

**MINUTES OF JANUARY 5, 2026 MEETING OF
ECTOR COUNTY EMERGENCY SERVICES DISTRICT NO. 1
&
ECTOR COUNTY EMERGENCY SERVICES DISTRICT NO. 2**

A public meeting was duly called by the Board of Commissioners of **Ector County Emergency Services Districts No. 1 & 2** on **January 5, 2026**, which was held at the **Kellus Turner Park Community Center**, located at **2261 W. Sycamore Dr., Odessa, Texas 79763**.

CALL MEETING TO ORDER, ROLL CALL AND ESTABLISH A QUORUM.

The meeting was called to order at 6:32 p.m. by **John Turner**, Board President, who stated a quorum was present. Those Commissioners present included:

John Turner	Present
Kevin Searcy	Present
Randy Lighfoot	Present
Heather Burks	Present
Patti Kappauf	Present

Also present at the meeting were Katie Norris of RIT Financial (attending remotely), Ira Coveler, and Melissa Wiggins of Coveler & Peeler, P.C. (attending remotely), and other members of the public attending in person.

TO ADMINISTER OATH OF OFFICE TO REAPPOINTED COMMISSIONERS.

Oaths of Office for all five (5) reappointed Commissioners were administered by Ira Coveler prior to meeting, after they had been reappointed by the Commissioners Court.

RECEIVE PUBLIC COMMENT.

First to address the Board was Sierra Searcy, who stated she had attended every Board meeting to date. She further stated that in her opinion Mrs. **Kappauf** only acknowledged the West Odessa area of the District's territory. Mrs. Searcy then noted that Mrs. **Kappauf** often questioned Mr. Searcy's conflicts of interest, but did not acknowledge her own. Mrs. Searcy complained about Mrs. **Kappauf's** approach to District meetings and business. Mrs. Searcy stated the Commissioners need to focus on emergency services.

Next to address the Board was Mr. Richard Pease, of West Odessa Volunteer Fire Department. Mr. Pease advised he had been with the Department for twenty-six (26) years, including six (6) as Fire Chief. He discussed past operations between the VFD and the City's Department, Odessa Fire and Rescue. He described concerns with the way calls had been run in the past between the Departments and stated that neither organization was fully functional without the other. When asked, he stated housing had recently been approved, and the Department was working to move apparatus to that facility. He also noted that despite a very small budget, the

Department handled its own calls with around seven (7) people to a call unless help was needed in which case aid from OFR would be requested.

The full comments from public comment are available on the District's website.

TO ELECT BOARD OFFICERS

Mr. Coveler then advised the Board that Officer positions could be Motioned and voted on all at once, or for each individual office. Mr. **Lightfoot** informed the Board he preferred to remain the Treasurer as he was now comfortable in the role and preferred to continue working in that capacity along with the District bookkeeper. Mr. **Turner** then made a Motion to readopt the current officer assignments in a single action. Mr. **Searcy** suggested revising adoption of officers in October at the beginning of the new fiscal year, though Mrs. **Kappauf** disagreed, citing Commissioner terms that would expire shortly thereafter, and expressing her opinion that officer positions should rotate to give other Board members perspective and the opportunity to work in different capacities. At this time, Mr. **Searcy** seconded Mr. **Turner's** Motion to re-adopt the same officer positions in a single motion. Thereafter, the Motion passed by a vote of 4 to 1, with Mrs. **Kappauf** opposed.

At this time Mrs. **Kappauf** requested the agenda be taken out of order to address item 10 regarding the purchase of business cell phones for Commissioners, as that item involved calling outside vendors.

TO REVIEW, DISCUSS AND ACT REGARDING THE PURCHASE OF DISTRICT CELL PHONES AND OR TABLETS FOR COMMISSIONERS.

At this time, Mrs. **Kappauf** stated three (3) carriers had submitted pricing information for Board cell phones, and that each vendor would now be contacted to address Commissioner questions for up to ten (10) minutes. Once a decision was made, she would also contact the providers to inform them of the Board's decision. The Board then contacted representatives from Verizon Wireless, ATT, and T-Mobile to discuss and compare pricing and package benefits and options. Mrs. **Kappauf** led each discussion, offering Board members the option to ask questions as well. Mr. Coveler asked each vendor whether the phones could be easily transferred to new Commissioners if a Board member was not reappointed, and if the information and records on those phones could be saved or exported according to the Districts' legal records requirements.

