

VILLAGE FIRE DEPARTMENT
REGULAR MONTHLY BOARD MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, August 27, 2025, 6:00 P.M

CALL TO ORDER

A regular fire commission meeting of the Village Fire Department was held on Wednesday, August 27, 2025, at 901 Corbindale, Houston, Texas 77024. It began at 6:01 p.m. and was presided over by Dan Ramey. The secretary was present.

Present & Voting Were:

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

Commissioner Dan Ramey, Chair
Commissioner John Lisenby, Vice Chair
Commissioner Rob Adams, Treasurer
Mayor Robert (Bob) Buesinger, Secretary
Commissioner Josh Pratt
Commissioner Matt Woodruff

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
Alternate Mike Garofalo
Alternate John DeWitt
Alternate Henry Kollenberg

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

1. CALL TO ORDER & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

No comments

There was a motion to move item 12A1 up on the agenda in advance of the consent agenda.

Motion: Lisenby
Second: Buesinger
Unanimously approved

The Board convened into Executive Session at 6:05 pm.
The Board exited Executive Session at 6:32 pm.

There was a motion to offer the position of Fire Chief to Fire Marshal Brian Croft.

Motion: Woodruff
Second: Buesinger
Unanimously approved

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 July 23, 2025
- B. Approval of Bills Paid – July 2025

There was a motion to approve the consent agenda.

Motion: Woodruff
Second: Pratt
Unanimously approved

4. REPORTS

- A. Treasurer's Financial Reports – July 2025
- B. Administrator's Report – July 2025
- C. Investment Report – July 2025
- D. Fire Chief's Report – July 2025

There was a motion to move item 6 after 4C.

Motion: Buesinger
Second: Adams
Unanimously approved

The department remains fully staffed. Captain Ekblaw has been having problems with his shoulder since the accident. Injections helped, but the problem persists. He will be having shoulder surgery, which delays his return to work. His knee is getting better; he still needs physical therapy for it. There will be another six to eight months of post-surgery recovery.

Aronda had successful surgery to remove his cancer. He's going to be undergoing radiation treatments for that. His doctor did permit him to do light duty, so he can return to light duty as soon as he's able. He's looking forward to wanting to come back.

The part came in for the aerial apparatus Friday to repair the suspension from the bushing. They expect it any day this week, then they'll be able to get it to the department. When it comes down here, it's going to go to Brookshire, and get outfitted which will take a couple weeks.

The rescue boat developed a blown seam during training a week ago. It was taken to Triad Marina, and they said that it's irreparable at this time. The department received the boat 2017 after Harvey because of the floods in the area. The department does have access to other boats.

In July, there were 88 fire calls in the Villages, 85 EMS, 17 non-emergency service calls for a total of 190. That equates to 293 unit responses. Average response time is really good at 4 minutes, 19 seconds.

The department had 14 PR events in July. And doing more community outreach and CPR to the cities.

No action was taken on the reports

5. DISCUSSION OF AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING ACCEPTANCE OF DONATION OF FUNDS FOR EMS EQUIPMENT - The Board of Commissioners will discuss and take any action necessary related to donated funds for the purchase of EMS equipment.

The Chief mentioned that he sent out an email recently about a CPR save in Hilshire Village. The person in question was Mark Huber, former City Councilman's wife. He was really grateful, came up to the station one day, and brought her up to the station to visit. The Chief really enjoyed the visit from them.

Mr. Huber asked what, if anything, was needed by the Department. Chief Witt was on the shift that was involved with the rescue. And he mentioned some items. At the Hilshire Village City Council meeting, Mr. Huber presented a check for \$50,000 to buy life-saving supplies.

The Department wishes to purchase life-saving equipment. Tonight the Board needs to decide where the money goes.

As per the Department Attorney, local government code gives general law cities, which is what we borrow our authority from, the ability to take hold and purchase property for a municipal purpose. So the Board should take an action just to accept the donation and specify that it's for a municipal purpose just out of abundance of caution. And then we're likely to need a budget amendment to spend that money, because it's not in the budget.

There was a motion to accept the donation for municipal purposes.

Motion: Lisenby

Second: Woodruff

Unanimously approved

6. DISCUSSION OF AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING INSURANCE PROPOSALS - The Board of Commissioners will discuss and take any action necessary related to insurance proposals.

Comiskey Insurance Agency has been writing the property and casualty insurance for the fire department for 30 years, everything except the workers comp. Tonight we are quoting through the Texas Municipal League, commonly called the TML, and the quotes and the coverages are mostly similar. We have the TML quote here, and we've emailed it to you so copies can be distributed (attached).

Because the premiums were not yet altogether, Comiskey Insurance will return in September.

No action was taken.

7. DISCUSSION OF AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING TOWER BIDS - The Board of Commissioners will discuss and take any action necessary related to bids/proposals received on the Tower renovations.

