

Minutes
**VILLAGE FIRE
DEPARTMENT REGULAR
MONTHLY BOARD
MEETING**

Wednesday, March 26, 2025, 6:00 P.M.

1. CALL TO ORDER

A regular fire commission meeting of the Village Fire Department was held on Wednesday, April 23, 2025, at 901 Corbindale, Houston, Texas 77024. It began at 6:00 p.m. and was presided over by Keith Brown. The secretary was present.

Present & Voting Were:

City of Bunker Hill Village
City of Hedwig Village
City of Hilshire Village
City of Hunters Creek
City of Piney Point Village
City of Spring Valley Village

Commissioner Keith Brown, Chair
Commissioner Matt Woodruff
Mayor Robert (Bob) Buesinger
Commissioner Rob Adams, Secretary
Commissioner Henry Kollenberg, Vice Chair
Commissioner John Lisenby, Treasurer

Present Were:

City of Bunker Hill Village
City of Hedwig Village
City of Hilshire Village
City of Hunters Creek
City of Piney Point Village

Alternate Clara Towsley
Alternate Patrick Breckon
Commissioner Mike Garofalo
Alternate John DeWitt
Alternate Dan Ramey

Village Fire Department
Administrative Staff

Fire Chief, Howard Miller
Amy Buckert, Administrator/Finance Director
Katherine Stuart, Administrative Specialist

Randle Law Firm

Attorney Brandon Morris

Not Present Were:

City of Spring Valley Village

Alternate Steve Bass

2. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC – Comments are limited to 3 minutes each.

Mayor Tom Jinks spoke about item 6A on the agenda, which would bring the Department's TMRS retirement plan in line with what is offered Hedwig Village's other City employees. He stated that his City was unable to afford the improvements to the Department's retirement plan, and as such, he wanted the record to reflect that he was against the item.

3. CONSENT AGENDA – All Consent Agenda items listed are considered to be routine by the Board of Commissioners and will be enacted by one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a Board Member requests, in which event the item will be removed from the Consent Agenda and considered in its normal sequence on the agenda.

- A. Approval of Minutes – Regular Monthly Board Meeting Minutes March 26, 2025
- B. Approval of Bills Paid – March 2025

Motion: Lisenby

Second: Kollenberg

Unanimously approved

4. **REPORTS**

- A. Treasurer's Financial Reports and possible action – March 2025 (attached)
- B. Administrator's Report and possible action – March 2025 (attached)
- C. Investment Report – March 2025 (attached)
- D. Fire Chief's Report and possible action – March 2025

The department is fully staffed. Captain Ekblaw is out until August. There was one major incident, a house fire in Hunters Creek. There were 193 calls for service averaging a four minute, eleven second response time. Chief is working on the All Hazards Mitigation Plan, working on an incident/accident training program, and thanked Commissioner Brown for his year as the Chair of the Board.

Motion: No Action Taken

Second:

5. **DISCUSSION ITEMS/PRESENTATION OF SPECIAL REPORTS** – The Board will discuss and consider possible action on the following:

- A. Temporary Aerial Apparatus

Chief told the Commission that five of the Cities had approved the Budget Amendment, and that Piney Point had it on their agenda for the Monday following the Commission meeting. He advised the Commission that there are two trucks available for lease at the moment.

Motion: No Action Taken

Second:

6. **DISCUSSION OF AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON THE FOLLOWING** – The Board will discuss and consider possible action on the following:

- A. TMRS Retirement

Anthony Mills of TMRS drove in from Austin to present to the Commission and explain nuances of the retirement plan options to the Board. The Chief gave his presentation which outlined reasons the plan improvements were needed (attached). He explained how the enhanced benefits would assist with recruitment and retention.

Member Kollenberg moved to approve the 100% option. He stated that in response to Mayor Jinks, Hedwig has 100% COLA for its employees, which makes its contribution 12.1%, which is pretty close to the 13% for option six. And also gives them a \$1.2 million unfunded liability for their employees as opposed to their share of option six, which would be just under \$700,000. He asked the Chair for discussion; however, with no second for the motion, they were unable to have a discussion.

