

VILLAGE FIRE DEPARTMENT
REGULAR MONTHLY BOARD MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, July 23, 2025, 6:00 P.M

A regular fire commission meeting of the Village Fire Department was held on Wednesday, Wednesday, July 23, 2025, at 901 Corbindale, Houston, Texas 77024. It began at 6:04 p.m. and was presided over by Dan Ramey. The secretary was present virtually.

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
Commissioner Mike Garofalo, Secretary
Commissioner Keith Brown
Commissioner Matt Woodruff

Present Were:

City of Hilshire Village
City of Hunters Creek
City of Piney Point Village
City of Spring Valley Village

Mayor Robert (Bob) Buesinger
Alternate John DeWitt
Alternate Henry Kollenberg
Alternate Steve Bass

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 Bunker Hill Village
City of Hedwig Village

Alternate Clara Towsley
Alternate Patrick Breckon

1. **CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
2. **COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC** – Comments are limited to 3 minutes each.

Andrea Herman of Hedwig Village asked about the old Sweet Tomatoes property and whether the new 10-story building going in there would be accommodated by the new ladder truck. The Chief said it would not.

3. **CONSENT AGENDA** – All Consent Agenda items listed are considered to be routine by The 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 June 25, 2025
 - B. Approval of Bills Paid – June 2025

There was a motion by Commissioner Woodruff to approve the consent agenda and a second by Commissioner Brown.

Motion: Woodruff
Second: Brown

Unanimously approved

An amendment was made by Commissioner Adams to adjourn the meeting by 7 pm, and a second by Commissioner Lisenby.

Motion: Adams

Second: Lisenby

Unanimously approved

4. REPORTS

- A.** Treasurer's Financial Reports and possible action – June 2025
- B.** Administrator's Report and possible action – June 2025
- C.** Investment Report – June 2025
- D.** Fire Chief's Report and possible action – June 2025
- E.** Insurance Broker Report – Property and Casualty Insurance

The Administrator/Finance Director noted that the reports were in a different format this month. She stated that she wanted to pull what can be done in QuickBooks (QBO) and show what those reports look like. She explained that she and the Administrative Specialist are entering items daily into QBO per the SOPs, and then reconciling all the accounts at the end of the month. She informed the Board that the time spend on the reconciliation of the accounts has been cut significantly with the transition to the new system. The everything is turned over to the accountant to put it into a report. In order to make the report work for the Board, there is some manual manipulation that has to occur and takes time. Even with these steps, the reports were still not what the Board wanted to see. The cost each month is running around \$3,000 to do this. Reporting software that staff has explored runs upward of \$20,000 per year. The Administrator decided to see if the QBO standard reports were good enough for the Board, and reiterated that the data in QBO is accurate, solid data, it's just the reports that were lacking.

She suggested returning to ORW, the Department's prior accounting firm, at least in the interim to review all the bank reconciliations and financial reports.

The Administrator again reiterated her attempts to stay within budget for accounting, and asked the Commission to please review the reports and offer any feedback.

Frank Comiskey with Comiskey Insurance, presented some insurance information to the Board. He stated that his group has insured the buildings, the general liability, the fleet, everything for 25 or 30 years. He told the Board the current casualty and property policies expire September 30th. The Department already received a quote from Texas Municipal League, TML, and his firm is in the middle of processing it, asking this file of 36 detailed questions that Jennifer in his office sent to Cheryl Nixon, at TML to answer.

Because of the fire truck accident on the freeway, and VFIS is replacing the fire truck to the tune of \$2 million, they sent a letter of non-renewal. Comiskey went to four or five different markets, and either they won't do business in Harris County or they won't do business in Texas.

The loss ratio because of the fire truck accident really impaired other people's ability to quote, and their underwriters wouldn't do it. But TML will. He stated they need to come back for the August meeting when they have had more time to really tweak and get firm answers to the questions that were sent.

