

**WOOD COUNTY EMERGENCY SERVICE DISTRICT #1
NOTICE OF MEETING OF DIRECTORS TO BE HELD:
MONDAY August 18, 2025, AT 9:00 AM
LOCATION:
HOLLY LAKE VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT
126 PR 7869
HOLLY LAKE RANCH, TEXAS 75765**

Meeting Minutes - FINAL

Call the Meeting to Order

President Kristina Horn called the meeting to order at 9:21 a.m. Other commissioners in attendance were Sharon Lindquist, Robin Edwards, Chuck Bahr and Cindy Treece.

Certification by the President or Vice-President that the provisions of the Open Meetings Act, Section 551.001 Et. Seq. of the Texas Government Code has been complied with in connection with the public notice of this meeting and that a quorum is present.

President Horn confirmed that all the provisions of the Open Meetings Act were met, and that a quorum was present.

Invocation

Commissioner Bahr gave the invocation.

Pledge of Allegiance

All in attendance participated.

Recognition of guests

No guests were present from the public.

Michael O'Connor and Donnie Reynolds from Christus attended as did HLVFD Chief Joe Taylor and Captain Cheryl Thomas. Donnie stated that Shawn Salter of Christus will be present at the September 2025 ESD #1 board meeting.

Receive public comment.

None

Review and consider approval of prior minutes.

The Commissioners reviewed the July 21, 2025 meeting minutes. Commissioner Bahr moved to accept the minutes as written and Commissioner Edwards seconded the motion. It was approved.

Present, review, and consider approval of Treasurer's Report

Commissioner Lindquist presented the treasurer's report. The beginning balance on July 31, 2025 was \$265,869.27.

Deposits made included \$1,617.15 from the Wood County Appraisal District and \$0.0 in interest. No disbursement was made, and there was a petty cash balance of \$60.00, resulting in an ending balance of \$267,546.42. There were no outstanding checks. Revenues for FY2025 to date total \$289,034.21 and disbursements total \$189,019.90. Commissioner Edwards moved to approve the treasurer's report, and Commissioner Bahr seconded the motion, which was approved.

Present, review, and consider approval for Payment of Accounts due.

Accounts due included a sworn billing of \$18,282.90 from HLVFD from July 2025. The Commissioners reviewed these receipts. Commissioner Lindquist moved to pay the reimbursement, and Commissioner Treece seconded the motion, which was approved.

ESD #1 Board to receive for review and consider approval for payment of sworn billing and any submitted requests of contractual amounts by Holly Lake Volunteer Fire Department (HLVFD).

There were no sworn billings received.

Activity Report including any training time from HLVFD and Christus EMS.

HLVFD:

Structure fire – 2

Grass fire – 1

Medical calls – 40

Landing zone - 0

Motor vehicle collisions - 5

Public assists – 4

Vehicle fire - 1

Total – 53

June training hours – 115-man hours

Christus:

Michael from Christus submitted a monthly report of the 34 calls (1 life emergency), 17 transports and a 13 minute and 26 seconds average response time for the month of July 2025. The medical calls were not related to heat illnesses but instead typical--chest pains, etc.

Mr. Reynolds from Christus stated that they will be covering more youth football games with ambulances than ever before. He added that the new ER in Henderson will result in more Christus transports. Commissioner Horn asked him how many EMTs are assigned to Holly Lake Ranch, and he responded that there are currently six, but Christus is hoping for new hires with an anticipated salary adjustment.

Old Business:

1. Update and report by President Horn on delivery of resolution to appoint and authorize Wood County Tax Assessor-Collector Angie Luman to calculate the no-new-revenue tax rate and the voter-approval tax rate for Wood County ESD #1.

President Horn reported that she delivered the resolution, and the tax assessor-collector calculated the Truth in Taxation form with the result being a No New Revenue Tax Rate of .0392/\$100 and a Voter-Approved Rate of .0414/\$100.

2. Update and report by President Horn on renewal of public officials' liability insurance policy through Texas Association of Counties Risk Management Pool.

President Horn stated that she sent in the renewal, and the bill will be due in October 2025. This will be for the same amount of coverage as 2024.

3. Discuss and consider approval of Request for Proposal for Strategic Plan.
Commissioner Treece stated that she will work with Chief Taylor and other members in our community to finalize the RFP. Her hope is to send it out for ESD #1 board members' consideration for approval at the September 15, 2026 ESD #1 board meeting.
4. Any other old business.
There was no other old business.

New Business:

1. Acknowledge receipt of the 2025 Tax Rate Calculation Worksheet (Form 50-856), commonly known as the "Truth in Taxation Worksheet," prepared by Wood County Tax Collector Angie Luman.
President Horn called the commissioners' attention to the fact that Blue Triton Brands/Ozarka has filed lawsuits in 2023 and 2025, disputing their taxable property value. They have announced that they intend to file a similar lawsuit annually. This has resulted in Wood County's ARB value being based on \$60,399,373 as opposed to \$82,563,150, a reduction of \$22,163,777.
2. Discuss and consider proposed FY2026 budget for Wood County ESD #1.
President Horn noted that the FY2025 ESD #1 budget was \$245,274. In 2025, ESD #1 expenses (not including HLVFD reimbursements) included: tax collection fees, collection of delinquent taxes (legal expenses), Safe-D subscriptions, CPA services, liability insurance, training for ESD commissioners and website expenses. For 2026, we will need to add the expense of the Liberty Mutual surety bond. In 2026, we will need to budget for a new ESD #1 website. Ms. Horn stated that ESD #1 will vote to approve the FY2026 budget at the September 15, 2025 board meeting.
3. Discuss and consider resolution for proposed 2025 Ad Valorem tax rates for Wood County ESD #1.
The commissioners discussed the Voter Approved Tax Rate of .0414. The resulting tax revenue using this rate will be a budget for ESD #1 of \$283,848.96. This is including the "unused increment." Without the unused increment, the tax rate will be .0412, resulting in revenue of \$282,477.66 (approximately \$1,000 less). Using the No New Tax Revenue rate of .0392, the result will be \$268,765.15.

