

**Sanibel Fire & Rescue District  
Board of Fire Commissioners  
January Meeting Minutes**

**Date & Time**

Wednesday, January 21, 2026, at 9:00 AM

**Location**

Station 171 – 2351 Palm Ridge Road, Sanibel, FL 33957

**Attendance**

Commissioner Jerry Muench / Commissioner Bruce Cochrane / Commissioner Richard McCurry / Fire Chief Kevin Barbot / Deputy Chief John DiMaria / Assistant Chief Chris Jackson / Fire Marshal Larry Williams / Administrative Assistant Greta Fulkerson / DVP Ed Zarick (Local 1826 District 17 - Remote) / District Personnel / Tiffany Repecki – The Island Reporter

**Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance**

The meeting was called to order by Commissioner Muench at 9:00 AM. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of the previous meeting were reviewed. A motion was made by Commissioner McCurry to approve the December meeting minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Cochrane. There was no discussion. The motion was approved unanimously.

**Fire Marshal Williams' Report  
Plan Reviews & Inspections**

- December 2025 plan reviews: 19.
- December 2025 inspections: 130.
- Year-to-date (2025) totals: 2,090 inspections and 443 plan reviews.
- While inspections are down approximately 600 from the previous year, they remain over 2,000 annually.

**Projects & Construction Activity**

- **Beach View:** Painting is underway; projected completion is March, April, or May 2026.
- **LCEC:** Clearing is complete; they are preparing for the garage and workshop.
- **SCCF/Ding Darling Dorms:** plans have been approved; waiting on progress update.
- **(Previously) The Fish House:** Purchased by CHR; the Department will conduct training in the building prior to demolition.
- **(Previously) Dairy Queen:** Excavation has been completed by hand due to eagle restrictions prohibiting heavy equipment. A 19-inch slab and steel beams were installed to secure the structure. The new roof will resemble the old Dairy Queen design.

### **Assistant Chief Jackson's Report Apparatus Maintenance**

- Engine 179 is scheduled for annual maintenance, pump testing, and repairs starting this afternoon.
- Ladder 171 and Engine 172 will rotate through maintenance subsequently.
- The old John Deere Gator was sold on GovDeals.com for \$4,395, resulting in a profit over the \$2,200 repair investment. Preparing to sell more equipment on the site.

### **Station 172 Punch List**

- Awaiting delivery of the cork board for the gym walls.
- A defective window (bubble in glass) is waiting for replacement.
- Interior and exterior hood covers were measured incorrectly by the vendor and are being redone.
- Tower lights were defective and have been returned to York Electric/manufacture for replacement.
- Vegetation, irrigation, and drainage (culverts/swales) are completed.

### **Deputy Chief DiMaria's Report Call Volume**

- December 2025: 147 calls (up 13% from Dec 2024).
- Annual 2025: 1,620 calls (up 9% from 2024).
- Out-of-chute times are in the 90th percentile (89.93%).

### **Operations**

- Commissioner Muench commended the crew for their professionalism and polite assistance during a recent lift assist call at his residence.
- **Fire Training:** December training hours totaled 684. EVOC is complete for all members.
- **Lee Flight Training:** Conducted landing zone training over three shifts. A new secure landing zone has been established at the Gavin site (Ding Darling property) for use during upcoming construction.
- **Active Shooter Training:** Joint training with Sanibel PD was conducted at the Sanibel School; this will become bi-annual collaborative training.
- This month's fire training is SCBA familiarization.
- **Medical Training:** Focus on cardiac emergencies (SVT/A-Fib). An OB nurse from Golisano Children's Hospital will conduct training next month on deliveries and newborn care.
- Fire extinguisher class scheduled at Sanibel School.

- Deputy Chief DiMaria and Fire Marshal Williams presented an Emergency Vehicle Safety Awareness course at the Sanibel Rec Center; great feedback with potential to present a couple times a year.
- Arbor Day Tree Dedication; a wild tamarind tree dedicated to all Sanibel first responders.
- Anna Johnson with CHR presented to all three shifts; what CHR is, what they do for the community, and how the Department can assist them in their daily operations.
- CPR classes scheduled and held in full force per usual.
- Engineer Adam Felix graduated paramedic school and is preparing for the National Registry exam.