There was some discussion about the existing policies and how TML policies compared. The Board asked Mr. Comiskey to send over the existing policies for review.

The Chief gave his report and stated that the Department is up to full staffing levels. Chief introduced David Arronda to

the Board, a firefighter who is currently fighting cancer and is on light duty in dispatch.

Chief gave an update on the leasing of the ladder truck and mentioned that the legal team from the leasing side is still reviewing the agreement sent by the Department. He stated that Medic 1 had preventive maintenance, Medic 3 had preventive maintenance on the generator this week, and the Chief's vehicle, had a camshaft and the air conditioning replaced on it this month. The bill for that was \$12,500. He stated that in the three years he has had the vehicle, a little over two years, the Department has paid \$40,000 for repairs. There are four more years left on this vehicle before it's due for replacement.

There were no major incidences for June, there were 82 fire, 180 MS, and 19 nonemergency service calls for a total of 209 incidences. Average response time was 4 minutes, 15 seconds.

The Chief stated that the training tower RFP draft was on the table in front of the Commission for review. He explained that there would be a bid tabulation sheet and one or two Commissioners present for the bid opening. He will bring back the bids for consideration and aware.

No action was taken.

5. **DISCUSSION ITEMS/PRESENTATION OF SPECIAL REPORTS** – The Board will receive a report from Connor Pennington, Intern, recapping his time with Village Fire Department.

The Department's Administrative Intern, Connor Pennington, gave his final presentation to the Board (attached), signifying his completion of the internship. The Commission thanked Connor for all his hard work and presented him with his stipend check.

No action was taken.

6. **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.

7. **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/Finance Director told the Board that the auditor started sending out requests approximately three weeks ago, and she started uploading information while she was working from home. Some of the info was here at the office, so when she returned to the office last Monday, she started working on those items. The Administrative Specialist helped with the last few items yesterday. She was happy to report that the Department has turned in 100% of their requests as of the day of the meeting. The auditors will come back and have follow up questions or need more details, but for now the requirements have been met.

The Chair advised the Board that he had a 50-minute call with Robert Belt the day before regarding potential extra charges due to the credit card fraud. He reminded everyone that the fraud amounted to \$46,000 over three years, and the 2024 budget is \$9.9 million. So the credit cards, if there were a problem with all of them, is only 0.64 of 1%. From an accountant point of view, the fraud is not in the range of materiality. In addition, \$17,000 of the \$46,000 the First Baptist Academy charges, so four transactions made up 36% of the whole

fraud amount.

The bigger firms, such as Crowe, have risk departments that analyze risk company-wide. It's no different than a risk group in a big company. Mr. Belt had to report it up that the Department had a fraudulent event. If it was a prior year, he would come in, help document it, turn it over to Harris County, and it would be done. Unfortunately the bigger firm is unwilling to do that. Part of the estimated \$10,000 to \$25,000 expense increase over the audit is that group billing into the engagement. They bill \$400 to \$600 an hour. Mr. Belt did mention the Administrator and the Fire Department staff have done a great job of getting the information to him quickly.

No action was taken.

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

There was a brief discussion about the investment policy, but in the interest of time, the Commission asked to table the item. Commissioner Woodruff told the Board that he has been asking for the entire time he's been on this commission that resolutions be presented to in writing in advance of the meeting, and this is the first time he has ever seen one. He thanked the Administrator/Finance Director for her efforts.

Motion: Woodruff

Second: Adams

Unanimously approved

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

This item was taken up under reports.

- 10. 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. Fire Chief
2. Potential Administrative Support

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

There was a motion by Commissioner Woodruff to adjourn into Executive Session at 6:53 and a second by Commissioner Adams.

Motion: Woodruff
Second: Adams
Unanimously approved

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

No action was taken.

12. **FUTURE TOPICS**

- A. Insurance Proposals
- B. Investment Policy

13. **NEXT MEETING DATE**
August 27, 2025

14. **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 7:00 pm.