Mrs. **Kappauf** noted that Verizon did not offer insurance on the phones so heavy-duty cases would be needed, but that the other vendors did offer protection plans. Mr. **Searcy** stated he preferred not to carry another phone, and advised other options involving specific apps could be available to the Board using their personal phones instead. Mrs. **Burks** and Mr. **Lightfoot** also initially stated they likely wouldn't use the phones. Mr. Coveler reminded the Board that any and all texts, emails, or records involving Commissioners related to District business were open to the Public Information Act ("PIA"), and restated that having different devices for personal and business purposes helped to identify and keep those records separate.

Mr. **Lightfoot** stated that doing District business on a personal phone presented a liability and risk to privacy which he preferred to avoid, and advised he would be willing to use a District phone. Though Mr. **Searcy** described an inexpensive option to use a digital application to protect each Commissioner's personal phone number, Mrs. **Kappauf** reiterated the importance of holding separate records for PIA purposes and requested recent PIA matters be discussed in Closed Session. Mr. Coveler reminded the Board that phones were not required and could be obtained for any Commissioners that wanted them. He advised he would provide a memo to the Board regarding protections for Commissioner personal information. At this time the Board tabled discussion and action of this item for Closed Session. No further action was taken at this time.

The Board then returned to the regular agenda order to address item 5 regarding property acquisition for the District.

TO REVIEW, DISCUSS AND TAKE ACTION REGARDING THE ACQUISITION OF PROPERTY FOR DISTRICT USE.

Mr. Coveler advised that discussion of specific parcels should be held in Closed Session. No further action was taken at this time.

TO REVIEW, DISCUSS AND TAKE ACTION REGARDING THE ENGAGEMENT OF PROFESSIONAL SERVICES, INCLUDING DISTRICT REAL ESTATE BROKERS, AND TO RECEIVE PRESENTATIONS RELATED TO SAME.

No information was available related to the engagement of professional services. At this time, Mrs. **Kappauf** made a Motion, seconded by Mr. **Searcy**, to remove this item from future agendas. Thereafter, the Motion passed by a vote of 5 to 0.

REGARDING LONG-TERM PLANNING AND FACILITIES MATTERS RELATED TO ECTOR COUNTY EMERGENCY SERVICES DISTRICT NO. 1 AND ECTOR COUNTY EMERGENCY SERVICES DISTRICT NO. 2.

Mr. Coveler stated this was the time to discuss the upcoming workshop and strategic planning matters for the District. Mr. **Searcy** then informed the Board that Mr. David Avery of the South Ector VFD had asked for the local VFDs to hold a workshop, including the ESDs, to discuss what they were capable of, and to discuss their personnel and assets. Three (3) Chiefs had agreed to meet on Saturday, January 17, 2026 at 10:00 a.m. to discuss these matters with the ESD Board if possible. Mrs. **Kappauf** interjected that community members had asked, and continued to ask questions related to tax revenues, station construction and locations, and service provision to the area but that the Board had been unable to answer those questions, even after seven (7) months and several thousands of dollars spent. She agreed that a workshop with the VFDs could be helpful but stated that the focus should remain on the District's business and ETJ area which was the Districts' responsibility.

Mr. **Searcy** agreed it would be best to get things done and discuss matters with the volunteers. Mrs. **Kappauf** again stated the Board's focus should be on District short and long-term objectives to address concerns of the community. Mrs. **Burks** agreed that speaking to the VFDs

could not hurt, though Mrs. **Kappauf** stated doing so would upset District constituents. President **Turner** advised that information gathered from the VFD workshop could then be discussed and used during the Board's strategic planning workshop later in February.

After discussion, Mr. **Turner** made a Motion, seconded by Mr. **Searcy**, to schedule the workshop with local Volunteer Fire Departments as discussed for Saturday January 17, 2026. Thereafter, the Motion passed by a vote of 3 to 2, with Mrs. **Kappauf** and Mr. **Lightfoot** opposed.

TO REVIEW, DISCUSS AND TAKE ACTION ON SUBMITTALS RECEIVED FROM THE DISTRICT COMMISSIONERS SEEKING COMPENSATION OR REIMBURSEMENT AS PERMITTED BY TEXAS HEALTH & SAFETY CODE §775.038 (A-1)

At this time Mr. Coveler informed the Board that they were entitled to adopt a compensation policy, allowing Commissioners to be paid up to \$221 per day for substantive District events or business, with an annual payment limit of \$7,200. This compensation was allowed under the water code and could be adopted by the Board up to the daily limit. He then stated that even without compensation, Board members were entitled to reimbursement of expenses related to District business, referencing the upcoming SAFE-D conference, and recent purchase of software related to a Public Information Act request to Mrs. **Kappauf**.