The Department had one bid come in, from Credence Construction. Chief Miller offered full transparency that his daughter was a partner in the company, an equity partner.

It came under what was budgeted, which was \$80,000. The bid came in at \$61,000. There was a copy in the packets for review.

The tower has to be painted prior to freezing weather, and there's a process for putting it on. Rust mitigation will be done first. The doors have to be special-ordered for the tower. It should be done before the end of the year.

The Chief was asked about the bats in the tower. The bats will require an exterminator, and can only be removed at certain times during the year.

The Board asked the Chief to call as soon as possible and make sure that it's the correct season. They said the specs should include whatever steps are necessary to make sure we don't get bats back in the tower. They stated that should be in one contract with the extermination as a subcontract. They want a turnkey project.

No action was taken.

8. 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.

This item was taken up in Executive Session.

No action was taken.

9. 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 2024 financial audit and related matters.

The Administrator stated that the portion of the audit in QuickBooks has been really easy to pull information from, as far as how invoices are attached into the system and other documentation. She anticipates the 2025 audit will go much smoother since the entire year will be on QuickBooks. She stated that pulling from the old system and from QuickBooks has been quite difficult.

Next steps are to finalize the audit report. The chair is going to have a conversation with Mr. Belt about the audit and then we'll be bringing together the audit committee to discuss that before we bring the full report to the Commission. They anticipate it will take at least another 30 days to finalize that audit report. They're still asking to pull a lot of documents. There may be an audit for the October meeting, but the Board should not expect one for September.

No action was taken.

10. DISCUSSION OF AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING INVESTMENT POLICY - The Board of Commissioners will discuss and take action on a Resolution updating the Village Fire Department Investment Policy.

On the Board's direction last month, staff was asked to go back to the cities and see what they were doing and incorporate what they had done in with our new policy. So that was done, and the Department's policy crafted based on theirs. One of the big things that they all have is the investment committee, and so staff wanted to be sure to call that to the Board's attention because that's something that's new from last month's draft. The Investment Committee will meet with the Administrator at least a couple times a year to talk about investments, strategy, and cash flow. It could be virtual; it doesn't have to be in person.

There was a motion to adopt the Investment Policy as submitted and to bring back Committee Member appointments next month.

Motion: Woodruff
Second: Lisenby
Unanimously approved

11. DISCUSSION OF AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING CONSOLIDATION OF BANK ACCOUNTS - The Board of Commissioners will discuss and take any action necessary related to combining the General Fund and Savings Account.

The Administrator reminded the Board that in the spring when discussing closing out the Wells Fargo ambulance fund she had mentioned the possible future consolidation of the Savings and General Fund accounts. It is possible that in the old structure of accounts under Wells Fargo perhaps the Department earned more interest by having a

savings account and a general fund, and when everything was rolled over to Steller a couple years ago, that same structure was held in place. Currently deposits are coming into the Savings account and bills are being paid out of the General Fund. During payroll or large bill runs, there are transfers back and forth, and there's no interest-earning benefit to having two different funds. It's one more thing to have to manage and make sure a payroll check or bill gets over drafted. The Administrator is asking permission to combine those into one General Fund. In addition, as the Department understands its cash flow better, it might be able to invest some of what used to be in the Savings fund.

The Department can invest a little into Texas Class, and can move it between Texas Class and General Fund to manage that interest earnings a little better and make better use of our money.

She reiterated that this would just apply to Savings and General Fund. Facility, Ambulance, etc. would remain independent funds.

This also offers the Board more transparency, as right now, transfers are made back and forth between general and savings, and no one sees it until the monthly report. If transfers are made between General Fund and Texas Class, a board member has to sign off on that. So there's security there as far as Board Members are active in the transfers and know what's going on with the money a little more.

A motion was made to close the Savings account and transfer the money currently in the Savings account into General Fund with excess placed in Texas Class. The motion was extended to say that the secretary is authorized to issue a secretary's certificate on the standard bank form necessary to effectuate the intent of the foregoing.

Motion: Woodruff
Second: Lisenby
Unanimously approved

12. 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;

1. Chief
2. Administrative Support Position
3. Captain

B. Executive session pursuant to Section 551.071 consultation with attorney regarding pending or contemplated litigation.

A motion was made to recess into Executive Session at 7:47 pm.

Motion: Buesinger
Second: Lisenby
Unanimously approved

13. RECONVENE OPEN SESSION – The Board of Directors will consider and take any actions necessary on items discussed in Executive Session.

The Board reconvened into Regular Session at 8:38 pm. A motion was made that the Commission authorize the Chair to meet with our respective Chief and negotiate the parameters of his employment on behalf of the Commission.

Motion: Woodruff
Second: Lisenby
Unanimously approved

14. FUTURE TOPICS

- Insurance
- Investment committee appointments

**15. NEXT MEETING DATE
September 24, 2025**

16. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made to adjourn.

Motion: Lisenby
Second: Buesinger
Unanimously approved