

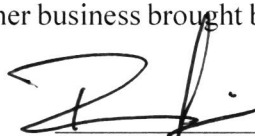
FORT BEND COUNTY EMERGENCY SERVICES DISTRICT NO. 7

Minutes for the regular Meeting of March 10, 2026

1. **CALL MEETING TO ORDER AND OPENING PRAYER.** The meeting was called to order at 11:34 AM by Commissioner **Hughes** at the District Fire Station, 1834 W. Sycamore, Fresno, TX. The Commissioners in attendance were **Ferrel Bonner, Brandon Gibson, Barbara Hamilton, and Ruston Hughes**. Commissioner **Freddy Lopez** was absent. Also, present were Fire Chief Anthony Bates, Office Manager Esmeralda Mendez, and other staff from Fresno Fire Department, District Legal Counsel John Peeler of Coveler & Peeler, P.C., Jessica Adkins of Coveler & Peeler, P.C., Justin Waggoner of Touchstone District Services, and Mark Miller of Municipal Accounts and Consulting (remotely).
2. **TO ELECT BOARD OFFICERS FOR THE 2026 TERM.** A motion was made by **Commissioner Hughes**, seconded by **Commissioner Bonner** to elect the Board as follows: President – Freddy Lopez, Vice President – Ferrel Bonner, Treasurer & Assistant Secretary – Ruston Hughes, Secretary & Assistant Treasurer– Brandon Gibson, and Commissioner – Barbara Hamilton. With a vote of 4 to 0, the motion carried.
3. **TO RECEIVE PUBLIC COMMENT.** The Board opened the floor to public comment. None was forthcoming.
4. **TO REVIEW AND ACT TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF PRIOR MEETINGS.** A motion was made by **Commissioner Hamilton**, seconded by **Commissioner Bonner**, to approve February 9, 2026, and February 10, 2026, minutes as presented. With a vote of 4 to 0, the motion carried.
5. **TO ACT ON FINANCIAL MATTERS, INCLUDING FINANCIAL REPORT, INVOICES/BILLS, INVESTMENTS, INVESTMENT POLICY, FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS, CREDIT CARDS, REQUIRED REPORTS, AND REVISIONS TO BUDGET(S).** Mark Miller presented the monthly report noting that the Wells Fargo account was winding down and wouldn't be open much longer. Chief Bates noted that the department received a donation from the church, and the Board recommended it go into the General Account. A motion was made by **Commissioner Hamilton**, seconded by **Commissioner Bonner**, to approve the reports and pay District bills as presented. With a vote of 4 to 0, the motion carried.
6. **TO REVIEW AND ACT ON DISTRICT WEBSITE AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH MATTERS.** Justin Waggoner with Touchstone presented updates regarding website and community outreach. No action was needed on this item.
7. **TO REVIEW AND ACT ON DISTRICT EXEMPTIONS FOR 2026.** Legal Counsel John Peeler reviewed the information with the Board. After some discussion, a motion was made by **Commissioner Bonner**, seconded by **Commissioner Hamilton** to leave the homestead exemption at zero percent, but increase the Over-65 and Disability exemption to \$10,000. With a vote of 4 to 0, the motion carried.