President **Turner** stated that while originally, compensation didn't seem necessary to the Board, reimbursement for expenses including the software, and printing costs for monthly Board packets was needed. Mr. Coveler then advised that the Board could also discuss obtaining credit cards to use for those expenses to avoid the need for personal reimbursements, and to keep clear records for the District's financial reports and audits. Ms. Norris stated credit cards could be obtained from Frost Bank very quickly, and that she would get information from each Commissioner to get the cards. When asked, she stated a \$5,000 limit per card was recommended.

At this time, Mrs. **Burks** made a Motion, seconded by Mr. **Searcy**, to authorize the Board to request compensation as allowed under the water code up to \$221 per day, and \$7,200 annually. Thereafter, the Motion passed by a vote of 5 to 0.

Next, President **Turner** made a Motion, seconded by Mr. **Lightfoot**, to approve a reimbursement request in the amount of \$59.98 provided by Mrs. **Kappauf** related to the purchase of software to handle a recent Public Information Act request. Thereafter, the Motion passed by a vote of 5 to 0.

President **Turner** then made a Motion, seconded by Mrs. **Burks**, to authorize Mr. **Lightfoot** and the District's bookkeeper to obtain credit cards for the Board through Frost Bank with a limit of \$5,000 per card. Thereafter, the Motion passed by a vote of 5 to 0.

TO RECEIVE THE DISTRICT FINANCIAL REPORTS, AND TO REVIEW AND TAKE ACTION ON FINANCIAL MATTERS AND TO PAY DISTRICT BILLS.

Ms. Norris then informed the Board that QuickBooks reports would be presented in February. She then stated current account balances totaled \$747,402.61 for ESD 1, and

\$746,637.67 for ESD 2. She also advised that she and Mr. **Lightfoot** were still working with Frost Bank to grant her online access to the accounts. Mrs. **Kappauf** asked if there was another bank available to work with the Districts, given the issues so far with Frost, though Mr. **Lightfoot** explained that some miscommunications had led to the current issues, and would hopefully be resolved very shortly. Mr. Coveler advised the Board that they could work with another local bank if they wanted to, though several other clients worked with Frost Bank without issue. After review, Mr. **Searcy** made a Motion, seconded by Mrs. **Burks**, to approve payment of the District's legal invoices as presented. Thereafter, the Motion passed by a vote of 5 to 0.

REVIEW, DISCUSS AND TAKE ACTION REGARDING THE ENGAGEMENT OF THIRD-PARTY DISTRICT WEBSITE VENDOR FOR BOTH DISTRICTS.

Mr. **Searcy** noted that he had been providing website services at no cost to the District, for a personal cost of around \$12 per month on his own server. He stated that the most time-consuming aspect of managing and posting to the current website dealt with preparing, editing and posting recordings of the meetings, but that he was open to the District using an alternative vendor to provide the District's web services. Mr. Coveler advised that there was a concern of continuity and Board turnover with hosting the website internally. If a Commissioner handled the website, and then was not reappointed to the Board, it could present issues for the Boards, whereas using a third-party to provide those services would ensure continuity regardless of who was placed on the Board. He then recommended creating separate websites for each District as the Boards might not always comprise the same five (5) individuals, and it would be more appropriate to have separate websites for each District. The third-party vendor would manage the website, and post updates and documents that were provided to them, though this would not include actively recording or managing recordings of the meetings, which would still be done by members of the Board at this time.

The Board then tabled this item for discussion in Closed Session. No further action was taken by the Board.

TO REVIEW, DISCUSS AND TAKE ACTION REGARDING THE ENGAGEMENT OF THIRD-PARTY EMAIL AND IT VENDOR FOR BOTH DISTRICTS.

This item was tabled for discussion in Closed Session. No further action was taken by the Board.

REVIEW, DISCUSS AND TAKE ACTION REGARDING ANY NEEDED BUDGET AMENDMENTS.

No action was taken by the Board.

TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF PRIOR MEETING(S).

