



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

PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES

WEDNESDAY, July 10, 2024 7:00PM

Meeting Location: Medina County Precinct 2 Bldg., Courtroom, 8366 FM 471 S, Castroville, TX 78009

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, Leroy Haby and Rodney Hitzfelder present. Also present were: Fire Chief Clinton Cooke, District Administrator Polly Edlund, Deputy Chief of Operations Jamie Esquivel, Administrative Assistant Lori Stein, and Firefighter Al Niebruegge.

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, 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:

None.

2. CITIZEN COMMENTS

President Dziuk called on citizen Terry Beck of 104 Harvest Moon, Castroville, TX 78009. Mr. Beck noted he had received and reviewed a copy of the MCESD#1's 2024-2025 proposed budget, which he had acquired through his open records request. After reviewing the budget, he expressed his concerns about proposed spending, and not having a negative budget. He was also not in favor of using reserve surplus funds to balance the budget. He said it was fiscally irresponsible and that the district could not afford this budget. In his opinion the district should not use funds outside the annual expected income for one year for proposed expenditures. He also asked that the Board not raise the tax rate. He thanked the Board for the recently passed property tax exemptions for homeowners and over age 65, and he thanked those who started the District.

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

3 - A. MINUTES, RESOLUTION OF ACCEPTANCE – (June 12th Minutes)

Commissioner Page moved to accept the minutes as written. Commissioner Ferren seconded his motion, and the motion passed 4-0.

3 - B. FINANCIAL REPORTS, APPROVAL FOR PAYING BILLS AND APPROPRIATE TRANSFERS:

The October 1, 2023, through June 30, 2024 financial report, in the Board's meeting materials, was summarized by Chief Cooke. Commissioner Hitzfelder did ask for clarification concerning what amounts will be considered unencumbered after this fiscal year ends. Chief Cooke responded that depending on what purchases were received by September 30th, and those amounts, the dollar amount would be somewhere between 3.9 to 4.1 million. Commissioner Ferren made a motion to approve the financial report, pay bills due, and make transfers necessary to pay the bills. Commissioner Page seconded her motion, and the motion passed 4-0.

3 - C. SALES TAX REPORT

The July sales tax deposit had just dropped the morning of the meeting. The July report was updated and provided in Board meeting materials. The deposit was down from the same month last year. No further action was necessary.

3 – D. MCAD VALUATIONS FOR 2024-2025 BUDGET YEAR – STATUS UPDATE

Preliminary property tax valuations had been provided to the Board's for review. The certified valuations would be provided when available. The expectation was to receive them from MCAD by July 25th. No further action was needed.

3 - E. DISCUSSION ON MCESD1's PROPOSED BUDGET FOR 2024-2025

In the June meeting, the Commissioners asked Chief Cooke to bring back two alternative budget options which included personnel staffing for the new LaCoste station #11 starting on October 1, 2024 in lieu of starting personnel at that station in 2025 when the new EMS phase was to start-up. Chief Cooke began the discussions with an explanation of the requested alternative staffing options, and how those alternative budgets compared in relation to the original draft proposed budget for 2024-2025. He noted that the subject of what is 'defendable' in relation to actions taken on what is spent was the main concern. He further said that while he may present options and/or have preferences, it is the responsibility of the Board to decide how monies are spent. The current situation with medic units within the district is that they receive numerous calls and go to 'zero' everyday (*meaning all units are on calls and none left in district to cover another run, backfill or mutual aid must come in to cover the calls*). The Board discussed all three proposed budget options discussed by the finance committee:

- Options 1 – keep things the same as they are today using only 3 medic units.
- Option 2 – move current crews around to man an additional unit in the new LaCoste station #11, taking manpower from station #10 in Castroville to the LaCoste station.
- Option 3 and 4 – add additional staffing to man the LaCoste station #11 utilizing either option 3 or option 4 which differed only by the number of personnel to hire and place in the station. The Board Commissioner's continued discussions concerning staffing options and costs hiring one person versus two.

