



**QEM Fire Protection District
P O Box 183
Elsah, IL 62028**

Minutes of the Board of Trustees Meeting Thursday, April 9, 2026

The Meeting was called to order at 6:02 p.m. by Vice President Ed Darabcsek

Trustees Present: Vice President Ed Darabcsek, Secretary-Treasurer Alan Hauff, Trustee Dennis Blackorby, and Trustee Dan Drescher

Trustees Not Present: None

Firefighters Present: Chief Aaron Darr, Captain Damon Eich, Ryan Motley, Matt Schulte, Cameron Mank, Brad Isringhausen, and Victoria Westfall

Also Present: Clerk Heather Hanna

Public Comments:

Damon Eich-QEM sponsor soccer team—Per Captain Eich, they found a sponsor for his daughter's soccer team.

Reports and Approvals:

Minutes:

March 12, 2026, Minutes were reviewed. Dan Drescher made a motion to approve the minutes for March 12, 2026, with no noted corrections. Dennis Blackorby seconded. Motion carried.

Bank Statement and Budget Status:

Alan Hauff gave a report on fund balances: \$348,763.07 is available in the Money Market Account and \$2,461.00 is available in the Jersey State Bank Checking Account, and \$631,729.82 is available in CDs at Jerseyville Banking Center as of March 31st. The CDs will fund a future Pumper purchase.

Under Revenue, QEM received \$2298.79 in March 2026. The revenue received in March included \$286.83 for the hospital rent; \$397.16 for the Corporate Personal Property Replacement Tax; \$1,522.50 (\$75.00 for fire reports and \$1,447.50 for a refund from Superior, Seawalls, Docks, and Dredging) in miscellaneous income; and \$92.30 for Interest Income. Revenue is budgeted for \$452,352.00 in FY 2025-26, which started in May. To date, \$482,022.04 has been received toward the budgeted amount.

The budgeted expense target for May through March was 92% of the budget. Actual expenses for March were 33.34% of the budget.

Review of Bills:

The March checklist of bills paid totaled \$18,856.66. Notable bills included: \$9,378.00 to Banner Fire EQT.; \$900.00 to Sydney Stierley for cleaning; and \$3,660.80 to Fire Catt LLC for hose testing.

Dan Drescher made a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report, and the payment of the bills as presented. Dennis Blackorby seconded. Motion carried.

Major Correspondence:

Review of Calls:

There were 33 calls in March 2026. 1 Breathing problems; 2 Chest pain (non-trauma); 1 CO alarm; 1 Controlled burning (Authorized); 1 Convulsions/seizures; 1 Diabetic problems; 2 Electrical power line down/arching/malfunction; 3 Fall; 1 Fire/smoke alarm; 1 Gas leak/gas order; 2 Lift assist; 1 Motor vehicle collision; 1 Other outside fire; 3 Sick case; 1 Stroke/CVA; 1 Trash/rubbish fire; 2 Unconscious victim; 1 Unknown problem (medical); 5 Vegetation/grass fire; 1 Vehicle fire-commercial; and 1 Wildfire-wildland

Old Business:

From the Trustees:

Superior, Seawalls, Docks and Dredging Update—Alan Hauff advised that materials that were left over and not used for the dock installation were returned to Superior, Seawalls, Docks, and Dredging. We were owed a refund of \$1,947.50 for the returned materials and they were not responding to requests from Alan regarding the refund. Attorney Jim Sinclair sent a letter requesting a refund. We received a check for \$1,447.50. They deducted \$500.00 for shipping costs.

2026 Calendar & Checklist—Ed Darabcsek reviewed the following:

14. Newly appointed and reappointed trustees take office (70 ILCS 705/4)—Completed
15. Newly appointed trustees must complete Open Meetings Act training within 90 days of taking office (5 ILCS 120/1.05)—Completed
16. Reorganize Board of Trustees following appointment or election of trustee(s) by electing officers (70 ILCS 705/6)—Tabled until May

IL OSHA Checklist—Ed Darabcsek reviewed the OSHA checklist he found in a Fire Call that he would like to review each month.

Credit Card Update—Clerk Heather Hanna wanted to advise the Board that she received the credit card and has given the number to Alan for the records.

QEM Girls Fire Camp Insurance Update—Alan Hauff received a response back from the insurance. It will be \$600.00 for the Girls Fire Camp for the weekend. The insurance is wanting a sexual harassment policy to the Board that she put together. Firefighter Victoria Westfall

advised that if she calls this a camp, it will need to be registered as an LLC, but if she calls it a program it can be done under QEM's name. Victoria presented the logo for the program; it will be called the Ignite HER Fire Program. Victoria presented the Board with the preliminary itinerary.

Attorney Jim Sinclair's Response to Fire Truck Purchase—Alan Hauff advised that he emailed Jim Sinclair regarding the purchase of a fire truck without getting three (3) bids. Alan stated that Banner probably has a joint purchase agreement with other fire departments. Chief Darr will contact Banner about a Joint Purchasing Program.

