

**LEADERSHIP AND
ADMINISTRATIVE
UNDERSTANDING OF ESDS**

Chief Chris Barron

2026 SAFE-D Conference

Chief Chris Barron



- 35 years in the fire service--chief for 25 years, served as both Volunteer and Career
- 15 years as Executive Director for State Firefighters' and Fire Marshals' Association of Texas
- International Association of Fire Chiefs- Chief of the Year 2014
- IAFC John Buckman Leadership Award
- IAFC-VCOS Recruitment and Retention Award
- Numerous fire service certifications and AAS, BBA and MBA degrees
- National Fire Protection Association 1720 Committee Member
- CEO, Emergency Services Solutions, LLC

CONTACT INFO

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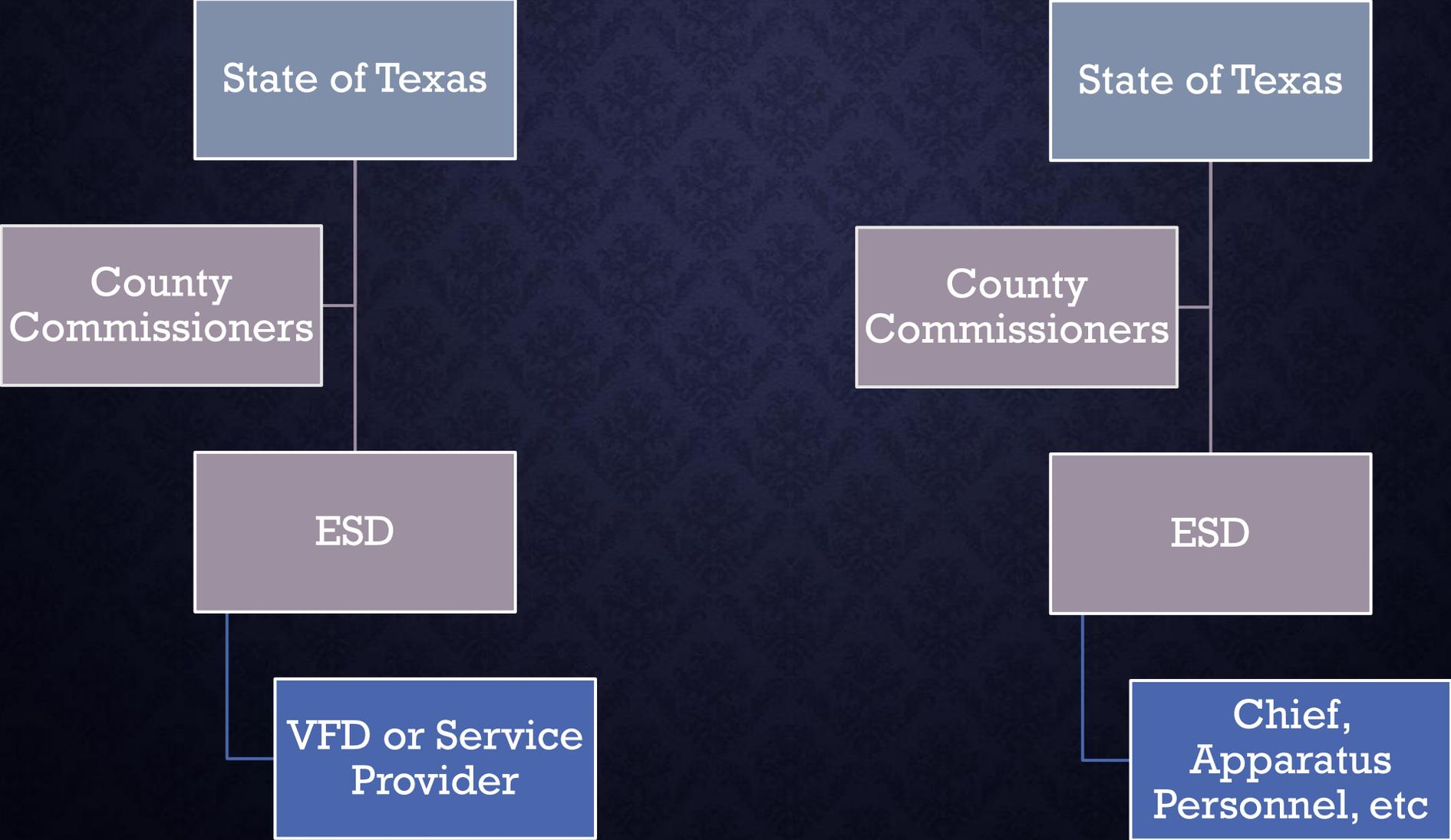
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OUR AGENDA

