Comal County Emergency Services District No. 7
Minutes of August 27, 2026 Meeting

1. Call to order.

A regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners of Comal County Emergency Services District No. 7 (District) was held at New Braunfels City Hall and was called to order at 8:30am by President James Frye.

2. Statement of quorum.

The following Commissioners were present: James Frye (President), Christine Seidel (Vice President), Kim Carroll (Secretary), Mark Kauzlarich (Treasurer), and Greg Drake (Assistant Treasurer). A quorum was declared. Also in attendance were New Braunfels Fire Department Chief Ruy Lozano, Assistant Fire Chief Mike Wehman, Assistant Fire Chief Matt Bushnell, District Administrator Diana Colbath, and others as announced.

3. Approval of minutes prior to meeting.

Board members reviewed the meeting minutes from July 23, 2026, regular board meeting. Commissioner Kauzlarich moved to approve the minutes as presented, and Commissioner Seidel seconded the motion. After discussion, the motion carried by majority vote 5-0.

4. Citizen Comment (Any individual may make a presentation relevant to the business of the district not more than three (3) minutes to the Board of Emergency Services Commissioners, after executing the proper form, which may be obtained from the Secretary).

Chris Clapper addressed the Board. He stated that he had recently moved to the north side of the District near Hoffman and FM 1102 and that he works for Canyon Lake Fire and EMS. Board members welcomed him and noted that he has fire-service knowledge.

5. Review of the City call report.

Assistant Chief Wehman presented the July 2026 Call Report as follows:

- Combined total for New Braunfels Fire Department – 1,387
- ESD No. 7 represented 12.04% of total calls.

Significant ESD incidents for July were emailed to the Board. The Chief noted a prior-month communication issue and confirmed that the current month's incident summaries were distributed.

6. Receive monthly report from the Fire Chief regarding emergency operations related to fire suppression and EMS response times, call volume, personnel staffing and training, management activities, communications, and public information activities.

Chief Lozano and Assistant Chief Wehman reported the following:

Staffing & Recruitment: Fit-for-duty physicals are underway for all personnel. Division Chief Tyler Hindman was deployed with TIFMAS (Texas Intrastate Fire Mutual Aid System) to wildland fires in the Possum Kingdom area. There were 8 vacancies in operations. One firefighter resigned. Three firefighter-paramedics had started orientation. New firefighter-paramedics were scheduled to start October 17, 2026. Applications remained open, and an entrance exam is scheduled for October 2, 2026.

Training Facility: New Braunfels City Council approved the BRW (Emergency Preparedness) training facility contract. The estimated timeline is approximately 8 months for design, followed by bidding and New Braunfels City Council award, then approximately 12 months for construction, for a total of about 20 months to completion. The Department noted that new personnel are currently being sent to other jurisdictions for live-fire training because the Guadalupe County burn building has been reduced to limited use.

Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA) Communications Project: A new invoice was received. Total invoiced to date was $1,356,062.83. The project is expected to be completed during the current fiscal year, before September 30, 2026. A brief radio-operation disruption occurred when an antenna was moved from the current water tower at Kerlick to an adjacent tower. Alerting was affected for a few hours but was resolved quickly. Remaining work is described as including final inspections and testing, including at the Conrad Tower.

Fleet, Apparatus, and Equipment: The fleet preventative maintenance contract renewal was approved by New Braunfels City Council and is out for signatures. The engine already in process is expected to be completed around September/October 2026. Three personnel, including Assistant Chief Bushnell, will travel to Florida near the end of September for acceptance inspection. New Braunfels City Council also approved purchase of an additional engine and a ladder truck, with estimated completion of approximately 36 months for the engine and 40-plus months for the ladder truck. Leadership confirmed ESD7 District-funded reserve engine will be fully equipped, including MDT (Mobile Data Terminal), combi tool, gas meter, hose, appliances, and other standard equipment, so crews will not have to transfer equipment during maintenance. A separate interlocal agreement will be prepared once a VIN is available, following the same process used for prior apparatus.

EMS, Safety, and Health: The Department is seeking certification pay for credentialed paramedics who actually operate on EMS calls, noting that approximately 70–80% of calls are EMS. In-cab camera systems are being added to apparatus. A pilot showed improved driver behavior and five months without an incident. Costs and funding for physical exams are increasing because federal mandate now requires that one-third of the Department receive an X-ray as part of the annual physical.

Inspections and Other Operational Items: A city internal audit found the inspection system had been tracking only about 2,000 commercial properties. GIS review identified 5,260 commercial occupancies. The Department's goal is to inspect every commercial occupancy on a 3- to 5-year rotation. Two additional inspectors were proposed at the City level. A possible company-officer inspection program was discussed, subject to certified-inspector requirements. Items discussed for possible budget support included flood siren upgrades, an ambulance remount, and wildland gear for vehicles and personnel. Assistant Chief Wehman noted that he plans to retire in March 2027 and that transition planning will begin in the near term.

There was no separate report from the City of New Braunfels City Manager's office.

7. Receive a report from Treasurer and consider taking action, including the monthly financial report, and taking action on the payment of bills.

