South Davis Metro Service Area

The South Davis Metro Fire Service Area Board of Trustees held a meeting on Monday, September 21st, 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-excused
Legal Counsel – Todd Godfrey
Finance/HR Director – Jessica Hardy
Data Analyst/Accountant - Hunter Stone
Administrative Assistant - Nikki Thompson
Administrative 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 September board meeting covered a full agenda spanning financial approvals, two interlocal agreements, EMS licensure compliance, a station expansion discussion, and monthly operations updates. The board approved August disbursements and received confirmation that the Truth and Taxation property tax increase was successfully processed. The administrative committee presented recommendations to designate the fire chief as statutory budget officer and reduce administrative committee meetings to budget-cycle meetings only, though legal questions about whether the interlocal creation documents or state statute governs the service area remain unresolved. The board also unanimously approved the Weber County Intercounty Automatic Aid Agreement, extending regional fire response capacity after years of hesitation over staffing and training gaps.

Beyond those items, the board approved posting the EMS licensure RFP on October 1 under Senate Bill 215, with the full board serving as the evaluation committee. A lengthy discussion on Station 81 expansion concluded with the board deferring a formal RFP, directing staff to survey rental options and seek informal architect input before any budget commitment. August was the busiest month of the year with 690 total responses, and the newly hired deputy chief is set to start October 5.

Consideration of August 31st Minutes

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

Notable 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 Cassell, 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

- 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

FY 25-26 Audit Update and Property Tax Increase

- South Davis Metro Fire received confirmation from the Utah State Tax Commission that the Truth and Taxation process was successfully submitted and the district will receive the requested property tax increase. 0:10:19
- Mrs. Hardy credited Mr. Bryce Haderlie (Woods Cross City Manager) specifically for making the Truth in Taxation process successful. 0:10:36
- The FY25-26 audit has no significant findings as of yet, per conversations with the auditor (Rob Wood/HBME). 0:10:41
- The completed annual audit is targeted for presentation to the board at the October 19th meeting. 0:10:48

Administrative Committee Structure and Budget Officer Recommendation

- The administrative committee met with Chief Larsen and reviewed the district's creation documents, bylaws, and input gathered individually from mayors and city managers before forming its recommendations. 0:12:46
- The administrative committee recommends the Fire Chief be designated the statutory budget officer, citing the current arrangement where the administrative committee chair holds that role and must defer to staff as needed. 0:13:10
- The committee also recommends amending the Board of Trustees creation documents (originally adopted and signed by each city in 2015) and the administrative committee bylaws to reflect a reduced meeting schedule focused on the budget process rather than monthly meetings. 0:13:26
- The West Bountiful creation document (adopted August 4, 2015) specifically states that the chair of the administrative committee shall be the budget officer, which is the language driving the need to amend original founding documents. 0:15:02
- Mr. Godfrey noted they are still reviewing whether the interlocal creation documents signed by each city legally bind the service area's governance structure, given that state statute governing service areas may take precedence; this question was flagged as unresolved. 0:16:01
- Mr. Godfrey stated they have not encountered another service area with this type of interlocal governance structure and are operating with limited historical context, as prior legal counsel's files contained no reference to this arrangement. 0:17:09
- A reference to 'budget officer' also appears in Section 6.3 of the Board of Trustees bylaws under the committees section; noted they would want to confirm whether the final adopted copy includes that language. 0:20:39

Davis County Interlocal Agreement

- Davis County Fire Chiefs Association, Davis County attorney Michael Kendall, and Davis County staff (Scott Parke and Jeff Oyler) presented fire departments across the county with a proposed update to an interlocal agreement dating to 1981, which auto-renews annually; a purported 1983 update could not be located. 0:23:47
- South Davis Metro Fire was not listed in the original 1981 document because at that time it was considered part of the county. 0:24:43
- The county identified several parcels not currently assessed under the existing formula and is proposing a standardized formula to be applied consistently across all fire protection entities in Davis County. 0:24:54
- Many of the listed parcels are on unbuildable ground or outside the district's service area, but upon closer review Chief Larsen found that a number of them are within the district's coverage area, raising questions about the accuracy of the parcel list. 0:25:19
- Chief Larsen and Fire Marshal Fessler have spent extensive time reviewing the document and have multiple redlined concerns; meetings with Mr. Kendall and city attorneys from member municipalities are ongoing to work through those issues. 0:26:05
- Discussion of hydrant ownership in unincorporated areas indicated that South Davis Water District has been the primary water system operator in those areas, based on Chief Larsen's experience at a recent fire in the former unincorporated area now part of North Salt Lake. 0:36:42

