South Davis Metro Service Area

The South Davis Metro Fire Service Area Board of Trustees held a meeting on Monday, October 19th , 2026, at 5:00 p.m., located at 255 South 100 West, Bountiful 84010

BOARD MEMBERS
Commissioner Ryan Westergard (WX) – Chair
Commissioner Brian Horrocks (NSL) – Vice Chair
Commissioner Kate Bradshaw (BT)
Commissioner Clark Wilkinson (CT)
Commissioner Ken Romney (WB)
Commissioner Bob Stevenson (DC)

STAFF PRESENT
Fire Chief - Jeff Larsen
Deputy Fire Chief – Josh Hardy
Deputy Fire Chief – Nick Dodge
Legal Counsel – Todd Godfrey
Finance/HR Director – Jessica Hardy
Accountant- Hunter Stone
Board Secretary – Nikki Thompson
Administrative Committee Chair – Bryce Haderlie

Commissioner Westergard stated this was a scheduled meeting, and a notice of time, place, and agenda was sent to the appropriate agencies and to each Board member before the meeting.

Summary
The SDMFSA Board of Trustees meeting opened with approval of September financial statements, disbursements, and prior meeting minutes, then centered on a comprehensive EMS licensure presentation mandated by HB 215. South Davis Metro Fire's model — serving 120,000 residents with 74% EMS call volume and a 6-minute average response time — drew explicit praise from state EMS medical director Eric Bornemeier as a 'model report' to be shared across any state EMS agencies. The board voted to award both the 911 EMS and inter-facility transport licenses for a 4-year term and separately approved the purchase of three Ford F-150 staff vehicles at roughly $8,500 under budget each.

Beyond those votes, the meeting featured extended discussion over proposed bylaw changes, which the board ultimately adopted in an amended form designating the Fire Chief as budget officer but removing the board chair and vice chair from the administrative committee. The session also surfaced unresolved strategic questions about the district's long-term governance model.

Consideration of September 21st Minutes

- Commissioner Bradshaw made a motion to approve the minutes; Commissioner Romney seconded the motion. This item was approved.

September Disbursements

- Notable disbursements included $11,891.86 to Granger for new turnout gear racks at Station 81 (page 10 of the packet). 0:06:58
- The annual contract with Caselle, the district's accounting software provider, was paid $8,932 (page 13). 0:07:06
- Wall-to-wall flooring for Station 82 and Station 85 carpet totaled $13,183 and $22,223 respectively (page 16). 0:07:23

- In the previous board meeting, Commissioner Bradshaw raised a concern that disbursement documents, which become public, currently include employee names associated with drug testing screenings and some child support withholdings, and requested those names be anonymized going forward. 0:08:19
- Mr. Stone confirmed he can remove those names from future disbursement documents; the district has already redacted some personal information for the state transparency site. 0:09:05

September Financial Statements

- Total cash in the general fund at the end of September was $6,603,420; total cash across all funds was $10,905,844. The PTIF interest rate increased slightly to 4.03%. 0:06:05
- Impact fees received in September totaled $9,541 ($3,864 from Centerville and $5,677 from North Salt Lake). Property tax receipts for August disbursements were $126,739.61, with $428,474.97 received in October for September payments. 0:06:28
- Total general fund revenue through September was $3,394,774.85 against $5,095,471.92 in expenditures, yielding a net loss of $1,700,697.07. The deficit is expected and will be offset by the large property tax disbursement received in December. 0:07:00
- Operations Division overtime had reached 48.3% of its annual budget through the first three months of the fiscal year; this was expected because the summer period includes high-activity special events, and the pace is anticipated to taper significantly for the remainder of the year. 0:07:54
- A $250,000 contribution from HF Sinclair has been recorded in Fund 45 and earmarked for the training facility. Two additional refineries are in early budget discussions about making their own contributions, with timing still to be determined. 0:09:01
- The Wildland Enterprise Fund shows a negative cash balance of $81,377.22, offset by $179,249.91 billed but not yet received from the state; once collected, the fund is projected to carry a net revenue of $92,781.42. Payment has been processed and approved through the state. 0:09:22

Fiscal Year Audit Status

- The fiscal year audit is almost complete, with only the MD&A section still in progress; the added complexity of switching accounting methods (enterprise to governmental funds) has extended the timeline, and the audit is expected to be presented to the board in November. 0:11:39

Introduction of Deputy Chief Nick Dodge

- South Davis Metro Fire introduced Nick Dodge as the new Deputy Chief of Operations following a search that included nine external interviews. 0:12:39
- Chief Dodge brings a 25-year career at West Valley City Fire Department, the last seven as a combat shift battalion chief, with experience spanning training, EMS, administration, operations, and tactical medicine. 0:13:14
- Chief Dodge also developed what is described as the first recognized critical care program in Utah, created in partnership with State Medical Director Peter Taillac, and worked on West Valley City's tactical paramedic program alongside their SWAT team. 0:14:45

