



# GARLAND

## MINUTES

The Fire and EMS Stakeholder Committee of the Public Safety Committee of the City of Garland convened a special meeting at 6:00 PM on October 8, 2025, in the Community Room at the Central Library, 625 Austin Street, Garland, Texas, with the following members present:

Present: Chair, Deputy Mayor Pro Tem Chris Ott  
Mayor Pro Tem Margaret Lucht  
Councilmember Carissa Dutton  
Judson Rex, City Manager  
Matt Watson, Chief Financial Officer  
Allyson Bell-Steadman, Director of Budget & Financial Strategy  
Mark Lee, Fire Chief  
Tyler Little, Driver-Engineer  
Dr. Matthew Tice, Medical Director  
Tim Nowak, Emergency Medical Solutions, LLC  
Melissa Garner, Community Leader  
Merill Balanciere, Community Leader  
Jason Collard, Community Leader  
Scott LeMay, Community Leader

Staff Present: Letecia McNatt, Public Safety Committee Liaison

### 1. **WELCOME - Purpose & Meeting Logistics**

Chair Deputy Mayor Pro Tem Ott welcomed attendees and opened the second meeting of the committee's nine-month process.

- Reiterated the three goals of the committee:
  - Improve public safety
  - Support firefighter and EMS health and wellbeing
  - Ensure long-term financial sustainability
- Members were reminded to state their names prior to speaking for accurate recordkeeping.
- Meetings are open to the public and materials are posted online.

### 2. **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Persons who desire to address the Committee on any item on the agenda are allowed three minutes to speak.

Mr. Michael McGregor addressed the Committee during Public Comments.

### 3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Consider Approval of Minutes from the Fire & EMS Stakeholder Committee of the Public Safety Committee on September 10, 2025.

Motion to approve the Minutes of the September 10, 2025, meeting:

- **Motion by:** Mayor Pro Tem Lucht
- **Seconded by:** Councilmember Dutton

- **Vote:** Unanimous approval

#### 4. ITEMS FOR INDIVIDUAL CONSIDERATION

##### a. Address Questions from the September 10, 2025 Meeting

Chief Mark Lee and department staff presented updates:

- **Hospital Wall Times** (Transfer Delays):
  - Average: 10 minutes 12 seconds
  - High: 20 minutes (Texas Health Plano)
  - Low: 5 minutes (standalone facility)
  - Based on 13,000 patient records
- **Call Volume Increases (Oct 2018–Sept 2025):**
  - EMS calls up 17%
  - Non-EMS calls up 22%
  - Total calls increased 19%
- **Fire Incident Data (Calendar Year 2024):**
  - 656 confirmed fire calls
  - 1,395 fire alarm activations
  - Additional “good intent” and non-patient calls noted
- **Additional requests:**
  - **Breakdown of calls by apparatus/unit**
  - **Follow-up on shift schedule data from other cities**
  - **Comparative data on EMS staffing and response practices**

##### b. State of the EMS Industry: Trends, Challenges, and Opportunities

**Presented by Tim Nowak, Emergency Medical Solutions, LLC**

- Key highlights from the presentation:
- EMS is evolving nationally; identity varies between public safety, healthcare, and public health.
- Fire/EMS integration models differ widely by region and state.
- Garland’s two-paramedic ambulance model is rare and considered financially unsustainable in most jurisdictions.
- Staffing trends nationally favor EMT + paramedic models due to cost and skill maintenance concerns.
- EMS typically follows call volume (“demand-based”), while fire stations are deployed for geographic coverage.
- Reimbursement for EMS services (especially Medicare/Medicaid) is often insufficient, leading to budgetary challenges.
- Special Taxing Districts (ESDs) are increasingly used in Texas and other states for EMS funding.
- Many communities face sustainability challenges, prompting mergers, new service models, or adjusted staffing.
- Nowak emphasized that Garland is not “broken,” but faces cost and retention pressures.

##### c. Questions & Discussion

**Jail-Related Calls:**

- Station 1 alone responded to over 500 calls to the city jail in 2025.
- Most did not require transport.
- Committee members discussed options for on-site medical solutions at the jail to reduce system strain.

**Staffing & Scheduling Concerns:**

- Discussion on 24/72 shift model viability and adoption in other cities.
- Plano is adopting 24/72; Garland is monitoring results.
- Cost to implement a fourth shift estimated at \$13 million.
- Recruitment, burnout, and schedule fairness concerns raised.
- Proposal to explore alternative start times (e.g., 11 AM) and station wellness upgrades (cold plunge tubs, saunas).

**System Efficiency & Personnel Rotation:**

- Questions raised about the ability to rotate paramedics off ambulances.
- Cultural and structural challenges noted (e.g., seniority and promotional tracks).
- Members debated whether schedule reform or resource increases (e.g., more units) would best improve workload balance.

**Recruitment & Retention:**

- Current system has limited lateral hires; most Garland personnel spend their careers here.
- Emphasis placed on preserving institutional knowledge and minimizing costly attrition.

**5. ADJOURN**

Meeting adjourned at 8:25 PM.

**Submitted By:**

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**/S/ Deputy Mayor Pro Tem Chris Ott, Chair**

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**/S/ Letecia McNatt, Secretary**