

Sanibel Fire & Rescue District
BOFC February Meeting Minutes

Date & Time: Wednesday, February 11, 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), Duty 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 by all present.
- A roll call confirmed the presence of the Board and District Administration.

Approval of Minutes

- The meeting minutes from the previous month were reviewed.
- A motion was made by Commissioner McCurry to accept the January meeting minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Muench. There was no discussion. The motion was carried unanimously.

Fire Marshal Williams' Report

- **Inspections and Reviews:** For the month of January, there were 176 fire inspections and 16 plan reviews completed. Fire Marshal Williams noted that reviews for remodels and buildouts are beginning to decrease.
- **Commercial Projects:**
 - **Old Dairy Queen Site:** The site is being converted into a restaurant serving hamburgers, hot dogs, and sandwiches. The City required the owner to maintain the original Dairy Queen roof style.
 - **Scooter's Pizza:** A hood test was recently completed; the restaurant is expected to open within a week pending health department approval.
 - **By the Sea (West Gulf):** Pilings are being installed for three building structures ranging from three to four stories.

- **Waterside Inn:** Plans are currently under review for three new buildings, though they have not yet been approved.
- **Inspection Failures:** Eight buildings at Sanibel Arms failed fire penetration inspections because the contractor closed the walls before required inspections could be performed. The City has been notified for further enforcement.
- **Professional Development:** Fire Marshal Williams and Deputy Chief DiMaria will present on Electric Vehicles (EV) and Hazmat at a conference at Florida Southwestern State College this upcoming Friday.

Assistant Chief Jackson's Report

- **Apparatus Maintenance:**
 - **Engine 179:** Currently undergoing annual maintenance; the shop provided a five-page list of suggested corrections. The unit requires six new tires and an alignment to meet NFPA seven-year lifespan requirements.
 - **Ladder 171:** Recently experienced an electrical issue and battery cable corrosion. It will be sent for annual maintenance once Engine 179 returns to service.
- **Station 172 Punch List:** Major outstanding items include the replacement of the tower handrails, installation of gym wall materials, and the replacement of a defective window.

Deputy Chief DiMaria's Report

- **Call Volume Statistics:** January 2026 saw 156 calls, representing an 18% decrease from the 191 calls recorded in January 2025. Year-to-date for 2026 is 180 calls compared to 223 calls for 2025. Although call volume has been down, an increase is expected during busy season.
- Question was raised by Commissioner Muench regarding a recent call involving a kayaker; Deputy Chief DiMaria deferred question to Chief Barbot, who responded to and was on scene for that particular call. Chief Barbot relayed that it was still an active investigation with FWC; an overturned kayak was found, within 3 to 5 minutes after LCSO helicopter found a body floating in the water. Chief Barbot clarified that this incident occurred approximately 2 and a half miles off of Donax beach access.
- **Operational Training:**
 - **Fish House Property:** Following the closing of the property, the site will be used for high-level training evolutions with mutual aid partners, including Captiva Fire.
 - **Active Shooter:** Training will be conducted bi-annually with law enforcement under a unified command system to practice patient extraction and first aid.

Deputy Chief DiMaria clarified that the only time fire personnel will enter the premises with law enforcement is if the threat is either eliminated or isolated.

- **Training:** 576 hours of training for the month of January; Brush Fire Training - personnel are currently focused on driving fire lines and utilizing foam systems during the dry season.
- **Truck Committee:** A committee has been formed (Firefighters Clement, Moore, and Felix) to begin building the specifications for the District's next engine, a process from design to completion likely to take two to three years.
- **Medical Training:** All three shifts will be completing OB training with a nurse from Golisano Children's Hospital; covering normal deliveries, difficult deliveries, peri- and postpartum hypertension. It is a renewal year for EMTs and Paramedics; ensuring all personnel have enough CEUs to renew by the end of the year through the State.
- **Community Involvement:** The District participated in a recent health fair providing blood pressure checks and CPR training program information. CPR classes and fire extinguisher classes are ongoing as usual; scheduled through April.
- Deputy Chief DiMaria commended Lt. Grant, Firefighter Bledsoe, and Firefighter Suarez for their professionalism and compassion on a recent call they ran for a family member of one of SPD's dispatchers.