Treasurer Mark Kauzlarich presented the Treasurer's report.

<u>Current Assets in Checking/Savings Accounts</u>

Frost Bank – $354,752 • Texpool – $23,515,922.

<u>Revenue – January through July 2026</u>

- Ad valorem tax – approximately $2,630,187 (increase of $14,532, July 2026)
- Penalties and interest – $8,869 (increase of $1,302, July 2026)
- Interest income – approximately $485,588 (increase of $74,564, July 2026)
- Sales tax – $3,472,444 (increase of $512,739, July 2026)
- Total revenue – $6,597,090 (increase of $603,139 for the month)

<u>Expenses – January through July 2026</u>

Total expenses – $3,387,010 (decrease of $382,916, July 2026)

Current Accounts Payable

$10,759.18

Obligated funds for special projects pursuant to Interlocal Agreements

- LCRA Radio Communications Project – $2,500,000
- New Braunfels Fire Department Training Facility – $4,000,000
- Total Obligated Funds – $5,500,000

Obligated funds pursuant to proposal

- $1,300,000 (Fully Equipped Engine)

Checks Presented for Payment

Payee	Amount
Comal Appraisal Dist.	$7,273.47
Diana Colbath	$2,333.33
Christine Seidel	$352.38
Carlton Law Firm	$800.00

Commissioner Seidel reported that the District may owe the City of New Braunfels approximately $85,000–$90,000 next quarter related to Costco and the Mayfair limited-annexation sales-tax structure. The District is working with the City and the Comptroller to have those funds distributed more directly. The Treasurer confirmed that pass-through sales-tax amounts are deducted from the profit-and-loss reporting.

Commissioner Kauzlarich made a motion to approve the Treasurer's report and the payment of bills as presented, and Commissioner Seidel seconded the motion. After discussion, the motion carried by majority vote 5-0.

The Board discussed whether lunch associated with a strategic-planning meeting was an allowable expense. After discussion, Commissioner Drake made a motion to allow meal expenses associated with meetings as a normal meeting expense and Commissioner Carroll seconded the motion. After discussion, the motion carried by majority vote 5-0.

8. Discuss TML Risk Pool Liability: General Liability, Workers' Compensation, Errors and Omissions, and Automobile Liability.

Vice President Seidel reviewed the District's TML Risk Pool coverages and reported estimated premiums of $663 for general liability, $1,075 for workers 'compensation, $1,746 for errors and omissions, and $582 for automobile liability. Because the District does not own a building and does not have employees covered in the same manner as a typical employer, and because the District Administrator and prior administrator serve as contract labor, the Board concluded that workers' compensation and automobile liability coverages are not needed at this time. General liability and errors and omissions coverage will be retained. Coverage may be revisited if the District later owns a building or otherwise changes its operational structure.

Commissioner Seidel made a motion to eliminate workers' compensation coverage of $1,075 and automobile coverage of $582 form the district's TML risk pool insurance and commissioner Drake seconded the motion. After discussion, the motion carried by majority vote 5-0.

9. Discuss and consider taking action regarding the 2027 budget.

The Board discussed the broader budget environment, including that property values came in lower than expected. Leadership stated that the District is not in crisis, but the budget year is tighter than previously anticipated. The Board reiterated its preference to fund vehicles and equipment rather than personnel and stated that it does not wish to become an employer. The Board and City representatives agreed that a future Station 8 scenario would require a different operational and financial structure and a revised contract.

Assistant Chief Wehman presented unfunded one-time Department needs that were not included in the New Braunfels City's adopted funding:

1. Civilian Fire Inspectors Vehicle	$48,006.00
2. Haz Mat Equipment (10yr)	$15,000.00
3. Knox Key Security compliance (7 units)	$9,600.00
4. Replacement of Rescue Equipment (10yr)	$15,000.00
5. Dive Team Equipment	$12,500.00
6. Accreditation Program Funding (TFCA)	$5,000.00
7. SCBA Fit Testing System (10yr)	$9,700.00
8. Purchase Command Vehicle w/Upfitting	$130,000.00
9. Tactical Medic Program	$15,252.00
10. Replace Gear Extractors (3 total)	$50,015.00
11. Security Fence for Fire Stations 4 and 6	$59,544.00

The wet-lab / advanced paramedic training request of approximately $206,000 remained unfunded by the City of New Braunfels and was already included in the district's proposed budget.

After discussion, the Board consensus was to support the City's equipment and vehicle request.

Commissioner Seidel made a motion to approve the City's request for equipment and vehicles in the amount of $369,617 to be added to the budget, with line items to be adjusted accordingly and Commissioner Drake seconded the motion. After discussion, the motion carried by majority vote 5-0. Commissioner Seidel clarified that the total amount being added in connection with these items, including the previously proposed $206,000 wet-lab / paramedic training allocation, is $575,617.

Commissioner Carroll made a motion to approve the proposed Fiscal Year 2027 budget, and Commissioner Seidel seconded the motion. After discussion, the motion carried by majority vote 5-0.