- Understanding the Basics Of
Emergency Services
- Acronyms
- State Organizations
- What's Required/What's Needed
- Working with Emergency
Services Chiefs
- Keys to Success
- Planning
- Staffing
- Financial Stuff & Funding
- Growth Challenges

ESD STRUCTURES



REGULATION OF ESDS?

- Who “Regulates” ESDs?
 - State ESD Authority
 - DPS
 - Texas Rangers
- No, there is no real oversight to ESDs except for Counties
 - Annual Audit Requests/Review
 - County Commissioner Appointments of ESD Commissioners

ESD REQUIREMENTS FOR OPERATIONS?

- Annual Budget
- Annual Audit
 - Data used for:
 - Setting Tax Rate
 - Strategic Planning
 - Future Purchases – Capital and Operations
- Monthly Operations Reports

DISTRICT 2
FIRE AND RESCUE
HONOR | INTEGRITY | COURAGE



MEETING MINUTES NOVEMBER 18, 2025

District 2 Fire & Rescue conducted a meeting in the Bexar County Emergency Services District No. 2 Meeting Hall located at 14515 Omicron Drive, San Antonio, TX 78245, to discuss the following:

1. **Call the District 2 Fire and Rescue meeting to order and establish a quorum.** – *David Harris called the meeting to order at 6:10 PM (18:10). A quorum was established with David Harris, Christopher Rait, Lynette Bradley, and Noah Almanza present. Richard Cash was absent.*
2. **Pledge of Allegiance.** – *The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.*
3. **Citizens' Public Comment (Speakers will be limited to three (3) minutes to address the Board. The Board will not comment or engage in discussion.)** - *There were no requests for Citizens' Public Comment.*
4. **Deliberation, update, and action regarding the October 23, 2025, meeting minutes.** – *David Harris motioned to approve the October 23, 2025, meeting minutes as presented, with a second from Noah Almanza. The motion carried with 4 Ayes and 0 Nays.*
5. **Deliberation, update, and action regarding the following on District properties:**
 - a. **Property Acquisition & Easements**
 - b. **Architectural & Engineering Services***-There was no action taken on item 5.*
6. **Deliberation, update, and action regarding the following financial items:**
 - a. **Financial Reports**
 - b. **Cash Reconciliations**
 - c. **Investment Reports**
 - d. **Authorization to Pay/Ratify Monthly Bills Due/Paid**
Christopher Rait motioned to approve items 6.a.-6.d. as presented, with a second from David Harris. The motion carried with 4 Ayes and 0 Nays.
 - e. **Request for Qualifications for Auditor** – *There was no action taken on item 6.e.*

HOW'S YOUR ADMINISTRATION SETUP?

- Chief/FD Administration
- ESD Business Manager
- Contract/Employee with a Bookkeeper/Accountant
 - Familiar with Texas ESD laws/requirements
- Meeting the requirements of State Statute
- Meeting Agendas Posted at Station/Courthouse/Online
- Meeting Minutes posted online
- Auditor interaction



THE CHIEF

- Responsible for operations and administration of the department
- Is “The Voice” of the department
- Establishes minimum response, staffing, and needs for the department
- Makes/provides input into ESD budget
- Administers/enforces policies, rules/regulations, guidelines and procedures
- Spokesperson, Human Relations, Business Manager

