



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

DATE: Wednesday, April 10, 2024 @ 9:00 AM

ATTENDEES:

Jerry Muench (Chairman)
Bruce Cochrane (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)

Jeff Tuscan (Tuscan & Company, PA)
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. Fiscal Year 2023 Auditors' Report to the Board

Jeff Tuscan, of Tuscan & Company, PA, presented the documents and level of detail provided, highlighting the opinion that how both impact fees and software subscription fees (as required per GASB 96) were recorded needed to be changed, and noting the Report to Management, updating on the comments from the previous year's audit. He praised the work done by the administrative staff preparing for and providing information during the audit and identified the next steps to complete and submit the audit to the Auditor General. It was clarified that in order to avoid carry-forward discrepancies going forward, the audit would not be closed until the current year books were confirmed to be starting with the final audited numbers. Several other issues ranging over past years had been tidied up.

Mr. Tuscan explained that at the end of fiscal year 2023, cash had increased by around \$3.3 million, with around \$3.6 million net income in the general fund, most of which was insurance payments, and highlighted that due to the timing of Hurricane Ian, the corresponding drop had taken place in fiscal year 2024. Investments were noted to have decreased by around \$250,000, being transferred into the operating account throughout the year, and net was identified as having decreased due to the destruction of assets and anticipated change in capitalization policy, with trucks, radios, and a mobile home at Station 172 confirmed to be the biggest additions netted in. Regarding liabilities, accrued expenses were stated to be a combination of payables, including construction at Station 172 and tax revenue to the Tax Collector. It was pointed out that impact fees had been moved from the fund balance category used in previous audits to being a liability in unearned revenue. There was a new category for subscription fees due to a new accounting rule. Repairs had their own category within operational costs. All long-term debt was confirmed to have been paid off. Mr. Tuscan explained liabilities around personnel, healthcare, and actuary requirements, and it was clarified that while the latter made no sense for the District, as no individuals received post-employment benefits outside of healthcare provided by the District, it was not optional. The general fund, at the time of approving the budget for fiscal year 2023, was identified to only have been assigned in small part, with Mr. Tuscan noting that one of their recommendations was for all or most of the balance to be assigned, providing more transparency for the public concerning intended use of funds, and adding that it didn't need to be assigned for something that already had a liability recorded. The rationale for maintaining a 90-day fund was also explained, along with a disaster reserve. Graphs 5 and 6 were identified as showing a history of the fund balance, including an anticipated drop for fiscal year 2024 of around 30%, with Graph 7 showing the revenue sources for the District and their changes, Graph 8 showing impact fee receipt collections in the year, and Graph 9 showing a consolidated breakdown of expenditures, where personnel had decreased and operating increased, both due to the storm. Mr. Tuscan added that the final graph was specific to fire districts, indicating the biggest revenue and expense, and what was left for operations.

Commissioner McCurry asked if the general feel for the District overall was positive. Mr. Tuscan agreed that if State funding came through for the current year, the insurance money could be put into reserves, which would help in coming years if there wasn't further help from the State and reiterated the positive attitude of the team during the audit. Chief Barbot expressed his appreciation for Mr. Tuscan's educational approach to the audit.

Mr. Tuscan confirmed that they could be contacted at any time throughout the year with questions or requests for advice and guidance.

A motion was made by Commissioner McCurry to accept the reported audit for fiscal year 2023 from Tuscan & Company, PA. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Cochrane. There was no discussion. The motion was approved unanimously.

2. Minutes from the Previous Meeting

The March commission meeting minutes 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.**

3. Fire Marshal's Report

Fire Marshal Williams explained that in March he had done 78 plan reviews and 194 inspections. Subway, the Bait Box, Wickies, Breakers West, and all of the Sanibel Siesta complex were confirmed to now be open, with Cheeburger Cheeburger due to open the next day, Sea Shells of Sanibel with two more buildings to complete before they were fully open, Lighthouse Cafe and Huxters still to complete their hoods, progress on Kona Kai moving along well, CVS without a timeline but expecting things to move quickly, and the Saint Isabel and Congregational Churches both moving back into their main sanctuaries. Fire Marshal Williams added that there were a number of complexes that hadn't been heard from, that the Fish House wasn't returning, and that the Dairy Queen location was waiting on the eagle's nest to be vacated.

Commissioner Muench wondered if anything had been heard regarding Bailey's. Fire Marshal Williams confirmed that he as well as Chief Barbot had reviewed the plans, and it was going to be lifted with parking underneath, buildings for retail, a gas station, a restaurant that would be built once a signed lease was in place, electric charging units by the road, and plans for a Bailey's general store, bigger than the Captiva store, on Rabbit Road where the Sanibel Spa had been.

