



Sanibel Fire & Rescue District

Board of Commissioners Meeting Minutes

DATE: Wednesday, March 13, 2024 @ 9:00 AM

ATTENDEES: Jerry Muench (Chairman)
Bruce Cochran (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)

Stephen Bledsoe (Firefighter)
Tiffany Repecki (The Island Reporter) – *via Microsoft Teams*

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

1. Minutes of the Previous Meetings

The minutes of the February commission meeting were reviewed. **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.**

The minutes of the March special 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. Pinning Ceremony for Firefighter Bledsoe

This pinning ceremony was held in honor of Stephen Bledsoe's successful completion of his probationary year as a Sanibel Fire firefighter and paramedic. This ceremony was six months overdue, as Firefighter Bledsoe started with the District just before Hurricane Ian. Chief Barbot spoke highly about Firefighter Bledsoe, his work ethic, and the positive impact he has brought to the District thus far. Chief Barbot added that Firefighter Bledsoe is the only one in the District that has the critical care paramedic certification, who completed the four-month class on top of all of the Hurricane Ian recovery efforts. Chief Barbot expressed his thanks and appreciation.

Deputy Chief DiMaria led the swearing-in ceremony for Firefighter Bledsoe. His family was present and assisted with the pinning.

3. Fire Marshal's Report

Fire Marshal Williams presented his report to the Board and provided updates on inspections/reviews and progress on the reopening of key public establishments in the community. Fire Marshal Williams confirmed that there had been 87 plan reviews and 116 inspections for February. The first floor of the Shell Museum had been opened up and inspections had been completed at Over Easy Cafe and San-Cap Trust Bank. 7/11 had opened as well as MacIntosh Books. Ongoing inspections included Wickies Lighthouse Restaurant, Huxters Market & Deli, and The Lighthouse Cafe.

Commissioner Muench and the other Board members noted that there is an urgent need to help get a number of health-related services, including CVS, back up and running within the community. Work is currently in progress on this matter. Regarding CVS, Chief Barbot noted that supposedly they are working to get the Fort Myers Beach location finished first before they shift full focus to the Sanibel location.

A lot of condos had been passed and building finals were being carried out. Fire Marshal Williams acknowledged that he still has yet to visit several condos.

4. Assistant Chief's Report

Assistant Chief Jackson reported that maintenance was due on apparatus and the Board was informed that the trucks would be rotated for inspection with any repairs carried out as required. This process is expected to take place between March and October.

Regarding Station 172, Assistant Chief Jackson confirmed that the demolition is complete, and the follow-up inspection with natural resources is done. The engine canopy will be installed in the next two weeks. On Tuesday the 26th the team is going to Naples to the Manhattan Construction office to go through the equipment sheet and get recommendations from them and also give them recommendations. The likely date for work to start on the property is late April. Permitting for the building is ongoing but moving right along. Commissioner Muench reiterated that everything will be purchased at the cheapest price, such as the generator. Assistant Chief Jackson explained that engineers were to be contacted after the Board meeting to confirm generator sizing. The build time for the generator is eighteen months to two years with an approximate cost of \$225,000. The generator will be bought directly from the manufacturer, which will save the District from all sales tax, and the plan is to get the generator as soon as possible so that it is already there when the building is ready. Some of these issues will be addressed on the 26th.

5. Deputy Chief's Report

Deputy Chief DiMaria presented his report to the Board and highlighted a number of matters.

The number of calls had increased by 41% compared to this time last year, up by 104 calls.

Commissioner Muench questioned whether Periwinkle access was any easier. Deputy Chief DiMaria confirmed that access remained the same due to the level of traffic because the number of places where vehicles can pull over is limited. Reassurance was provided that the District's skilled engineers are still able to navigate this route safely and efficiently.

The District is up over the 90th percentile for under 120 seconds out-of-chute time.

Last month over 500 hours of combined training hours were undertaken by the 21 staff on the line in a range of areas including high angle rescue training, both aerial and ground ladder training, hose management and advancement, EVOC and medical. All of these forms of training coincide with the probationary firefighters' training manual. There is currently a probationary firefighter on each of the three shifts.

In terms of medical training, LCEMS came out to work with the District crews on the new pit crew model for managing cardiac arrests. This went well and the crews are confident in dealing with these situations.

Regarding PR and community involvement: CPR classes were held throughout the month and are ongoing. A fire safety course was held the previous week for a group of kids with the Progressive Club, and Deputy Chief DiMaria included Lee Control in that presentation. The CROW auction dinner is to be held this month at Station 171.

Deputy Chief DiMaria remarked that overall, it was a rather productive month last month.

6. Fire Chief's Report

I) Financial Report

\$6 million in State funding has been received for the Station 172 replacement. The Senate and The House agreed that the District will be getting the remaining \$2.1 million of funding, but this is awaiting Governor DeSantis' approval.

A special meeting had been held on March 1st. The documentation provided at the time did not yet reflect changes made to the balance sheet and this will be amended accordingly to reflect those changes.