Reported budget figures included expenses of $11,202,526. Net is $1,972,724.67. Income is $9,229,801.33 Net deficit of $1,601,113.67. The board discussed that some items are appropriated before they are expended and that reserves and previously obligated project funds affect the appearance of the budget deficit. President Frye and Secretary Carroll are to sign the budget resolution, to be notarized by Vice President Seidel.

10. Discuss and consider taking action on the 2026 tax rate

- **a. Establishing proposed tax rate;**
- **b. Taking a record vote and scheduling a public hearing;**
- **c. Authorizing expense and publication of "Notice of Public Hearing on Tax Rate"**
- **d. in the Newspaper; and**
- **e. Acknowledging and approving posting "Notice About 2026 Tax Rates" and Notice of Public Hearing on Tax Increase" to the home page of the District website.**

Commissioner Seidel made a motion to propose a tax rate at the voter-approval tax rate of 0.048438% for the 2026 tax year. Commissioner Carroll seconded the motion.

Individual voice votes were taken and recorded as follows:

- Commissioner Frye – yes
- Commissioner Seidel – yes
- Commissioner Carroll – yes
- Commissioner Kauzlarich – yes

- Commissioner Drake – yes

The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

Commissioner Carroll moved to approve publication and posting of the notice of tax rate and associated hearing requirements. Commissioner Kauzlarich seconded the motion. After discussion, the motion carried by majority vote 5-0.

A special meeting for the public hearing and final tax-rate action was scheduled for September 10, 2026, at 8:30 a.m. at New Braunfels City Hall, with notice to be posted on the District website and published in the Herald-Zeitung.

11. Discuss and consider taking action on Strategic Planning.

The Board received an update on the kickoff meeting with Mike Montgomery and Company (MSM), including Mike Montgomery, Chris Barron, and financial consultant Randy Parr. The planning effort is expected to be front-loaded and to extend over approximately six months, with a preferred five-year planning horizon. Treasurer Kauzlarich and Assistant Treasurer Drake were identified as the primary committee contacts. Assistant Chief Wehman was identified as the Fire Department liaison. District Administrator Diana Colbath will serve as recorder. Remaining Board members will serve in an advisory and approval capacity.

The Board discussed the need for a mission statement, vision and values work, data collection, workshops, community and stakeholder input, and planning for capital needs including future stations. Consultants will perform analytical work; the District and Department will provide data and policy direction. GIS data, including road networks, future roads, and growth patterns, was identified as a critical input. Consistency between City and County data sources was emphasized. The City's planned hire of an additional GIS analyst for public safety was noted as helpful. Neil Rose was identified as a key GIS contact.

Workshops may be posted as workshops rather than decision-making meetings. A community advisory group of approximately 10 to 15 people was discussed. The Board also discussed a possible site visit or field trip related to the Mayfair / school property discussion, to be paired with GIS review. Assistant Chief Wehman offered use of a Fire Department conference room for smaller working sessions.

The Board discussed mission-statement drafting. The Board agreed that a concise, practical statement should be the goal, and that it should reflect both fire and EMS because those services are integrated in this District. No final mission statement was adopted.

No separate formal motion was required beyond continuing the existing engagement.

12. Next Meeting (agenda items and/or new/old business).

Commissioner Seidel made a motion to adjust regular meeting dates to the 4th Thursday of every month, with holiday adjustments as needed and Commissioner Kauzlarich seconded the motion. After discussion, the motion carried by majority vote 5-0.

Commissioner Seidel made a motion to add a Commissioner's Report item to monthly agendas so commissioners may summarize outside meetings or other ESD-related interactions. Commissioner Drake seconded the motion. After discussion, the motion carried by majority vote 5-0.

Under that item, Commissioner Seidel reported that she met with Judge Kristen Hoyt and Commissioner Steve Minus to discuss the District, the Emergency Operations Center, future station growth, staffing questions, and dispatch concerns. County officials invited Board members to reach out with questions and offered a possible tour of the EOC (Emergency Operations Center). The Board discussed dispatch coordination between New Braunfels City and Comal County systems and automatic-aid implications.

The Board also discussed communications from Michael Meek regarding the school / property matter and its potential effect on a candidate station site. If school property is not used, the developer still owes the district a tract of land, and alternative sites nearer major thoroughfares should be evaluated.

The next regular Board meeting will be held on September 24, 2026 (fourth Thursday), at 550 Landa Street, New Braunfels City Hall.

Follow-up items include:

- Finalize and send updated budget numbers, tax-rate paperwork, and required notices.
- Amend the Treasurer's report to reflect the $1.3 million fully equipped engine amount.
- Remove workers' compensation and automobile liability from TML Risk Pool coverage.
- Follow up with Julia regarding remaining LCRA communications project work.
- Work with the State Comptroller's office regarding Mayfair / Veramendi sales-tax handling and limited annexation structure.
- Send updated strategic-planning notes and roster to Mike Montgomery and the committee; schedule the next MSM working session.
- Obtain GIS data needed for strategic planning and continue planning a possible site visit.
- Prepare a draft mission statement for Board feedback.

13. Adjournment.

There being no further business, Commissioner Kauzlarich made a motion to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned.

Kim Carroll, Secretary