4. Assistant Chief's Report

In regard to apparatus updates, Assistant Chief Jackson stated that Engine 172 was in for annual pump testing, a recall to fix a fuel injector system issue with no fee, and service, with the bill currently around \$8,200. Marine 171's door had been fixed, the chassis of the brush truck was confirmed to be moving, albeit slowly. In regard to Station 172, it was highlighted that a temporary sign had been put up with a flagpole. The Vice President of Manhattan Construction had explained they were still getting pricing from their contractors so there was not currently a defined ground-breaking or construction start date as it required both agreement of pricing and confirmation that material orders would be fulfilled as required. Schenkel Schultz was identified as having submitted the paperwork to amend the permit for construction with the City now that a contractor had been agreed, but it had not yet been approved.

In response to Commissioner Muench's query, Chief Barbot confirmed that a \$6,000 hook-up fee had been received from Island Water Association for Station 172, and they were in the process of trying to see whether the IWA Board was willing to waive it, although they were waiting on the IWA May Board meeting.

Commissioner McCurry wondered if there had been any follow-up from the meeting with Manhattan Construction in March. Assistant Chief Jackson explained that it was currently all on Manhattan's end, but that he expected there would be a meeting to go through everything and put together a list to ensure materials were ordered in a timely manner.

5. Deputy Chief's Report

Deputy Chief DiMaria stated that year-to-date call volume was up 70% from last year, being 397 versus 232, which was a major uptick. It was confirmed that in-route time was at 91.5% under the 90th percentile or 120 seconds.

In regard to training, he explained that training hours had gone up 26 hours from the previous year, being 526 hours for March, with night operations carried out in the previous month to provide experience of using the vessel's electronics and potential call out scenarios, along with a first five-minute drill in the evening. Deputy Chief DiMaria clarified that coordination of training was achieved through providing captains with instructions regarding the training to be carried out and that his role included making sure that the captains were able to provide that training consistently. Deputy Chief DiMaria added that the Herb Strauss Schoolhouse Theater, which was due to be demolished, had been offered up for training purposes, so there were plans to conduct high-angle rescue and rope training this month, with search-and-rescue, fire attack, and other training sessions involving smoking the entire building out in the following month. Individual captains would also be able to conduct their own training sessions there until the construction team cordoned off the area.

In regard to medical training, the previous month was identified as having been on post-resuscitative care, with probationary employees working heavily on EMT skill sets along with veteran employees. A scenario was planned for this month around pediatric poisonings and allergic reactions using expired medication and gear for hands-on experience. Deputy Chief DiMaria confirmed that all Zoll monitors had been updated and were ready to go, and hose testing would take place on the 18th with a company hired to carry out all testing on trucks and stored hoses in a single day.

Regarding PR and community involvement, Deputy Chief DiMaria explained that last week and this week he was doing a Narcan 'stop the bleed' CPR refresher for Sanibel PD to enable them to use the free Narcan as provided by a State program. Shell Museum was noted to have hosted a large CPR class in the previous month, and a class requested this month that needed to be added to the schedule. The CROW birthday party was identified as having gone well and a total of 91 ribbon-cutting ceremonies had taken place, being 25.4% up and running between the two islands, putting them ahead of the Chamber's projections. It was confirmed that they would be attending Friday Night Lights at the hospital on the 26th, and a group of 20 foster children would be visiting the department on Saturday the 20th for a Public Safety Career Day.

Regarding the brush fire call led by Captain Wilkins, it was emphasized that the quick actions of him and his crew had saved a building and over \$0.5 million in equipment within it.

Commissioner McCurry wondered if there was a lot of need for the use of Narcan. Deputy Chief DiMaria admitted that there was not so much on Sanibel, but it was being disseminated across the country in response to an uptick in opioid overdoses, and the shelf life was around two years.

Commissioner McCurry asked whether both station crews were present during training sessions. Deputy Chief DiMaria explained that it would depend on the event, but they mainly switched off and proper care was being taken to keep Station 172's area covered.

