

Sanibel Fire & Rescue District

BOFC July Meeting Minutes

Date & Time: Wednesday, July 8, 2026, at 9:00 AM

Location: 770 Dunlop Road, Sanibel, FL 33957 (Sanibel Library)

Attendance: Commissioner Jerry Muench (online), Commissioner Bruce Cochrane, Commissioner Richard McCurry, Fire Chief Kevin Barbot, Assistant Chief Chris Jackson, Deputy Chief John DiMaria, Fire Marshal Larry Williams, Administrative Assistant Greta Fulkerson, Duty Personnel, Dr. Ben Abo (online), Phoenix Award recipients and family members, and members of the public

Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

- The meeting was called to order at 9:00 AM.
- The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all present.
- A quorum of the Board was present, with Commissioner Muench tuning in electronically.

Phoenix Award Ceremony

- The meeting opened with a Phoenix Award ceremony recognizing two separate cardiac arrest saves. Chief Barbot and Deputy Chief DiMaria emphasized the District's teamwork with Sanibel Police Department and Lee County EMS, noting that strong training, equipment, coordination, and rapid intervention continue to give patients a second chance at life.
- Medical Director Dr. Ben Abo joined the meeting online and congratulated the responders, stating that Phoenix Awards represent patients who were clinically dead and are alive today because of exceptional decision-making, teamwork, and composure in the moments that matter most.
- The first Phoenix Award recognized the successful resuscitation of Mr. Thomas Krivchenia following a cardiac arrest on April 12, 2026, at approximately 4:23 AM.
- Deputy Chief DiMaria recognized the early actions of Sanibel Police Department Officers James Serrago, Ryan Murphy, and Corey Martin, who arrived first, immediately began lifesaving efforts, and delivered two defibrillation shocks before fire and EMS crews arrived.
- Additional responders recognized for the save included Captain Mike Martin, Engineer/Paramedic Bryan Clement, Engineer/EMT Craig Shelby, Lee County EMS Paramedic Phil Mastres, and EMT Heather Pie. The team worked for nearly an hour

performing high-quality CPR, airway management, cardiac rhythm analysis, medication administration, and ongoing reassessment.

- Mr. Krivchenia addressed the Board and responders, expressed his gratitude, and advised that his cardiologist expects a full recovery. His wife also spoke and described the events of that early morning, thanking the 911 operator and responders for their compassion, rapid intervention, and lifesaving care.
- The second Phoenix Award recognized the successful resuscitation of Mrs. Sheryl Taylor following a cardiac arrest on April 21, 2026, at approximately 10:00 AM.
- Responders recognized for that save included Fire Marshal Larry Williams, Engineer/EMT Edward Zarick, Firefighter/Paramedic Stephen Bledsoe, Firefighter/Paramedic Mike Tejada, Lee County EMS Paramedic Mike D'Angelo, and EMT Ryan Stites. The team provided approximately 45 minutes of sustained advanced life support care, including CPR, airway management, medication administration, and rhythm analysis.
- Mrs. Taylor joined the ceremony virtually from Ohio and thanked the responders for not giving up and for giving her another chance to return home to her family and meet her new grandchild. Her husband also thanked the entire team and described the incident as the scariest event he had ever experienced.
- A brief recess was taken to allow photographs with the Phoenix Award recipients, families, and responders. When the meeting resumed, the Board commended staff on a very well-done and meaningful presentation.

Approval of Minutes

- The meeting minutes from the previous month were reviewed.
- **A motion was made by Commissioner Cochrane to accept the June meeting minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner McCurry. With no further discussion, the motion carried unanimously.**

Fire Marshal Williams' Report

- **Inspections / Plan Reviews:** For the month of June, there were 26 plan reviews and 139 fire inspections completed. Fire Marshal Williams advised that annual city-related inspection activity remains steady and development activity continues to increase.
- **Project Updates:**
 - **Riverview Apartments:** Walkthroughs remain ongoing, and Fire Marshal Williams received plans for Riverview 2. He advised that the next phase is expected after the Fish House property is removed.

- **SCCF Intern Village:** Underground utility and site work are underway.
- **LCEC Project:** Pile installation is progressing, with 168 total pilings planned and 78 remaining at the time of the report.
- **Doc Ford's / Lazy Flamingo Site:** Fire Marshal Williams and Assistant Chief Jackson completed a flow test at Pine Avenue and Coconut Road for the proposed new restaurant development.
- **Former Dairy Queen Site:** Interior work remains underway. The roof is complete, and penetration and firewall inspections are continuing.
- Fire Marshal Williams advised that additional large-scale projects and plan reviews are continuing across the island and that significant construction activity is expected over the next one to two years.

Assistant Chief Jackson's Report

- **Equipment / Maintenance Updates:**
 - The new rescue inflatable boat (RIB) has arrived and is currently at Station 172. Staff are gathering remaining equipment and awaiting delivery of a redesigned trailer.
 - Assistant Chief Jackson explained that the new trailer will include longer bunks, rollers, and improved tire configuration to make loading and unloading easier and safer, particularly in surf conditions. Delivery is expected around July 22 to July 24. If the design performs as intended, the District may retrofit the existing trailer to match.
 - Commissioner McCurry publicly thanked On Island and Bank of the Islands for supporting and completing the campaign to fund the second RIB for Station 172, noting the value of having one asset available at each end of the island.
 - Other district apparatuses are functioning normally. Marine 171 is scheduled to be sent out for a 500-hour service the following week.
- **Station 172 Reconstruction Update:** At Station 172, staff continue to work through warranty items with Manhattan, including replacement of a cracked countertop and correction of flooring adhesion issues in the tower and stair tower areas.
- **Station 171 Reconstruction Update:** At Station 171, demolition is 100% complete. Site staking for the new building has begun, underground and plumbing layout work is progressing, and structural tie-in work to connect the new building to the existing apparatus bay is beginning.