THE ALPHABET SOUP

SOME COMMON ACRONYMS/DEFINITIONS

Automatic Aid	Aiding departments are Immediately dispatched to an emergency
Battalion	Mid-Level Management in charge of several stations
Brush Truck	Truck to fight grass or brush fires
CAD	Computer Aided Dispatch
Command	Someone in Charge of an Incident
Engine	Fire Truck (typically 500gallons + Water/ 1250 gpm pump, tools, etc)
FDIC	Fire Department Instructors Conference - - largest fire conference
ICS/IMS	Incident Command System / Incident Management System
Ladder/Quint	Fire Truck with a Ladder / Quint – Ladder truck with a pump

THE ALPHABET SOUP

SOME COMMON ACRONYMS/DEFINITIONS

LODD	Line of Duty Death
MDC	Mobile Data Computer
Mutual Aid	A department must request assistance from a neighboring department
NFPA	National Fire Protection Association
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment (Coat, Pants, Boots, Hood, etc)
SCBA	Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (Air Pack)
SOGs/SOPs	Standard Operating Guidelines / Standard Operating Procedures
Squad	Vehicle used for either medical and/or Fire Response (quick attack)
TIC	Thermal Imaging Camera
Tender (Tanker)	Fire Apparatus carrying 1000 ++ gallons of Water
TIFMAS	Texas Intrastate Fire Mutual Aid System
WUI	Wildland Urban Interface (where homes are adjacent to wildland)

WHO ARE THE MAJOR PLAYERS? – OVERVIEW OF STATE ORGANIZATIONS



TDEM
THE TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY SYSTEM



TESRS
Texas Emergency Services Retirement System



WHO ARE THE MAJOR PLAYERS? – OVERVIEW OF STATE ORGANIZATIONS

State Fire Marshal's Office

- Fire Investigation services for suspicious/Church Fires
- Fire Inspection/Life Safety Code Enforcement
- Licensing of Fire Sprinkler/Alarm Technicians
- Investigation of all Line of Duty Deaths
- Texas Fire Incident Report System
- Provide ISO PPC Oversight

Texas Commission on Fire Protection

- Regulation of the Paid Fire Service and the Voluntarily Regulated VFDs (Fire Station/Personnel)
- Certification Program for Firefighters
- Requires biennial inspections of facilities, PPE, training records
- Ongoing continuing education requirements
- Ongoing costs of certifications and renewals

WHO ARE THE MAJOR PLAYERS? – OVERVIEW OF STATE ORGANIZATIONS

Texas Engineering Extension Service (TEEX)

- Host of Largest Fire School in World
- Located in College Station
- Offers classes to the fire/EMS services which are often FREE
- Offers various regional and annual fire schools/conferences
- State Funded

Texas A&M Forest Service (TFS)

- Provides Firefighting Resources
- Administers the TIFMAS (Texas Interstate Fire Mutual Aid System)
- Administers Grants for volunteer fire departments
- Provides forestry services to Texas

WHO ARE THE MAJOR PLAYERS? – OVERVIEW OF STATE ORGANIZATIONS

Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM)

- **Manages/Coordinates State/Local Disasters**
- **Hosts/Coordinates TIFMAS Deployment Payments**
- **Provides Incident Management Assistance**

STATE FIREFIGHTERS & FIRE MARSHALS ASSOCIATION (SFFMA)

- **PROVIDES A CERTIFICATION PROGRAM FOR VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENTS**
- **LONGEST/OLDEST FIRE ORGANIZATION OF TEXAS**
- **LEGISLATIVE REPRESENTATION**
- **FIREFIGHTER NEWS, BENEFITS, BOOKSTORE, ETC.**

SOME BASICS

EVERYTHING in emergency services is EXPENSIVE!

