

# SOUTH WALTON FIRE DISTRICT

911 North County Highway 393, Santa Rosa Beach, Florida 32459

*"Prompt, Competent, Caring Response in Time of Need"*



The Board of Fire Commissioners of the South Walton Fire District will hold a regular meeting on **November 8, 2021, at 4:00 p.m.** at the South Walton Fire District Administration building.

The agenda will include, but not be limited to the following:

- I. Call to Order
- II. Approval of Minutes  
**Regular Board Meeting: 10.11.2021**
- III. Secretary/Treasurer's Report
- IV. Attorney's Report
- V. Chief's Report
- VI. Committee Reports  
**Bylaws Committee Update**  
Charlotte Flynt, Chair
- VII. Unfinished/Old Business
- VIII. New Business
- IX. Public Comment\*
- X. Adjournment

**\*Note:** Persons who wish to be placed on the agenda must contact the Administrative Assistant within five days of any meeting and provide the name of the person who will be speaking and the subject to be addressed. If a person decides to appeal any decision made by the Board of Fire Commissioners of the South Walton Fire District with respect to any matter considered at such meeting or hearing, he or she will need a record of the proceedings and that, for such purpose, may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based.

# **SOUTH WALTON FIRE DISTRICT BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS**

## **Meeting Minutes – November 8, 2021**

**\*\*\*PENDING APPROVAL\*\*\***

**Commissioners Present:** David A.C. Bailey, Tom Cooper, Charlotte Flynt, Mark B. Foley, Maurice Gilbert, Mike Stange

**Commissioners Absent:** Brian Christenson

**Call to Order:** 4:00 p.m.

Chairman Gilbert announced that there was a quorum present.

On a motion duly made by Commissioner Cooper and seconded by Commissioner Bailey, the Board unanimously approved the minutes of the October 11, 2021, Board of Fire Commissioners' regular meeting.

**Secretary/Treasurer's Report:** Commissioner Flynt read the September 2021 cash report into the record.

### **Attorney's Report:**

Attorney Youell updated the Fire Commissioners regarding 47 subpoenas for a misdemeanor case related to the Mussett Bayou Wildland Fire. After a lengthy discussion, a motion was duly made by Commissioner Flynt and seconded by Commissioner Cooper, whereas the Board directed Chief Crawford to send a letter to the State Attorney explaining the concern with regard to subpoenaing that number of first responders would adversely impact those served by the District.

On a motion duly made by Commissioner Flynt and seconded by Commissioner Bailey, the Board unanimously approved Attorney Youell's October 2021 billing statement.

### **Fire Chief's Report:**

Chief Crawford reviewed the Emergency Response Activity Report which included Beach Safety Responses. SWFD continues to trend 22% higher in total response activity YTD as compared to YTD last year. There was a 10% increase in total response activity for October 2021 when compared to October 2020.

For the 21st consecutive year, the Fire District is proud to sponsor the Caring and Sharing "Angel Tree". Individuals choosing to participate through the adoption of angels are asked to return gifts before Friday, December 3rd.

Due to steadily increasing fees over the past year and reluctance to provide SWFD staff accessibility to some of SWFD's proprietary databases, SWFD has begun transitioning its vendor-managed IT services from Bit Wizards to Xent IT. All hardware systems have been transitioned to Xent IT and the migration of all virtual machines or cloud-based servers will take place over the next two to three months. Chief Crawford expressed his appreciation of Assistant Chief LaTour and IT Manager Kotowske's efforts to move this critical project forward.

An RFP for architectural services for SWFD's logistics building third floor build-out was advertised. The project timeline has Competitive Negotiations and Firm Selection

occurring in December, Schematic Design in early February, Preliminary Design in early March, and Final Design April 1st. Staff hopes to bring a recommendation for the selection of a general contractor at the May regular board meeting. Project completion is estimated around September 2022.

Assistant Chief Hughes and Fleet Director Meadows completed the final inspections on SWFD's new rescues. Fleet Services is completing all final upfitting and plans to have these new ambulances placed in service within the next few weeks at SWFD's Seagrove and Miramar Beach stations.

Assistant Chief LaTour and Fleet Director Meadows completed the final inspection on SWFD's wildland brush truck which is a specialized four-wheel drive vehicle that will provide the District with greater capacity in attacking fires off-pavement in the wildland urban interface.

Assistant Chiefs Hughes and LaTour attended an Insurance Service Organization (ISO) update in Valdosta, Georgia on October 21st. This training provided an understanding of ISO's rating criteria, the data used, and preparation for the next rating review.

Chiefs Crawford and Hughes completed a site visit with AHCA representatives on October 26<sup>th</sup> to confirm SWFD's Medicaid ambulance provider status.

Chief Crawford attended a Walton Fire Council Meeting in DeFuniak Springs on October 13th. The council codified an update to their bylaws and elected officers for 2022. Chief Crawford was selected to serve as Vice-Chair in 2022.