- Commissioner Bradshaw flagged a provision in the agreement that would assign the district responsibility for hydrant maintenance, which the district currently does not perform; Chief Larsen confirmed the district does not test, flow-test, or maintain any hydrants in any member city. 0:29:55
- Board members emphasized the importance of clarifying whether the updated agreement represents a cleanup of the 1981 document or an expansion of service responsibilities, and whether the proposed funding formula is adequate if new or challenging coverage areas are included. 0:31:17
- Next step is for Chief Larsen and Mr. Godfrey to complete a thorough redline review and return a suggested adoption version to the board; no adoption vote was taken. 0:38:01

Weber County Intercounty Automatic Aid Agreement

- Weber County Fire Chiefs first approached Davis County Fire Chiefs in November 2020 about creating an intercounty automatic aid response structure labeled as a 5-year program; South Davis Metro Fire was listed in the agreement, but never signed. 0:38:38
- The agreement establishes a task force model allowing either county's PSAP to request cross-county mutual aid for large incidents (multi-structure fires, large apartment complexes, wildland fires), modeled after the recent deployment to the Henefer fire. 0:39:17
- The district was previously reluctant to participate due to staffing levels and wildland/urban interface training gaps at the time; Chief Larsen stated the district is now in a position to commit. 0:40:07
- Chief Slater of Ogden Fire Department requested the district join in extending the existing agreement; to the chief's knowledge, all other Davis County fire departments have already signed. 0:40:46
- Key provisions reviewed include the command structure during deployments, injury and death benefits, and equipment damage liability; wildland/urban interface incidents and reimbursement is handled through the state's delegation process. 0:41:58
- Mr. Godfrey confirmed they reviewed the agreement; the only questions raised were the ones the Chief Larsen addressed. 0:42:34
- Chief Larsen noted Hill Air Force Base is included in the agreement with special access provisions; the base has a new training center recently toured by Davis County Fire Chiefs and regularly sends apparatus to assist on off-base incidents. 0:44:43

Refinery Mutual Aid and Regional Partnerships

- Commissioner Horrocks raised the question of whether entities like Chevron and HF Sinclair (formerly Holly Frontier), which operate private fire departments, should be part of intercounty mutual aid agreements. 0:46:13
- Chief Larsen noted the district participates in the Salt Lake Valley Mutual Aid Refinery Group, meeting monthly with each refinery and Salt Lake City Fire; the district covers the majority of refineries in the area, with only Marathon located in Salt Lake County. 0:46:40
- The emergency manager from Tooele County visited Silver Eagle after hearing about the Salt Lake Valley mutual aid group, reflecting broader regional interest in the partnership model. 0:47:06
- A signed agreement allows refineries in the group to provide mutual aid to each other and to be called out to support South Davis Metro Fire; last year a refinery foam truck (unfilled due to ~$250,000 cost) was prepared to deploy as a water tender. 0:47:16
- Refineries are covered under a separate mutual aid agreement rather than the intercounty agreement, partly because government immunity provisions in the intercounty agreement do not apply to private entities. 0:48:26
- HF Sinclair has proactively offered personnel support on multiple occasions, and South Davis Metro Fire described the partnership with HF Sinclair's administration as especially close. 0:49:09

EMS Licensure RFP (Senate Bill 215 compliance)

- Senate Bill 215, passed last year, shifted EMS licensure authority back to municipalities; it covers both 911 licensure and inter-facility transport licensure, both of which South Davis Metro Fire currently holds. 0:50:49
- Application of the legislation to Title 17B special services districts has been uncertain; after consultation with legal counsel and the Bureau of EMS up to the state EMS director level, the agency's interpretation has been affirmed as compliant. 0:51:48
- The RFP cannot be signed and ratified until within 90 days before the license expires; staff plan to post it October 1 for a 7-calendar-day open period under the existing procurement policy. 0:52:35

- The state model for the RFP is built around cost, quality, and access; staff drafted the RFP and a corresponding agency response/application based on those criteria. 0:53:01
- The legislation requires a contingency plan including a first-right-of-refusal MOU with another ambulance provider; South Davis Metro Fire has an existing partnership with Gold Cross Ambulance and has received a draft MOU from Gold Cross's legal team. 0:53:44
- South Davis Metro Fire is believed to be only the 2nd district statewide to go through this process since the new legislation (Hurricane/Washington County was first); North Davis Fire is using the same template and also targeting an October 1 posting date. 0:54:38
- Layton, Kaysville, and Farmington have already completed the process; Layton and Kaysville each received a letter of intent from an unrecognized private ambulance company, raising concern about third-party entry under Senator Owens' proposed legislation. 0:55:04
- Weber County Fire District, Fire Chief Clark has circulated a letter to state chiefs proposing a legislative fix under Title 17B provisions; the outcome of that effort is uncertain. 0:55:46
- The full board will serve as the RFP evaluation committee; each board member will sign a single letter representing their respective municipality or county, a format pre-approved by the Bureau of EMS. 0:57:01
- The resulting EMS license, once approved, is valid for 4 years and covers both 911 and inter-facility transport. 0:56:48

