

VILLAGE FIRE DEPARTMENT
REGULAR MONTHLY BOARD MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, November 19, 2025, 6:00 P.M

1. CALL TO ORDER & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

A regular fire commission meeting of the Village Fire Department was held on Wednesday, November 19, 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	Commissioner Dan Ramey, Chair
City of Spring Valley Village	Commissioner John Lisenby, Vice Chair
City of City of Hunters Creek	Commissioner Rob Adams, Treasurer
City of Hilshire Village	Commissioner, Bob Buesinger, Secretary
City of Bunker Hill Village	Commissioner Josh Pratt
City of Hedwig Village	Commissioner Matt Woodruff

Present Were:

City of Bunker Hill Village	Alternate Clara Towsley
City of Hedwig Village	Alternate Patrick Breckon
City of Hilshire Village	Mayor Mike Garofalo
City of Hunters Creek	Alternate John DeWitt
City of Piney Point Village	Alternate Henry Kollenberg

Village Fire Department	Fire Chief, Brian Croft
Administrative Staff	Amy Buckert, Administrator/Finance Director, Katherine Stuart, Administrative Specialist

Randle Law Firm	Attorney Brandon Morris
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Not Present Were:

City of Spring Valley Village	Alternate Steve Bass
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2. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC – Comments are limited to 3 minutes each.

There were no comments from the public.

There was a motion to take Item 6 out of order and bring to the top of the agenda.

Motion: Buesinger

Second: Woodruff

Unanimously approved

3. CONSENT AGENDA (BUCKERT) – 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 October 22, 2025
- B. Approval of Bills Paid – October 2025

Commissioner Woodruff made a motion to approve the consent agenda.

Motion: Woodruff

Second: Pratt

Unanimously approved

4. **REPORTS**

- A. Treasurer’s Financial Reports and possible action – October 2025
- B. Administrator’s Report and possible action – October 2025
- C. Investment Report – October 2025
- D. Fire Chief’s Report and possible action – October 2025

The Administrator/Finance Director went over the Budget to Actuals and pointed out that the Department is under budget and mentioned that one question that’s come up is why we are so far under budget in the payroll piece. She reminded the Board that the Department typically budgets for two three-day emergency events and there were no emergency events in 2025 so that’s a large part of it. She stated that she is having meetings with the deputy chiefs and the captains to try and go through their line item budgets and make sure that they understand what those can be spent on and what they have left. In the past with our accounting software there’s been a lot of confusion about what was left in their line items, what’s cleared, what hasn’t and with QuickBooks Admin is able to pull those reports year to date and she can sit down and show them what they’ve spent their money on. She stated that she’s gotten positive feedback on that from the officers; they like the transparency they’re able to have on their budgets. She stated that the Investment Committee met late in October and got the money moved to Texas Class as instructed. She stated that to move things in Texas Class there is a same-day action needed by 4 pm. She asked for volunteers to be her “go to” person on these transactions so we can get that resolved. She stated it should just be a log on that you just have to log on and approve it in Texas Class. It should not take up a significant amount of anyone’s time.

One of the Board members asked the Administrator/Finance Director to do a little one pager with instructions to make it easier for everyone. She stated that she would do so.

The Administrator/Finance Director stated that there is a conflict of interest form for 2025 at each Commissioner’s place. That is something from audit and if you have a conflict of interest with any firms that we do business with here at the Village Fire Department then I would need you to turn that form in to me. If you don’t, you can write N/A or leave your blank form on my desk. In January we’re going to do it all over again. We have to do this every year to make sure that we have any conflicts of interest on file. This is one of the audit checkbox things that needs handling annually.

She also advised the Board that there's a state law that if we have unclaimed property we have a certain amount of time to turn it over to the state to try and get it back to these rightful owners. We try to get it back to the people first and if we can't reach them then we have to turn it over to the state. This is applicable to the Ambulance Billing Fund. She stated that she can't tell that it's ever been done. She's working through that process. Those letters went out a week ago. It's not a lot of money, it's less than \$2,000 altogether, but I did want to bring it to your attention. It's an annual requirement.

The Budget and Audit Committee calendars' latest versions are on the website in the packets.

The Administrator/Finance Director advised that she sent out an email to the Department asking for all purchases to be completed by December 10th in order to have a smoother year-end process. get a better handle on year-end this year.

The Fire Chief gave his report. Last month (October) was life safety month for the U.S. and the Department reached over 1,000 community members through 12 schools and churches, and 8 walk-ins. Most of the classes are kids ranging from anywhere from kindergarten to usually third grade. Year-to-date we've done 216 CPR AED classes here or around the villages. Twenty seven were certified in the month of October. He recommended going back to each of their cities and to get friends and neighbors to set it up.

Last month we also participated in the EMS and PR services for Kincaid. They hosted the Special Olympics bocce ball competition. There was over 600 attendees. National Night Out was last month. The Department visited over a dozen homes or gatherings in the area all over the villages driving around meeting the citizens. That was a lot of fun to get out in public and just kind of interact with people not in an emergency situation. That was a big change.