The Board then reviewed the December 1, 2025 meeting minutes. President **Turner** noted a correction regarding the Meadow Lake property in the minutes. After review, Mr. **Turner** made a Motion seconded by Mr. **Lightfoot**, to approve the minutes as corrected during the meeting. Thereafter the Motion passed by a vote of 5 to 0.

TO REVIEW, DISCUSS AND TAKE ACTION REGARDING THE ADOPTION OF TAX EXEMPTIONS FOR ECTOR COUNTY EMERGENCY SERVICES DISTRICT NO. 1 AND ECTOR COUNTY EMERGENCY SERVICES DISTRICT NO. 2, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO HOMESTEAD EXEMPTIONS.

Mr. Coveler next presented a model for potential revenue impacts related to District exemptions including Homestead, Over 65, and Disability for the Board's consideration. He explained that based on the total taxable homestead value in the Districts, a five percent (5%) exemption would cost approximately \$257,572 in revenue based on the previous year's certified values. As current information was not yet available for consideration, Mr. **Turner** made a Motion, seconded by Mr. **Searcy**, to table discussion and action of the District's exemptions until February. Thereafter, the Motion passed by a vote of 5 to 0.

REVIEW, DISCUSS AND TAKE ACTION REGARDING ADOPTION, AMENDMENT AND EXPLANATION OF DISTRICT POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINES.

- a. Tax Abatement Policy**
- b. Records Retention & Digital Records Management**

Mr. Coveler then presented record management policies for both Districts, along with the state prescribed records retention schedules for elections, public safety, taxation, and general records. He explained that it was legally required for both Districts to have records policies, and that the appropriate paperwork would be filed with the Texas State Library Archives Commission by his office. After discussion, Mr. **Turner** made a Motion, seconded by Mrs. **Burks**, to adopt the records policy and execute related documents as presented. Thereafter, the Motion passed by a vote of 5 to 0.

Mr. **Searcy** next addressed the abatement policy, presenting information including comparisons with nearby Reeves County, as well as Ector County. He advised the District should adopt a policy in line with Ector County to benefit everyone, as incentivizing businesses to come into the District could help everyone, and commercial businesses would not benefit from any regular exemptions granted by the Districts. When asked, Mr. Coveler stated any adopted policy could be amended at a later date and would look into those restrictions to better advise the Board. Mr. **Lightfoot** stated he preferred regular exemptions to be addressed and determined for the Districts before any policy benefiting commercial entities was adopted.

Mrs. **Kappauf** stated this should be discussed at the Board's strategic workshop meeting and asked if any conflicts of interest existed based on Mr. **Searcy's** involvement with the school district and county business. Mr. **Searcy** stated he was not compensated for time and efforts he volunteered to the school district or county. Mrs. **Kappauf** then restated her previous request for training on conflicts for the Board. Mr. Coveler also stated that conflicts in this case as defined by law related to financial interests of an ESD Commissioner and offered to provide information to the Board to better understand perceived versus actual conflicts of interest.

After discussion, Mr. **Lightfoot** made a Motion, seconded by Mr. **Searcy**, to move forward with legal counsel to address the District's abatement policy. Thereafter, the Motion passed by a vote of 5 to 0.

TO REVIEW, DISCUSS AND TAKE ACTION REGARDING ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF OFFICER POSITIONS.

Mrs. **Kappauf** stated her opinion that Board officer roles and responsibilities should be better understood, and presented a drafted guide detailing those roles and responsibilities for consideration. Mr. Coveler advised that a specific explanation of duties had been provided to Mr. **Lightfoot**, though further additions or revisions to any adopted guide could be made at a later date. After review, Mrs. **Kappauf** made a Motion, seconded by Mr. **Turner**, to approve the roles and responsibilities document as presented. Thereafter, the Motion passed by a vote of 5 to 0.

TO REVIEW, DISCUSS AND TAKE ACTION REGARDING THE APPOINTMENT OF NEEDED DISTRICT COMMITTEES.

The Board discussed the need for Committees to address specific District business. Mrs. **Kappauf** then made a Motion, seconded by Mr. **Turner**, to table this discussion until the February meeting. Thereafter, the Motion passed by a vote of 5 to 0.

TO REVIEW, DISCUSS AND TAKE ACTION RELATED TO ATTENDING THE 2026 SAFE-D CONFERENCE IN SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS.