### **Chief Barbot's Report**

#### **District Financials / Administration**

- First fiscal quarter financials are on track with personnel services and expenditures tracking within the approved budget.
- **Legislative Update:** There is uncertainty regarding property taxes in Tallahassee, with proposed bills potentially doubling homestead exemptions or reducing taxes, which could impact the 27% of Sanibel properties that are homesteaded and District income.
- **Administrative Overtime:** Chief Barbot advised the Board of a future request for a resolution allowing administrative staff to work overtime for a set period (approx. 30 days) to manage the logistics of moving out of Station 171 into the temporary trailer and administrative office space. Overtime opportunity would be opened up to line-of-duty personnel as well to assist. Commissioner McCurry suggested hiring professional movers for heavy furniture.
- **Burn Ban:** A county-wide burn ban was issued yesterday. For the safety of the island, the District had to end the beach campfire permit season effective immediately and revoked existing permits, including a planned CHR bonfire fundraiser event.

#### **Station 172 & 171 Updates**

- **Station 172:** The District has reached out to Governor DeSantis' office to invite the Governor and staff, as well as Senator Martin and Representative Botana, to the official public grand opening; date to be determined.
- **Station 172:** The final payment application has been paid. Approximately \$84,000 in retainage remains pending completion of punch list items.
- **Replacement Engine:** Procurement is beginning for a replacement engine truck estimated to be between \$750,000 and \$1,000,000. A committee led by Deputy Chief DiMaria will oversee specifications.
- **Station 171:** The Invitation to Bid (ITB) is active with a pre-bid conference held recently; strong attendance with a lot of interest shown in the project. The sealed bid deadline has been extended to February 4, 2026, to accommodate addendums. Contract award is anticipated for February 11 at the next board meeting.
- **CDBG-DR:** The project is expected to be over budget. The District is working hard with the County to potentially increase the grant amount before the March deadline.

## **Labor Relations & Recognition**

- **RIB Arbitration:** After the January 12th special meeting, an MOU was submitted to the Union for review, who accepted it with edits. The District agreed to the terms, and the document is awaiting final signature.
- **Marine Operations:** Chief Barbot and the Board commended Captain Martin and the crew for a successful boat rescue performed on Sunday during severe weather (shelf cloud).
- **Staff Recognition:** Deputy Chief DiMaria (18 years) and Lieutenant Cliff Steele (14 years) were recognized for their service.

## **Business Agenda Items**

### **Return of Interest Funds to State (Station 172 Funding)**

- The District received \$6 million in state appropriations for Station 172.
- Per the funding agreement, interest earned on these funds must be returned to the State upon account closure. The estimated interest is \$31,604.09, plus a final prorated amount.
- **A motion was made by Commissioner Muench to close the account and issue a check for the interest payment to satisfy the funding agreement. The motion was seconded by Commissioner McCurry. There was no discussion. The motion was approved unanimously.**

### **Closure of Community Disaster Loan (CDL)**

- The District secured a \$1.5 million line of credit (CDL) following Hurricane Ian for emergency liquidity.
- Utilization of funds requires proving financial hardship, which the District cannot currently do. Keeping the line open would incur unnecessary interest.
- **A motion was made by Commissioner McCurry to close the Community Disaster Loan. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Cochrane. There was no discussion. The motion was approved unanimously.**

## **Union Items**

- DVP Zarick (remote) confirmed receipt of the MOU and expressed satisfaction that an agreement was reached regarding the recent dispute without further conflict.
- Commissioner McCurry asked if the final MOU review with edits was put to Union member body vote. DVP Zarick responded that he and President Garcia were able to work it out themselves as there were no changes to contract language, but the body was made aware. He noted the MOU clarifies the understanding between administration and the Union.

**Commissioner Items**

None.

**Public Input**

None.

**Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting was 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