

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

Date: Wednesday, July 9, 2025

Time: 9:00 AM

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

In Attendance: Commissioner Cochrane / Commissioner McCurry / Fire Chief Barbot / Assistant Chief Jackson / Fire Marshal Williams / Administrative Assistant Fulkerson

*Commissioner Muench – present online

*Deputy Chief DiMaria – excused

1. Call to Order / Pledge of Allegiance

The meeting was called to order by Commissioner Cochrane. Commissioner Muench joined virtually via Microsoft Teams. Deputy Chief DiMaria was excused for crew training. Commissioner Cochrane led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

A motion was made by Commissioner McCurry to approve the June 2025 meeting minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Cochrane. There was no discussion. The motion was approved unanimously.

3. Fire Marshal Williams' Report

- Completed 35 plan reviews (mainly new) and 212 inspections during June.
- Lighthouse Resort: LP tank inspection complete; entire complex has now reopened.
- Jerry's (bakery): Fully operational with compliant hood and suppression systems.
- Old Sanibel Shops: All businesses relocated to Village Shops, all COs issued.
- Over Easy Café: Completed, approved, and reopened; previous complex will be remodeled, most likely demolished and rebuilt as elevated structures.
- 7-Eleven (Periwinkle & Tarpon Bay): Interior demo complete; no rebuild plans yet submitted.
- Ongoing projects: Shalimar still aiming for a September 28th reopening, White Pelican Villas progressing (formerly Beachview), Bailey's still working on electrical.

4. Assistant Chief Jackson's Report

- **Brush 171:** undergoing undercoating and rustproofing as part of hurricane season readiness.
- **Marine 171:** Sanibel Marina no longer services vessels; alternative maintenance vendors (such as Fort Myers Marina per Commissioner Muench's recommendation) being contacted for trim tabs and routine maintenance.
- **Engine 172:** final unit scheduled for annual NFPA pump testing and maintenance.
- **Station 172:**
 - Epoxy floor installation underway; Tampa-based contractor temporarily housed on-island to get project done.
 - Drywall installation is progressing on second floor.
 - Second coat of tower waterproofing complete; awaiting tabby finish schedule.
 - Initial sprinkler testing failed; corrective weld work completed and passed.
 - Permanent power anticipated by the following week; temporary ducting in place to protect new HVAC system.
 - Still aiming for an end-of-September TCO deadline.

5. Deputy Chief DiMaria's Report (presented by Chief Barbot)

- **Out-of-shoot time improved to 90.25% (up from 89%).**
- **Year-to-date calls: 919 (2025) vs. 716 (2024), indicating a 22% increase.**
- **484 fire training hours logged in June; focused on water can operations, including tactical operations, deployment techniques for primary searches, door control, and fire containment.**
- **Search and Rescue techniques: Conducting live drills under 0-visibility conditions, including vent entry search work and hose management under heated conditions, in a structure donated by Dan Bud (Wildseed Construction).**
- **Rope Ops course is scheduled for the following week with 9 crew members attending, Technician-level course to follow.**
- **Probationary employee reviews complete; development on track.**
- **Medical training: Seizures and stroke; medication review (Midazolam and Droperidol); BLS provider renewals for all staff at the end of month and medical in-service training scheduled for July 28th.**
- **Community Involvement: July 3rd fire safety presentation and fire extinguisher class at CROW, July 4th water balloon event at the rec center was a success with a high turnout of all age groups, CPR classes are ongoing as usual.**

