commissioner Page noted there was an option on the proposal for an allowance of \$1200 for Texas accessibility; however, the committee had decided to not approve that \$1200 as part of their recommendation. Commissioner Page moved to approve Debra Dockery as the architect on record for the Station #10 and Station #10 annex remodel projects as presented on the proposal for \$6,435. Commissioner Ferren seconded his motion, and the motion passed 3-0.

### **4 - D. Consider and Approve Proposals for Construction Trades for Remodel of Station #10**

Chief Cooke explained that as the District/Admin staff will be acting as the general contractor overseeing the remodel for Station #10, and the Station #10 annex, the Board would need to decide how they would like to handle the hiring of subcontractors. There are two options: Option one being that administrative personnel be allowed to handle the hiring with



updates to the board. Option two being that the administrative personnel bring selections back to the board for official board approval. The goal is to streamline the process as much as possible without the Board feeling like administration will be "let loose" on the project. Deputy Chief Esquivel noted that there was no estimated sub-contact over the \$50,000 limit on the project. Commissioners' concerns included subs forgetting to include all portions of the provided bid, and then coming back for more, thus affecting the bottom line of the project. Chief Cooke explained the in-house expertise of current administrative staff and felt good control methods would be handled as professionally as possible. The current budget total was \$500,000 and the chiefs felt both station #10 and the Station #10 annex could be performed under this budget amount. The subcontracted trades will also have payment needs different from the district's current check issuing schedule and adjustments will need to be made for that as well. Commissioner Ferren wanted to ensure that administration staff would not be unduly burdened with taking on the general contracting aspect of construction at this time. Chief Cooke assured her that with the hiring of the Training Officer, current responsibilities will be transferred to alleviate any possible strain on the Deputy Chief. Commissioner Ferren also requested that the construction oversight Commissioners on that committee be kept in the loop of administration's decisions regarding subcontractors. Commissioner Page moved to approve Chief Cooke (and his administrative staff) to act as general contractor, to hire and oversee subcontractors, in accordance with the purchasing policies and legal requirements of the District, and with construction committee commissioners' approval, for the station #10 and station #10 annex remodel projects. Commissioner Bertie seconded his motion. The motion passed 3-0.

**4 - E. Consider and approve the purchase of a Vehicle Scanner to be used by Fleet Maintenance Personnel**

Chief Cooke is requesting the purchase of an electronic diagnostic tool that would streamline the ability of maintenance staff to repair apparatus. Two options were available: one from Snap-On tools and another from Diesel Laptops. It would be a one-time purchase with no recurring costs. The question was asked whether there would be any annual software updates and if there was any concern about this specific brand of scanner. Software updates would be only when necessary and Lt. Wells, who recommended the scanner, had used the Diesel Laptops brand before and had no concerns. Commissioner Ferren moved to purchase the Diesel Laptops scanner for \$10,035.00 which included the device and original software needed. Commissioner Bertie seconded her motion. The motion passed 3-0.

**4 - F. Consider and approve the purchase of a Used 2008 Wheeled Coach Medic Unit for BCESD#7**

In the interest of expediting the ability to become licensed with the state to become a transport agency, Chief Cooke was requesting the purchase of a used medic unit. The used unit had 60,000 miles on the unit and had been used for deployments. This purchase would help to put the district twelve months ahead in the licensing project. The licensing project could start now, rather than wait until delivery of the current medic units on order, scheduled to arrive in February 2025. Commissioner Page moved to make the purchase on the used medic unit and to offer \$40,000 toward the purchase. Commissioner Bertie seconded the motion. Discussion continued. This medic unit purchase would be initially beneficial in getting the licensing but could also serve as a back-up unit if needed in the future, and could be used in a variety of other applications with the district. President Dziuk called for a vote and the motion passed 3-0.

**5. New or Upcoming District Developments – Discussion and Actions on the Following:**

Nothing new to report.

**6. Old Business – Discussion and Actions on the following:**

None.

**7. New Business - Introduction of Any New Business:**

The next monthly meeting will be tentatively scheduled for April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024. The exact date and time will be announced with the posting of the agenda.

**8. ADJOURN:**

Commissioner Page moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Ferren seconded his motion, and the motion passed with a 4-0 vote, President Dziuk voting. President Dziuk adjourned the meeting at 8:36 pm.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

  
POLLY EDLUND, DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR

MCESD1-PRESIDENT

  
MARVIN DZIUK, PRESIDENT