



**Sanibel Fire & Rescue District
Minutes of the Fire Commission Meeting**

DATE: May 10, 2023 @ 9:00 AM

ATTENDEES: Jerry Muench (Chairman)
Bruce Cochrane (Vice Chairman)
Richard McCurry (Secretary Treasurer) – Present via Teams Meeting Online

Kevin Barbot (Fire Chief)
Larry Williams (Fire Marshal)
John DiMaria (Captain)
Greta Fulkerson (Administrative Assistant)

Captain Jackson
Lieutenant Martin
FF Bell
FF Moore
FF Tejada
FF Steele
FF Johanson
FF Zarick
FF Nygaard
The Island Reporter
The Santiva Chronicle
The General Public

Commissioner Muench opened the meeting at 9:00 AM. Commissioner Muench led the Pledge of Allegiance.

1. Phoenix Awards Presentation

Commissioner Muench gave the floor to Chief Barbot for the introduction and presentation.

Chief Barbot welcomed attendees, and the previous seven months were noted to have been a physical and mental rollercoaster. It was explained that first responders who had exemplified with excellence the meaning of community were to be celebrated and noted that in early April, Sanibel Fire, Sanibel Police, Lee County EMS, and Sanibel Dispatchers had all played a critical role in working as a unified team to achieve the desired goal of every call. The Henshaw family were highlighted as dedicated members of the community, and Jane Henshaw was asked to present Phoenix Awards to the individuals who had saved her life. Officer Kyle Eckert of the SPD was noted to have been first on scene and was able to administer defibrillation. Lieutenant Grace Towler, Sergeant Jarred Ciccone, and Dispatcher Courtney McCarthy of the SPD, Paramedic Mike Cunningham and EMT Wayne Young of Lee County EMS, and Captain Chris Jackson, Firefighter Rob Bell, Firefighter Arian Moore, and Firefighter Michael Tejada of SFRD, were all recognized and applauded for their efforts.

2. Promotions

I) Lieutenant Michael Martin Promotion

Captain DiMaria read out a commendation by Chief Barbot, highlighting Michael Martin's contributions during recovery efforts following Hurricane Ian among others, thanking him and congratulating him on his promotion to Lieutenant. Captain DiMaria explained the role and responsibilities of Lieutenant and led Michael Martin through the swearing of an oath to discharge and perform his duties as a Fire Officer.

II) Firefighter Michael Tejada Swearing In

Captain DiMaria explained the role and responsibilities of a firefighter and led Michael Tejada through the swearing of an oath to discharge and perform his duties as such.

Both Lieutenant Martin and Firefighter Tejada were recognized by applause from attendees.

3. Minutes of the April 12, 2023, Commission Meeting

A motion was made by Commissioner Cochrane to accept the minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Muench. There was no discussion. The motion was approved unanimously.

4. Fire Marshal Williams' Report

Fire Marshal Williams explained that inspections around firewalls and fire alarm systems had taken place with condos from Periwinkle to West Gulf to East Gulf being brought up to date with the current code. 67 plan reviews were completed in April and 391 year-to-date. Fire flow reviews were also taking place for the District's new station, Beachview Cottages, Island Cow, Island Inn, Shalimar, confirming that nothing had yet been received from West Wind. It was noted that the FEMA village behind Station 171 was occupied, with Fire Marshal Williams explaining that there had been an initial six-month estimate, and suggested the

date might be August. Plan reviews and inspections in conjunction with the building officials were confirmed to be ongoing, with a generally optimistic outlook.

5. Captain DiMaria's Report

I) Captain DiMaria confirmed that the District had attended the community Easter Program, with one member dressing up as the Easter Bunny. It was noted that there would be three CPR classes in May, with 15 people attending a class the day before the meeting, and stated that the hope was to incorporate Water Safety Month into the May classes, with the media invited to at least one class for public information and awareness purposes. There will be a July 4th event at the recreation center which the District will take part in. Captain DiMaria suggested the presence of a fire truck for children to operate the hose.

