



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 December 10, 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
Mike Betz, Interim City Manager
Matt Watson, Assistant City Manager
Allyson Bell-Steadman, Chief Financial Officer
Mark Lee, Fire Chief
Bill Crews, Garland Fire Association
Tyler Little, Driver-Engineer
Dr. Matthew Tice, Medical Director
Jason Collard, Community Leader
Melissa Garner, Community Leader
Scott LeMay, Community Leader

Staff Present: Letecia McNatt, Public Safety Committee Liaison

1. WELCOME & MEETING LOGISTICS

The meeting opened with a welcome and acknowledgment of leadership changes since the last session:

- Interim City Manager Mike Betz was acknowledged
- Allison Steadman, Chief Financial Officer
- Matt Waston, Assistant City Manager

Chair, Deputy Mayor Pro Tem Ott, described this meeting as a midpoint opportunity to clarify direction and priorities as the committee moves toward final recommendations.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Consider Approval of Minutes from the November 12, 2025 , meeting.

Minutes from the November 12, 2025, meeting were unanimously approved.

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS

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

Speakers during Public Comments included:

- Mr. Bob Duckworth

4. ITEMS FOR INDIVIDUAL CONSIDERATION

a. Midpoint Check-In: Questions, Clarifications, and Emerging Priorities

24/72 Shift Schedule & Overtime Impact:

City of Plano in Texas has moved to a 24/72 shift.

There is limited empirical data, but potential exists for reduced overtime with adjusted FLSA cycles (e.g., shifting from 3-week to 4-week).

City-Owned Facilities for Sale:

The City owns ~289 facilities (ranging from park restrooms to major operational buildings).

Vacant land is being assembled for redevelopment, but one-time sales are not a sustainable funding solution.

EMS Fee on Utility Bill:

Currently \$2.50/month, generating ~\$2.8 million.

Raising it significantly could attract state legislative scrutiny due to bracket legislation.

No requirement to go to voters to increase the EMS fee, though a non-binding public opinion vote could be held.

Plano's Experience Implementing 24/72:

Plano negotiated the change through a meet-and-confer process, offsetting costs (~\$20M) through salary freezes, adjusting pay steps, and deferring certain expenses (e.g., bunker gear).

Plano utilized its "unused increment" under SB2 to generate ~\$10M in revenue—an option not currently available to Garland.

Financial Constraints & Legislative Environment:

SB2 limits tax revenue growth to 3.5% per year; further reductions (to 2% or 1%) are being discussed at the state level.

Garland's annual increase in property tax revenue (~\$2.5M) is insufficient to cover a 3% merit raise for employees.

Public safety already consumes 67% of the City's General Fund.

Garland's tax base is 43% below average when compared to similar cities, resulting in ~\$93M less in annual revenue.

Staffing Needs:

The current fire department has 285 personnel.

Based on the Master Plan, the City is already 76–80 personnel short.

Implementing 24/72 would require an additional 87 firefighters, totaling a shortfall of ~167 personnel.

b. Committee Discussion

Committee discussion if needed following Midpoint Check-In

24/72 Schedule Support vs. Affordability:

Committee members widely agreed that the 24/72 schedule is ideal for health and sustainability. However, financial limitations make full implementation currently unfeasible.

Councilmember Dutton suggested incremental hires (25–34 personnel) as a more feasible step.

Operational Improvements:

Fire Chief emphasized the need for:

Recovery time for first responders

Implementation of 4-person staffing for improved effectiveness and safety

Avoiding burnout, worker's comp claims, and turnover

Comparison of three-person vs. four-person staffing was presented through real-world incident examples.

Financial Planning & Communication Strategy:

Several members supported forming a long-term plan, even if implementation must be delayed until after the upcoming tax election.

Emphasis was placed on building public awareness and presenting the science behind shift and staffing models.

Voter Involvement:

Members discussed whether any proposal (e.g., EMS fee increase or tax rate shift) should be taken to voters.

Concerns were raised about increasing voter fatigue and political climate risks.

Historical precedent was mentioned where a voter-approved tax proposal was ultimately not enacted by Council.

Public Trust in Fire-Based EMS:

Committee consensus was strong in opposing EMS privatization.

Public perception heavily favors the current fire-department-based EMS due to professionalism and performance.

c. Review Fire | EMS Stakeholder Committee Schedule

The committee reaffirmed its commitment to the existing monthly schedule, with flexibility to adjust discussion topics.

Revised Schedule Overview:

January 2026 – Scientific evidence on shift models and health impacts

February 2026 – Staffing models, operational benefits, alternatives

March 2026 – Financial feasibility, funding mechanisms (EMS fee, tax rate shifts, ROI, etc.)

April 2026 – Public communication and outreach planning

5. ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at approximately 7:15 PM

Submitted By:

/S/ Deputy Mayor Pro Tem Chris Ott, Chair

/S/ Letecia McNatt, Liasion