Chief Barbot's Report

- **Financials and Audit:** No issues to report; the District is still on track within the fiscal year 2026 budget. The fiscal year 2025 financial audit is reaching completion. Chief Barbot acknowledged Administrative Assistant Fulkerson for her organization, communication and efficiency throughout the process, noting auditors were only on-site for one day compared to 5 days in years past.
- **District Updates:**
 - **Union:** An MOU referencing the Rescue Inflatable Boat has been executed between Sanibel Fire and Local 1826 District 17.
 - **Drone Program:** Early discussions are underway with the County, who received grant funding for 4 drones and selected Sanibel as one of the potential placement locations, to install a drone at Station 172 to assist with medical and fire emergency responses within a three-mile range. The unit base is 4 ft. by 4 ft. and approximately 36 in. tall. One obstacle to overcome is a flat roof install (training roof) that cannot be drilled through. The drone would be operated by the County. There are no fees to the District other than supplying power and internet for the unit. The County is estimating that over time the drone range will become larger.

- **GovDeals:** The District has been utilizing GovDeals to sell asset surplus; this has been successful with quite a few assets sold already. An updated list of items to be sold will be brought forward to the Board in March.
- **Station 171 Rebuild:** The District will be discussing the floor area ratio with the planning committee on February 24th; the District exceeded what the current land development code states per the City of Sanibel; however, it is believed that the City is on board with the District's plans, but a deviation is still needed. Three bids were received and opened in the Sunshine, ranging from \$9.2 million to \$10.1 million. Due to a funding deficit, a request for additional CDBG-DR grant funding is being requested from the County for the reconstruction of Fire Station 171. In the meantime, the District is currently working through ensuring all bids are compliant based on the requirements that were set forth in the Invitation to Bid. Review expected to be complete by the following day. Contractors who submitted a bid will be met with, and a Notice of Intended Decision will be placed on the District website.
- **Rescheduled Meeting:** The March board meeting has been moved to Thursday, March 12, at 10:00 AM due to an educational seminar conflict.
- **Anniversaries:** Firefighter / Paramedic Brandon Pujol with 2 years of service.
- **Station 172 Grand Opening:** Three potential dates have been submitted to the Governor's office, pending the final Certificate of Occupancy (CO).

Business Agenda Items

- **Policy Review:** The Board reviewed six updated policies and one procedure:
 - Policy 602 – Communicable Disease Training Program*
 - *Policy 322 – Disposition of Valuables and Personal Belongings*
 - Policy 600 – Fire Apparatus Driver Operator Training*
 - Policy 208 – Minimum Staffing Levels*
 - Policy 203 – Training Policy*
 - Policy 613 – Training Records*
 - Procedure 321 – Response to Calls for Service During Periods of Civil Disorder*
- ***Policy 322 Discussion:** This policy was tabled for further review following concerns raised by Commissioner McCurry regarding language around District liability for personal property in homes or vehicles; Chief Barbot agreed to adjust language to meet requirements.

- **A motion was made by Commissioner McCurry to approve all other policies and procedures with the exception of Policy 322. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Cochrane. With no further discussion, the motion carried unanimously.**

Commissioner Items

- None

Public Input

- None

Union Items

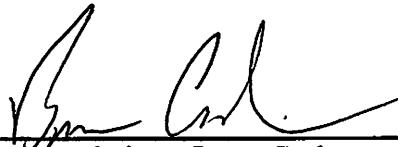
- **Benevolent Fund Chili Cook-Off:** DVP Zarick officially announced a benevolent fund chili cook-off on April 11th from 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM at the Cheeburger Cheeburger parking lot. Currently, 10 restaurants are confirmed to participate. Fire Marshal Williams and Firefighter Clement were acknowledged for handling all permitting requirements.

Adjournment

- There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:31 AM.



Commissioner Jerry Muench



Commissioner Bruce Cochrane



Commissioner Richard McCurry