



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 January 14, 2026, in the Community Room at the Central Library, 625 Austin Street, Garland, Texas, with the following members present:

Present: Deputy Mayor Pro Tem Chris Ott, Chair
Mayor Pro Tem Margaret Lucht
Councilmember Carissa Dutton
Dr. Matthew Tice, Medical Director
Jason Collard, Community Leader
Melissa Garner, Community Leader
Scott LeMay, Community Leader
Merrill Balanciere, Community Leader

Staff Present: Mike Betz, Interim City Manager
Matt Watson, Assistant City Manager
Allyson Bell-Steadman, Chief Financial Officer
Mistie Gardner, Managing Director, Emergency Management
Mark Lee, Fire Chief
Bill Crews, Garland Fire Association
Tyler Little, Driver-Engineer

1. WELCOME & MEETING LOGISTICS

Committee members and attendees were welcomed. The Chair noted that the primary focus of the meeting would be a presentation and discussion regarding firefighter health, wellness, and the sustainability of the current work schedule.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Consider Approval of Minutes from the December 10, 2025, meeting.

Councilmember Dutton made a motion to approve the January 14, 2026, meeting minutes as presented. Mayor Pro Tem Lucht seconded the motion. All voted in favor. The motion carried.

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS

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

There were no speakers on this item.

4. ITEMS FOR INDIVIDUAL CONSIDERATION

a. Firefighter Health and Wellness

Staff and Fire Department representatives provided a comprehensive presentation on firefighter health, wellness, fatigue, and the long-term sustainability of the current 56-hour work week.

Key discussion points included:

- Historical background of the 24/48 schedule and its evolution into the current 56-hour work week.
- Significant increases in call volume, complexity of incidents, and EMS responsibilities over time.
- Impacts of extended work hours on fatigue, sleep deprivation, cognitive function, physical health,

mental and behavioral health, and overall safety.

- Data and survey results indicate dissatisfaction with the current schedule and challenges with recovery during off-duty time.
- Increased risks associated with fatigue, including on-duty injuries, vehicle crashes, tactical and clinical errors, and long-term health outcomes.
- Effects of the current schedule on workforce sustainability, recruitment, retention, institutional knowledge, and family life.
- Emphasis that the purpose of the discussion was to understand the problem and impacts, not to discuss costs or make decisions at this meeting.

The presenters stressed that fatigue is a predictable and manageable risk and that addressing it is a public safety issue affecting both employees and the community.

b. Committee Discussion

Committee members engaged in an extended discussion following the presentation. Topics included:

- Comparisons to other public safety and safety-sensitive professions regarding work-hour limitations.
- The balance between operational needs, staffing models, recovery time, and service delivery.
- The importance of supporting firefighter health while maintaining effective emergency response.
- Appreciation for the depth of information provided and acknowledgment that this discussion helped clarify the underlying issues driving prior conversations.

Several members expressed appreciation for the transparency, data-driven approach, and personal perspectives shared during the presentation. Staff noted that future meetings would continue the discussion, focusing on staffing models, operational considerations, and evaluation of alternative schedules to ensure service levels and response times are maintained, with an emphasis on fully understanding impacts before considering potential solutions.

5. ADJOURN

Chair Ott adjourned the meeting at 7:40 p.m.

Submitted By:

/s/ Deputy Mayor Pro Tem Ott, Chair

/s/ Jennifer Stubbs, City Secretary