Commissioner Bahr stated that ESD #1's budget is about public safety. He also stated that it is difficult to ask for a tax increase and expensive to pay for an election. It is his strong desire to give HLVFD the right tools for 2026, considering the added expenses of having to repair a retaining wall and to repave the parking lot. He stated that he understood that, as a result of the tax increase election in 2021, ESD #1 could levy a tax rate as high as .0525 without having to have another election.

Chief Taylor stated that his understanding is that ESD #1 can only go as high as 1.035 of the previous year's value. Commissioner Bahr questioned whether an election is needed to obtain the resources HLVFD needs for 2026. Chief Taylor stated that in 2021, HLVFD had a total of approximately 360 calls, and for 2025, they are on track to hit 700. The Commissioners agreed that this is a powerful statistic, and they discussed the possibility of a November 2025 election or a March 2026 election.

President Horn stated that the deadline to file for conducting a November 2025 election is the current date, August 18, 2025. A resolution must be submitted to the Commissioners' Court immediately. It was noted that in 2021, it took six months to prepare for the election.

Commissioner Bahr re-stated his desire to provide good equipment and the right resources to attract good firefighters to join HLRVFD. Chief Taylor stated that he believed he will be able to have the resource with \$280,000+ from ESD #1's budget and approximately \$33,000 that he will obtain from Wood County. He also stated that the State of Texas has just released substantial grant money for fire departments, with many previously submitted applications to receive funding. HLRVFD has an outstanding grant application for a new truck.

Commissioner Bahr moved to approve a tax rate of .0411, just under the Voter Approved Rate. Commissioner Lindquist seconded the motion, and it was approved. President Horn stated that she will prepare a resolution for the .0411/\$100 rate. She did so, and each commissioner signed the resolution.

4. Report by treasurer on CNB and proposed Origin account and consider any necessary action.
Treasurer Lindquist stated that she would like to recommend putting \$100,000 at Origin Bank in a ladder certificate of deposit. This would provide ESD #1 with approximately three months of operating reserves. It was noted that ESD #1 moved and approved the motion at the previous month's board meeting on July 21, 2025, to open an account at Origin Bank. The amount was unspecified. Therefore, there is no need to make another motion at this time.
5. Discuss and consider email and web services for Wood County ESD #1 board members.
Commissioner Bahr stated that he has found a cyber security provider that will also provide emails for each ESD #1 commissioner as well as develop a new website and web services for ESD #1. Group M7 is based in Tyler, Texas, and has been in business since the late 1990's. M7 developed a website for ESD #2 in Henderson County, so they understand the compliance and security issues of an ESD. He noted that we have budgeted \$6,000 for cyber security in the ESD #1 FY 2025 budget. M7 has proposed a contract for \$3,000. Annual maintenance would be \$400 a year, and their hourly rate for additional services is \$150/hour.

Commissioner Edwards moved to approve the website proposal by M7 with documentation and the approval of President Horn. Commissioner Treece seconded the motion, which was approved.

6. Report by President Horn and discussion regarding current contract for paramedic ambulance services and proposal for renewal of contract with Christus EMS.
The original contract for ambulance service from Christus was signed in 2010 and has been auto-renewed for many years. The Chief Administrative Officer of Christus, Shawn Salter and Donnie Reynolds met with President Horn. She stated that Mr. Salter has agreed to be at the September 2025 ESD #1 board meeting.

Michael O'Connor of Christus stated that he was the first captain of the Christus EMS station at HLRVFD in 2010. Commissioner Bahr stated that he would like to see benchmarks and goals for Christus' service, and he would like to ask questions before renewing the contract. He stated that he will meet with Mr. Salter and ask his questions. Before the meeting with Mr. Salter, he will seek input from select ESD #1 commissioners about his questions.

7. Discuss online strategic planning workshop.

Commissioner Treece stated that she has found an online workshop for ESD commissioners about writing a strategic plan. It was presented at a Texas Association of Counties conference last year. She will watch it and send feedback to the other commissioners.

8. Discuss any upcoming or planned public events involving Wood County ESD #1, HLVFD or Christus EMS.

Chief Taylor stated that HLVFD will host a waffle breakfast August 30, and will continue to conduct monthly bingo and to participate in Hook and Ladder meetings. There will be some preparation at HLVFD for Fire Prevention Week October 5-11, with an open house, games for kids and demonstrations.

Christus reported no events.

9. Any other new business.

President Horn stated that an upcoming bill for a three-year surety bond will be due to cover October 1, 2025 through October 1, 2028. It is due by August 26, 2025. Commissioner Edwards moved to pay this bill, and Commissioner Treece seconded the motion, which was approved.

Close Meeting

Commissioner Bahr moved to adjourn the meeting, and Commissioner Edwards seconded the motion, which was approved.

By _____ *Cynthia Treece* _____

Prepared by Cynthia Treece, Secretary, September 3, 2025