



# Travis County Commissioners Court Agenda Request

**Meeting Date:** October 15, 2013

**Prepared By/Phone Number:** Danny Hobby, 854-4416

**Elected/Appointed Official/Dept. Head:** Danny Hobby

**Commissioners Court Sponsor:** County Judge Samuel T. Biscoe

## **AGENDA LANGUAGE:**

CONSIDER AND TAKE APPROPRIATE ACTION TO ALLOW STAR FLIGHT-4 VIETNAM PILOT AND CREW MEMBER TO FLY DURING THEIR NOVEMBER VISIT TO STAR FLIGHT.

## **BACKGROUND/SUMMARY OF REQUEST AND ATTACHMENTS:**

Travis County Emergency Services and STAR Flight are requesting permission to allow the Vietnam pilot and crew member of STAR Flight-4, our recently purchased fire aircraft, to take a flight in the helicopter. Ideally, the flight will take place around Veteran's Day or whenever the pilot and crew member can come to STAR Flight. They both live out-of-state and will have to arrange their own travel to Austin.

On May 19, 1969, our UH-1H (Huey), which now serves as SF-4, crashed in combat in Vietnam. The U.S. Army's report about the crash says that as a result of the crash, no one was killed, and five people were injured.

See attached memorandum and proposed schedule for a detailed summary of this request.

## **STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Emergency Services and STAR Flight recommend approval of this request.

## **ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES:**

Emergency Services and STAR Flight feel this visit and flight would be beneficial not only to the visitors coming but also to the STAR Flight program. The pilot and crew member are a part of the history of this

helicopter and our nation, as we believe that the experience they have with the aircraft will give staff and crew insight into the helicopter on which they serve.

**FISCAL IMPACT AND SOURCE OF FUNDING:**

The fiscal impact would be staff time already budgeted and the cost of maintenance and fuel (\$400) for the flight that would probably take a maximum of 30 minutes.

**REQUIRED AUTHORIZATIONS:**

Barbara Wilson, County Attorney's Office, 854-9567

William Derryberry, PBO, 854-4741

Kapp Schwebke, Auditor's Office, 854-6628

# EMERGENCY SERVICES

DANNY HOBBY, COUNTY EXECUTIVE  
P. O. Box 1748  
AUSTIN, TEXAS 78767  
(512) 854-4416, FAX (512) 854-4786




Emergency Management  
Pete Baldwin, Emergency  
Mgmt. Coordinator

## MEMORANDUM

Fire Marshal  
Hershel Lee

**To:** Travis County Commissioners Court

Chief Medical Examiner  
Dr. David Dolinak

**From:** Danny Hobby, County Executive, Emergency Services 

**Date:** October 9, 2013

STAR Flight  
Casey Ping, Program  
Director

**Subject:** Vietnam Pilot and Crew Member Visit to *STAR Flight*

Travis County Emergency Services and *STAR Flight* are requesting permission to allow the Vietnam pilot and crew member of *STAR Flight-4*, our recently purchased fire aircraft, to take a flight in the helicopter. Ideally, the flight will take place around Veteran's Day or whenever the pilot and crew member can come to *STAR Flight*. They both live out-of-state and will have to arrange their own travel to Austin.

On May 19, 1969, our UH-1H (Huey), which now serves as SF-4, crashed in combat in Vietnam. The U.S. Army's report about the crash says that as a result of the crash, no one was killed, and five people were injured.

When SF-4 joined *STAR Flight* and Emergency Services Public Information Officer Lisa Block learned its history, she started a search for its pilots and crew members with the goal of letting them know that this aircraft is now serving the people of Travis County. PIO Block located several Vietnam Veterans associations online and e-mailed them with the story. The Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association let their readers know about the search for crew members, and they published an article about the Huey.

Shortly thereafter, Reggie Kenner contacted *STAR Flight* via Facebook, identified himself as one of the crew members who was in the helicopter when it crashed in Vietnam, and sent a photo of his self with the crashed helicopter. He also began a search for the pilots and other crew members. He located one of the pilots, Dave Wilson, and learned that the other pilot, Ed Sakenes, is deceased.

Mr. Kenner and Mr. Wilson would like to visit *STAR Flight*, and we would like to obtain permission to allow them to fly in the helicopter. The flight would probably take a maximum of 30 minutes and cost around \$400 (includes maintenance and fuel) not including staff time which is already budgeted. There would be no other direct expense to the county. Their visit and flight would be beneficial not only to them but also to the *STAR Flight* program. They are a part of

the history of this helicopter and our nation, and we believe that the experience they have with the aircraft will give staff and crew insight into the helicopter on which they serve.

The deceased pilot's widow, Donna Sakenes, and his sister would also like to visit **STAR Flight**, during Mr. Kenner and Mr. Wilson's visit. We are not requesting that they be allowed to fly because they are not former crew members of the helicopter. Donna suggested that we schedule the visit to coincide with Veterans Day, November 11, so possible dates for the visit would be around this date.

With the Court's permission to allow Mr. Kenner and Mr. Wilson to fly in their former helicopter, we plan to make their visit to **STAR Flight** a memorable day for them and current staff and crew members. (See proposed schedule). At the same time, we also hope to honor all Veterans who gave of themselves in service to our Country.

## ***STAR Flight-4's Vietnam Pilot and Crew Member Visit*** **Proposed Schedule**

9:00-10:00 a.m.—Former Crew Member Reggie Kenner, Former Pilot Dave Wilson and Deceased Pilot, Ed Sakenes', widow and sister and families arrive at, and tour, ***STAR Flight***.

10:00 a.m.—Reggie Kenner and Dave Wilson take flight on SF-4.

11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.—Media is allowed to interview VIP guests and selected ***STAR Flight*** staff members. (If Travis County Commissioners or other VIP officials wish to welcome the VIP guests, we can have a brief welcome ceremony at 11:00 with media in attendance.)

12:00-1:00 p.m.—***STAR Flight*** personnel and VIP guests have lunch together.