RUSK COUNTY EMERGENCY SERVICES DISTRICT NO. 1
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING

Thursday, August 20, 2026 | 6:30 p.m. | 1515 Whippoorwill Avenue, Henderson, Texas

Board Members Present	David Burks, President; Wayne Griffith, Vice President; Gloria Dooley, Secretary/Treasurer; James “Jiffy” Dukes, Assistant Treasurer; Curt Collins, Commissioner
Quorum	Present - all five Commissioners were in attendance
Meeting Type	Regular Meeting
Record Basis	Posted agenda, combined transcript/notes, and multiple audio recordings

1. Call to Order and Establish Quorum. President David Burks called the regular meeting of the Rusk County Emergency Services District No. 1 Board of Commissioners to order at approximately 6:36 p.m. All five Commissioners were present, and a quorum was established.

2. Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance. The invocation was delivered by Chief Jeremy Bozeman, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States flag.

3. Roll Call of Departments. A roll call of departments was recorded as follows: Carlisle, Crims Chapel, Church Hill, Eastside, Elderville, Henderson, Garrison, Kilgore, Kilgore Rescue, Rusk County Rescue, Laneville, Mt. Enterprise, New London, New Salem, Overton, Reklaw and Tatum. Departments absent were Texas Forest Service.

4. Public Comments and Announcements. Michael O’Conner addressed firefighter heat safety and urged departments to treat rehab, hydration, cooling, and removal of overheated personnel as mandatory operational practices during extreme heat. He referenced recent serious heat-related incidents, including a firefighter with a reported temperature of 105.2°F, and offered to distribute a sample heat-rehab policy and training material regarding heat exhaustion and heat stroke. Additional comments encouraged incident commanders to use the American Red Cross first-responder contact system following residential fires and other disasters so displaced residents can receive timely shelter and assistance. Departments were also encouraged to support community fundraising activities when appropriate.

Board announcement: Commissioner James “Jiffy” Dukes advised the Board that he intended to step down from his ESD Board position effective September 30, 2026, subject to remaining in office until a successor is appointed and qualified as required. He asked those present to identify a suitable Precinct 4 candidate who would work effectively with the Board, firefighters, and the County Commissioners. He also advised that he and his wife were reducing other volunteer commitments and would move to an auxiliary role with Laneville VFD. In a separate planning announcement, Board members were advised that a work session would be needed within approximately two weeks to address quick-response-station timelines and employee-benefit planning for 2027.

5. Consider and Approve Minutes of Previous Meetings. The agenda called for consideration of the July 11, July 16, and August 4, 2026 minutes. The corrected meeting packet contained revised copies for Board review. A motion to approve was made by Jiffy Dukes, and duly seconded by Curt Collins. Motion passed with unanimous vote.

6. Consider and Approve Monthly Financial Reports. Board Administrative Assistant Dawn Taylor presented the District’s monthly financial reports for July 2026, including the general money-market account, checking account, obligation account, and sales-tax money-market account. The Board discussed a correction in the oral presentation of the sales-tax deposit and interest amounts. The reports were accepted as presented in the packet.

Motion: Wayne Griffith moved to approve the monthly financial reports as presented. Second: James “Jiffy” Dukes. Vote: Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

7. Consider and Approve Monthly Payment of Bills. The Board reviewed the detailed check register distributed with the financial packet. No material questions or objections were raised.

Motion: James “Jiffy” Dukes moved to approve payment of the monthly bills. Second: Wayne Griffith. Vote: Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

8. Consider and Approve Revenue Transfers Among District Accounts. Secretary/Treasurer Dooley reported two July transfers: $573,459.25 representing sales-tax collections was transferred from checking to the sales/use-tax money-market account, and $300,000 was transferred from the general money-market account to checking to fund the SCBA purchase.

Motion: Wayne Griffith moved to approve the account transfers as presented. Second: Curt Collins. Vote: Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

9. Consider and Approve Monthly Summary Financial Report from District VFDs. The Board reviewed the July departmental financial summaries and detailed department reports. Commissioners stated that no large discrepancy or unusual item stood out during review.