EMS Licensure Presentation

- Last year's HB 215 legislation required South Davis Metro Fire to issue an RFP for both its 911 EMS licensure and its inter-facility transport licensure. South Davis Metro Fire is the second special services district in the state to go through this new process, after Hurricane, Washington County. AMR acknowledged the RFP but did not submit a response due to timing. 0:18:04
- South Davis Metro Fire serves approximately 120,000 residents across five cities and unincorporated areas, with 7,495 calls for service in the prior year. Of those, 5,500 were EMS calls and 3,401 were EMS transports, making EMS-related calls 74% of total call volume. 0:21:00
- The department operates with 82 field personnel on three shifts, staffing four ALS ambulances 24/7, three medic engines (81, 82, 83) each carrying at least one paramedic, and a bariatric ambulance available via jump staffing (used 19 times in the prior year, including 11 incidents involving Lakeview Hospital and care facilities). 0:21:26
- All sworn personnel are certified at advanced EMT level or higher; the department has 34 paramedics (including command staff) and 58 advanced EMTs. State statute requires two paramedics dispatched to all ALS calls, with the option to cancel one on arrival if acuity is lower than initially reported. 0:24:15

- South Davis Metro Fire plans to execute an MOU with Gold Cross Ambulance to serve as the contingency provider for inter-facility transport overflow during surge periods, prioritizing Gold Cross from the south to avoid depleting coverage in Farmington and Kaysville from the north. 0:29:21
- The department's average 911 response time in 2025 was 6 minutes and 10 seconds from dispatch to first unit on scene, well under the NFPA 1710 guideline of 9 minutes for 90% of Priority 1 responses. Hospital wall times average under 10 minutes, enabling rapid unit turnover. 0:32:49

EMS Revenue, QA/QI Program, and State Recognition

- EMS incident reports are targeted for completion before crews leave a shift and must be documented, QA/QI reviewed, peer reviewed, officer reviewed and submitted to the state within 24 hours of the incident. Early submission is also linked to improved insurance reimbursement outcomes. 0:33:28
- The QA/QI program tracks metrics including return of spontaneous circulation rates, cardiac arrest outcomes, first-pass intubation success, and medication appropriateness; any deficiencies trigger corrective action and coaching, and all complaints route directly to the Fire chief. 0:34:14
- Billing rates are set by the state and cannot be adjusted by South Davis Metro Fire; the gap between HB269 base rate for ALS transport and Medicare/Medicaid reimbursement rates produces a structural write-off. In 2025, the total amount billed was $8.43 million, required write-offs were $3.9 million, and net collected revenue was $3.59 million. 0:35:07
- Eric Bornemeier, state EMS Director (Bureau of EMS, DPS), called South Davis Metro Fire's RFP presentation a 'model report' and 'exemplary,' expressing intent to share it as a best practice across the state's 141 EMS agencies. He noted the department is well positioned not only for current requirements but for the direction EMS regulation is heading at the state level. 0:43:14

EMS Licensure Award

- The Bureau of EMS provided a template letter, requiring signatures from each board member, that satisfies both the 911 EMS services and inter-facility transport licensure requirements under the new state statute. 0:45:14
- South Davis Metro Fire is the 3rd department in Davis County to go through this licensure process; Clinton City Fire recently completed theirs, and AMR is reported to be monitoring transport revenue numbers across departments. 0:50:47
- Commissioner Bradshaw raised concern that continued legislative pressure could hollow out inter-facility transport by separating its more profitable reimbursements from the broader ambulance service funding model, potentially eroding the district's revenue base. 0:46:24
- The State Chiefs Association met with Senator Owens, the bill's author, who is reluctant to reopen the EMS licensure bill out of concern that doing so would transform the legislation; he has agreed to address the special services district (17B) piece separately. 0:47:09
- Mr. Bournemeir echoed that early concerns about the legislation proved premature as implementation played out and issues were resolved at the lowest level; there is broad hesitancy to reopen the bill. 0:48:37
- Commissioner Westergard noted that the 'firehouse model,' where inter-facility transport revenue offsets the fixed cost of maintaining ambulance staffing across multiple stations, is important in keeping emergency response times (cited as a 6-minute benchmark) affordable for residents. 0:53:44
- Commissioner Bradshaw made a motion to award our EMS licensure to South Davis Metro Fire. Commissioner Horrocks seconded the motion. All voted "aye"; this motion was approved.

