

# HIGHLAND RESCUE TEAM AMBULANCE DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES

Highland Station  
317 South Lookout Mountain Road  
December 9, 2025  
2:30 p.m.

**Directors Present:** President Terry McCarthy, Treasurer Dan Kasinec, Secretary Kara Cooper, Director Sharon Jones, and Director Chris Garlasco (via Google Meet)

**Others Present:** Chief Bob Fager, Assistant Chief Steve Telgener (via Google Meet), Deputy Chief of Operations Damon Brown, Accountant Christina Jantzef (via Google Meet), and District Administrator Laura Cardon (via Google Meet).

## **CALL TO ORDER**

President McCarthy called the meeting to order at 2:33 p.m.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no announcements.

## **PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES**

Director Jones made a motion to approve the November board meeting minutes. Director Cooper seconded the motion. Unanimously approved.

## **ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT (Laura Cardon)**

### *November Medical Billing and Collections Report*

For full details, please refer to the 2025-12 Admin Report - November 2025 pdf.

November was a busier month with 28 patients transported and \$42,389 billed. The district received \$19,949 in payments. \$15,111 was written off and \$6,584 was sent to collections. The ending billing balance increased again to \$131,374. The 12-month average for all figures increased with November 2025 numbers.

Patient insurance payors remained steady year-to-date, with the majority (42%) of patients having Medicare. The next largest percentage of patients was commercial insurance, making up 30% of patients. These two groups are also the largest percentage of payments received.

Accounts are spending fewer days in receivables than previous months, down to 98 from billing to payment. 111 accounts are outstanding, with 66 in private pay (un-insured patients). This is also a decrease year-to-date. All other accounts are processing normally through insurance.

\$279.49 was paid to collections accounts in November 2025, netting the district \$209.62. \$1,850 in debt was cancelled.

Ms. Cardon also reported she had not received any notifications of issues processing Medicare and Medicaid bills now that the federal government has reopened.

### **FINANCIAL REPORT (Christina Jantzef)**

#### *November Financial Memo*

Revenue is at 96% of target as of November after a high billing month that will likely put the district over budget for 2025 revenue. The new ambulance grant was also finally received in November. There are \$9,000 in budgeted property taxes that the district has not received yet. Typically, the district collects 99.5% of the budgeted amount. The district can expect those payments to arrive in December 2025 and January 2026

Expenses are below target. Salary expenses will be closer to the budgeted amount once merit bonuses are awarded to staff in December. As previously discussed, safety and training expenses are over budget. Apparatus and equipment expenses are well below budget at 56% of the budgeted amount. Administration expenses are also below target at 72% for the year. There were no other significant variances from the expenses budget.

Capital spending is at 87% of target, mostly due to the conservative budgeting for station improvements. \$128,000 was budgeted for station improvements but not spent. The septic system was the only work done this year and cost approximately \$40,000. The surplus funds will carry forward into 2026. President McCarthy asked where the surplus funds are categorized. Chief Fager answered the reserves.

Chief Fager added that the original \$128,000 was a conservative estimate, and the district's only goal this year was to install a septic system.

Ms. Jantzef added that Length of Service Award Program (LOSAP) expenses have also not been spent. Even with that distribution, expenses will still likely be low, but the January financial memo will have the most accurate number. Ms. Cardon will provide Ms. Jantzef with an estimated distribution amount after the board meeting.

### **CHIEF'S REPORT (Chief Fager)**

The district received 70 calls for help in November and transported 29 patients to the hospital. The district's total calls for the year is just under 700.

### *Staffing Update*

There were no staffing changes in November 2025.

### *Whole Blood Program Update*

Chief Fager reported that all but one Advanced Life Support (ALS) provider has been trained on blood banking and blood transfusion skills. To his knowledge, no other agency is doing this, particularly other volunteer agencies. Most agencies have specific officers trained to respond in a fly car. Highland is excited to offer this opportunity to all of its members, including Basic Life Support (BLS) level providers who are able to set up blood transfusion supplies and are integral to proper blood banking.

