

The Rusk County Emergency Services District #1 met on June 5th at 5 :45 p.m. with Board President David Burks presiding. Board Members present were Gloria Dooley, Jiffy Dukes and Wayne Griffith. Absent was Board Member Curt Collins. The meeting was opened with a prayer from Jiffy Dukes followed by the pledge to the American Flag. Also present was Paul Patterson, Michael Searcy, Bill Ruby and Tina Dukes. **Purpose of Meeting:** Review and finalize the proposed job descriptions for the District Operations Manager (later discussed as Director of Operations/District Administrator) and Business Manager positions in preparation for future hiring.

The Board conducted a detailed workshop focused entirely on refining the organizational structure and job descriptions for future paid administrative staff. Discussion centered on establishing a clear chain of command, defining responsibilities between the operations position and business manager position, and ensuring compliance with Texas law governing ESD operations.

Key consensus items included:

- The district should have **one primary administrative leader** responsible for day-to-day operations and organizational development.
- The Board remains the governing authority and retains fiduciary responsibility.
- The administrative leader should not be micromanaged but should operate under Board policy and direction.
- The Business Manager position should support financial, payroll, records, and administrative functions while reporting to the operations position.
- Volunteer fire departments will retain authority over their own volunteer personnel.
- The operations position will focus on strategic planning, coordination with departments, contract compliance, and operational oversight.
- Degree requirements should not eliminate otherwise qualified applicants with significant real-world experience.
- Additional workshops will be needed to establish salary ranges, benefits, personnel policies, disciplinary procedures, employee handbooks, and purchasing authorities.

Board members discussed whether the District should have one senior administrator overseeing all district operations or multiple equal administrative positions.

The Board generally agreed:

- One individual should be responsible for overall administration of the District.
- Additional positions should be built underneath that individual as the organization grows.
- The title itself was less important than clearly defining responsibilities.
- Suggested titles included:
 - Director of Operations
 - District Administrator
 - Operations Manager

Discussion emphasized that while the Board remains legally responsible for District actions, daily operations should be managed by the administrative leader rather than by Board members. The consensus on the Operations title was District Administrator or Director of Operations.

The Board discussed how much authority should be delegated to the operations position.

Discussion included:

- Hiring and supervision of future paid personnel.
- Recommendations regarding discipline and termination.
- Development of personnel policies.
- Oversight of operational functions.
- Maintaining Board involvement without micromanaging employees.

Members agreed the Board must remain engaged in governance while allowing staff to perform their duties. Concerns were raised about creating a structure where one individual could act without accountability.

The Board discussed allowing disciplinary actions while maintaining appeal rights or Board review processes through future personnel policies.

Operations Position Job Description Review

Job Summary

The Board agreed language should be revised to clarify authority over **paid firefighters only**, since volunteer departments maintain authority over their own personnel.

Strategic Planning

The Board agreed strategic planning should be specifically identified as a responsibility of the operations position.

Language was recommended to include:

- Leading strategic planning efforts.
- Coordinating long-term organizational development.
- Assisting the Board in preparing for future growth and paid staffing initiatives.

Reporting Structure

The Board agreed:

- The operations position reports directly to the Board.
- The individual should attend Board meetings and advise members on operational matters.
- The position should provide updates regarding service providers and district operations.

Purchasing Authority

Discussion focused on purchasing responsibilities.

The Board distinguished between:

- Operational coordination of equipment needs.
- Financial approval and payment authority.

Members discussed:

- Tires
- SCBA equipment
- Thermal imaging cameras
- Gas monitors
- General department support equipment

Consensus indicated operational staff could coordinate and prepare purchasing requests, but expenditures would remain subject to Board policies and approval requirements.

Service Agreement Compliance

The Board agreed the operations position should oversee compliance with:

- Service contracts
- Reporting requirements
- Certification requirements

- Records management obligations
- Other operational obligations of contracted service providers.