6. Chief's Report

I) Financial Update

Chief Barbot explained that 98.9% of ad valorem tax income had been received and that the revenue lost funds from the State Legislative Appropriation program were being used to transfer on a monthly basis into the general operating account for expenses relating to payroll. Personnel services were reiterated to be the highest expenditure at 80% to 90%, with 45.6% spent at the six-month mark, putting them on budget, but vehicle maintenance was identified as a point of concern, with a 30% to 40% increase, despite doing as much work in-house as possible, and an inflated spend on truck maintenance likely in the future. Chief Barbot added that he and Administrative Assistant Fulkerson had initiated talks with the insurance agent about getting multiple quotes on work comp, liability, auto, and property insurance, as well as looking into health insurance, emphasizing that there would be no changes to health insurance or benefits, but that the plan was currently administrated through the county, for which they were charged a fee, so they were investigating any potential to save money by becoming a direct partner with Aetna. In regard to the CDBG-DR funding, Chief Barbot confirmed that an application was in process to request grant funding, which involved a partnership with the City. He highlighted an expression of appreciation for the Sanibel Fire & Rescue District and other not-for-profit organizations from Bank of the Islands, which had included a \$1,000 donation for each non-profit, church, and first responder organization.

II) District Update

Chief Barbot noted that the month had mainly been focused on the audit, grant applications, and keeping the construction project progressing.

III) Staffing Update

Chief Barbot confirmed that the District was fully staffed, highlighting Firefighter Bryan Clement's five years of service and Lieutenant Shane Grant's fourteen years of service.

7. Business Agenda Items

I) Resolution 24-011, FY 2023-2024 Budget Amendment Number 3

Chief Barbot explained that this resolution would make the District compliant with all of Tuscan & Company's requests from the audit, and briefly reviewed its contents, including changes previously agreed and proposed amendments as mentioned earlier by Mr. Tuscan. Chief Barbot stated that as a result, the accounts would be much clearer and cleaner by fiscal year 2025. Administrative Assistant Fulkerson read the resolution, requesting the Board's approval.

A motion was made by Commissioner Muench to adopt the resolution as read. The motion was seconded by Commissioner McCurry. There was no discussion. The motion was approved unanimously.

II) Resolution 24-012, Construction Phase Services with Schenkel Schultz

Chief Barbot explained that this resolution was for the architects and engineers who had been working on Station 172's designs to stay on board as construction administration and ensure the plans were adhered to. Administrative Assistant Fulkerson read the resolution, requesting the Board's approval. Chief Barbot added that a 5% discount had been received, saving around \$10,000, and that the resolution was worded as it was due to some language in the contract presented that was currently being negotiated, so the intent was to provide prior approval to enter into the contract when he and the attorney were satisfied with it, avoiding delays.

A motion was made by Commissioner McCurry to adopt the resolution as read. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Cochrane. There was no discussion. The motion was approved unanimously.

III) Resolution 24-013, Closing 2 CD Accounts

Chief Barbot explained that he had previously discussed this with the Board, and the resolution was to enable him to move the funds into a new checking account with the same interest yield as the District's other checking accounts. Administrative Assistant Fulkerson read the resolution, requesting the Board's approval.

A motion was made by Commissioner Cochrane to adopt the resolution as read. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Muench. There was no discussion. The motion was approved unanimously.

8. Approval of Policies

Chief Barbot explained that the three policies for approval were statutorily required and had been requested by the auditor, being (1) Travel and per diem expenses, which would follow State statute, (2) Employee cellphone stipend, allowing the use of a personal phone for business matters rather than having two separate phones, and (3) Capitalization, depreciation, and disposition of assets. He clarified that policy (3) did not mean individual assets under the \$5,000 minimum would not be tracked or numbered, giving cell phones as an example.

A motion was made by Commissioner Muench to approve the three policies as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Cochrane. There was no discussion. The motion was approved unanimously.

9. Other Business Items

Chief Barbot explained that he had been approached about the possibility of fireworks on the island for July 4th, with concerns raised regarding construction and suitable viewing locations, as well as how dry the island was and the large amounts of brush. Forestry was noted to have cautioned that rainfall so far had been hard

and short, with the ground not soaking the moisture up and a dry season expected. Chief Barbot asked for direction from the Board in case he needed to provide the District's stance on the event.

The Board agreed that they were in opposition to the event being held due to the heightened fire risks, and authorized Chief Barbot to draft an appropriate letter to be sent to the City Manager.

10. Commissioner Items

There were no items to discuss.

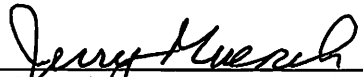
11. Union Items

There were no items to discuss.

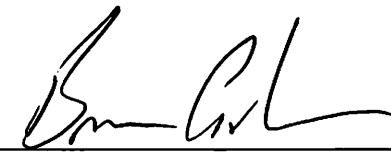
12. Public Input

There was no input to discuss.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:47 AM.



Commissioner Jerry Muench



Commissioner Bruce Cochrane



Commissioner Richard McCurry