



Sanibel Fire & Rescue District

Board of Commissioners Meeting Minutes

DATE: Wednesday, January 10, 2024 @ 9:00 AM

ATTENDEES: Jerry Muench (Chairman)
Bruce Cochrane (Vice Chairman)
Richard McCurry (Secretary Treasurer)

Kevin Barbot (Fire Chief)
John DiMaria (Deputy Chief)
Chris Jackson (Assistant Chief)
Larry Williams (Fire Marshal)
Greta Fulkerson (Administrative Assistant)

Rob Wilkins (Captain)
Ed Zarick (Firefighter)

Tiffany Repecki (Island Reporter) – present via Microsoft Teams

The meeting was called to order by Commissioner Muench. Commissioner Muench led the Pledge of Allegiance.

1. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the December 13, 2023, commission meeting were reviewed. **A motion was made by Commissioner McCurry to accept the minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Cochrane. There was no discussion. The motion was approved unanimously.**

2. Board of Commissioners Seat Assignments

The Board agreed that they remain in their current assigned seats. **A motion was made by Commissioner McCurry to keep the seat assignments as they currently are. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Cochrane. There was no discussion. The motion was approved unanimously.**

3. Fire Marshal's Report

The plan review for the year was 995, an average of 5 plans a day. 106 inspections were carried out in December, with 903 for the year. The Hurricane House Resort fire alarm had been done, with alarms and sprinklers tested. Several new openings were set to occur. Sunshine Inn and Sanibel Moorings had been approved for occupancy. Fire alarms at Sedgemoor Condos in both buildings had been done and would be open for occupancy soon. Fire Marshal Williams had been working with Bryan, Max, and Dan to handle the Lighthouse Café. Nothing had been heard yet regarding Dairy Queen or Fish House. They had been all cleared out, but there were no further updates. Lazy Flamingo had been cleared out as well, but they didn't want to do anything for a couple of years. It was unclear if Topsy Turtle had been cleared out yet. The situation with CVS was also unclear, although it was expected to open in May. A lot of the places Fire Marshal Williams had been talking to were wanting to finish up one place they owned before moving on to others.

4. Assistant Chief's Report

I) Equipment Update

Last month the brush truck got approved and Assistant Chief Jackson had a phone call with the build team; they designed all of the compartments and were going to send over a finalized proof of everything discussed. The cabin chassis had been ordered but didn't have a delivery time yet. Once they had the cabin chassis, it would take 30 to 60 days for everything to get mounted, including the bed, and wired up.

II) Maintenance Update

Normal wear and tear items; they were going to pull Marine 171 out of the water soon and do some maintenance. Some floodlights needed to be replaced. Commissioner McCurry asked if there were any plans to get lighting back at the dock. Assistant Chief Jackson responded that the City took care of the lighting and that he would check in with the situation regarding the gate, as well as the lighting and security camera.

III) Station 172 Update

Assistant Chief Jackson had received a text from the demolition company on the first of the year wanting to come out to the island to get started. Over the course of three shifts, the crews had removed all items, including

bunker gear racks, hose racks, and the air compressor, from inside Station 172 and reorganized them in the 2-car garage that was to be kept for use over the duration of the construction of the new station. They were trying to leave the 172 Engine in the station as long as possible, with plans to order a cover for outside. They were also going to swap 172 with 179, the oldest fire engine, to avoid potential weather damage to 172. They had to carry out an asbestos test before demolition which had come back negative, enabling the company to get started with demolition once County permits had been taken care of. Everything in the building would be recycled. They had a lot of public interest in getting pictures and video for when the station is demolished, with plans to potentially hold a PR event. The electricians would probably be out next week to work on the portable generator. There was concern about the location of the fire pole being close to the bollards, but after having discussions with other fire stations, Assistant Chief Jackson had discovered this was fine.

5. Deputy Chief's Report

I) Training

Personnel training was ongoing throughout the month. For medical training, they had worked with Dr. Abo on pit crew operations last month, and Deputy Chief DiMaria had attended a train-the-trainer course with Lee County EMS who were launching all-hands training countywide with the fire departments. Pit crew is a systematic approach to a person who goes into cardiac arrest. Alex Priest would let Deputy Chief DiMaria know when they could do the training collectively. A new medical protocol rolled out; Deputy Chief DiMaria and Firefighter Nygaard were working on study guides to give to personnel. Regarding fire training, Sunset Beach was still being used for training purposes until being knocked down. For chainsaw operations, they had been able to use the aerial truck to access the roof. Forceful entry; they were getting hurricane-proof sliders off as well as windows, and the training had gone well.

