

WILLIAMSON COUNTY EMERGENCY SERVICES DISTRICT #2

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING – September 21, 2023

The Williamson County Emergency Services District #2 held a regular meeting on September 21, 2023 at Sam Bass Fire Department Station 2, 16248 Great Oaks Drive, Round Rock, Texas and on-line at <https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/645098693> and by phone at 1-571-317-3129 or 1-877-309-2073.

Commissioners in Attendance:

Commissioners present in person: Jordan Baltazor, Russell Strahan, Tim Hunsberger, Darryl Pool, and Thom Nanninga.

Meeting called to order at 7:00pm by Commissioner Baltazor. A quorum was present.

Pledge of Allegiance led by Commissioner Baltazor.

Public Comment: No member of the public requested to speak.

Action items

ITEM 4: *Approve minutes of prior meeting(s).*

Commissioner Pool noted the heading of special meeting minutes of 8/31/23 states the meeting was held in 2022 rather than the correct year of 2023.

Motion to approve minutes of regular meeting held August 24, 2023 and the special meeting held September 14, 2023 as presented and to approve the minutes of the special meeting held August 31, 2023 as corrected.

Motion: Nanninga Second: Hunsberger [Unanimous]

ITEM 5: *Review bookkeeper's report from Municipal Accounts & Consulting and consent to: a) approval of payment of monthly bills and invoices, b) approval of monthly financial report.*

Municipal Accounts & Consulting representative Tyler Wilson presented the District's monthly financial statements, bills, and invoices for August 2023. He stated there was nothing out of the ordinary to report.

Motion to approve MAC reports as presented.

Motion: Baltazor Second: Nanninga [Unanimous]

ITEM 6: *Review Sam Bass Fire Dept. bookkeeper's report from M.A.&C.*

Wilson presented SBFD's monthly financial statements, bills, and invoices for August 2023. He stated there was nothing out of the ordinary to report.

Wilson said he had prepared a consolidated District/SBFD budget as requested by Commissioners at the 8/24/23 board meeting.

ITEM 7: *Update on the adoption of Interlocal Agreement between Williamson County and the District.*

Williamson County EMS Director Mike Knipstein said he is excited about the approval of the interlocal agreement between the District and Williamson County. The ambulance now positioned at Round Rock Fire Station 9 will move to SBFD Station 3 on 10/31/23. He said RRFD agrees this change will enable that growing area to be better served.

Knipstein reported EMS service calls to the entire Brushy Creek area has increased about 30% over the past five years. He is working on the EMS fiscal year 2025 budget and believes there is a strong possibility of then being able to operate the Station 3 ambulance 24 hours a day.

Commissioner Strahan requested EMS provide a brief summary of data on monthly service calls in the District that could be incorporated into the monthly reports the board receives from SBFD. Knipstein agreed to do so.

ITEM 8: *Discussion and take action relative election of Sales and Use Tax.*

Commissioner Baltazor stated everything is in place for the District's proposal for a sales and use tax to be on the November 2023 election ballot. The contract between the District and the Williamson County elections office has been signed. The language for the ballot in English, Spanish, and audio has been approved.

ITEM 9: *Receive and take action relative to the report from the Steering Committee regarding adopting Sam Bass FD.*

The Steering Committee met 9/19/23 with Commissioner Pool representing the District and SBFD represented by Assistant Chief Amber Jordan, Battalion Chief Micah Mensch, and Firefighter Ross Hendrickson. Commissioner Pool summarized discussion at the meeting as follows:

The Steering Committee had previously set a merger date of 10/6/23. It was agreed too much remained to be done to meet that goal. Commissioner Pool suggested a merger could still be accomplished by the original goal of 12/31/23. Those representing SBFD were skeptical even that deadline could be achieved.

Commissioners several months ago had authorized Legal Counsel Mark Dietz to draft an agreement for a merger, but no members of the Steering Committee have seen any such draft. Commissioner Pool said he personally would not be willing to go forward with a merger without having a governing document making it clear that current and future Commissioners could not interfere with daily operations of the fire department.

