



July 17, 2023

Minutes: ESD 12

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM by President David Monk. Board Members present: Kari Bersano, Nancy Bertholf, Danny Bristow, Cody Seale. Visitors: Wes Johnston, Brandon Smith, Robert York.

The minutes from the June 19, 2023, meeting were approved as written.

There were no public comments.

Fire Chief Robert York displayed the new ESD 12 logo which will be used on the station, equipment and uniforms. He reported on the donation of 4 thermal energy imagers and air pacts. The donations from the Dallas FD were provided through the Texas Forest Service and will update current equipment.

Mr. Monk reported dates for upcoming meetings as required to set tax rates. Notice will be posted on August 4 for ESD Board Meeting on August 7 to discuss budget and tax rate. Both items require a vote and notice of public hearing. A quarter page notice in the newspaper (Athens Daily Review) and website posting are required at least 7 days prior to meeting. The budget and tax rate public hearing are scheduled for August 25; however, this could be subject to change if the County Tax Assessor has not met their deadlines.

The contract with the CVFD was discussed. Mr. Monk stated there was still a clarification needed on one item but recommended we approve the contract noting a possible amendment at the next meeting. Danny Bristow moved to accept the contract, Cody Seale seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

The CVFD Budget was reviewed. It was noted that a stipend for volunteers was missing. Mr. Johnston said that they did want this included but had not finalized a plan for tracking mileage for firefighters on call. Cody Seale moved to accept the budget with future consideration for mileage to be amended. Danny Bristow seconded. All members voted in favor.

The preliminary budget for the ESD was discussed. It was noted that the budget did not include the cost of a webpage nor expenses for the treasurer's report. Mrs. Bertholf noted that a lap top for both the treasurer and secretary would insure record keeping was self contained on ESD property and could be easily passed on as board members retire. A website would provide transparency with easy access to public records.

Mr. Monk asked for discussion on the tax rate. Mrs. Bersano stated she would like a 10 cent per \$100. She felt like this would provide an income that would cover future growth and long term goals set by the fire department to update existing equipment. Mr. Monk reminded members that there were other

departments that had set their rates from 2.5% to 7.5%. The highest being Westside VFD which also collects sales tax. Mr. York noted that the VFD with the lowest rates had much smaller service areas.

Mr. Bristow stated concern for the 10 cent rate noting that he would have a difficult time rationalizing the large reserve in the proposed budget. Mr. Seale also expressed concern about tax payers' response.

Mrs. Bertholf pointed out that most taxpayers had paid very little for fire service in the past 60 years. Mr. York also noted that the current operating budget left no room for future purchases and expansion which would be covered by the reserve. Mr. Monk again noted that once a tax is set, it would take an election to raise it to meet increasing standards for operation.

Mr. Monk called for a vote. Voting for a 10 cent/\$100 ESD 12 tax: Kari Bersano, Nancy Bertholf, Cody Seale. Against: Danny Bristow. Abstaining: David Monk. The motion passed.

Cody Seale moved to adjourn. Danny Bristow seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 7:40 PM