

SANIBEL FIRE & RESCUE DISTRICT  
Minutes of the Fire Commission Meeting  
December 14, 2022

Commissioners – Chairman Jerry Muench, Vice Chair Bruce Cochrane, Secretary Richard McCurry  
Fire Chief Kevin Barbot  
Division Chief Tim Barrett  
Fire Marshal Larry Williams  
Assistant Administrator Greta Fulkerson

In attendance were the following: Captain DiMaria, Lieutenant Wilkins, FF Martin, FF Zarick, FF Tejada, FF Shelby, and the general public.

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

1st Order of Business: The minutes for the November 9, 2022, commission meeting were reviewed and accepted by the Board Members. **A motion was made by Commissioner Cochrane to accept the minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner McCurry. There was no discussion. The motion was approved unanimously.**

2nd Order of Business: The minutes for the December 5, 2022, emergency meeting were reviewed and accepted by the Board Members. **A motion was made by Commissioner Muench to accept the minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Cochrane. There was no discussion. The motion was approved unanimously.**

3rd Order of Business: Division Chief of Training Report. Medical training has been as usual, tying ongoing training into Dr. Abo's monthly lectures. Dr. Abo's lecture on respiratory was the following day, December 15, 2022. The District got into contact with and received permission from condo owners at Kings Crown, among others, undergoing rebuilding and remodeling to use the premises for fire training purposes. Commissioner Muench asked, can you elaborate on the training? Division Chief Barrett responded, in the Kings Crown area you cannot drive that far out to the condos, so it is more of a hose stretch training. Fire Marshal Williams added, we are going to try to change that by having them put a sandpipe system in, and that way we would not have to stretch the hose 300 to 400 feet. Commissioner Muench asked, have you had any elevator calls? Fire Marshal Williams answered, none of the elevators nor the telecommunication systems within the elevators are working. Division Chief Barrett added, once these places are further along back up and running, we will start to get more calls for assistance. The Recreation Center opened back up, so Division Chief Barrett will be contacting them regarding pool access for swim training. The District will also be doing walk-up blood pressure checks for residents and the community at The Recreation Center. The District is back to offering CPR classes with one coming up the following week at The Sanctuary.

4th Order of Business: Division Chief of Prevention Report. Fire Marshal Williams and Chief Barbot met with the new building officials, Craig and Julian, to go over the plan regarding rebuilding and remodeling across Sanibel. It is estimated that 30 percent of the island will end up falling under the 50 percent rule, which entails bringing everything up to current codes and standards, and in this case will include upgraded fire alarm and sprinkler systems. Commissioner McCurry asked, what about people applying for permits that are under the 50 percent rule? Fire Marshal Williams responded, we will handle them on a case-by-case basis, looking at the systems they have and what devices and/or wiring will need to be replaced. Fire Marshal Williams used the Kings Crown area as an example, adding that pre-hurricane they had not wanted to tear up the pavement in order to input a sandpipe system, but now, post-hurricane, would be the perfect

opportunity to do so and would be much more beneficial to the District and ultimately safer for the residents. Fire Marshal Williams and Chief Barbot also met with CVS management regarding their options for rebuilding. If they were to keep the structure they have now versus do a complete teardown and rebuild, they would have to install 9-foot flood walls. Commissioner McCurry asked, what are 9-foot flood walls? Fire Marshal Williams responded, they are panels that go around the entire exterior. Chief Barbot added, the issue with those is the expense and amount of work it would take to install them. Commissioner McCurry asked, will there be a new flood map? Fire Marshal Williams responded that he does not know yet because he does not handle that, but given how Fort Myers is changing their flood zones it is possible. Fire Marshal Williams has been making contact with as many businesses on the island as he can and has found that the vast majority are maxed out on their insurance, most not even coming close to what it will cost to rebuild. Commissioner Muench asked, have you heard anything about the post office? Fire Marshal Williams answered, I have not. Fire Marshal Williams has been working with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) out of Washington D.C. regarding the retrieval and removal of electric vehicles and golf carts. They will be purchasing these electric vehicles and golf carts that caught fire and relocating them to a warehouse for research purposes.