Fire Engine Costs	\$900,000	++++	(Wait Times to Build – minimum of 1.5-2 years)
Ladder Truck	\$1,800,000	+++	
Command Vehicle	\$80,000	+++	
PPE Ensemble	\$4,500	+++	(Basic Coat, Pants, Boots, Hood, Gloves)
Portable Radio	\$6,000	++	
SCBA	\$14,000	++	
Full Station Staffing – minimum	\$1,000,000		

+++ Bells, Whistles, Lights, Sirens



GEE WHIZ STUFF

- Radios with maps, cellular backup, Wifi and messaging capabilities
- “Dashboards” in the station
- Automations!
 - Garage Doors that open FAST / Doors that close upon leaving the station
 - Mobile Data Computers that route you to a call, have incident detail information & pre-plans, puts you on scene when arriving.
 - Data from Dispatch auto filling out records, dashboards, scheduling, etc.
- HAAS Alerting - - alerts drivers using Apple maps, Waze or built in Jeep/Chrysler/Mercedes vehicles that an emergency vehicle is ahead



FUNDING SOURCES

- ESD Tax Cap
- ESD Overlay
- ESD Sales Tax
- Regional/State Grant Opportunities
 - Pool your resources/data
 - Ask for what you are lacking
 - Benefits for everyone
- Texas – Texas A&M Forest Service HB2604/TIFMAS Grants (Water Tenders, Brush Trucks, PPE)
- National – AFG (Assistance to Firefighters Grant)
 - SAFER (Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response)
 - FPS (Fire Prevention and Safety)

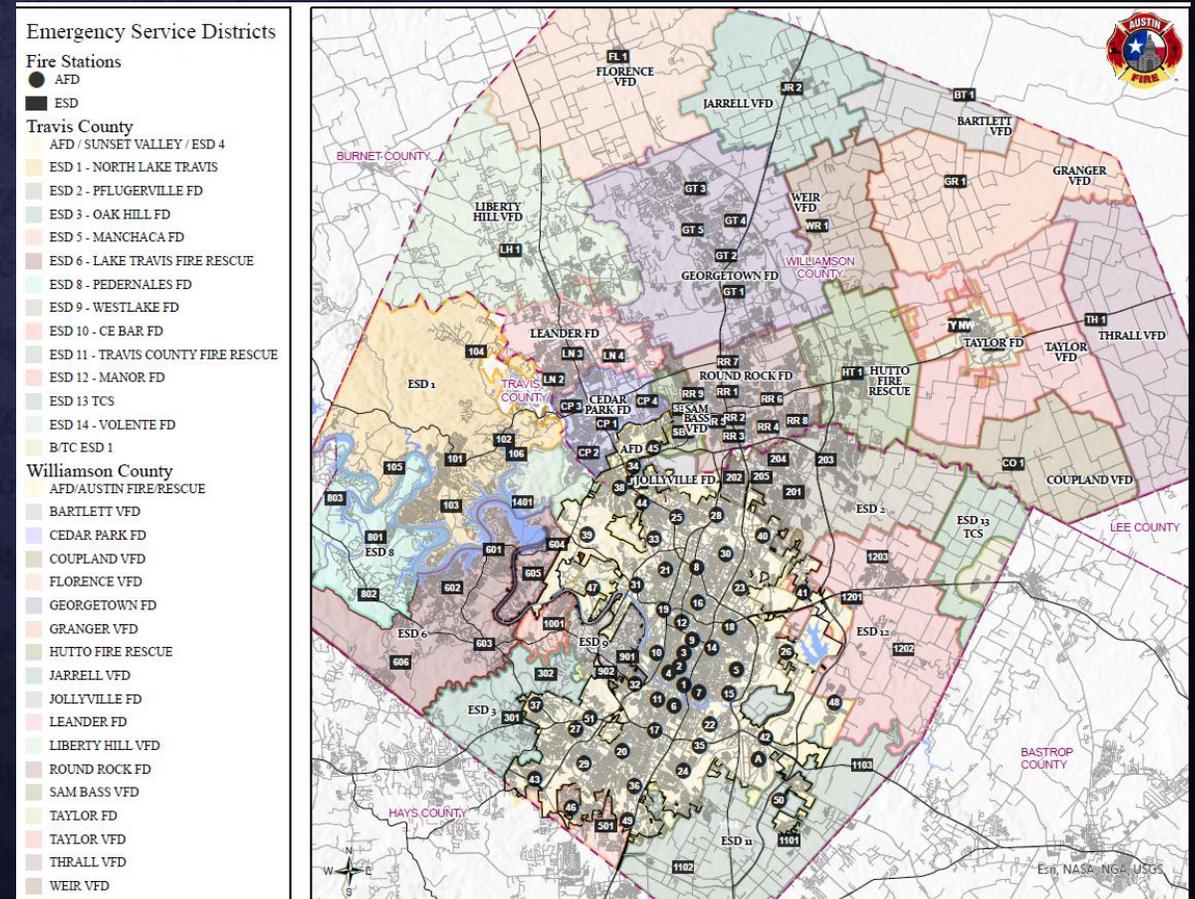
DON'T HAVE THIS TYPE OF CASH??

