

MINUTES OF MEETING
OF THE CONGRESS FIRE DISTRICT

HELD April 17, 2025

A public meeting of the Congress Fire District was convened at 1:00 p.m. on April 17, 2025, at the Congress Fire District Office. The following matters were discussed, considered and decided at the meeting:

1. Call to Order: Meeting was called to order at 1:00 p.m.
2. Roll Call: The following members of the Board of Congress Fire District were present at the meeting: Brandi Bridges, Chair of the Board, Reggie MacDonald, Clerk of the Board, and Jane Summers, Donald Wessel and George Wickholm members. Also present were Fire Chief Bryan Smith and Secretary/Treasurer Kaitlyn Brinkley.
3. Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the meeting of March 20, 2025, were reviewed. George made a motion to approve the minutes and Don seconded the motion. All in favor; minutes are approved.
4. Approval of Financial Reports: Financial reports for the month of March 2025 consisting of Balance Sheet, Cash Flow (Budget vs. Actual), Transaction list, County Treasurer Monthly Warrant Statement with Reconciliation, and County Treasurer Monthly Capital Reserve Statement with Reconciliation were reviewed. Motion was made by Reggie to approve the financial reports for the month of March 2025; George seconded; all in favor; financial reports are approved.
5. Correspondence: None.
6. Fire Chief's Report.

We are still working on the Community handout to be included in the monthly Congress Water bill to help notify the community of wildland preparedness. Once the new dispatch system goes into effect in July, the RAVE system will also be available for emergency notifications. We received a notification from the US Senate regarding the Congressional Grant; it is back open, so we are reapplying for the same equipment and Water Tenders. This is the grant we were awarded last year but not funded; we mentioned that in the grant to hopefully it will increase the chance of getting it approved.

With the new dispatch system coming in July, Priority Ambulance has assured us that we will have the ambulance back at Congress Fire. This ambulance will respond to any calls in the area up to Wilhoit. Congress had 40 calls for service last month; the mobile data terminals will be installed soon. The Paramedic course will be completed at the end of May, and one of those students will be placed on a shift here in Congress. All crew members will then have a Paramedic. Along with that change, the B-shift has a new captain, Rudy Armenta, who came from Mayer; he is our public information officer, one of our instructors, and a paramedic. We also have two new Engineers, Eng. Sedillo and Eng. Tallet.

The Congress Fire Brush truck went on an assignment to North Carolina with a Consortium Crew. The assignment lasted a week, and the Engine Boss stated that the truck ran great. This past week, the Apron Fire on Highway 93 happened. The Congress Engine was on scene for about a day—mostly state land crews on the scene. Twelve consortium members attended the annual Basin Ops drill for wildland training purposes.

7. Old Business: With the upcoming Wildland season, there have been requests and discussions on raising the credit card limit to help alleviate personnel costs on assignments. The current limit is \$2500.00, and after reviewing transactions from the previous Wildland season, the Board has approved an increase to \$20k; Kaitlyn will reach out to Chase Credit Card service to get the process started and see what amount increase Chase will authorize.
8. New Business:
 - a. A discussion has begun regarding the preliminary tentative budget for Fiscal Year 2025/2026, which is due to the County by May 9th. For FY 2024/2025, Congress Fire set a tax rate of \$3.50 per \$100 of assessed value. The FY 2025/2026 budget remains similar, with expenses closely aligned to those of the previous fiscal year. There will be no significant increases in salaries; the planned raises will include a cost-of-living adjustment and adjustments to align the pay scale with other districts in the Consortium. Chief Smith has calculated the costs for the Public Safety Personnel Retirement System (PSPRS) based on the Williamson Valley Fire District rate, estimating about \$90,000 per year. It may take a minimum of one year to incorporate the Congress Fire into their system due to procedural requirements. The board decided to increase the tax rate to \$3.60 per \$100, which would raise the Congress Fire budget by approximately \$10,000.
 - b. Clerk MacDonald of the Board had questions regarding the safety protective equipment that the Fire District has. Chief Smith stated: With the grant received this past year, the crews received new sets of turnout gear, helmets, boots, and gloves; each firefighter has a flashlight with their equipment, and some are kept inside the truck. The SCBAs used have a thermal imaging camera and transmitting capability that allows the battalion chief to monitor the O2 levels of each firefighter. It also has an alert system that will notify the firefighter to evacuate, and you can only turn off the alert once the O2 has been turned off. For Wildland, everyone has the appropriate gear necessary for a brush fire. We have applied for grants to purchase new equipment, and the board would like to consider giving a stipend every few years for new Wildland equipment as well.

An electrician who will visit the station next week to look into running a line or setting up a new box for the extractor and washer/dryer was also mentioned. We will also be looking to purchase a new commercial-grade ice machine. This equipment will be placed on the back wall of the bay next to the SCBA machine.
9. No Executive Session required.
10. Call to the Public: None.
11. Adjournment: Next regular meeting: Thursday, May 15, 2025. George made a motion to adjourn the meeting: seconded by Reggie; all in favor, meeting is adjourned at 2:20 p.m.

Congress Fire District Governing Board

Secretary _____

Approved: _____