Staff Vehicle Purchases

- The district has experienced increasing transmission maintenance costs on its Ford Explorer staff vehicles, attributed possibly to Skyline Drive terrain or equipment load; 2 existing F-150s have performed well by comparison. 0:55:36
- The F-150 platform also aligns with the district's clean cab philosophy, keeping turnout gear, air packs, and equipment out of the passenger cab. 0:56:09
- Young Automotive, which is on state bid and located within the county, will supply the trucks and handle the full lighting and radio package; a truck bed cover replaces a bed shell for cost savings. 0:56:34
- Commissioner Stevenson suggested contacting Young Automotive; it operates a trade-in rotation program used by the Sheriff's Department and search-and-rescue fleet, where minimal drilling during outfitting preserves resale value and allows trade-backs roughly every 2 years for as little as ~$3,000 per truck. 0:58:17

Bylaw Proposal

- The proposed bylaw changes focus on the administrative committee's composition and processes, not the board itself; key additions include the board chair, vice chair, and the fire chief (as a voting member, up from a non-voting role), bringing proposed voting membership to 9. 1:00:49
- A proposed change to Article 4 would create a preference that the county commission appointee reside within district boundaries; Commissioner Bradshaw noted that none of the current 3 commissioners live within those boundaries, making the provision inapplicable today. 1:03:45
- The board debated refining the county seat language from 'preference' to a tiered rule: first priority to a commissioner living in the district, then to another county elected official residing in the district, then to a commission assignment if no qualifying elected official exists. 1:07:23
- Commissioner Wilkinson raised objection to adding board members to the administrative committee, arguing it reduces the city managers' independent oversight role and dilutes the internal control function that justifies the per-city assessment. 1:10:42
- Commissioner Bradshaw argued that making the fire chief the budget officer resolves a structural inconsistency: the fire chief is held accountable to the budget but currently has no formal ownership of it; the district's finance team was cited as sufficient support. 1:13:39
- Mr. Godfrey explained that the revised bylaws require the administrative committee to review the proposed budget by March and deliver a recommendation to the board by April 1 each year, aligning with truth-in-taxation hearing deadlines under recent property tax law changes; nothing prohibits additional meetings if major budget changes arise. 1:19:11
- Mr. Huffman (West Bountiful city administrator) provided historical context: the administrative committee was created specifically to give city councils confidence to grant the district property taxing authority, and the committee's membership and duties are spelled out in the founding resolutions and interlocal agreements of all 5 cities and the county. 1:22:07
- The administrative committee unanimously supports making the fire chief the budget officer and is prepared to recommend procedural changes internally (meeting frequency, scope discipline) without requiring board action; however, Mr. Huffman urged the board to consult city councils before formalizing any changes given the original creation documents. 1:26:56
- Mr. Huffman pushed back on what he characterized as vague accusations of unprofessional conduct by the administrative committee, stating such concerns should be raised directly (including in closed session if needed) rather than implied as a rationale for structural changes. 1:28:07
- The bylaw proposal before the board contained 3 elements: (1) changes to the county representative preference, (2) designating the fire chief as the budget officer, and (3) changes to the composition and voting membership of the administrative committee. 1:39:27
- Mr. Godfrey gave a formal opinion that the board is not legally obligated to seek city council approval for bylaw changes, even those affecting the administrative committee's makeup, after reviewing both their own analysis and a legal opinion submitted by counsel for one of the member cities. 1:41:40
- Mr. Haderlie (Administrative Committee Chair) raised a concern that placing two elected board members on the administrative committee alongside city managers would create a power imbalance similar to having elected officials on planning commissions, where appointed members tend to defer to the elected officials rather than deliberating independently. 1:47:15
- Commissioner Horrocks expressed no objection to the fire chief holding a vote on the administrative committee, noting the fire chief could be outvoted by the other members and that the current rotating budget officer has always been a voting member. 1:51:24
- An informal straw poll found near-consensus on the county preference changes and the fire chief as budget officer; the administrative committee retaining its role as long as assessments exist also drew consensus, while adding the board chair and vice chair to the administrative committee drew clear pushback. 1:53:17
- Chief Larsen clarified that at an administrative committee meeting approximately 6 weeks prior, there had been consensus on all items under discussion except for the fire chief becoming a voting member of the administrative committee, which had not been raised at that session. 2:01:49
- Mr. Godfrey flagged an unannounced change in the proposed bylaws: language under the administrative committee's mission related to reviewing compensation of officials had been struck; counsel clarified this was

intentionally removed as duplicative, since compensation review is inherently part of overall budget review. 2:06:01