Sharing Resources

- Fleet
- Group Purchasing
- Combined Dispatch Center
- Shared Station
- Regional Responses

Automatic Aid

- Work with your neighboring agencies
- Communications, equipment, apparatus, terminology



WHAT'S YOUR PRIORITY?

BEHIND
BARELY KEEPING UP
TRYING TO GET AHEAD



Building
Infrastructure?

Stations
Apparatus
Equipment



Staffing?

On Call/Full Time



Expanding
Services

Fire Based EMS
Transport
Additional Station
TIFMAS Response

COMMUNICATIONS

Who to keep updated:

- ESD Commissioners
- Community
- County Commissioner
- Members/Staff
- Local Businesses



HOW YOU COMMUNICATE

- Website
- Social Media – Facebook/Instagram
- Nextdoor
- LED Sign Board
- Community Events



PLANNING

- Strategic Plan
 - 3 or 5 Year Plan
 - Mission, Vision, Values
- Capital Improvement Plan
 - Apparatus
 - Station
 - Station Remodel
 - HVAC/System Replacements

TRAVIS COUNTY EMERGENCY SERVICES DISTRICT NO. 6

STRATEGIC PLAN

2021-2026



BUDGETING!

- Financial Plan / Forecasting Plan
 - Accounting for Debt, Service Expansion, Pay Offs
 - Are you in the Red or Black
 - Can you afford a new station payments/staff/etc
- Doing an annual budget and planning
 - Planning for the unexpected/annexations

ESD Financial Forecast		
	2022	2023
Income		
Property Tax	1,858,197	2,572,413
Sales Tax	1,940,000	2,759,792
Other		
Prop Tax Increase/Decrease		
Sales Tax Increase/Decrease		
Total Income	3,798,197	5,332,205
Expenses		
Station 501	255,563	255,563
2022 Spartan Pumper	70,179	70,179
2020 Sutphen	\$79,318	\$79,318
2021 SpartanTender	50,241	50,241
SHMUD	279,825	288,000
Staffing	1,475,868	1,567,393
Operating Exp	1,136,296	846,761
New Station		
New Station Staffing & Admin		
Engine 502		
Budget Increase/Decrease	3%	3%
Total Expenses	\$ 3,347,290	\$ 3,157,454
Surplus/Loss	\$ 450,907	\$ 2,174,751

STAFFING MUST HAVES

- Leader to Lead
- Personnel Handbook
- Policies/Procedures/Disciplinary policies
- Code of Conduct
- VFDs - “Active Member”
- Disciplinary Policy/Annual Evals

Travis County Emergency Services District
No. 5



Manchaca Fire/Rescue

Personnel Handbook

October 2025

STAFFING MUST HAVES – DON'T FORGET!

- Budget!!
 - Salaries/Pay
 - Overtime!!!
 - Workers Comp Insurance
 - NFPA 1851 Health Physicals
 - Social Security - - Pay In/Out?
 - Benefits!!
 - Health/Dental/Vision
 - Pension
- Be ready for pay scale adjustments!

