



Councilmember Jimmy Rogers
President

Judge Cindy Vanlandingham
Vice-President

Heart of Texas Council of Governments

Mayor Protem Andrea Barefield
Secretary/Treasurer

Russell Devorsky
Executive Director

Emergency Preparedness Advisory Committee Meeting 9:30 AM, Thursday, March 12th, 2026 HOTCOG – 1514 S. New Road, Waco, Texas

I. Call to Order and TOMA

A. Proof of Posting

- A Proof of Posting was determined.

B. Determination of a Quorum

- A Quorum was present.

II. Welcome and Introductions

A. Guest Recognition

- | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| - Jeffrey Pearce (TDEM) | - Harold Furgeson (HOTCOG) |
| - Jim Hollister (TDEM) | - Amy Rossow (HOTCOG) |
| - Martin Whitfield (TDEM) | - Chris Clark (Hill County) |
| - Andy Davis (HOTCOG) | - Samuel Ortiz (DSHS) |
| - Wayne Stovall (HOTCOG) | - Rob Walker (City of Waco) |

B. Member introductions

- | | |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| - Phillip Cantrell | - John Sutton |
| - Chris Cary | - Terry Townley |
| - Ryan Dirker | - Buffy Waldie |
| - Michael Graham | - Jeff Watkins |
| - Danny Guerra | - Alicia Wilson |
| - Robert LaFoy | |

III. Sub-Committee Reports

A. CERT

- Andy Davis provided a report on the CERT Subcommittee meeting held following the January 14th EPAC meeting. The report included an overview of the regional CERT Nonprofit Initiative, as well as updates on the use of Veoci for regional CERT team tracking.

B. ICC

- Andy Davis presented a report on the Interoperable Communications Committee meeting held on February 4th. The committee discussed several topics, including proposed changes to communications infrastructure requirements. They also reviewed the current status of radio communications within the region, along with proposed projects for the FY2027 SERI grant and updates to the region's RICP/SOP.

IV. HOTCOG Staff Reports

A. Review of FY2025 and FY2026 Funding Status

- A summary of the current status of FY2025 SHSP funds was presented to the committee. The outlook for funding was positive, with preliminary award information indicating that all regional projects are expected to be fully funded, including

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additional projects submitted through the NPA solicitation. An anticipated timeline for the release of FY2025 SHSP funds was also discussed, with funds expected to be available by the end of March 2026.

- Wayne Stovall announced that the application window for FY2026 SHSP funding is currently open and will close on Monday, March 16th.

B. ENS Migration and Vendor Next Steps

- Andy Davis provided an overview of the timeline for the ENS migration project to date. A significant update was presented regarding a substantial cost increase for the second year of service with vendor CivicPlus. Contract discussions between HOTCOG staff and CivicPlus account management revealed that the year two cost increased from the originally quoted recurring amount of \$38,000 to \$210,000. Andy noted that CivicPlus attributed the increase to unanticipated system usage and challenges scaling to meet regional demands.
- Committee members discussed potential solutions to address the issue. Alicia Wilson inquired about the region's current contractual position with CivicPlus. Chair Ryan Dirker also raised concerns regarding the system's automated national weather alerting capabilities, noting its limited functionality in distributing alerts only to users who have opted in and selected specific alert preferences.
- Chair Ryan Dirker made a motion directing HOTCOG Homeland Security staff to make every effort to terminate the CivicPlus contract as soon as possible and pursue reestablishing service with Everbridge in order to ensure reliable alerting ahead of the severe weather season. Alicia Wilson seconded the motion, and the motion passed.

V. New Business - Consideration of and/or Action On

A. Approval of January 14th, 2026 – EPAC Meeting Minutes

- Alicia Wilson made a motion to approve the meeting minutes, Michael Graham Seconded, the motion carried.

B. Presentation about TDEM Voluntary Liaison Program

- Jeffrey Pearce, TDEM Voluntary Agency Liaison for Region 8, delivered a presentation outlining the program's functions. He also shared examples of past deployments and provided firsthand insight into the importance of VOAD/COAD efforts and effective volunteer coordination.

VI. Public Comment

- Martin Widtfeldt announced that TDEM will coordinate a statewide ENS systems drill in April to assess the capabilities of local and regional systems.
- He also announced that TDEM has released the August 2026 schedule for the PIO TPUB-403 course. Additionally, ICS 300/400 course offerings have been expanded through TEEX in response to recent legislative direction.
- Martin further shared that this would be his final EPAC meeting, as his employment with TDEM will be coming to a close.
- Jeff Watkins expressed appreciation to Michael Graham and the McLennan County Bomb Squad for their generosity in donating unused VHF radios to Falls County.

VII. Announcements or Future Business Items

VIII. Next EPAC Meeting

9:30 AM, Wednesday, May 13th, 2026 at HOTCOG

- Andy and Wayne announced that there will most likely be an April scoring meeting in response to the expected batch date of the FY2026 SHSP applications.

IX. Adjournment

- Jeff Watkins made a motion to adjourn, Danny Guerra seconded the motion, and the motion passed.