SWFD held a Promotional Pinning Ceremony on October 15th for District Chief Mike Redmond, Lieutenants Josh Williams and Mark Jones, and Sergeants Josh Ellis, Tim Parker, and Jerry Moss to their new positions. The event was well attended by family and friends as they were formally sworn in.

October 20, 2021, marked the 17th anniversary of the loss of the Airheart 1 crew. SWFD's Honor Guard conducted a brief ceremonial detail along the south shoulder of Highway 331 observing a moment of silence while honoring the crewmembers.

On October 21, 2021, Chief Crawford met with South Walton Utilities to execute an agreement addressing a waterline easement abandonment issue at SWFD's Station 5. A follow-up meeting will be scheduled to execute all deed and easement documents.

A Beach Safety amendment providing for additional funding for the expansion of services for the 2022 Lifeguard season has been submitted and approved by Walton County Administration and has been placed on the Walton County Board of County Commissioners agenda. Staff anticipates presenting the contract amendment for final approval at the December SWFD regular board meeting.

Staff is waiting for formal acceptance by the Sandestin Owners Association Board of an agreement for renewal terms for lifeguard services through October 31, 2024. Staff plans to place the proposed agreement on the Fire Board's December agenda for consideration and acceptance.

SWFD staff members attended the Florida Association of Special District's Fall Membership Meeting held at Sandestin Resort on October 29, 2021. Chief Crawford attended a Strategic Leadership Development workshop with focus on inter-generational leadership, executive coaching, and high-performing team dynamics.

On October 30, 2021, Assistant Chief LaTour and his family represented SWFD in attending a Halloween reception hosted at the Governor's mansion in Tallahassee. Governor Desantis and the First Lady invited fire service families from around Florida to this private Halloween event in an effort to celebrate and honor Florida's First Responders.

SWFD conducted an off-site Strategic Planning Session on November 5, 2021, with approximately thirty members including staff, labor leadership, and a cross section of our internal stakeholders.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services announced that the 2022 Ambulance Inflation Factor (AIF) will be 5.1%. In accordance with the Fire Board's adopted ambulance user fee resolution, the inflation factor increases will be applied to the District's ambulance user fee schedule with an effective date of January 1, 2022.

Chief Crawford shared that North Florida Fire Expo organizers have requested to use SWFD as a satellite location to conduct the hands-on training of the conference. The expo is scheduled to be held March 3-5, 2022, on Okaloosa Island, and approximately 200 fire service student registrations are anticipated. As part of the agreement allowing the fire training to occur at SWFD, facility organizers have agreed to waive the student registration fees for six SWFD members.

Warren Averett, SWFD's audit firm, is scheduled to conduct field November 15-19, 2021. While there is no requirement for the Board's Audit Committee to meet with the auditing firm before field work commences, Audit Committee Chairman Stange preferred to receive the required regulatory correspondence electronically via email.

Chief Crawford informed the Fire Board that eight firefighters were hired to fill vacant positions from recent retirements as well as the new positions provided for in the FY22 budget. SWFD welcomes Firefighter Morgan Cronk, Jamey Goddin, Jacob Morrison, Chase Patrick, Zachariah Prescott, Ryan Winburn, Joseph Quinn, and Seth Ward.

Chief Crawford and members of SWFD's Honor Guard are scheduled to attend the Florida Fallen FF Memorial and Prayer Breakfast on November 18, 2021, at the State Fire College in Ocala.

Chief Crawford is scheduled to attend the Florida Firefighter Health and Safety Conference in Orlando from December 5-7, 2021. Items on the agenda include COVID19 and Vaccine MythBusters, PTSD and new approaches to hyperbaric brain healing amongst firefighters, PPE delivery and Decon best practices, Environmental Exposures and Cancer Prevention Strategies, Occupational Safety Trends, a panel discussion on the Surfside Condominium collapse response, and a Firefighter Cancer Cohort Study update.

A retiree breakfast is scheduled for November 20, 2021, at SWFD's logistics building patio area. Chief Crawford invited the Fire Commissioners to attend.

SWFD's employee holiday celebration is scheduled for December 11, 2021, at Embassy Suites.

A quarterly Pension Board meeting is scheduled for November 29, 2021, at 2:30 pm at SWFD Headquarters.

SWFD administrative offices will be closed November 11, 2021, in observation of Veterans Day as well as November 25-26, 2021, in observation of the Thanksgiving holiday.

The next regularly scheduled Board of Fire Commissioners meeting will be on Monday, December 13, 2021, at 4 pm.

**Committee Reports:** By-law Committee Chairwoman Flynt provided a By-laws update which included several suggested revisions. As per Article IX Section 1, By-laws Committee Chairwoman Flynt requested an accounting for Commissioner Stange's 2021 absences. Commissioner Stange complied.

There was further discussion regarding alternate ways to attend meetings being defined in the By-laws. Chairman Gilbert requested a redlined version of the By-laws committee suggestions be sent to all Fire Commissioners for review prior to the next regular board meeting.

**Unfinished/Old Business:** None

**New Business:** None

**Public Comment:** None

**Adjourned:** The meeting adjourned at 5:10 pm.