The Chief pointed out the Department has a new PR tent, and is trying to get our brand, our name out there and let people know who we are as we serve the citizens of the villages. Even today, as long as we've been here since 1940-something, there's still some that don't know that we are the fire department here in the villages. There is a QR code on the side of it, and it takes you right to the website.

The generator install is scheduled to begin tomorrow. They'll set up the temporary generator, hook that all up, make sure it's working, test it. When it's good, they'll start decommissioning the other one. They'll work through next week, take the holidays off. They're projected to be finished somewhere around December 2nd.

There was an increase in calls, 196 for October. The majority of those were EMS calls. Our average response time is 417 for all six villages, and we're up to 1,852 calls for the year.

Chief Croft introduced Deputy Chief Tommy DePaul, who has been here over 25 years. He came up through the ranks, started as a firefighter, went to operator, captain, and now he's Deputy Chief on A-shift. Just recently, he graduated from the Texas Fire Chiefs Academy, Battalion Chiefs Academy.

Chief Croft wanted to honor him for that. It was a big success. He enjoyed it, and it opened his eyes to a lot of things on the administration side. So without further ado, this is Deputy Chief DePaul.

Chief DePaul came up and said a few words, and stated that he was honored to be selected to attend.

Chief Witt has requested a two-day update on the ladder truck. The latest update came today. All the parts have been ordered. As soon as they arrive, she'll let us know and the project starts. We're at the mercy of the mechanics at this point.

No action was taken.

5. **DISCUSSION OF AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON THE FOLLOWING (BUCKERT/STUART)** – The Board will discuss and consider possible action on the following:
 - A. Budget Committee Meeting Calendar
 - B. Audit Committee Meeting Calendar
 - C. 2026 Commission Meeting Calendar
 - D. Approval of VMIG Board Recommendation for Plan Year 2026 Insurance Carriers

The Administrator/Finance Director stated she's covered the calendars in her report for AB&C, so the only item left to address is 5D, which is the approval of the VMIG board recommendation.

The VMIG board recommended to move from UnitedHealthcare to TML for medical, dental and vision, which is in the BlueCross BlueShield network. Life products are the same, staying with the same carrier because there is a rate guarantee.

It's going to be an overall 4.12% decrease in premiums, and the Board needs to approve their decision in order for the Department to move forward.

There was a motion that the commission adopt the recommendation of VMIG with respect to plan year 2026 insurance carriers.

Motion: Woodruff

Second: Lisenby

Unanimously approved

6. **DISCUSSION OF AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING PRESENTATION OF 2024 AUDIT (BUCKERT)** - The Board of Commissioners will discuss and take any action necessary related to accepting the 2024 financial audit report.

Robert Belt, the Department's representative from Crowe presented the Department's 2024 Audit. Crowe issued an unmodified opinion, which the highest level of assurance one can provide that all the disclosures required by generally accepted accounting principles have been included and the financial statements are materially correct. One thing that's always been of interest to the Board in the past is the budget to actual for the

General Fund which is on page. Total revenues for the year came in at \$9,619,000 (rounded off) and total expenditures came in at \$8,854,000 (rounded off). That provides revenues over expenditures of \$763,000. In the Capital Replacement Fund (page 14) there was an ending fund balance of \$837,000. The Ambulance Billing Fund is an in and an out so there's no fund balance left at year end, and the only other fund is the Facility Fund, a non-major fund and had an ending fund balance of \$12,582. There was some discussion between Mr. Belt and the Board about the extended length of time the audit took and the processes with regard to the national office. The Chair stated that Mr. Belt spoke about weaknesses in the report to the Commissioners and within the letter said there were no control deficiencies but then there's a material weakness and a significant deficiency. He asked Mr. Belt how do you reconcile no deficiencies, but there's a material weakness which is as big as it gets and then a significant deficiency, but in the document there are no control deficiencies. Mr. Belt explained that it means is there was none that were just significant deficiencies by themselves; a material weakness by definition is a significant deficiency that could have a material impact, so if you have a material weakness you do have a significant deficiency it's just not called that. The financial statements are materially correct. What it's talking about is, is it possible that something could happen and not be detected that would be material to the financial statements? We commonly find those types of things every time we post an audit adjustment that's material to the financial statements well that was a material weakness that was addressed during the audit.

Commissioner Woodruff made a motion to accept the audit as presented.

Motion: Woodruff

Second: Pratt

Unanimously approved

7. **DISCUSSION OF AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING A BLOCKER APPARATUS (CROFT)** –The Board of Commissioners will discuss and take any action necessary related to acquisition and use of a blocker apparatus for traffic accidents.