- Commissioner Bradshaw noted that redline copies were not included in the board packet on either occasion this bylaw revision came before the board; Mr. Godfrey acknowledged this was his office's error after the fire chief had specifically requested a redline be provided. 2:08:23
- Commissioner Stevenson argued that an effective executive officer should be given full responsibility to run the organization, with the board's role limited to oversight rather than operational involvement. 1:30:38
- Commissioner Stevenson proposed that South Davis Metro Fire should eventually transition to being fully funded through property taxation, with city assessments eliminated and city managers stepping back from governance, drawing a parallel to the county's successful paramedic program transfer to fire departments. 1:32:34
- Commissioner Wilkinson asked whether the board has unilateral authority to convert to a full taxing district; Mr. Godfrey indicated it was uncertain under the current Service Area Act, noting two recent changes to the act leave the district's status in between frameworks. 1:33:03
- A prior analysis from 2016, when the district was formed in its current configuration, found that Centerville City's overall property tax rate was too low to absorb the offset required for eliminating city assessments, which was a key barrier at the time. 1:37:07
- When the district was originally formed, each member city was required to lower its tax rate by an equal small amount as 'seed money'; whether that same step-down requirement would apply to a full conversion today remains unresolved. 1:37:53
- Mr. Godfrey acknowledged the district's hybrid nature (part taxing district, part service area) creates complexity but noted it performs better than most comparable entities in the state. 1:38:23

- Commissioner Bradshaw described a concerning disconnect between the fire district and member cities at the elected, staff, and resident levels, discovered during interviews conducted with Commissioner Westergard earlier in the year, noting firefighters do not feel closely connected to the communities they serve. 1:43:00
- The district's governance structure was described as unique in the state, with no comparable model found among sewer, recreation, or other fire districts, a distinction that has created ongoing tension around the question of who holds decision-making authority. 1:44:26
- Commissioner Bradshaw continued that unlike sewer or other service-based assessments, fire service assessments are directly tied to life-safety services, which was offered as a reason the administrative committee and city assessment structure should be preserved for the time being. 1:45:35
- Commissioner Bradshaw expressed a personal view that a new strategic plan should be developed now that the district has a fully staffed command team, to determine whether the district is evolving toward a full taxing entity or remaining a hybrid, noting the current plan is approximately 10 years old. 1:46:11
- Commissioner Bradshaw reflected that the board originally anticipated the district would eventually become a pure taxing entity with assessments phased out, and that forming even the initial taxing component was considered a major milestone at the time. 1:57:55

Operations Report

- Call volume returned to average levels in September; incidents included 2 structure fires (one in North Salt Lake, one in Bountiful) with no injuries, 2 mountain rescue responses, and a significant hazmat callout the prior weekend. 2:09:24
- The hazmat callout involved coordination with the DEA, which has indicated an expected increase in similar incidents; Chief Larsen committed to notifying individual board members when hazmat events occur in their respective cities. 2:09:45
- Chief's interviews for new recruits began the day of the meeting, with 16 candidates being interviewed to fill internal vacancies. 2:10:15
- The board was informed of internal command staffing changes: Captain Clark Willey is being promoted into the EMS Division, and Chief Argyle is reassigned to combat operations on A shift to fill the vacancy left by Chief Hardy, both effective November 1st. 2:10:24
- Chief Larsen shared that Salt Lake City Fire Department lost firefighter John Stevens (16 years of service) after a critical incident; Salt Lake City Fire also recently lost Gabe Riley in a wingsuit accident, leaving the department under significant strain. Chief Larsen reached out to Salt Lake's command staff and Chief Lieb offering condolences and support. 2:10:45

- Chief Larsen circulated a letter for EMS licensure listing all relevant personnel for board members to sign so it could be submitted. 2:11:46
- Commissioner Westergard acknowledged and welcomed the district's two new Deputy Chiefs, thanking them for accepting the role and noting the district is now at full command staff strength. 2:12:03

Board Chair Report
Nothing to report

The regular meeting was adjourned.

Ryan Westergard, Board Chair

N. Thompson
Nicole Thompson, Clerk

Decisions

- *September 21st Board of Trustees minutes were approved. 0:02:18*
- *September disbursements were approved, including a $3,903 Aspen Title settlement fee, $12,597 for PDK door access systems, $18,990 for the fiscal year audit, and an $8,500 Zoll three-year monitor warranty. 0:05:49*
- *September financial statements were approved. 0:11:17*
- *The board voted to award the EMS licensure (covering 911 EMS services and inter-facility transport) to South Davis Metro Fire, valid for a 4-year term pending submission of the signed template and required documents to the Bureau of EMS. 0:52:52*
- *The board approved the purchase of three Ford F-150 staff vehicles from Young Automotive at $71,616 each (approximately $8,500 under the $80,000 per-vehicle budget cap), outfitted with lighting packages, radios, and truck bed covers. 1:00:07*
- *The board adopted the proposed bylaw updates for the South Davis Fire Service Area Board of Trustees, with an amendment to Article 6, Section 3 removing the board chair and vice chair as members of the administrative committee while retaining the fire chief as a member. 2:04:20*
- *Captain Clark Willey was promoted to Battalion Chief to fill the EMS Division vacancy, and Chief Argyle was moved to combat operations to fill the A-shift vacancy left by Chief Hardy, both effective November 1st. 2:10:24*