Deputy Chief DiMaria's Report

- **Call Volume Statistics:** Year-to-date calls were reported at 939 compared with 952 during the same period last year. For the month of June, the District handled 152 calls compared with 110 in June 2025, showing a notable month-over-month increase.
- **Training Hours:** District personnel completed 646 hours of fire training during June.
- Deputy Chief DiMaria recognized crews involved in a major structure fire in District 2, noting that personnel worked in extreme heat conditions and performed exceptionally well alongside mutual aid partners.
- A multi-day MERT training exercise is scheduled for later in the month with Captiva Fire, focusing on marine response, rescue board deployment, and interagency operations involving district marine assets.
- Vehicle stabilization struts requested by the Board were purchased, placed on the truck, and are now operational. Vehicle machinery rescue technicians are continuing shift-level familiarization training, and a few additional accessory components are still being acquired.
- A prescribed burn that had been planned for the date of the meeting was postponed due to paperwork delays and is expected to be rescheduled later in July. The District also recently trained with Captiva Fire in acquired structures, with a focus on island-specific tactics and operating for extended periods before additional help arrives.
- Medical training for the current cycle includes pain management protocols and associated treatment decisions. Deputy Chief DiMaria advised that Handtevy pediatric training and pediatric scenarios are scheduled next, along with additional medical scenarios focused on when and why medications are used under protocol.
- Deputy Chief DiMaria recognized Firefighter/Paramedic Brandon Pujol for his performance on two major trauma calls that occurred on the same day, noting that both patients received excellent care.
- Community involvement included participation in July 4th activities, a truck demonstration with the library reading group, and continuing CPR classes, which remain in high demand.

Chief Barbot's Report

- Chief Barbot reported that the budget is tracking within expectations and that no notable financial issues need to be addressed at this time.
- Final DR-420 taxable values were received in early July. District property values increased 6.91%, improving from the earlier negative projection and establishing a

rollback rate of 1.3016 mills. Chief Barbot noted, however, that districtwide values remain roughly half a billion dollars below 2021-2022 levels.

- Chief Barbot introduced an upcoming agenda item regarding the District's Post-Employment Healthcare Plan benefit. He advised that staff are evaluating a new PEHP administrator that would not increase cost to the District, would preserve current benefit structure, would allow employees to name a beneficiary, and would provide an avenue for employees to contribute to the account within program guidelines. He noted the matter is subject to union discussion and will come back to the Board later.
- **Staff Recognition:** Captain Mike Martin was recognized for 19 years of service.
- Chief Barbot also commended district personnel for handling a demanding late-June and early-July operational period that included fires, water rescue activity, trauma calls, and medical emergencies, noting that staff continue to meet the needs of a very active summer population.
- Staff are continuing to research alternatives for future apparatus procurement due to rising truck costs. Additional information and options will be brought back to the Board at the next meeting.

Business Agenda Items

- **Resolution 26-007 - Tentative Millage Rate / Budget Hearing Dates:**
 - Chief Barbot presented the proposed not-to-exceed millage rate for fiscal year 2026-2027 and reviewed the supporting budget assumptions used for fiscal years 2027 and 2028, including conservative valuation assumptions, CBA-based personnel projections, a health insurance contingency, and inflationary increases for operating expenditures.
 - Chief Barbot explained that because of uncertainty surrounding the November homestead exemption referendum and future taxable values, staff used the finalized current-year DR-420 values as a planning baseline for the outer years while also accounting for the proposed homestead exemption impacts.
 - The Board discussed retaining the current millage rate of 1.3915 mills as the tentative not-to-exceed rate. Chief Barbot advised that this approach preserves flexibility because the rate can be lowered later during the formal budget process if needed.
 - Administrative Assistant Fulkerson read the resolution. **A motion was made by Commissioner McCurry and seconded by Commissioner Cochrane to adopt Resolution 26-007, establishing a tentative not-to-exceed millage rate of 1.3915 mills, which exceeds the rollback rate of 1.3016 mills and represents a**

6.91% tax increase. The motion also set the first public budget hearing for September 9, 2026, at 5:01 PM and the final public budget hearing for September 21, 2026, at 5:01 PM. The motion carried 2-0, with Commissioners McCurry and Cochrane voting in favor. Commissioner Muench participated electronically and noted that he could not vote.

Commissioner Items / Annual Chief Evaluation

- Commissioners commended the Phoenix Award recipients and all responders recognized during the ceremony, stating that the District's training, service, and lifesaving efforts do not go unnoticed.
- The Board also conducted its annual evaluation of Fire Chief Barbot. Commissioners stated that he has provided strong leadership, has remained accessible and responsive, has handled significant challenges well, and has built a strong administrative and operational team. The Board expressed full support for Chief Barbot and encouraged him to continue in the role.
- Chief Barbot thanked the Board for its comments and stated that the evaluation reflects the efforts of the entire organization, including administrative staff and line personnel.

Union Items

- No formal union items were brought forward. It was noted that preliminary efforts are beginning to secure sponsors for next year's firefighter calendar.

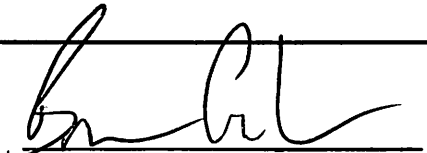
Public Input

- One member of the public was present and thanked the Board for allowing public participation.

Adjournment

- There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 10:00 AM.

Commissioner Jerry Muench



Commissioner Bruce Cochrane



Commissioner Richard McCurry