From the Chief:

Overhead Door Maintenance and Repair Update—Chief Darr advised that Overhead Door will be coming on April 13th to perform the routine maintenance and look at door 8.

Hose Testing Update—Chief Darr advised that we lost three (3) sections of hose. He will probably replace the hose sections with the next budget.

Drop Tank for #4161 Update—Chief Darr advised the drop tank is in and has been put on #4161.

New Business

From the Trustees:

Reorganization of Board of Trustee's—Tabled until a 5th Trustee has joined the board. Ed asked if anyone had a new trustee in mind. Ed Darabcsek has reached out to one (1) person and is waiting to hear back. Firefighter Victoria Westfall has someone who might be interested.

LCCC Scholarship—Ed reached out to Debbie at Lewis and Clark Community College about QEM providing a scholarship in honor of Cy Bunting. Debbie sent a sample agreement for everyone to review. Alan would like to see the lawsuit settled before we do the scholarship. Ed will contact the Jersey County Sheriff's Office to see how they do their scholarship.

Adopt Tentative Budget and Appropriation Ordinance for FY 26-27—Alan received the tentative budget from Attorney Jim Sinclair. The tentative budget must be posted for 30 days, and we need to schedule a date and time for the public hearing. It was agreed that at the May Board meeting we would go through the budget. Dennis Blackorby made a motion to Adopt the Tentative Budget and Appropriation Ordinance for FY 26-27. Dan Drescher seconded. Motion carried.

Schedule Date and Time for Public Hearing—The meeting for the Public Hearing is set for July 9, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.

Firefighter Survey—Ed Darabcsek will be handing out a survey to firefighters and would like to make this a yearly survey.

From the Chief:

IL OSHA Visit—Chief Darr advised that we had an inspection from Lee Chery with IL OSHA on March 25th. Lee helped us with paperwork that we did not have. We had to create a Respiratory Protection Plan and an Emergency Action Plan. If firefighters want to go interior or be a stoker for the burn tower, they must complete the OSHA Respirator Medical Evaluation Questionnaire and QEM will need to have a physician review and complete the Medical Evaluation Form. We did not have Hepatitis B Vaccine Forms filled out by firefighters, but we were able to email Lee three (3) completed forms by the next day. Chief Darr will be working on getting a HazMat Refresher training scheduled. Chief Darr advised that we are waiting for the official report from IL OSHA to know if we are getting fined.

Fireproof Cabinet—Chief Darr advised that we do not have a fireproof cabinet for flammable material storage in the bays and he would like to purchase one as this is an OSHA requirement. The fireproof cabinet is \$1,074.36 from Home Depot. Dennis Blackorby made a motion to approve the purchase of a fireproof cabinet for \$1,074.36. Dan Drescher seconded. Motion carried.

New Hires—Chief Darr has two (2) potential firefighters he would like to add to the roster. Jase Rawe is interested in being a cadet. Sydney Stierley would like to be a probationary firefighter. Dan Drescher made a motion to add Cadet Jase Rawe and Probationary Firefighter Sydney Stierley to the roster. Dennis Blackorby seconded. Motion carried.

Tractor Hood—Clerk-Heather Hanna spoke with Sydenstricker Nobbe John Deere. The tractor is under warranty until August 17, 2026, or 2,000 hours. They do not know if the hood is covered under warranty until they repair it and submit the claim to warranty. If warranty does not cover the replacement of the hood due to the broken latch, we will need to pay for it. The cost to replace the hood is \$800.00. Dennis Blackorby made a motion to approve \$800.00 to fix the hood of the John Deere Tractor. Dan Drescher seconded. Motion carried.

Roth ID Tag—Firefighter Victoria Westfall presented Roth ID Tag's to the Board. Roth ID Tag is an emergency identification system for anyone who needs to carry emergency health and contact information. In the event of an emergency, first responders locate the tag, that turns into a wristband. QEM is having a child passenger safety class in January 2027. For them to complete the class they must have a child safety check and Victoria would like to purchase 100 kits to hand out.

Fish Fry—Firefighter Victoria Westfall would like to purchase banners for the fish fry. The signs we have are wood and are painted and Auxiliary must be removed from them, since there is no longer an Auxiliary. She would like to purchase 20 signs from Vista Print for \$2,824.00. Dennis Blackorby made a motion to approve the purchase of 20 banners from Vista Print for \$2,824.00. Dan Drescher seconded. Motion carried.

EMS Activity Reports:

None

Committee Reports:

None

Open Discussion and Preparation for Next Meeting:

The Celebration of Life for Cy Bunting is on May 9th at 12:00 p.m. The family is going to have food catered and will be decorating. Firefighters will need to set up tables and chairs for the family.

Adjournment:

Dennis Blackorby made a motion to adjourn. Dan Drescher seconded. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 7:39 p.m.