Motion: James “Jiffy” Dukes moved to approve the July VFD financial reports. Second: Curt Collins. Vote: Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

10. Consider and Possibly Approve Pending Items Regarding the New Salem VFD Station Project. The Board received an update on the New Salem station. Recent rain had caused erosion/washout concerns around the site. One proposal had been obtained and an additional proposal was being sought for grading, erosion control, mesh or similar soil stabilization, seeding, and related work. New Salem representatives indicated they could assist with watering after seeding. Construction progress was also reported, with a substantial portion of the exterior siding installed. The Board agreed to wait for additional pricing before taking action.

Action: No formal action taken.

11. Consider and Possibly Approve Communications/Technology Improvements and Repairs. The Board considered several technology and communications matters.

Antivirus protection

The District could expand its existing antivirus subscription from approximately 25 to 50 devices for a total annual cost of $235, allowing protection to be installed on department computers that access District resources. Commissioners cited recent public-safety cybersecurity incidents and considered the expanded coverage a low-cost risk-reduction measure.

Motion: James “Jiffy” Dukes moved to approve antivirus protection for up to 50 covered computers at $235 annually. Second: Curt Collins. Vote: Motion carried unanimously.

Microsoft 365 / Department email

The Board discussed a future option to provide each department with a standardized ruskcountyfire.org email address and cloud resources through nonprofit Microsoft 365 pricing. The estimated Business Basic cost discussed was approximately $1 per user per month. Commissioners saw value in providing consistent department addresses and shared cloud storage but were not ready to implement the program at this meeting.

Action: No formal action taken; item retained for future consideration.

PDK access cards and key fobs

The Board discussed purchasing both access cards and plastic key fobs compatible with the PDK door-access system. Buying 100 of each was estimated at approximately $120 total. Providing both formats would allow authorized users to choose a card or key-chain credential.

Motion: James “Jiffy” Dukes moved to purchase 100 access cards and 100 key fobs for the PDK system. Second: Curt Collins. Vote: Motion carried unanimously.

Laneville tower / south-end communications

The Laneville tower was reported complete except for the previously approved rock work. Participants reported substantial improvement in radio coverage at Laneville School and portions of the south end. Carlisle representatives, however, continued to report weak portable-radio coverage in portions of their area, particularly toward the Smith County line and south of Highway 79. The Board discussed possible solutions including mobile-radio remote microphones, cellular-capable radios, and use of the Good Springs water tower. A possible interim solution would relocate an existing VHF repeater from the former Overton location to Good Springs and link it to improve Carlisle coverage. The District already leases space at that site and owns much of the required equipment. Staff was directed to develop costs for electrical service, antenna work, and related installation for a future agenda. The possibility of paying the water-supply entity a monthly amount for shared electrical service rather than installing a separate meter was also discussed, but no action could be taken because that specific arrangement was not posted.

12. Consider and Possibly Approve Funding Assistance with Sheriff's Department CAD System Changes. The Sheriff explained continuing operational problems with the County's current CAD/RMS vendor and advised that Commissioners Court had authorized efforts to terminate that contract. The preferred replacement is Motorola Solutions Spillman, which is widely used by neighboring agencies and could improve interoperability and dispatch information available to fire departments. The quoted project cost discussed was approximately $487,000. The Sheriff had approximately $152,000 in available funds and requested District assistance so the County would not have to wait for resolution of its vendor dispute before replacing the system. The Board discussed interfaces with Alpine/Active911, future fire-reporting capability, ownership, maintenance, and the direct benefit of reliable countywide dispatch. The Board also discussed the possible return of funds recovered in the County's settlement or resolution of the current CAD-vendor dispute. The County would remain responsible for ongoing system maintenance. **Approved structure:** The District would advance approximately $335,000 toward the Spillman purchase, conditioned upon Rusk County Commissioners Court approving an interlocal agreement under which the District would be reimbursed two-thirds of the funds advanced from proceeds from the dispute.