The district was supposed to receive its first shipment of blood on December 5, but unfortunately that has been held up due to legal negotiations between the blood bank and the regional council operating the blood program. Highland is ready and the hold up is not caused by the district.

President McCarthy asked why the legal process is taking so long since Highland is not the first district in the area to implement whole blood.

Chief Fager responded that the regional council is paying for it differently than other districts have with the blood bank. The issue isn't with Highland specifically. Highland has validated all of its equipment, including coolers, temperature sticks, ice packs, and freezing and refrigeration. The crews are continually doing dry runs and swapping coolers every night with a bag of saline standing in for blood. Chief Fager also used AI for new ways to communicate about the program with the team, including a podcast in the weekly update, daily announcements over station speakers, and a song that plays every day at 6 p.m. to remind the crews to perform the daily check.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### *2026 Budget Resolution (Chief Fager, Ms. Jantzef)*

Chief Fager shared the only change to the 2026 budget since the last meeting was taking the feasibility study expenses out. Evergreen is no longer interested in doing the feasibility study. Evergreen is the only other EMS agency considering merging with neighboring fire districts, so without their support, there is no desire to pursue merger discussions.

Ms. Jantzef shared she received the final valuation for property taxes from the Jefferson County assessor. The number changed very minimally and is reflected in the resolutions for the board to vote on.

Chief Fager said his only outstanding question was what amount of money, if any, should be added for station improvements. Deputy Chief Brown added that he anticipates

finishing engineering and architectural work in early 2026 and would like to get bids for contractors as well.

President McCarthy asked Chief Fager to confirm that there were no funds currently budgeted for station improvements.

Chief Fager clarified that he budgeted \$140,000 for station improvements in the 2026 budget.

Deputy Chief Brown added that the district staff would discuss any purchases ahead of time with the board and would not move forward on contractors without their approval.

Chief Fager added that if the board did not want to allocate those funds, but did approve station improvement expenses in 2026, the district would have to file a budget amendment at the end of 2026 to accurately reflect that.

Director Jones suggested allocating the \$140,000 2025 budget surplus to the 2026 station improvement budget. The board was in agreement. Ms. Jantzeff will send an updated, final copy of the budget resolution for the board to sign after a vote.

President McCarthy called for a motion. Treasurer Kasinec made a motion to adopt the budget as amended with an additional \$140,000 for capital building expenses. President McCarthy seconded the motion. Unanimously approved.

#### *2026 Board Meeting Proposed Schedule (Ms. Cardon)*

Ms. Cardon presented the 2026 board meeting schedule for the board and district staff to review for any conflicts. She noted Director Jones had caught a typo in the May date, which will be updated to May 13, not 23, 2026.

Chief Fager identified a conflict for the February and April dates with important district business. He attends EMS at the Capital in February and the annual EMS Financial Symposium in April. He added the board can also meet without him.

President McCarthy said it was up to the district staff since the board had no conflicts. With no further discussion, President McCarthy made a motion to approve the 2026 board meeting dates with the following changes:

February 11, 2026 instead of February 10, 2026

April 21, 2026 instead of April 21, 2026

The previously noted correction to May 2026's meeting.

Director Jones seconded the motion. Unanimously approved. Ms. Cardon will send an updated version to the board following the meeting and post the approved dates to the district's website.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

*Facility Update (Deputy Chief Brown, Director Garlasco)*

Deputy Chief Brown shared the engineer is still working on parking design alternatives as discussed last month.

Director Kasinec asked how the septic system was working now that it had been installed. Deputy Chief Brown said there had been no alarms or back-up issues. The crews are enjoying not having to be so diligent about their water usage; they are better able to do laundry and shower, which is a big improvement for quality of life at the station.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no public comment.

### **ADJOURN**

President McCarthy moved to adjourn the meeting at 3:09 p.m.. Director Kasinec seconded. Unanimously approved.