Station 81 Expansion

- A mobile office trailer was delivered to Station 85 the previous Friday; power installation is pending, and the lease commitment is 12 months, providing a short-term fix for office space infrastructure crisis. 0:57:56
- The proposal under discussion is to expand the Station 81 training room northward approximately 60 feet to create roughly 6 offices; a Bountiful City engineer informally indicated the adjacent retention pond would not be an obstacle to that footprint. 0:59:05
- Bountifuls city engineer, consulted informally with a board member, confirmed the retention pond could be significantly reduced in size, freeing usable lot area; the engineer also had thoughts on the existing barrel-roof design. 1:00:47
- West Bountiful recently contracted a feasibility study for a larger city building project; for the Station 81 scope, estimates ranged from $10,000 to $20,000 for a professional needs assessment. 1:05:17
- Mrs. Hardy noted the $100,000 already budgeted for a training-room office-space upgrade could be reallocated to cover an architectural needs assessment. 1:07:00
- Potential financing paths discussed include reallocating Fund 10 training-center funds, rebonding at the agency's improved credit rating, or pursuing one-time federal capital project funding; cost estimates ranged from $750,000 to $1.7 million. 1:03:07
- Mr. Haderlie advised hiring a professional architect for a needs assessment; he suggested $15,000 to $20,000 as a reasonable cost for a needs assessment at this scale, noting Woods Cross combined an architect and contractor simultaneously to avoid designing beyond budget. 1:12:15
- Multiple board members expressed concern about optics of pursuing a $1M+ project after a recent tax increase, with Commissioner Wilkinson and Stevenson stating they were reluctant to even start the RFP process outside of the next budget cycle. 1:15:24
- An alternative raised was leasing nearby commercial office space, with Commissioner Horrocks citing suburban office rates of roughly $12–$15 per square foot, as a lower-commitment option compared to a capital expansion. 1:20:47
- The board noted that a decision on whether to continue the 12-month trailer lease or pursue a permanent solution must be made before the lease expires. 1:23:08
- The board reached informal consensus to defer a formal RFP and instead ask staff to survey rental office options near Station 81, explore additional portable office placement at the site, and seek informal cost guidance from the architect firm used on prior station projects, with a formal feasibility study considered for inclusion in next year's budget. 1:25:44

Operations and Fire Chief's Report

- August was the busiest month of the year with 690 total responses, including 533 medical calls and 22 fire calls. 1:28:41
- Two structure fires occurred in Bountiful with no injuries: one involved an outside storage unit at an apartment complex threatening multiple exposures, and one was a basement fire the previous Friday morning. 1:28:50
- A fatality incident on I-15 on the previous Saturday caused an extended freeway closure and widespread gridlock across Redwood Road, Highway 89, and surrounding routes. 1:29:17
- The firefighter recruitment process narrowed from over 100 applicants (96 tested) to 36 candidates after physical, written, and video testing; the goal is to reduce to 12 for chief interviews and fill 5 current openings, with a target start date of January and recruit school at Salt Lake City's academy beginning the 2nd week of February. 1:29:59
- South Davis Metro Fire recorded and obtained the HF Sinclair training parcels (signed with the title company the previous Thursday); a ribbon-cutting event will be planned once contractor equipment is cleared from the property. 1:30:42
- Fire 101 is scheduled for Saturday with 5 RSVPs received so far; Mrs. Hardy is tracking additional registrations. 1:31:35
- The Deputy Chief position was offered to and accepted by Chief Nick Dodge from West Valley City; his start date is October 5, with a swearing-in alongside Chief Hardy scheduled for October 7 at 6 p.m. at Station 81. 1:31:45

Board Chair Report

Nothing to report

The regular meeting was adjourned.

Ryan Westergard, Board Chair

N. Thompson

Nicole Thompson, Clerk

Decisions

- *Minutes from the August 31st meeting were approved. 0:06:39*
- *August disbursements were approved. 0:09:49*
- *The administrative committee recommends that the chief be made the statutory budget officer, replacing the current arrangement under which the administrative committee chair holds that role. 0:13:10*
- *The administrative committee recommends that it no longer meet monthly, instead convening during the budget process and as needed for budgetary modifications. 0:13:26*
- *The board approved the Intercounty Automatic Aid Fire Agreement by unanimous vote. 0:50:20*
- *The board approved posting the EMS licensure RFP for 7 calendar days starting October 1, with the full board serving as the evaluation committee and results to be brought back at the October meeting. 0:57:26*
- *The board directed staff to not issue a formal Station 81 expansion RFP at this time, instead pursuing informal architect contacts and an office-space rental survey before any budget commitment. 1:28:21*