II) Call volume was noted to be 321 compared to 680 for the same period in the previous year, a decrease of 53% so far, and hazmat training was confirmed to be scheduled on 17th, 18th, and 19th at IWA, with Firefighter Moore to talk about hazmat responses as the department hazmat technician. Rope rescue training was noted to be an increasing priority, with Firefighter Felix, Lieutenant Wilkins, and Lieutenant Martin leading the classes together as the department's rope technicians. It was hoped that some real-world training in the community would be possible as well as using the training tower, and Fire Marshal Williams noted that he'd spoken to Island Inn, with permission given to use Kimball Lodge for training prior to its demolition, and Captain DiMaria noted that a new smoke machine had been received which would also enable search-and-rescue practice there. Anaphylaxis was noted as the previous month's medical training focus, and acute coronary syndromes was identified as May's focus.

Chief Barbot thanked Captain DiMaria for his assistance in reducing Chief Barbot's administrative load.

6. Chief Barbot's Financial Update

I) Chief Barbot confirmed that the tax relief bill had been passed meaning that 25% of ad valorem tax revenue being returned to homeowners if they were in a home that was not livable for more than 30 days and noted that the impact of this was now starting to be seen. It was estimated 55% to 60% of applications had been processed, being about 11,531 to date, of over 19,000 so far received by the tax collector. The District would need to pay \$412,318.09 back to taxpayers, as well as there being an outstanding ad valorem revenue of \$232,830 of unpaid property taxes, with both amounts to come off the tax liability owed for the tax relief bill. Chief Barbot explained that this meant there would be no further income to the District until the tax relief bill debt had been paid off which would therefore impact the coming months. Further discussions would need to take place to agree on an operating budget. The revenue loss for the next year was estimated to be between \$800,000 to \$1 million. Chief Barbot explained that the Lee County property appraiser had projected a 20-30% property value adjustment, which could translate to a \$1.6-2.4 million budget loss on top of the tax relief impact. Ad valorem revenue to date was noted to be \$7.1 million, including all commissions and fee deductions from the tax collector and property appraiser's offices. It was emphasized that personnel services would be the utmost priority and there would not be any layoffs.

II) Chief Barbot noted that the prevention department, Fire Marshal Williams, was a one-man band and highlighted commendations and thanks from Building Director Craig and Deputy Director Julian regarding

the handling of permit inspections and inquiries. Thanks were recorded to Fire Marshal Williams with a round of applause. There had been \$11,000 in permit fees the previous year, compared to \$110,000 this year to date.

III) Chief Barbot confirmed there was a huge difference from the previous year in interest-bearing accounts due to the increase in interest rates, with a previous year gain of \$4,000 and a current gain of \$96,000 just on interest from emergency fund accounts, and that the total year to date revenue for the District was \$7.4 million.

IV) Chief Barbot requested that the budget workshop originally scheduled for May 17th be delayed until the soft numbers were available, which would be after the June commission meeting. The Board agreed.

V) Chief Barbot noted that the District's expenditures were under budget for 2022 and explained that the figures included everything paid for such as personnel, overtime, equipment, and replacements due to Hurricane Ian, so would normally be much lower. FEMA Category B reimbursements were noted to include personnel services, labor, equipment, and special contracts. \$513,000 was explained to be operations between September 28th and December 7th, which will be recouped from FEMA once all processes have been completed and documentation submitted, with a rough timeline of funds being received within six to nine months. It was explained that the cost liability for post 12/7 operations of around \$337,000 would be reimbursed as \$281,000 based on FEMA's 75% cost share, with 12.5% or \$60,000 to \$50,000 coming out of District funds. Chief Barbot explained that he and Lieutenant Martin had been working extensively to ensure all funds would be paid back to the District.

VI) Chief Barbot confirmed that, following revisions, approval had been received for an almost \$1.6 million FEMA Community Disaster Loan, with files being sent to FEMA to draw up the agreement for the Board to agree on. The CDL was explained as a low-interest loan for operating expenses, given to local governments with financial and budgeting deficits. It was noted that the loan was an open line of credit with no charges to the District until it was drawn against. It could only be used for operating expenses.