Chief Barbot reiterated that the District had received \$2 million in funding for revenue loss to be used this fiscal year, and those funds were being put towards payroll expenses each month.

II) Staffing Updates

Currently, the District is fully staffed, and overtime is under control.

The Union has advised that they want to engage in negotiations, as the Collective Bargaining Agreement expires at the end of this fiscal year. The process is anticipated to start in late April; however, personnel need to meet to discuss possible dates. Ideally, the negotiations need to be completed by late July.

III) District Updates

Regarding the phone issue, the whole phone system has been replaced and is up and running smoothly. There are phones throughout Station 171 as well as one at Station 172, and everyone has their own extension. If a voicemail is left for any of the administrative staff, the voicemail gets dictated and sent via email. There is now one phone line for the whole District and lines can be accessed remotely.

The District's newest hire, Brandon Pujol, who has been a paramedic with LCEMS and Fort Myers Beach Fire, credentialed the previous weekend with Doctor Abo. This will be official as of Monday morning 8:00am.

7. Business Agenda Items - Resolutions

I) Resolution 24-008 – FY 2023/2024 Budget Amendment Number 2 w/ (Exhibit A)

Chief Barbot explained that just like with the \$2 million revenue loss State funding, the District cannot use the \$6 million State funding for the Station 172 replacement until it has been added to the budget, which must be Board approved. The budget is being amended by adding the \$6 million State funding to the State grant income category, as well as being allocated to the Station 172 capital category. Two other changes to note; \$30,000 will be moved from the brush truck capital category to the professional services category, as the full \$200,000 in the brush truck capital category will not be needed. The District plans to use impact fee funds for 50% of the new brush truck purchase.

Administrative Assistant Fulkerson read the resolution.

A motion was made by Commissioner Muench to adopt Resolution 24-008, amending the budget and fund balances for the 2023/2024 fiscal year. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Cochrane. There was no discussion. The motion was approved unanimously.

II) Resolution 24-009 – Utility Trailer Purchase

Chief Barbot noted an imminent need for a utility trailer replacement. The District's own Lieutenant Howell had a trailer that was under consideration for a purchase price of \$2,700. This would save the District \$1,000. The trailer was brand new and Chief Barbot requested that the Board grant approval for this purchase.

Administrative Assistant Fulkerson read the resolution.

A motion was made by Commissioner Cochrane to adopt Resolution 24-009, approving the purchase of Lieutenant Howell's trailer for the purchase price of \$2,700. The motion was seconded by Commissioner McCurry. There was no discussion. The motion was approved unanimously.

III) Resolution 24-010 – Station 172 Reconstruction Contractor Award

Chief Barbot explained that they have reached the point in the Station 172 rebuild process where they are ready to employ a general contractor for the reconstruction of the station. The District received 3 bids: Wright Construction, OAK Construction, and Manhattan Construction. 2 of the bids came in above \$9 million, and the third, Manhattan Construction, came in at \$7.4 million. Manhattan is a contractor that is really interested in this project and understands the District's mission and what the District is intending to accomplish given its current financial constraints.

Administrative Assistant Fulkerson read the resolution.

Commissioner Muench expressed concerns around communication being maintained between the District and the Board during the process. The Board was reassured by Chief Barbot that all decisions and plans, financial and otherwise, will go through all working partners. Board members will be contacted individually and notified of any such instances. As outlined in section 3 of the resolution, change orders will be presented at all future Board meetings, should any of the contingency funding need to be spent. Any change orders will be communicated to the Board members individually throughout the month.

Commissioner Muench and the Board members were content with this response. **A motion was made by Commissioner Muench to adopt Resolution 24-010, authorizing Chief Barbot to enter into a contract with Manhattan Construction and to perform wire transfers to the contractor upon work completion. The motion was seconded by Commissioner McCurry. The motion was approved unanimously.**

8. Commissioner Items

Commissioner McCurry addressed the Board to recognize the hard work that's been carried out in relation to securing funds and expressed thanks to everyone involved. Chief Barbot stated that he made a commitment

about a year ago that he was going to fight as hard as he could to get the Station 172 rebuild project fully State and Federally funded and not through property taxes from the island community. Commissioner McCurry and the Board members responded with recognition and appreciation for Chief Barbot's great efforts to his commitment. Commissioner Cochrane also acknowledged Assistant Chief Jackson for his hard work with overseeing the Station 172 project. Commissioner McCurry noted that the safety signs are now up around Station 171, but Commissioner Muench expressed concerns that this may not solve the safety issues entirely. Board members and staff were urged to remain vigilant. Commissioner McCurry also wanted to acknowledge the crews for their accumulative efforts in saving a life from an aortic aneurysm. Chief Barbot gave a positive update on the patient and added that the importance of this is early detection, which was critical.


9. Union Items

There were no union items to discuss.


10. Public Input

There was no public input to discuss.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:47 AM.



Commissioner Jerry Muench



Commissioner Bruce Cochrane



Commissioner Richard McCurry