5th Order of Business: At this time the District is operating 82 percent below ad valorem revenue compared to last fiscal year due to the delay in TRIM notices going out and therefore delay in ad valorem revenue coming in. Chief Barbot expressed that he is not overly concerned because residents and business owners must pay their taxes, so the District would receive its funds in the future regardless. Tax distributions come in every two weeks, on the 15th and the 30th of every month, through February, and then it's a one-time payment at the end of the month. Commissioner Muench asked, didn't they extend the payments for a couple of months? Chief Barbot answered, yes they did, through December 31st with no penalty. Chief Barbot added that there are some bills in progress that would reduce taxes for disaster-affected areas and potentially hurt the District and other critical infrastructures financially. The Florida Association of Special Districts (FASD) is handling this situation, ensuring that should these bills be passed by the State, there is language within them protecting critical infrastructures from being negatively impacted. Per the Board's guidance at the December 5th emergency meeting, all paperwork for the Community Disaster Loan (CDL) has been sent to FEMA and is in process.

6th Order of Business: Grau and Associates has been the District's auditing firm for the last 5 years and although this fiscal year is their final year per contract, they do have the ability to extend their services for an additional 5 years if the offer stands. Chief Barbot asked the Board whether the District should go out to bid for a new auditing firm or extend their contract with Grau and Associates. Commissioner McCurry said, I recommend we go out to bid for funding purposes as well as to gain perspective of other companies as to what they have to offer the District. Commissioner Muench agreed to looking into other potential auditing firms. This month the District's call volume is down approximately 35 percent, with 73 incidents logged compared to the 112 incidents last November. Given the current state of the island, there have been much less lift assists and fire alarms and much more pertinent calls, such as the debris pile fire which was well-handled by all 3 Captains while Chief Barbot was out of town. They ran Command, they ran Ops, and they worked with mutual aid assistance from South Trail, Iona, Estero, Bay Shore, and San Carlos. Captain DiMaria mentioned that Estero came out on a strike team given the water supply and pressure issues that the District is currently experiencing. Captain DiMaria added that since the agency dealing with these types of debris piles was immediately on scene, they were able to stop the fire much more quickly. Commissioner McCurry asked, would this mirror a scenario if the District had Battalion Chiefs in place? Chief Barbot responded, absolutely, we were able to separate them from the specific task of running an engine to get the big picture of what was happening on scene with assets coming in and the County making contact regarding assistance. Commissioner McCurry commented great job to the Captains. Given the currently high volume of contractors on the island, a majority of calls have been due to industrial injuries, such as a laceration to the face from a floor scraper and other tool-related injuries. Chief Barbot said that while the call volume may be down 35 percent now, he predicts it will increase starting January 2nd when Sanibel is opened to

the public. Commissioner McCurry asked, was the re-opening of the island a County or Mayor decision? Chief Barbot replied, the County stated they were going to re-open the toll and the City piggy-backed off their decision, so the re-opening of the toll and the island are happening in conjunction on January 2nd. Chief Barbot requested that the Annual Awards Banquet be postponed until the end of the first quarter of 2023 to allow time to plan and find a proper facility for the occasion. The Board Members agreed to the request. Many generous donations have been made to the District this month, including \$5,000 from the Bruning Foundation, a \$41,000 monitor purchase from the Gary Sinise Foundation, \$2,000 from the United States First Responders Association in partnership with Jagermeister, and \$1,000 in gift cards from the Florida Association of Special Districts. Chief Barbot transitioned to a FEMA status update, taking a moment to acknowledge how much work FF Martin has done for the District on this matter. Chief Barbot said that the District would not have accomplished nearly as much FEMA-related work or as quickly without the help of FF Martin on the financial side. He has been a huge asset in ensuring that the District will recoup as much funding as possible from both FEMA and VFIS, the District's insurance company. The Board Members thanked FF Martin for his valuable work. FF Martin's main two focuses have been tracking the District's labor costs and contents loss from each structure for insurance purposes. He has been working closely with Hagerty Consulting to ensure that all documentation is being recorded properly. Commissioner Muench asked, that is who we hired to help us with the FEMA process, correct? FF Martin answered, yes, hiring them was probably the best decision we could have made through this whole experience given that we are way ahead of the curve in this process. FF Martin shared the insurance discrepancies on contents that were found within each station, approximately \$64,000 compared to \$120,000 at Station 172 and approximately \$90,000 compared to \$150,000 at Station 171. Chief Barbot transitioned to discussing his conference call with Max Miller and VFIS. The structural repair estimates that VFIS had originally given the District did not consider the hardships that were faced on the island, such as not having access to the Causeway, which affected the number of hours of labor and transportation. The goal moving forward is to ensure that the District will recoup as much funding from VFIS as possible given the specific circumstances of the disaster. Lee County Property Appraiser estimated Station 172 to be worth \$574,000 and VFIS estimated that it would cost \$471,000 to rebuild Station 172 how it was pre-hurricane, placing the District well above the 50 percent rule. Even if the District is unable to recoup federal funding or assistance, the District is responsible for ensuring that the Station 172 structure is rebuilt to current codes and standards as it was pre-hurricane, which is not an option. The District will inevitably have to get a private appraisal done on the Station 172 structure given its extensive damage, and that estimate will most likely still place the District above the 50 percent rule, which would give the District the inability to rebuild Station 172 as it was, making it all the more crucial to recoup as much funding as possible through FEMA. Commissioner McCurry asked, when can you get the private appraisal? Chief Barbot replied, yesterday I requested a proposal for a quote from a commercial appraiser, so I should be receiving that within the next day or so. Commissioner McCurry asked, if the Station 172 structure is demolished and rebuilt from the ground up on pilings, can the footprint be changed at all? Chief Barbot responded, in order to maximize the compensation we receive from FEMA, the District has to follow the strict guidelines of remaining as close to the same as possible. What the District is currently looking at is a structure with 3 bays on ground level and living quarters on top. What Chief Barbot has gathered from his conversations with Andre McIntosh with Hagerty Consulting is that within 3 to 4 months the District should have a strong sense of where FEMA is headed in terms of funding for the Station 172 rebuild. The lease agreement for the temporary structure at Station 172 has been signed, and the single-wide trailer should be delivered before the end of the year. The District is foregoing beach campfire permits this 2023 season given the current nature of the island.