II) New Shifts

New shifts started on January 1st, and everyone was in place, including all newly promoted officers. There had been an officer meeting the day before, discussing expectations and how to proceed throughout the year with training and other planned events.

III) Marine 171

The week of January 22nd, Firefighter Walter was leading the boat operator course, a week-long course with both classroom and hands-on boat time. The new pump came in; Chief Barbot reiterated that the pump had been fully paid for by WCIND (West Coast Inland Navigation District), who had used their excess funds to assist fire departments that had been affected by Hurricane Ian. The boat is to be pulled out of the water on Thursday for maintenance at the marina. Marine 171 would hopefully be fully operational by the beginning of the following week, with Firefighter Walter and Firefighter Zarick assisting in handling the maintenance.

IV) Public Education and Community Involvement

CPR classes were still in full force. Deputy Chief DiMaria was trying to space these out strategically so as not to interfere with training and operations. Weekend classes had been advertised on social media. Ding Darling had to be split into two classes due to the number of people attending. Deputy Chief DiMaria and Chief Barbot were meeting with NBC Universal that day regarding a documentary on Hurricane Ian. Chief Barbot added that they were talking about airing it prime time national news, most likely around 8:00 PM on a Sunday.

V) Ribbon Cutting Ceremonies

They were at Costa Vista a couple of weeks ago and the Sanibel Moorings yesterday, which had a great turnout. Using the donations that were asked for during the District's Christmas party, Deputy Chief DiMaria and Chief Barbot were able to go out and disseminate gift cards to essential workers and establishments on the island that were there in the wake of Hurricane Ian. The community had been appreciative of this.

VI) Call Volume

In 2022, they ended the year at 1,520 calls. In 2023, they ended the year at 937 calls with a big uptick in November and December but still 37% less than the previous year. This year they were currently at 22 calls, on track with the previous two years. Out-of-chute times had been good with the average time for the current year being 70 seconds, staying within the 90th percentile.

6. Chief's Report

Chief Barbot extended a thank you to all staff and personnel. He said, as heard from the chief officers, there are a lot of moving pieces in the current season at the District and getting it all done would not be possible without all of the staff support. It is much appreciated to get the District back on track.

I) Financial Update

The district had started working with the auditing firm, Tuscan & Company, PA, with documentation submitted in December and would be setting up soon to have the firm come on-site for the process. Chief Barbot had a meeting with the property appraiser, along with Fort Myers Beach, Iona-McGregor, and Captiva. The group had concerns the district would be receiving property value adjustments coming in. There have been statements that tax authorities in the affected areas should expect a drastic drop. The District has received 87% of the \$5.9 million ad valorem funding so far. Chief Barbot was advised that the property appraiser cannot claw back any of those funds, however, they can relay that the District owes them the following year. The District had an 8% increase from the certified July numbers to the final October numbers.

Chief Barbot had made a trip to Tallahassee, which had been positive for the \$2.1 million ask for the appropriations request. The lobbyists wanted him and Deputy Chief DiMaria back up on the 23rd and 24th of January for another round of petitioning. The funding agreements were completed, and they were waiting for the \$6 million funding from the State for Station 172 and \$2.1 million for the operational funds. Per the agreement, the State was supposed to take back any interest made on those funds. Chief Barbot had been directed by the Board to open bank sub-accounts, which had been established, and there was paperwork to sign regarding this. The \$2.1 million operating fund had to be used by June as per the contract. 100% of this would be used for labor costs.

Chief Barbot received approval from a County attorney for the impact fee use for the brush truck.

II) District Update

Chief Barbot was contacted by a group from Manatee and Hillsborough County Barrier Island Departments, who wanted to start a Barrier Island disaster group to meet on a quarterly basis and discuss how to help each other out to be prepared for natural disasters.

III) FEMA Update

They were in EHP, the last phase, review for Station 172, the last public assistance grant project open at the time. Once completed, they could move on to Cat Zs, which includes labor costs. Chief Barbot had been asked at the previous Board meeting to see what it would take to keep Hagerty Consulting on standby. They were in a PRN contract with them until December 31, 2024. Due to how much value Hagerty Consulting has brought to the District throughout the entire process, Chief Barbot will discuss a potential emergency contract when the current contract nears its end.

The District was working with CROW on an event they had coming up called Wild About CROW. The District is donating to the auction hosting a six-person dinner at the station.

