FORT BEND COUNTY EMERGENCY SERVICES DISTRICT NO. 7

Minutes for the regular Meeting of July 14, 2026

1. **CALL MEETING TO ORDER AND OPENING PRAYER**. The meeting was called to order at 11:30 AM by Commissioner **Lopez** at the District Fire Station, 1834 W. Sycamore, Fresno, TX. The Commissioners in attendance were **Freddy Lopez, Brandon Gibson, Barbara Hamilton, Ferrel Bonner,** and **Ruston Hughes.** Also, present were Deputy Fire Chief Les Thomas, 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., Carol Morrison of Municipal Accounts and Consulting (remotely), and Paul Hamilton.

2. **TO RECEIVE PUBLIC COMMENT**. The Board opened the floor to public comment. No public comments were offered.

3. **TO REVIEW AND ACT TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF PRIOR MEETINGS.** A motion was made by **Commissioner Bonner**, seconded by **Commissioner Hughes**, to approve the June 9, 2026, minutes as presented. With a vote of 5 to 0, the motion carried

4. **TO PROPOSE THE DISTRICT'S 2027 BUDGET.** Mrs. Mendez presented the 2027 draft budget to the Board. She noted that she, Chief Bates and the Budget Committee met on July 9th to review the draft. The proposed 2027 budget had a 3% increase for property tax and estimates for sales tax. There is also a 10% increase in employee health benefits. A few noted changes were an increase in Cost of Living and Sales Tax. Mrs. Mendez also noted that there would be a few revisions once the certified values are received, and that the current proposed estimate is growth-related. **Commissioner Hughes** noted that any revenue over budgeted expenses would go into the general reserve. It was also noted that TIFMAS income and expense lines are both blank as there is no way to know if they will be deployed, but that they have always received reimbursements if deployed. A motion was made by **Commissioner Hughes**, seconded by **Commissioner Hamilton,** to propose the proposed 2027 budget as presented by staff, noting that it will be revised before final adoption. With a vote of 5 to 0, the motion carried.

5. **TO PROPOSE THE DISTRICT'S 2027 TAX RATE.** A motion was made by **Commissioner Hughes**, seconded by **Commissioner Gibson**, to propose a 2026 tax rate of $0.10 per $100. With a vote of 5 to 0, the motion carried.

6. **TO ADDRESS TRUTH IN TAXATION MATTERS, INCLUDING AUTHORIZING PUBLICATIONS, SETTING DATES FOR PUBLIC HEARING AND DATES FOR ADOPTION OF THE 2027 BUDGET AND 2026 TAX RATE.** District Counsel John Peeler discussed the timing of proposal, adoption, and newspaper deadlines. A motion was made by **Commissioner Bonner**, seconded by **Commissioner Hamilton**, to hold a public hearing on the 2026 tax rate on August 11, 2026, and adopt the 2026 tax rate and 2027 budget at the same meeting. With a vote of 5 to 0, the motion carried.

7. **TO ACT ON FINANCIAL MATTERS, INCLUDING FINANCIAL REPORT, INVOICES/BILLS, INVESTMENTS, INVESTMENT POLICY, FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS, CREDIT CARDS, REQUIRED REPORTS, AND REVISIONS TO BUDGET(S).** Carol Morrison presented the monthly report noting that 96.59% of the 2025 Ad Valorem tax levy had been collected. She also noted that sales tax for April 2026 was slightly lower than in April 2025. A motion was made by **Commissioner Hughes**, seconded by **Commissioner Hamilton**, to approve the reports and pay District bills as presented. With a vote of 5 to 0, the motion carried.

8. **TO REVIEW AND ACT ON DISTRICT WEBSITE AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH MATTERS.** Captain Pena provided a summary of outreach events but also noted that some data reports from Touchstone were not provided. Mrs. Mendez stated that Chief Bates has reached out to Touchstone to coordinate things with Captain Pena. It was noted that moving forward Touchstone would be used for website maintenance and on an as-needed basis, resulting in a reduced cost for the District. No action was needed on this item.

9. **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.** Deputy Chief Thomas and Mrs. Mendez presented on operations, administration and HR matters. Chief Thomas noted the implementation of House Bill 33 (Uvalde Strong Act), the AI policy is still being drafted and reviewed, and that staff is working with Arcola on possible future participation in a building permit and plan review process. He also said that the District Commissioners would be included in future discussion with Arcola. Chief Thomas also noted that they are waiting for the rough draft and estimate on the construction for the Safety Complex. There was no action on this item.

10. **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.** There was no discussion on this item.

11. **TO ACT ON REAL ESTATE, INCLUDING SALES, PURCHASES, LEASES, PERMITS, ENCUMBRANCES, PLATTING, SURVEYING, UTILITIES AND ACQUISITION FINANCING.** There was no discussion on this item.

12. **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.

13. **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.** No Closed Session was held under Section 551.071.

14. **TO MEET IN CLOSED SESSION PURSUANT TO GOVT. CODE §551.072 REGARDING REAL ESTATE MATTERS.** No Closed Session was held under Section 551.072.

15. **TO MEET IN CLOSED SESSION PURSUANT TO GOVT. CODE §551.074 TO DISCUSS PERSONNEL MATTERS.** No Closed Session was held under Section 551.074.

16. **TO MEET IN CLOSED SESSION PURSUANT TO GOVT. CODE §551.076 TO DISCUSS SECURITY DEVICES.** No Closed Session was held under Section 551.076

17. **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.

18. **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.** There was no discussion on this item.

19. **TO REVIEW AND ACT ON DISTRICT'S EMPLOYEE CONDUCT AND BEHAVIOR POLICY.** This agenda item was tabled for a later meeting.

20. **TO DISCUSS FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS AND SET FUTURE MEETING DATES.** The next regular meeting is scheduled for August 11, 2026.

21. **ADJOURNMENT.** There being no further business brought before the Board; the meeting was adjourned at 12:25 PM.

Brandon Gibson
Fort Bend ESD No. 7
Secretary