There would be an overlap for training new EMS protocols once the medic units arrive in the district. There was a \$500,000 contract cost included in the budget to cover this overlap. There would also be a 60 - 90-day delay for billing revenues to start up, following the first billed revenues with the EMS startup process. The budget contained a reserve number for the billing revenues to be received. Projected revenues were high by the new billing company; however, past historical data had the Chiefs and finance committee wanting to be a little more conservative until trends could be established. Commissioner Ferren commented that building a station only to leave it unused for any length of time doesn't make sense; and that since the Board had already voted to buy medic units to take on the EMS phase, the Board knew it was not a cheap endeavor when the startup was discussed. The district could not purchase the five medic units and not use them. She also wanted to point out that this would be a one-time expense and to keep in mind the bigger picture of what this meant for the district's overall services. Commissioner Hitzfelder wanted to emphasize that the units in Castroville are being pulled to LaCoste more frequently, the volunteer base is very low especially in the LaCoste area, and when services shift to LaCoste the resources are moved out of Castroville. He also had concerns regarding the possibility of having increased mutual aid requests below Lacoste. He further noted if there was any way to tighten up the budget, and still provide the best service, he was all for it. The subject of using the used ambulance that is currently being used to set up EMS licensing was also discussed. The possibility of using it earlier than April (the projected EMS startup time for 2025) would depend on whether contractually we would be able to. Currently the services are provided by Allegiance, the contracted service provider, and using our own medic unit would be competing against that service provider for revenue. Allegiance is aware of the district's plan to assume EMS around the April 2025 timeline and they are supportive. The property tax exemptions, the tax values of those exemptions, and the overall effects on the district's total property tax revenues with those new exemptions in place was also discussed. Commissioner Ferren asked about the medical director's vehicle proposed within the budget as part of her compensation. The average medical director's fees run between 200-225 per hour. The vehicle was negotiated because it would be an alternative way to provide compensation without having to budget a larger amount of money for a medical director. The Board would take up final budget discussions once the certified valuation numbers arrive. No further action was necessary at this meeting.

4. FIRE CHIEFS REPORTS – DISCUSSIONS AND ACTIONS ON THE FOLLOWING:

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

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

- There was an expectation that administration will submit for licensing by end of July
- Assessment of rescue tools was completed and some new purchased
- The new MCESD#1's Ambulance was available for viewing at tonight's meeting, with the new wrapping/logo.

4 – B. CONSTRUCTION COMMITTEE REPORTS – PROJECT UPDATES

The construction updates for each project were included in the Chief's report and financial report. Below are the highlights on each station project:

4 – B - 1. Station #11 CIP Monthly Draw Approval, YTD Project Costs & Any Construction Project Updates

Station 11 remains on schedule as we approach a late August substantial completion. The team meets bi- weekly with the contractor, and we visit the site multiple times per week. To date we have spent \$3,038,049 of our 4.5-million-dollar budget. We expect to remain within budget on the project. Total construction costs outstanding including any pay app at this meeting with retainage are \$1,313,614. This leaves approximately \$70,000 for furniture and fixtures for the station. Commissioner Page moved to approve the W.R. Griggs pay app #11 for \$439,825.75. Commissioner Hitzfelder seconded his motion, and the motion passed 4-0.

4 – B – 2. Station Remodel Project #10 – Construction Project Updates & YTD Project Costs

Station 10: Plumbing and electrical are continuing. We are working on HVAC routing and awaiting final pricing on flooring. Once flooring is complete, in the add on dorms off the kitchen area, we will complete the final demo and wall move of the current EMS supply storage. This will open the dayroom. We anticipate the project wrapping up in early August. As of July 5, we had expended \$168,000 of our \$500,000 budget. Once complete on this one we will move to the Annex Building.

4 – B – 3. Station Remodel Project #14 – Construction Project Updates & YTD Project Costs

Station 14: The metal building is constructed, and insulation installed. Awaiting roll-up door installation. We have spent \$94,313 of the \$125,000 we budgeted to put that station online this year.

4 – B – 4. Station Remodel Project #12 – Construction Project Updates & YTD Project Costs

Station 12: We are continuing to work through subcontractor selection processes. We have not pushed this project hard, until we finalize station 10 and 14 as we expect many of the same subs will bid this project.

5. NEW OR UPCOMING DISTRICT DEVELOPMENTS – DISCUSSION AND ACTIONS ON THE FOLLOWING

Chief Cooke encouraged the board to travel within the district and view the changes in new construction and new developments. He was waiting for updates from a few of his contacts regarding the planning for new water hookups which would give him an idea of how many homes to hit within the district in the next year. Commissioners Hitzfelder and Dziuk shared Bexar County new station information learned for Bexar County ESD’s on Jungman road, the old Masterson/U-Bar area near the Silo’s development, and a planned station near Montgomery Road.

6. OLD BUSINESS – DISCUSSION AND ACTIONS ON THE FOLLOWING

None.


7. NEW BUSINESS – INTRODUCTION OF ANY NEW BUSINESS

The next meeting was tentatively scheduled for July 31st, 2024, at 7:00pm to set the ‘proposed’ rate for publication. If the truth and taxation timelines go as planned, the August 14th meeting would be on schedule to hold a hearing, vote on the budget and adopt the tax rate at that meeting. The exact date and time will be confirmed with the postings.

8. ADJOURN:

Commissioner Hitzfelder moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Page seconded his motion, and the motion passed with a 4-0 vote, President Dziuk concurred. President Dziuk adjourned the meeting at 8:13 pm.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,


POLLY EDLUND, DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR

MCESD1 PRESIDENT


MARVIN DZIUK, PRESIDENT