8. **TO RECEIVE A REPORT FROM THE FIRE CHIEF, COMMAND STAFF AND ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF REGARDING FRESNO FIRE AND RESCUE OPERATIONS AND ACTIVITIES, TO REVIEW REQUESTS FROM THE FIRE DEPARTMENT ON OPERATIONAL EXPENSES.** Chief Bates and Mrs. Mendez presented on operations, administration and HR matters. Chief Bates noted a few staff position changes including Captain Nowetner moving to logistics, Captain Lawson moving to Battalion Chief, and newly hired Battalion Chief Jack Helton. He also discussed calls for service for the month and that he is working on new policies for the District including AI, conduct, and overtime policies. Chief Bates also noted that he is still working with the County on the Public Safety Facility/Station 52 project. Mrs. Mendez noted that onboarding for 2 part-time firefighters had been initiated, there were no employee injuries, and there was one employee termination. No action was taken on this item.
9. **TO REVIEW AND ACT ON MATTERS RELATED TO CONSTRUCTION, RENOVATION, REPAIR, MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVEMENTS TO DISTRICT FACILITIES AND REAL PROPERTY, INCLUDING ENGAGEMENT OF DESIGN PROFESSIONALS OR ENGINEERING SERVICES, SELECTION OF BUILDERS/CONTRACTORS AND COOPERATION WITH OTHER COUNTY ENTITIES REGARDING THE DEVELOPMENT OF STATIONS, INCLUDING ACTION ON CONSTRUCTION FINANCING.** It was noted that Chief Loftin would be the primary contact for Station 52 project. No action was needed on this item.
10. **TO ACT ON REAL ESTATE, INCLUDING SALES, PURCHASES, LEASES, PERMITS, ENCUMBRANCES, PLATTING, SURVEYING, UTILITIES AND ACQUISITION FINANCING.** Legal Counsel John Peeler noted he has engaged a real estate attorney to organize everything to get the multiple parcels on FM 521 re-platted into one parcel. Chief Bates noted that he currently is not working to secure another lease space for administrative offices and instead plans to include it with the Station 52 project.
11. **TO REVIEW AND ACT ON THE ACQUISITION OF EQUIPMENT AND VEHICLES, INCLUDING APPROVAL OF ACQUISITION FINANCING FOR SAME AND TO DISCUSS AND ACT ON DISPOSITION OF SURPLUS OR SALVAGE PROPERTY PURSUANT TO TEXAS HEALTH AND SAFETY CODE §775.0735.** There was no discussion on this item.
12. **TO MEET IN CLOSED SESSION PURSUANT TO GOVT. CODE §551.071 TO CONSULT WITH LEGAL COUNSEL ON LITIGATION, SETTLEMENTS OR CONFIDENTIAL MATTERS UNDER TEXAS BAR RULES.** Closed Session was held from 12:25 PM to 12:36 PM.
13. **TO MEET IN CLOSED SESSION PURSUANT TO GOVT. CODE §551.072 REGARDING REAL ESTATE MATTERS.** No Closed Session was held under Section 551.072.

14. **TO MEET IN CLOSED SESSION PURSUANT TO GOVT. CODE §551.074 TO DISCUSS PERSONNEL MATTERS.** Closed Session was held from 12:25 PM to 12:36 PM.
15. **TO MEET IN CLOSED SESSION PURSUANT TO GOVT. CODE §551.0761 TO DELIBERATE CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE FACILITY AND CYBER SECURITY.** No Closed Session was held under Section 551.0761.
16. **TO REVIEW AND TAKE ACTION ON PERSONNEL MATTERS, INCLUDING DISTRICT ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF, FIRE SUPPRESSION STAFF, COMMAND STAFF AND FIRE CHIEF, INCLUDING COMPENSATION, BENEFITS, JOB DUTIES, SCHEDULING, HIRING AND RETENTION.** A motion was made by **Commissioner Bonner**, seconded by **Commissioner Hamilton** to approve the waiver and settlement agreement with former Assistant Chief Henderson as discussed in Closed Session. With a vote of 4 to 0, the motion carried.
17. **TO REVIEW AND ACT TO APPROVE THE STRATEGIC PLAN PRESENTED BY STAFF.** Legal Counsel John Peeler noted that the Strategic Plan that was presented at the February Special Meeting had not been approved by the Board at that time. Chief Bates noted that the plan can shift and change with the circumstances of the District. A motion was made by **Commissioner Bonner**, seconded by **Commissioner Hamilton**, to approve the Strategic Plan as presented by Staff. With a vote of 4 to 0, the motion carried.
18. **TO DISCUSS FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS AND SET FUTURE MEETING DATES.** The next regular meeting is scheduled for April 14, 2026. Chief Bates noted that he would be out of town at the Chief's Conference.
19. **ADJOURNMENT.** There being no further business brought before the Board; the meeting was adjourned at 12:40 PM.



Brandon Gibson
Fort Bend ESD No. 7
Secretary