

## SMITH COUNTY EMERGENCY SERVICES DISTRICT TWO

06:00 P.M. \* Thursday \* October 22, 2020

201 South Main St \* Arp, Texas 75750

---

### 1. CALL TO ORDER

President Randy Melton called the Smith County ESD #2 called meeting to order at 06:04 p.m. Roll was called; four commissioners were present: Randy Melton, Charles Wilson, Paul Perryman, and Matthew Mckeethan via video conference. He certified that a quorum was present. Commissioner Biggers arrived late.

### 2. PRAYER AND PLEDGE

President Randy Melton led the meeting in prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States and Texas flags.

### 3. RECOGNITION OF GUESTS

President Melton welcomed all guests to the meeting.

### 4. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Johnny Brown signed up for public comments. He stated that he believed the board should continue with the plan that was discussed at the previous meeting. He believed the board should keep their word, and only hire 18 personnel.

Craig Lacarty signed up for public comments. He stated he recently started attending the meetings again, after an absence. He stated he felt that since people who care about tax payer dollars stopped attending meetings, the budget has increased and transparency has ceased. He noticed the meeting minutes, and check register have not been posted in 2 years. The minutes were posted a couple of days ago. He stated that the constant item increased has been ESD 2 salaries and benefits. He understands the need for 24/7 firefighters, however there needs to be a look at what has happened. He stated it seemed as if the new sales tax funding was like waking up on Christmas morning. He also stated an example of Lake Cities fire department's Chief losing his job over hiring more people than originally approved. He stated he thinks we need to look seriously at how we are spending the tax payer dollars. He stated that there will be more people watching Smith County ESD 2.

Anthony Bruner signed up from public comments. He stated he was concerned about the news of the increase in payroll. He stated the tax district was meant to take care of the volunteers. To pay for stations, equipment, etc. Now it not the time to put more burden on the tax payers. There will not be anymore helping volunteer fire departments by businesses. Its not right to rob other cities of their firefighters because ESD 2 wants to pay more. He stated the ESD needed to roll back and not abuse tax payers. He stated to look at the whole county, ESD 2 has been reconized for many years of volunteer service. The ESD has done a good job, but roll back taxes.

### 5. PERSONNEL AND EMPLOYMENT FOR SCESD 2

President Melton presented item #5, and stated that there would be some ground rules set: He stated the following:

1. The audio from the September 28, 2020 meeting would be played.
2. Chief Rozell would give a presentation as to his decision to hire additional personnel.

3. The board would have the opportunity to ask Chief Rozell questions.
4. The board would convene in closed session.
5. The board would return to open session to take any action.

The audio from the September 28, 2020 board meeting was played. The audio started at approx. 23:00 and ended at approx.. 45:00.

Chief Rozell began his presentation, and stated his philosophy is to put the safety of the first responders first, the safety of the citizens second, and to operate in the most cost effective manner possible. He stated that he understands the confusion about 18 personnel. However, in the past the board has approved the budget with a number of positions and allowed administration to hire personnel for those positions. He stated that once a citizen came forth in the last meeting to describe an issue in the northwest portion of the district.; He was asked by Commissioner Mckeethan what would be the solution. His answer was to staff Dixie Station 2. That would ensure coverage for that area in the best way at this time. He felt that ESD 2 was liable for the current fire protection levels in that area. The citizens in that area are paying the same taxes as those in other parts of the district, but are not receiving the same level of protection. So operating in the precedent set in the past, he moved forward with hiring the additional 12 personnel. Chief Rozell presented the board with a numbers comparison for the hiring. He stated with hiring the additional personnel it would cost ESD 2 \$444,332 per month. He stated that the average sales tax received per month is \$778,205. He also stated that if no additional personnel were hired beyond these, and by using the projections ESD 2 should be under budget for payroll in September 2021 in the amount of \$1,917,823.00. He stated by doing it this way the reserve would be built up including the amount already on hand to the amount of \$8,068,451.00.

**Commissioner Perryman** asked when the offers were tendered?

**Kathryn Anderson** Director of HR responded with October 14<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, and 16<sup>th</sup>.

**Commissioner Perryman** asked President Melton when were you aware of these offers?

**President Melton** stated either October 14<sup>th</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup>.

**Commissioner Perryman** asked President Melton why did you not notify the other boardmembers?

**President Melton** the positions were budgeted for.

**Commissioner Perryman** stated he felt that in the last meeting there was an understanding to hire only 18 personnel in 2020. Then hire additional personnel in 2021. He stated that he went by the office on October 16, 2020 and was informed that 30 personnel were hired. The hires were scheduled to report on November 1, 2020, but the board was not scheduled to meet until November 2, 2020. He stated that Chief Rozell wanted to circumvent the boards wishes, specifically and deviously. He also stated that Randy Melton did not notify anyone, and that Terry did not tell any other Commissioners. He believed that this would not stand at any other job.

**Matthew Mckeethan** stated he agreed with Commissioner Perryman, and that he would like to board to go into closed session at this time.

**Commissioner Biggers** asked Chief Rozell if the numbers presented to the board included capital items.

**Chief Rozell** stated that the numbers presented were payroll only.

Upon return from closed session Leroy Biggers made the motion to move forward with the hiring of the additional personnel; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Charles Wilson; Motion carried 3-2. Commissioner's Mckeethan, and Perryman voted against the motion.

**6. PURCHASE OF BUNKER GEAR FROM NAFECO AT A COST OF \$75,244.00**

Chief Rozell presented a proposal to purchase bunker gear from NAFECO at a cost of \$75,244.00. He stated this was new gear for new personnel, and was budgeted. **Charles Wilson made the motion to purchase the bunker gear from NAFECO at a cost of \$75,244.00; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Leroy Biggers; motion carried 5-0.**

**7. CLOSED SESSION**

The board went into closed session 07:10

**8. RETURN TO OPEN SESSION**

The board returned to open session at 07:45

**9. ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING**

President Melton stated the next board meeting is at the new Arp Fire Station #1, 201 South Main, Arp, TX 75750, Monday, November 2, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.; he declared the meeting adjourned at 07:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by: \_\_\_\_\_

Paul Perryman, Secretary/Treasurer