7th Order of Business: VFIS deemed the 2009 F550, the District's support vehicle and sole towing vehicle for the marine asset, a total loss and will be reimbursing the District \$35,000 for that vehicle. The District will be selling the current Fire Chief vehicle, a 2017 Chevy Tahoe, which holds a value of \$25,000 to date. Between the funds from both of those vehicles, the District is purchasing a brand new F250 four-wheel drive vehicle that would be able to tow the marine asset as well as be a Battalion Chief staff vehicle should the District choose to proceed with that restructure. The estimate for this vehicle purchase is \$50,231, and

it would not be delivered for 5 to 6 months. Chief Barbot said that the District did not have to go out for bid on this purchase, but it does need a motion to proceed. **A motion was made by Commissioner McCurry to proceed with the purchase of a 2023 F250 staff vehicle. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Muench. There was no discussion. The motion was approved unanimously.**

8th Order of Business: Former Chief Briscoe's staff vehicle, which was also deemed a total loss, is being replaced by a 2023 Chevy Tahoe that will be delivered to the District the following day. The F150 Fire Marshal vehicle is currently getting the lights and sirens package installed and will be going to the graphics shop afterwards. Chief Barbot presented images of what the new District vehicle graphics will look like to the Board Members. The Board Members approved of and complimented the new graphics design. The District also purchased a replacement hose tester for \$4,350, which was deemed a loss by insurance and will be reimbursed since it was in the training tower, which took on 5 feet of water during the hurricane. Hose testing is a yearly mandate per FDA requirements, and the District usually does its hose testing every November. The replacement hose tester is set to arrive around the end of January, so the District will then be able to complete its annual hose testing. Regarding personnel updates, Division Chief of Training Barrett reached 24 years of service this month. The Board Members congratulated Division Chief Barrett. The District is almost back to its 100 percent staff status, with one having just completed work comp and two others potentially getting cleared for full-duty in the upcoming couple of weeks. Chief Barbot said that he is hoping for full-strength by Christmas.

9th Order of Business: Chief Barbot stated that the Board does need to ratify the actions taken during the December 5th emergency meeting with a motion per request from Lewis, Longman & Walker. This includes the Board's approval of the Procurement Policy, the purchase of a temporary structure for Station 172, and the Community Disaster Loan. **A motion was made by Commissioner Cochrane to ratify all actions taken during the December 5, 2022 emergency meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner McCurry. There was no discussion. The motion was approved unanimously.**

10th Order of Business: Commissioner Items. No items to discuss.

11th Order of Business: Union Items. No items to discuss.

12th Order of Business: Public Input. No items to discuss.

Meeting adjourned at 9:48 AM.

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Commissioner Jerry Muench



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Commissioner Bruce Cochrane



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Commissioner Richard McCurry