IV) Starlink

They had been having tech issues with Comcast. The expense was under the procurement guidelines where normally approval wouldn't be needed; however, this would lead to a monthly long-term fee. During Hurricane Ian they had not been able to function without the internet and had been able to obtain a Starlink from the County to solve this. A Board member advised them to purchase a Starlink as part of their equipment as a redundancy system for internet connectivity. The cost for the high-performance unit was \$2,500 and a \$250 per month maintenance fee. The equipment would be owned rather than rented. Once they had sustainable and reliable internet the aim was to go with Voiceover IP phones and move away from CenturyLink, reducing the bill to around \$100. Regarding potential issues, cloud cover hadn't been an issue. In the event of another hurricane, they would take the equipment down from its mount on the tower at the back of the station for the duration of the hurricane. Commissioner McCurry asked, would we get one for each station? Chief Barbot replied that he would prefer to get one first and make sure it is fully functioning and exactly what the District needs before proceeding with purchasing a second for the other station. The Board agreed.

V) Staffing Update

Chief Barbot announced Deputy Chief DiMaria with sixteen years of service, as well as newly promoted Lieutenant Steele with twelve years of service. They had three extended sick leaves over the past three months, which had been costly to the District. 50% of their overtime budget had already been used. However, only one person was still on extended sick leave, which would hopefully be cleared up soon. On the personnel services budget, they were three months in and through December 31st they were on track at 24.6%. Administrative Assistant Fulkerson was leaving the following day to do a humanitarian trip in Haiti.

7. Resolution 24-001 - Approving Solicitation and Funding Plan for Construction of Station 172

Resolution 24-001 was to solicit a general contractor for Station 172. Board approval was needed to proceed with the solicitation for the bid, which would be open for a six-week period. A special meeting would be held with internal staff. The lowest bidder would get the work for the station, with no choice due to it being a state and federally funded project. Administrative Assistant Fulkerson read the resolution.

A motion was made by Commissioner Muench to approve Resolution 24-001 regarding the solicitation and funding plan for construction of Station 172. The motion was seconded by Commissioner McCurry. There was no discussion. The motion was approved unanimously.

8. Resolution 24-002 - Owner Direct Purchase Policy - Procurement Policy Amendment

Resolution 24-002 was a necessary procurement policy amendment for the District for owner direct purchase of any tangible items being purchased for the reconstruction of Station 172. The vendors and subcontractors of the general contractor would submit their invoices directly for the District to pay. The District would handle all necessary State paperwork with them to be able to do the ODP (Owner Direct Purchasing). This would mean tax wouldn't be paid on the equipment. Administrative Assistant Fulkerson read the resolution.

A motion was made by Commissioner McCurry to approve Resolution 24-002 regarding the procurement policy amendment for owner direct purchase policy. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Cochrane. There was no discussion. The motion was approved unanimously.

9. Resolution 24-003 - Administrative Vehicle Purchase

When they had the budgeting workshop, the Board had advised looking into replacing the red Tahoe due to mechanical issues. Chief Barbot had been in talks with Tuscan, PA going through the Florida Sheriffs Association contract bid to get pricing. They were able to find a local pickup truck cheaper than the State bid contract. Chief Barbot gave the documentation to Mr. Tuscan who advised them to purchase the vehicle from the vendor locally for a cheaper price. The State bid price was \$47,569 but the local price was \$46,034.95. Resolution 24-003 would give the Fire Chief or appointed representative the authority to make the purchase on behalf of the District. Administrative Assistant Fulkerson read the resolution.

A motion was made by Commissioner Cochrane to approve Resolution 24-003 regarding the purchase of an administrative vehicle to replace the red Tahoe. The motion was seconded by Commissioner McCurry. There was no discussion. The motion was approved unanimously.

10. Commissioner Items

No items to discuss.

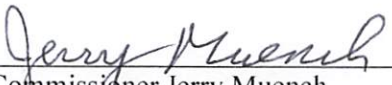
11. Union Items

No items to discuss.

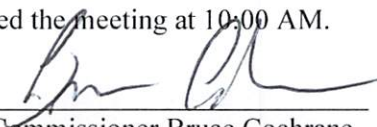
12. Public Input

No input to discuss.

There being no further business, Commissioner Muench adjourned the meeting at 10:00 AM.



Commissioner Jerry Muench



Commissioner Bruce Cochrane



Commissioner Richard McCurry