6. Chief Barbot's Report

- Financials are on track; Operating expenditures are at 50% of the budget with 3 months left in the fiscal year.
- Large operating expenditures to note:
 - Repairs to Engine 179 and Ladder 171 totaled ~\$22,000 (not yet reflected in reports). Engine 172 has not been paid yet.
 - Old brush truck (military-style high-water vehicle): Fire pump inoperable; new fire pump motor quotes around \$6,000. Full refurbishment (lights, console, reel, speedometer) under review with Warrior Brush Truck (vendor for Brush 171); possible total investment under \$50,000.
- Budget & Millage presentation and discussion:
 - Property taxable valuation for fiscal year 2025 on Sanibel: \$5.6 billion. At the current millage rate would bring in ~\$7.8 million to the District.
 - Millage rollback rate: 1.1650 mills; current millage: 1.3915 mills.
 - Proposed not-to-exceed millage of 1.3915 mills yields a 19.44% increase over rollback to the District's budget.
 - Chief Barbot presented research displaying the current state of the market and real estate sales and raised the question as to why the District would be seeing a 19.44% shift given such information.
 - Chief Barbot's notes and recommendation:
 - This current year the District received ad valorem revenue amounting to less than personnel services and operational expenditures combined. Budget was brought back to balance in interest earnings.
 - Personnel services are continuing to increase; work comp rates, FRS employer contributions, health insurance, property insurance (addition of Station 172 to policy), fire apparatus.
 - The funding the District has received for the rebuilding of the stations has allowed for expansion on purchasing; new tools for the trucks, new staff assets, etc. If the stations had needed to be rebuilt in-house, the District would not have all of the instrumental and beneficial tools it currently has.
 - Potential removal of property taxes at a state level, as well as possible restructuring of FEMA.
 - Recommendation: Maintain current rate to allow for budgeting flexibility.
 - Board discussion was held; all commissioners agreed on strategy to stay at 1.3915 for now.

RESOLUTION NO. 25-012

Adopt Tentative Millage Rate for Fiscal Year 2025-2026 at 1.3915 mills, which exceeds the rolled-back rate of 1.1650 mills, resulting in a tax increase to residents of the District of 19.44%.

Public Budget Hearing dates set:

Tentative: September 3, 2025, at 5:01 PM

Final: September 16, 2025, at 5:01 PM

A motion was made by Commissioner McCurry to accept Resolution No. 25-012 as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Cochrane. There was no discussion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Chief Barbot's Report Cont.

- **Station 171 update:**
 - Geotechnical report completed and forwarded to the design team (structural engineer). Currently, the schematic design has been completed and now in the design and development phase of the project.
 - Preliminary 30% (early development stage) cost estimate: ~\$9.2 million (general contractor services only), does not include \$700-750k design/construction admin costs.
 - Total estimated project cost may exceed HUD grant funding. However, there will be cost estimate reports at 60% and 90%, which will provide more accuracy in the numbers.
 - Submission for permitting targeted for October 2025; bid release to follow after first round of City building department comments.
 - Project will follow sealed bid, low-bid-wins process per federal funding guidelines.
 - Temporary admin relocation sites being explored (John Naumann building & Roberts Center).
 - Schenkel Schultz to present renderings, as well as a 3D model walkthrough, at next board meeting.
- **Search & Rescue Vessel:**
 - New inflatable rescue boat (RIB) delivered and being outfitted.
 - Used for shallow or high-water rescues where the MetalCraft cannot reach.
 - Training for 21 crew members is planned with outside search and rescue specialist.
 - Commissioner McCurry proposed honorary name "Lady Diana" after resident impacted by Hurricane Helene floodwaters who was unreachable during rescue attempt. The vessel will be referenced informally as such.
- **Sand & Sandbags availability:**

- In partnership with City of Sanibel and Lee County Emergency Management, sand and sandbags are available all hurricane season.
- Sand: located behind former Senior Center; bags: located at Station 171.
- Must be a Sanibel resident or business owner.
- Educational video posted online regarding use and placement.
- Chief Barbot responded to Commissioner McCurry's question regarding feedback that so far there has been a positive response, and the sandbags are reusable.
- Captain Martin recognized for 18 years of service.

7. Business Agenda Items

RESOLUTION NO. 25-013

Purchase of Replacement Compressor System for Station 172 Cascade System. Quote from Breathing Air Systems Inc: \$36,260.60. Purchase funded from Capital Station 172 rebuild budget. Lowest quote not selected due to service history and superior vendor support with Breathing Air Systems Inc.

A motion was made by Commissioner Cochrane to accept Resolution No. 25-013 as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner McCurry. There was no discussion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Chief Barbot's Performance Review:

- All three members of the Board commended Chief Barbot's outstanding performance, availability, strategic leadership, integrity, and success securing state/federal funding. Commissioner Muench commented, "when we hired him as Fire Chief during Hurricane Ian, it was the greatest thing we ever did." Commissioner McCurry commented, "selfless, he puts the District first and ensures it has all that it needs to operate well and efficiently."
- No performance issues noted.
- Formal salary review will occur once Fiscal Year 2026 budget is worked out.

No Union items to discuss.

No Public input to discuss.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:15 AM.

Commissioner Jerry Muench



Commissioner Bruce
Cochrane



Commissioner Richard McCurry