Motion: James "Jiffy" Dukes moved to approve the approximate $335,000 conditional funding arrangement as discussed, subject to an approved interlocal agreement. Second: Curt Collins. Vote: Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

13. Consider and Possibly Approve Salvage Property Resolution Regarding Used Laneville VFD Tires. The Board discussed used Laneville VFD tires that had no continuing value to the District. Based on legal guidance, the tires would be declared salvage property with zero value so they could be disposed of or transferred in accordance with law rather than treated as surplus property requiring sale.

Motion: James "Jiffy" Dukes moved to approve the salvage-property resolution for the used Laneville VFD tires. Second: Curt Collins. Vote: Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

14. Consider and Possibly Approve Reimbursement to Church Hill VFD for Additional Metal-Enclosure Cost. Church Hill requested an additional $110 over the previously approved amount after the enclosure opening had to be increased from approximately eight feet to ten feet to accommodate fire apparatus. Commissioners discussed the recently revised reimbursement guidelines and the need to avoid small after-the-fact reimbursement requests when departments have adequate operating funds. The discussion strongly favored requiring future project overruns to be brought to the Board before expenditure. **Motion: James "Jiffy" Dukes moved to deny the request. Second: Gloria Dooley. Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.**

15. Consider and Possibly Approve Reklaw VFD Replacement Hose and TFS Training-Grant Cost Share. Reklaw VFD requested replacement hose after portions of its hose inventory failed annual certification testing. The quoted replacement cost was $4,290, excluding freight. Reklaw also requested a District cost share of $3,021.03 on a Texas A&M Forest Service training grant. The grant-funded training system was described as a countywide training resource that could be used by multiple departments.

Motion: Gloria Dooley moved to approve both Reklaw requests, including the $4,290 hose purchase plus applicable freight and the $3,021.03 TFS training-grant cost share. Second: Wayne Griffith. Vote: Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

16. Consider and Possibly Approve Fiscal Year 2027 Budget. The Board reviewed the proposed budget for January 1 through December 31, 2027. Commissioners indicated they had reviewed the revisions and corrections circulated in the packet. The Board clarified that the Sheriff's CAD assistance approved under Item 12 would be a 2026 expenditure/budget amendment rather than a 2027 budget item.

Motion: James "Jiffy" Dukes moved to approve the 2027 District budget as presented. Second: Curt Collins. Vote: Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

17. Public Comment on Proposed 2026 Tax Rate. President Burks opened the public-comment period on the proposed 2026 tax rate. The Board explained that the proposed rate was the calculated no-new-revenue rate. No member of the public offered comment during the recorded hearing.

18. Record Vote to Establish 2026 Tax Rate; Adopt Order Levying Taxes; Authorize Filing. The Board considered adoption of the 2026 no-new-revenue tax rate of $0.077927 per $100 of taxable valuation. The Board noted that this rate was a small increase from the prior year's $0.076280 rate but was the calculated no-new-revenue rate for 2026.

Motion: James “Jiffy” Dukes moved to adopt the 2026 no-new-revenue tax rate of $0.077927 per $100 valuation, adopt the Order Levying Taxes, and authorize filing with the Rusk County Tax Assessor/Collector. Second: Wayne Griffith.

Record vote: David Burks - Aye; Wayne Griffith - Aye; Gloria Dooley - Aye; James “Jiffy” Dukes - Aye; Curt Collins - Aye. Motion carried unanimously, 5-0.

19. Acknowledge and Approve Website Posting of Adopted Tax Rate Statement. Following adoption of the tax rate, the Board considered the required statement regarding the adopted rate for posting on the District’s website home page.

Motion: Gloria Dooley moved to acknowledge and approve posting the adopted-tax-rate statement on the District website. Second: James “Jiffy” Dukes. Vote: Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

20. Adjournment. There being no further posted business, a motion to adjourn was made by Wayne Griffith, and duly seconded by Curt Collins. The meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

_____ _____

Gloria Dooley, Secretary/Treasurer
Date: _____

David Burks, President
Approved: _____