FRONT  LINE

MOBILE HEALTH

STAFFING – WHAT IFS

- Staffing
 - What Ifs
 - Maximizing Pay - - Overtime opportunities
 - Succession Planning
 - Lateral Transfers
 - Competitive Pay
 - The Bad Apples

EQUIPMENT COSTS/MAINTENANCE

- Stations – Require Maintenance/Updates
- Personnel Protective Equipment Annual testing/cleaning and semi-annual cleaning regardless
- PPE – Life of 10 years!



HOW QUICK IS YOUR COMMUNITY GROWING?

- Is your department keeping up?
 - New subdivisions/industrial
- Community Risk Reduction
 - Fire Codes
 - Burn Permits
 - Inspection Program
 - Community First Aid/CPR Programs

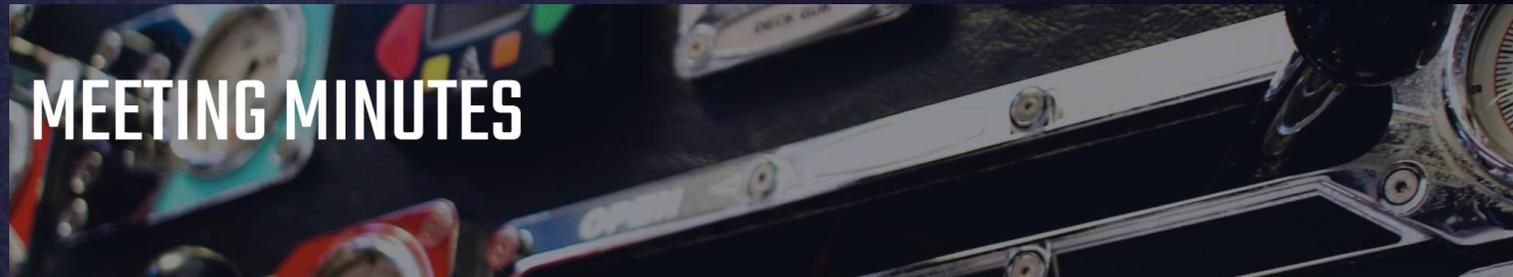


HAVE LEGAL COUNSEL

- Chapter 775 of Texas Statute
- Requirements
- Should be done right or you can get challenged
- As you grow more and more, legal counsel can help with that growth
- You will need it if you get sued

DOCUMENTATION

- Agendas
- Minutes
- Contracts/Agreements
- Annual Budgets/Tax Rate Time
- Proposals/Awards
- RMS/EHR Reports
- PIA – Open Records



MEETING MINUTES

<p>TRAVIS COUNTY EMERGENCY SERVICES DISTRICT NO. 5: BOARD MEETING MINUTES, DECEMBER 11 , 2025</p> <p>READ MORE »</p> <p>January 15, 2026</p>	<p>TRAVIS COUNTY EMERGENCY SERVICES DISTRICT NO. 5: BOARD MEETING MINUTES, NOVEMBER 6 , 2025</p> <p>READ MORE »</p> <p>December 12, 2025</p>
<p>TRAVIS COUNTY EMERGENCY SERVICES DISTRICT NO. 5: BOARD MEETING MINUTES, OCTOBER 9, 2025</p> <p>READ MORE »</p> <p>November 7, 2025</p>	<p>TRAVIS COUNTY EMERGENCY SERVICES DISTRICT NO. 5: BOARD MEETING MINUTES, SEPTEMBER 11, 2025</p> <p>READ MORE »</p> <p>October 17, 2025</p>
<p>TRAVIS COUNTY EMERGENCY SERVICES DISTRICT NO. 5: BOARD MEETING MINUTES, AUGUST 14, 2025</p>	<p>TRAVIS COUNTY EMERGENCY SERVICES DISTRICT NO. 5: BOARD MEETING MINUTES, JULY 10, 2025</p>

REMEMBER WHO YOU SERVE

- YOUR Community expectations
- What level of service do you deliver?
- Are you checking in with your community on a regular basis about your challenges/needs?



QUESTIONS??

THANK YOU!

Chief Chris Barron

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