Interagency Relationships

The Board agreed the position should serve as liaison between:

- Volunteer fire departments
- Other emergency service organizations
- Governmental agencies
- Planning organizations
- Other entities as directed by the Board

Examples discussed included OEM meetings and Local Emergency Planning Committee meetings.

Driver's License Requirement

The Board discussed requiring a Class B CDL.

After discussion, consensus favored:

- Requiring a valid Texas driver's license.
- Making higher classifications preferred rather than mandatory.

Education Requirements

The Board discussed degree requirements extensively.

Members agreed:

- A degree alone does not guarantee competence.
- Significant management and operational experience may be equally valuable.
- Language should include allowance for equivalent experience.

The Board supported retaining education preferences while allowing equivalent professional experience to qualify applicants.

Volunteer Fire Service Experience

The Board discussed requiring volunteer fire service experience.

Consensus favored:

- Volunteer fire department experience remaining highly desirable.
- Changing the requirement to a preferred qualification rather than an absolute requirement.

Knowledge and Skills

The Board discussed various statutory and emergency management knowledge requirements.

Members expressed concern that excessive requirements might discourage qualified applicants.

Consensus favored:

- Listing such knowledge as preferred.
- Allowing training after hire where appropriate.

Business Manager Job Description Review

Reporting Relationship

The Board agreed:

- The Business Manager should report directly to the Operations Director/Administrator.
- The Business Manager should support the Board Treasurer as needed.
- The Business Manager should attend Board meetings when required.

Financial Responsibilities

The Board discussed assigning responsibility for:

- Payroll processing
- Personnel records
- Financial reporting
- Budget support
- Contract administration
- Annual reporting requirements

Members noted that many current Treasurer responsibilities would ultimately transition to the Business Manager while remaining under Board oversight.

Contract Management

Discussion included:

- Annual reporting requirements.
- Interlocal agreements.
- Service contracts.
- Insurance renewals.
- Recurring contractual obligations.

Consensus favored assigning contract tracking and management functions to the Business Manager while ensuring appropriate reporting to the Operations Director and Board.

Software and Financial Skills

The Board agreed the Business Manager should possess:

- Microsoft Excel proficiency.
- QuickBooks proficiency.
- Knowledge of governmental accounting practices.
- Budgeting and financial reporting experience.

Education Requirements

The Board again expressed support for recognizing equivalent experience in place of formal degrees when appropriate.

Members noted successful professionals often possess extensive practical experience despite lacking formal academic credentials.

Confidentiality

The Board agreed maintaining confidentiality of personnel and financial information should remain a mandatory requirement rather than a preferred qualification.

Supervisory Authority

Discussion determined the Business Manager should generally support administrative operations rather than directly supervise staff. Relevant language was recommended for revision.

Compensation and Benefits Discussion

The Board briefly discussed future compensation planning.

Topics included:

- Salary ranges.
- Retirement participation through the Texas County & District Retirement System (TCDRS).
- Health insurance options.
- Vehicle allowances.
- Cell phone allowances.
- Total compensation package considerations.

No formal action was taken, but members agreed compensation and benefits would need further study before recruitment begins.

Meeting Conclusions

The Board completed a detailed review of both job descriptions and identified numerous revisions for incorporation into the next draft.

Major themes included:

1. Establishing a clear chain of command.
2. Maintaining Board governance authority.
3. Separating operational and financial responsibilities.
4. Allowing equivalent experience in lieu of strict degree requirements.
5. Preserving volunteer department autonomy.
6. Preparing the District for future paid staffing.
7. Developing future policies governing personnel, purchasing, and discipline.

No formal action was taken during this meeting.

The meeting served as a work session to refine draft job descriptions for future Board consideration and adoption.

There being no further business to come before the Board at this time, a motion to adjourn was made by Board Member Jiffy Dukes, and duly seconded by Board Member Wayne Griffith. On a unanimous vote of the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 8:01 p.m.

Secretary

President