VII) An update was given on Station 172, with Chief Barbot explaining that traction was being gained towards meeting FEMA's 50% rule for a full structural replacement at a federal level, and confirming the review was 80% complete at the second check. It was explained that the Station 171 rebuild invoice adjustments had been investigated and \$37,600 in discrepancies had been found and removed. A refund check of \$3,000 was also noted to be coming as a result of roof tarping discrepancies.

VIII) Chief Barbot referred to the previous meeting's decision to transfer CDs into a higher-interest bank account, confirming this had been done and the interest rate was now 4% from 0.8%.

IX) Chief Barbot gave an overview of decisions made in January, including pausing projects, reducing spending, and pausing all non-critical capital improvement projects. A reduction in force via the elimination of certain positions and restructuring was noted to have been one of the hardest decisions, so far leading to a \$27,900 a month or \$335,000 annual saving.

7. Chief Barbot's District Update

I) Chief Barbot confirmed a special meeting was scheduled for May 17th for the Station 172 rebuild design presentation, with two firms, GMA Architects & Planners and Schenkel & Schultz, to provide renderings of

the external appearance and floor plans for the ground and second-floor structures. It was noted that the meeting had been advertised publicly and would take place at 9:00 AM in the same station and room as the current meeting. Rebuilding the station was now critical and would be going ahead before the FEMA funds were confirmed, with quotes and bids requested for land survey and geotechnical reports.

II) Chief Barbot noted that he had been nominated by Chief DiLallo into the Resilient Lead Group, which would be the economic recovery branch, confirming the first meeting would be May 18th in Downtown Fort Myers, and explaining that it would consist of private sector, public government, and not-for-profit organizations giving recommendations to a Board.

III) Chief Barbot echoed Captain DiMaria's earlier input on community involvement, adding that a school PTA event had been attended, as had multiple resiliency meetings at Big Arts, with the next such meeting on May 22nd as part of a free series put on by Bob Moore, where Chief Barbot would be speaking.

IV) Preliminary financial audit submissions were confirmed complete, with a full completion time frame of late May to early June.

8. Chief Barbot's Equipment and Maintenance Update

I) Chief Barbot noted that the beach rescue side-by-side had been replaced with insurance funds, that the Can-Am was here, and that the rescue skid for the back was still awaited. All apparatuses were noted to be undergoing maintenance, although only critical necessities and repairs were being conducted until the budget for the next fiscal year had been confirmed.

II) Chief Barbot reviewed an email sent on April 25th in regard to the budget, highlighting cost-saving efforts through in-house solutions, including issues with Marine 171. Specifically mentioned were Lieutenant Howell and crew for swapping the starter on a fire pump, Firefighter Zarick for rewiring the fire pump on the brush truck and installing a windshield on the Can-Am, Firefighter Clement who assisted Captain Jackson in the purchase and collection of the Can-Am unit, Firefighters Walter and Schelm for fixing a marine water pump and replacing batteries on Marine 171, Firefighter Grant for building an exterior deck at the Station 172 trailer, Lieutenant Martin for his assistance with the District and handling of FEMA and financial recovery, Captain Jackson for assistance with equipment and facility maintenance, and Firefighter Moore for planning and providing hazmat training.

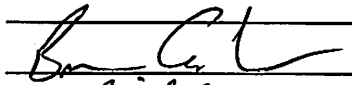
9. Other Items

There were no items to discuss under the Commission or Union.

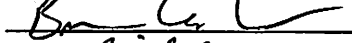
10. Public Input

There was no public input to discuss.

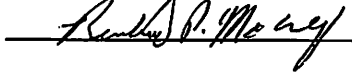
Attendees were thanked for coming, and the meeting was adjourned at 9:49 AM.



Chairman, "Jerry", Jerrold Muench



Vice Chairman, Bruce Cochrane



Secretary/Treasurer, Richard McCurry