The floor was not turned over to Mr. Mills.

There was a motion made to approve Option 1 from the packet.

Motion: Kollenberg

Second:

Motion died for lack of a second

There was a motion made to approve Option 2 from the packet.

Motion: Kollenberg

Second:

Motion died for lack of a second

There was a motion made to approve Option 3 from the packet.

Motion: Kollenberg

Second:

Motion died for lack of a second

There was a motion made to approve Option 4 from the packet.

Motion: Kollenberg

Second:

Motion died for lack of a second

There was a motion made to approve Option 5 from the packet.

Motion: Kollenberg

Second:

Motion died for lack of a second

There was a motion made to approve Option 6 from the packet.

Motion: Kollenberg

Second:

Motion died for lack of a second

7. **DISCUSSION OF AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING PAST FINANCIAL MATTERS** - The Board of Commissioners will discuss and take any action necessary related to past financial matters, the resulting forensic audit, and steps toward resolution.

Motion: No Action Taken

Second:

8. **DISCUSSION OF AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING TIMING AND PAYMENT OF 2024 AUDIT** - The Board of Commissioners will discuss and take any action necessary related to past financial matters, the resulting forensic audit, and steps toward resolution.

The Administrator/Finance Director gave an update to the Board, including that Mr. Belt had drafted a letter to the partners on behalf of the Department, and the Department was reviewing the letter for return back to Mr. Belt. She advised the Commission that Mr. Belt would want a meeting with the Audit Committee once that letter was final.

Motion: No Action Taken

Second:

9. **DISCUSSION OF AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING COMBINING GENERAL FUND SAVINGS AND CHECKING INTO ONE ACCOUNT** - The Board of Commissioners will discuss and take any action necessary related to closing the savings account and combining the General Fund checking and savings accounts.

The Administrator explained that there is no benefit to the Department to have a separate savings and checking account at Stellar Bank as appeared to be the case at Wells Fargo. She sought permission to consolidate the two accounts to simplify money management.

She also mentioned that she wants to get more intentional with cash management and treasury management so that the Department can make more money on the current interest rates. She stated that she would be drafting an Investment Policy during her time in Little Rock so that the Department can more actively manage cash. The policy will be PFIA compliant and all monies will be collateralized in accordance with PFIA.

Commissioner Woodruff moved combine the general fund checking and savings account and authorize the secretary to sign such corporate certificates as may be required on the bank's forms to effectuate the intended report.

Motion: Woodruff

Second: Lisenby

Unanimously approved

10. **DISCUSSION OF AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING AUDIT FIRM REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS** - The Board of Commissioners will discuss and take any action necessary related to seeking qualifications from audit firms for annual audit work.

The Board directed the Administrator/Finance Director to draft up an RFQ for Audit Services for their review.

11. **DISCUSSION OF AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING AMENDMENT TO THE VFD BYLAWS**
- The Board of Commissioners will discuss and take any action necessary related to amending the VFD bylaws.

Member Woodruff asked the Commission to consider striking the authority of the Chair to appoint Committees as is outlined in the interlocal. The decisions would be handled on a Committee-by-Committee basis.

Motion: Woodruff

Second: Kollenberg

Unanimously approved

12. **DISCUSSION OF AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING APPOINTMENT OF ALL COMMITTEES** - The Board of Commissioners will discuss and take any action necessary related to appointing Committee members.

There are three Committees on the Commission: the Search Committee, the Audit Committee, and the Budget Committee. The following are the compositions of each:

Audit Committee:

- Ramey
- Buesinger

Motion: Woodruff

Second: Kollenberg

Unanimously approved

Budget Committee:

- Towsley
- Lisenby
- Ramey

Motion: Woodruff

Second: Garofalo

Unanimously approved

Search Committee:

- Woodruff
- Pappas
- Buesinger

Motion: Kollenberg
Second: Garofalo
Unanimously approved

Member Woodruff asked the Commission to consider striking the authority of the Chair to appoint Committees. The decisions would be handled based on each Committee.