Commissioner Woodruff gave an introduction to this item. He stated that the Department has ordered a \$2M ladder truck that's going to take two years to replace. For 1% of the cost of that new ladder truck, the Department could get a used truck like this one that's on sale for \$20,000 and place that on the highway to assist with traffic. He asked the chief to look into it.

This is something that's picking up in different departments around the country, the idea of a blocker apparatus. It's a sacrificial truck that you park between the individuals who have already had the wreck and others on the highway.

The Chief did a some research and found some other agencies implementing this. The pros are pretty obvious: limiting the exposure of the expensive truck that is put out on the freeway.

There is no long downtime for a front line apparatus getting hit. The cost to replace the blocker apparatus is significantly cheaper than replacing a new truck worth \$2 million.

The Chief went over several possible types of trucks.

One of the biggest drawbacks is the limited space here on our property. We've reached every fence line and board. The other drawback is staffing the blocker truck. There are four on the ladder truck. One could be taken off and pull the apparatus. They can park it on the freeway. With only one person on the freeway, it allows the ladder truck to stay here with three to respond to anything else.

The Commission asked the Chief to come back with more information and data.

No action was taken.

- 8. DISCUSSION OF AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING CHIEF MILLER'S RIDE OUT TIME (CROFT/STUART)** - The Board of Commissioners will discuss and take any action necessary related to paying out Chief Miller's accrued time and benefits on the January 15, 2026, paycheck.

The Administrative Specialist stated that she sent out a spreadsheet that broke down the days Chief Miller is using vacation through the 31st of December. There was some discussion of his various types of leave and his TMRS date. The Administrative Specialist told the Board that as far as TMRS is concerned, since his paycheck will be January 15, the TMRS contribution report will be in January's contribution report. TMRS only wants a month and a year, so that will be January 2026. There is no material impact on the Department regardless of his last pay date as far as TMRS is concerned.

No action was taken.

- 9. DISCUSSION OF AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING BUDGET LINE ITEMS (BUCKERT)** – The Board of Commissioners will discuss and take any action necessary related to adjusting budget line items that exceed \$10,000 over budget.

The Administrator/Finance Director stated that the Board may recall the last few months she's been pointing out that we're likely going to go over in accounting services with Laureen's work on the QuickBooks migration and the Schwartz audit with the prior Administrator. Last month, Commissioner Woodruff reminded all that in the bylaws, if over \$10,000 is moving even within the category, it has to go to the Board for approval. It doesn't have to go to the cities unless it's changing within those 13 categories, but it has to go to the Board if it's more than \$10,000. She stated that she did some journal entries to correct a few things that were coded there that should have been coded somewhere else.

Higher class is difficult to effectively budget because of the nature of the pay. Higher Class is paid when a member rides up to the next rank. Captain Ekblaw has been out for a year on workers' comp and someone has been riding up in his position for a year. There is plenty of room in the payroll category to adjust for this. She estimates there is approximately \$20,000 to finish out the year based on what has been spent so far.

For professional services, these are the line items I'm proposing that we take things from to make up the \$24,000 that accounting services is over.

- **17306 IT Services:** \$3,018
- **17308 Health Insurance Consulting Fees:** \$2,825
- **17309 Medical Director Services:** \$5,800
- **17310 Salary/Benefit Survey:** \$1,000
- **17311 Legal Notices:** \$10,000
- **17313 Other Prof Services:** \$1,650

She warned the Commission that she may still be coming back with a budget amendment, but she recognizes the Board likes to package up budget amendments with as many things as possible so we don't have to keep going back to the cities. It's going to be very tight. Professional services as a whole is going to be tight.

There was a motion to adopt the budget adjustments as set forth on the slide.

Motion: Woodruff

Second: Adams

Unanimously approved

- 10. DISCUSSION OF AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING PAST FINANCIAL MATTERS (MORRIS)** - 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 Commissioners discussed whether the \$8,000 additional charges on the audit due to fraud could be added to the case against the former Administrator.

There still has been no update from the District Attorney. Brandon asked the Administrator to get him the auditing charges to see if he could get that added to the case.

No action was taken.

- 11. DISCUSSION OF AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING DECEMBER'S MONTHLY MEETING (RAMEY)** – The Board of Commissioners will discuss and take any action necessary related to holding the regularly scheduled December meeting.

There was some discussion on whether or not to cancel the December meeting. Due to the bylaws requiring Board action to cancel a meeting, the decision was made to cancel the meeting and call a special meeting if necessary to conduct any business that might arise.

There was a motion to cancel the December meeting.

Motion: Woodruff

Second: Pratt

Unanimously approved

12. FUTURE TOPICS

- Fund balance return to cities
- Ambulance monies return to cities
- 2026 Conflict of Interest forms

13. NEXT MEETING DATE

DECEMBER 17, 2025

14. ADJOURNMENT

There was a motion to adjourn at 7:27 pm by Commissioner Buesinger.

Motion: Buesinger

Second: Woodruff

Unanimously approved