SBFD representatives said their preference instead of a merger would be to clear up ambiguities in the current contract between SBFD and the District. Specific ambiguities were not discussed as it was not known if the board would want to pursue that course of action.

Commissioner Pool said that while the current interaction between Commissioners and SBFD is working well now, he wants to consider what would be the best organizational structure for the long-term.

Commissioners discussed issues involved in continuing to pursue a merger or whether to renew the existing contract between the District and SBFD. It was recognized the original goal of merging the two entities by the end of 2023 would be difficult to accomplish due to time constraints. It was also noted the significant improvement in communication between Commissioners and SBFD personnel this calendar year has reduced, or possibly eliminated, the need for a significant change in organizational structures.

Motion to authorize Commissioner Baltazor to open negotiations with SBFD Chief James Shofner regarding renewal of the contract for SBFD to provide emergency services to the District.

Motion: Baltazor Second: Strahan [Unanimous]

ITEM 10: *Receive monthly operations report from Sam Bass Fire Department.*

a) *Receive monthly statistics report from Sam Bass Fire Department.*

Captain Corby Bryan presented SBFD incident report data and activities for August 2023 plus comparison to prior years. With a modest reduction in summer temperatures, SBFD is no longer needing to respond to as many out of district brush fires.

b) *Receive update on Community Outreach Program at Sam Bass Fire Department.*

Assistant Chief Jordan reported Station 2 held one scheduled tour of the facility plus some unscheduled ones in August. Some SBFD personnel from Station 2 attended a meet and greet at the Brushy Creek MUD Community Center. She said October is the busiest month for their community outreach activities.

d) *Discuss and action relative to Round Rock Auto Aid Agreement.*

Chief Shofner discussed the proposed auto aid agreement between SBFD and the Round Rock Fire Department. RRFD is presenting the proposal to the Round Rock City Council at its meeting this same night. The proposal is the same as the one RRFD has with Georgetown and Pflugerville fire departments and that SBFD has with the Cedar Park Fire Department.

Chief Shofner said under the agreement SBFD would only respond to serious priority calls in the city of Round Rock. He favors the proposal as it could provide faster response times within the District in certain circumstances. He said the proposal would also allow SBFD use of RRFD's training center at any time. He believes that center is superior to the one SBFD has been using at Texas A & M. Use of a local training center would reduce SBFD travel expenses and would reduce the amount of time those firefighters are away from their stations.

Motion to have Legal Counsel Mark Dietz review the auto aid proposal with a request he provide Commissioners his opinion within two weeks.

Motion: Nanninga Second: Baltazor [Unanimous]

c) *Receive proposed 2024 budget from Sam Bass FD.*

Chief Jordan presented SBFD's proposed budget for 2024. Their previous single line item for insurance was broken out to show expenses for different categories of insurance.

ITEM 11: *Discussion and action relative to the adoption of FY 2024 budget.*

Commissioners discussed the District's proposed 2024 budget and made adjustments to increase the amount allocated for insurance and for per diem fees paid Commissioners when conducting District business. SBFD is considering hiring an administrative assistant. Commissioners discussed the possibility of having such an employee also handle some of the District's administrative tasks.

Motion to adopt a 2024 District budget. Commissioner Baltazor called for a roll call vote.

Motion: Nanninga Second: Hunsberger [Unanimous]

In favor: Baltazor, Strahan, Hunsberger, Pool, Nanninga Opposed: none

ITEM 12: *Discuss potential agenda items, location, time, and date(s) for future business meeting. (10/19/2023)*

Next regular meeting to be held October 19, 2023 beginning at 7:00pm at Sam Bass Fire Station 2.

Adjournment:

Motion to adjourn made at 8:47pm.

Motion: Strahan Second: Baltazor [Unanimous]

“I attest that all the above information is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.”

Submitted by Darryl Pool, Secretary, Williamson County ESD #2