13. DISCUSSION OF AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING FY 2026 BUDGET DISCUSSION #3 –

The Board of Commissioners will conduct Budget Discussion #3 to include discussion and possible action.

Member Kollenberg asked the Commission to consider a 5% COLA and a 4% contribution to the 457(b) plan. Commissioner Woodruff said he would be in support of a 3%. Mr. Kollenberg stated that the police department is talking about 4%. He stated the Fire Department should be talking about 4% or 5%, especially since there was no movement on the TMRS options. He stated it would be a good idea to increase the 457(b) contribution.

The department is approximately \$750,000 under budget for the 24 budget, so in essence the Department is returning \$750,000 back to the Cities. \$750,000 is roughly 7% of the budget.; he stated he wants 7% to go toward salary improvements. There was some discussion about building in a cushion of three days (\$150,000) for disaster mitigation in the event that it is needed.

There was some discussion about the sustainability of the budget, being as how a 3% raise was increasing the Department's budget approximately 6%. It was clarified that each City pays a portion of that 6% increase, not the entire 6% increase, based on the Interlocal Agreement.

There was discussion about the cost of Capital items in the budget artificially inflating the budget and making the increases appear larger than they really are. Someone mentioned that this is an issue with the Interlocal and how Capital is defined, and not necessarily a statement on how the Fire Department does their budgeting. The Commission then discussed amending the Interlocal to allow for better classification of these items within the budget.

There was a proposal to take some of the capital items (Tower repairs, fuel station upgrades, and the generator), remove them from the budget, and do a budget amendment at the same time that we fix the interlocal to address all those capital items, and take the capital items from the refund to the Cities.

Motion: Woodruff
Second: Kollenberg
Unanimously approved

14. EXECUTIVE SESSION - The Board of Commissioners will retire into Executive Session as authorized by Chapter 551; Texas Government Code, to seek legal advice related to the following matters:

- A. Executive session pursuant to Texas Government Code Section 551.074 authorizing a governmental body to deliberate the appointment, employment, evaluation, reassignment, duties, discipline, or dismissal of a public officer or employee; Fire Chief
- B. Executive session pursuant to Texas Government Code Section 551.074 authorizing a governmental body to deliberate the appointment, employment, evaluation, reassignment, duties, discipline, or dismissal of a public officer or employee; Administrator/Finance Director
- C. Executive session pursuant to Section 551.071 consultation with attorney regarding pending or contemplated litigation

The Board convened in Executive Session at 7:50 pm.

The Board resumed open session at 8:09 pm. No action was taken.

15. **ACTION – CLOSED SESSION** – The Board of Directors will consider and take any actions necessary on items discussed in Executive Session

Motion: No Action Taken

Second:

16. **FUTURE TOPICS**

- A. Ratify appointments of existing committees
- B. Amend Interlocal Agreement
- C. Approve Budget Amendment 2025-03
- D. Adoption of 2026 Budget

17. **ROTATION OF OFFICERS**

2025/2026 Rotation

- Commissioner PPV Henry Kollenberg – Chair
- Alternate Dan Ramey
- Commissioner SVV John Lisenby – Vice Chair
- Alternate Council Member Steve Bass
- Commissioner HCV Rob Adams – Treasurer
- Alternate John DeWitt
- Commissioner Hil V Mike Garofalo - Secretary
- Alternate Mayor Robert “Bob” Buesinger
- Commissioner HV Matt Woodruff
- Alternate Council Member Patrick Breckon
- Commissioner BHV Keith Brown
- Alternate Council Member Clara Towsley

18. **NEXT MEETING DATE**

May 28, 2025

The Board elected to move the May meeting up one week to May 21, 2025.

Motion: Kollenberg

Second: Garofalo

Unanimously approved

19. **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:12 pm.