

ESD Board Meeting Summary: December 15, 2025

Introduction: Understanding the Meeting

This document provides a summary of the key discussions and decisions from the Emergency Services District (ESD) board meeting held on December 15, 2025. Its purpose is to help new members of the organization quickly understand the current priorities, challenges, and activities of the Ingram Volunteer Fire Department (IVFD) and the ESD board that oversees it. This meeting was particularly noteworthy for its deep dive into inter-departmental politics, alongside routine but critical operational and financial oversight.

1.0 Ingram Volunteer Fire Department (IVFD) Operations Report

The fire department provided a comprehensive update on its recent activities, financial standing, and ongoing projects, demonstrating a period of active engagement and proactive improvement.

1.1 Financial Health & Activity Levels

The department's financial status and recent call volume reflect a stable and busy operational tempo.

Bank Balance \$193,932.00

Savings Account \$60,941.00

Fundraiser Account \$30,856.37

Donations (To Date) \$6,583.00

Calls Since Last Meeting 40

Total Calls for the Year 343

1.2 Key Projects & Achievements

The department highlighted several recent accomplishments focused on community presence, member morale, and infrastructure upgrades.

- **Community Engagement:** The IVFD actively participated in the Ingram and Kerrville Christmas Parades and the local "Lighting the Y" event. Their own department Christmas party was also very successful and received positive feedback.
- **Member Recognition:** Annual awards were presented to recognize outstanding members:
 - **Most Improved Firefighter:** Warren Day
 - **Junior Firefighter of the Year:** Colton Lynch
 - **Firefighter of the Year:** In a unique and powerful gesture of unity, this award was given to **every member of the department**.
- **Station Improvements:** A new covered parking area is under construction behind the station. Its primary purpose is to protect essential equipment that is currently left outside from the elements. The structure will eventually be fully enclosed with doors and equipped with electricity and lighting to ensure security.
- **Grant Success:** The department has successfully secured **\$487,596** in grant funding to date. A new operations grant application was recently submitted to the Sterling Turner Foundation, with a decision expected in February 2026.

1.3 Equipment & Maintenance Updates

Demonstrating a significant shift towards proactive, long-term financial management, the department outlined several key initiatives to optimize equipment readiness and reduce operational costs. Leaders are working with Kerr County to submit for FEMA reimbursement for property damages, a necessary step as the IVFD is a private nonprofit and cannot submit claims on its own. Progress on the new tender vehicle is steady, with recent painting making it "start to look like a truck." Most notably, the department is researching bulk purchasing of maintenance parts—citing an example of sourcing a filter for \$3 instead of \$17—as part of a new, formal preventative maintenance plan being established with the service provider Sens Martin.

Following the operational report, the meeting shifted to a significant and challenging topic: the department's relationship with the Kerr County Firefighters Association (KFRA).

2.0 The KFRA Relationship: A Deep Dive

A major portion of the meeting was dedicated to a difficult but critical discussion about the Ingram VFD's relationship with the Kerr County Firefighters Association (KFRA), a county-wide association of local fire departments. This was not a routine agenda item, but rather a long and emotionally charged debate that revealed deep-seated historical tensions between the department and the county-level association.

2.1 The Core Issue: IVFD's Proposal to Leave KFRA

The IVFD presented a letter detailing their membership's desire to withdraw from KFRA. Their reasoning was based on several core complaints about the association's environment and effectiveness:

- **Ineffective Leadership:** The department stated that the current KFRA leadership promotes a "hostile environment" and has violated the county-wide code of ethics that all departments are contracted to follow.
- **Lack of Productivity:** Time and effort invested in KFRA meetings yield no corresponding results. The letter cited unclear decision-making processes, inefficient use of resources, and a lack of meaningful progress.
- **Unequal Treatment:** The department's members feel they are not treated as equals, respected, or warmly received by KFRA leadership. They expressed a deep-seated frustration with being perpetually treated as "the bad guy," where any issue in the county is often attributed to Ingram by default.

2.2 The Board's Perspective: A Call for a "Reset"

While acknowledging the department's negative experiences as valid, the ESD Board urged the department to reconsider its position for tactical reasons. The board's argument was strategic: withdrawing now would allow others to frame Ingram as the uncooperative party. Conversely,

attending the proposed "reset" meeting and being poorly treated would unequivocally place the fault on KFRA, strengthening Ingram's position in any future disputes.

2.3 The Path Forward: A Tentative Agreement

After a protracted and impassioned discussion where members voiced years of frustration, a tentative resolution was reached. The IVFD has agreed to **table its decision to leave KFRA** for the time being. The agreed-upon next step is for IVFD leadership to attend the next KFRA meeting to "give it a shot" and evaluate whether the environment has genuinely improved. Crucially, members of the ESD board will also attend the meeting to witness the interaction firsthand and support the department.

With a fragile truce established on the KFRA front, the board pivoted to address its own pressing financial and legal obligations.

3.0 Board Business and Decisions

The board addressed several key financial and administrative items to ensure the sound management of the district.

3.1 ESD Financial Report & Bills

The board reviewed and approved the treasurer's report, which showed the district to be in a strong financial position.

Beginning Balance \$262,776.14

Ending Balance \$257,871.50

Truck Account \$308,034.07

****Grand Total** **\$565,905.57****

****Approved Payments****

- Kerr County for tax collection services (\$491.25).

- Reimbursement to IVFD for swiftwater rescue bags (\$1,267.34).
- Reimbursement to IVFD for a ventilation fan (\$6,745.95).

3.2 Key Updates and Actions

1. **After-Action Review (AAR) Status:** The board provided a crucial clarification on the AAR related to the July 4th incident. The formal AAR is on pause due to pending litigation, and no report has been finalized or shared. Importantly, the board explained that previous discussions with other departments were *not* the AAR; rather, they were meetings to "specifically address accusations that were made" against the IVFD. The board reiterated its commitment to making the final AAR public once it is completed.

2. **Public Information Request:** A new legal challenge has emerged from ESD2 (Mountain Home), which has formally requested a board member's personal notes from the incident discussions. The board explained the serious nature of this request: because the member testifies professionally as his primary source of income, this request could legally compel him to testify for free wherever the notes are used, thereby jeopardizing his livelihood. The board has engaged its attorney to request a formal ruling from the Texas Attorney General on this matter.

3. **Annual Audit:** The board voted unanimously to engage the firm **Armstrong Vaughn and Associates** to perform the district's annual financial audit for a fee of \$5,200.

4.0 Key Takeaways for a Newcomer

For someone new to the organization, this meeting highlighted three interconnected themes that define the current landscape. The IVFD's proactive drive for operational excellence—improving equipment, securing grants, and finding new efficiencies—is the very foundation of its frustration with the perceived lack of professionalism from the county-wide KFRA. This long-standing conflict over respect and effectiveness is now the board's central diplomatic challenge. This, in turn, is compounded by complex legal issues, such as litigation and public information requests, which require the board to navigate a landscape far broader than firefighting alone.