The Board next discussed the upcoming SAFE-D conference in San Antonio, including available classes and travel plans. Mr. **Searcy** also advised that VFD members could attend the conference if they registered to do so. Currently, four (4) of the five (5) Commissioners were planning to attend the conference. The Board then addressed the cost of the conference as previously discussed at the December 29th special meeting. Mr. Coveler advised that payments for expenses to the Commissioners could be made in advanced, with any unused funds being returned to the District accounts. Based on a review of hotel costs including taxes, Mr. **Searcy** made a Motion, seconded by Mr. **Turner**, to increase the total approved accommodation cost ceiling not to exceed \$1,5000 per Commissioner. Thereafter, the Motion passed by a vote of 5 to 0.

Mrs. **Kappauf** next made a Motion, seconded by Mr. **Searcy**, to preapprove accommodation and per diem expenses for a combined cost not to exceed \$2,100 for each Commissioner, pending provision of appropriate receipts for those expenses. Thereafter, the Motion passed by a vote of 5 to 0.

TO REVIEW, DISCUSS AND TAKE ACTION TO SET THE DISTRICTS' MEETING CALENDARS FOR 2026.

At this time, the Board considered a proposed calendar for meeting dates in 2026, including the following adjustments:

- February – rescheduled to Monday, February 9th
- April – rescheduled to Monday, April 13th
- July – rescheduled to Monday, July 13th
- September – rescheduled to Monday, September 14th
- November – rescheduled to Tuesday, November 10th

After discussion, Ms. **Burks** made a Motion, seconded by Mr. **Searcy**, to approve the calendar of meeting dates for 2026 including the above proposed revisions. Thereafter, the Motion passed by a vote of 5 to 0.

TO DISCUSS AND CONFIRM UPCOMING REGULAR AND SPECIAL MEETING DATES, AND TO REVIEW, DISCUSS AND TAKE ACTION ON ANY DISTRICT MATTERS WHICH NEED TO BE INCLUDED ON THOSE AGENDAS.

The Board confirmed the following dates for upcoming meetings:

1. Workshop with local Volunteer Fire Departments – Saturday, January 17, 2026
2. Regular February ESD Board Meeting – Monday, February 9, 2026
3. ESD Strategic Workshop – Saturday, February 7, 2026

TO MEET IN CLOSED SESSION PURSUANT TO GOVERNMENT CODE §551.071 TO CONSULT WITH LEGAL COUNSEL.

The Board convened in Closed Session at 9:06 p.m. to consult with legal counsel.

TO MEET IN CLOSED SESSION PURSUANT TO GOVERNMENT CODE §551.072 TO DELIBERATE REGARDING REAL ESTATE MATTERS.

The Board convened in Closed Session at 9:45 p.m. to discuss real estate matters.

The Board returned to Closed Session to consult with legal counsel at 9:58 p.m.

The Board reconvened in Open Session at 10:22 p.m.

TO REVIEW, DISCUSS AND TAKE ACTION ON MATTERS RELATED TO REAL ESTATE OR OTHER MATTERS AS DISCUSSED IN CLOSED SESSION.

At this time, Mr. **Searcy** made a Motion, seconded by Mrs. **Burks**, to authorize legal counsel to move forward with action regarding the real estate matters as discussed in Closed Session. Thereafter, the Motion passed by a vote of 5 to 0.

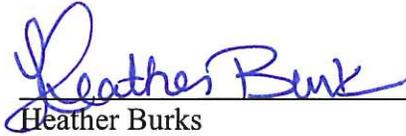
Mrs. **Kappauf** next made a Motion, seconded by Mr. **Turner**, to approve the purchase of three (3) iPhones through Ector ESD 1 and heavy-duty cases through government contract and Ector County ESD 1 with ATT as discussed. Thereafter, the Motion passed by a vote of 5 to 0.

ADJOURNMENT.

There being no further business brought before the Board, Mr. **Burks** made a Motion, seconded by Mr. **Lightfoot**, to adjourn the meeting at 10:25 p.m. Thereafter, the Motion passed by a vote of 5 to 0.

The foregoing minutes were passed and approved by the Board of Commissioners on February 9, 2026.

**ECTOR COUNTY EMERGENCY
SERVICES DISTRICT NO. 1**

By: 
Heather Burks
District Secretary

**ECTOR COUNTY EMERGENCY
SERVICES DISTRICT NO. 2**

By: 
Heather Burks
District Secretary