

# 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 **July 8, 2024, at 4:00 p.m.** on the third floor of the South Walton Fire District Logistics Building.

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

- I. Call to Order
- II. Public Comment\*
- III. Approval of Minutes  
**Regular Board Meeting: 06.17.2024**
- IV. Secretary/Treasurer's Report
- V. Attorney's Report  
**Trademark Update**  
**Title Insurance Claim Update**
- VI. Chief's Report
- VII. Committee Reports
- VIII. Unfinished/Old Business
- IX. New Business  
**Board Action Item: Proposed Millage Rate and First Public Hearing Date for 2024**  
Fiscal Officer Carole Martin
- X. Public Comment\*
- XI. 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 concerning 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 – July 8, 2024

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

**Commissioners Present:** David A. C. Bailey, Brian Christenson, Charlotte Flynt, Mark Foley, Maurice Gilbert, Roger Hall, Mike Stange

**Commissioners Absent:** None

**Call to Order:** 4:11 p.m.

**Public Comment:** None

Commissioner Gilbert announced that a quorum was present.

On a motion duly made by Commissioner Flynt and seconded by Commissioner Christenson, the Board unanimously approved the minutes of the June 17, 2024, Board of Fire Commissioners' regular meeting.

**Secretary/Treasurer's Report:** Commissioner Flynt read the May 2024 cash report into the record.

**Attorney's Report:** Attorney Youell reported there continues to be no response from Old Republic National Title Insurance Company and Porath & Associates, P.A. after being notified of a Notice of Title Defect for SWFD's Geronimo Street property. Attorney Youell suggested filing a lawsuit.

On a motion duly made by Commissioner Flynt and seconded by Commissioner Hall, the Board unanimously approved to file suit if there continues to be no response within 30 days of Old Republic National Title Insurance Company receiving the certified notice.

Attorney Youell also reported that she is compiling a response packet for review by a trademark attorney before submitting it to the US Trademark Office.

On a motion duly made by Commissioner Christenson and seconded by Commissioner Bailey, the Board unanimously approved Attorney Youell's June 2024 billing statement.

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

Chief Crawford reviewed the Emergency Response Activity Report which included Beach Safety Responses.

SWFD's Beach Safety Division completed the first three-week Junior Lifeguard session on June 20, 2024. The final session will take place July 9-25, 2024. In addition, the Emerald Coast Junior Lifeguard Competition will take place at the Miramar Beach Regional Access on August 3, 2024.

A total of sixteen Firefighter candidates who successfully passed both the physical abilities and written assessments are being invited back to participate in selection interviews July 16 -17, 2024.

Assistant Chief Hughes and EMS Director Coker attended a weeklong Rescue Task Force “RTF” train the trainer course in June. The RTF concept provides procedures for firefighters and first responders to partner with law enforcement in a coordinated response to hostile threats such as an active shooter incident.

On June 26, 2024, SWFD hosted a quarterly Walton Fire Council meeting with leadership from fire departments across Walton County as well as Walton County Emergency Management Staff.

SWFD hosted a retiree breakfast on June 22, 2024, at Station #2 in Watercolor.

In June, Fire Marshal Sanchez and Beach Safety Director Vaughan attended several county meetings and workshops providing input into the latest revisions to the Walton County Waterways and Beach Activities Ordinance. Adopted changes include the prohibition of fireworks on the beach or dunes from any beach or beach access owned, leased, or maintained by the County.

New changes that affect beach bonfire permitting include:

- a 30-foot distance to be maintained between bonfire set-ups
- all bonfire pits/barrels/containers shall be kept elevated off the sand
- March 1st – October 31st bonfire setup may not begin until after 5 pm and must be removed by midnight
- November 1st - the last day of February bonfire setup may not begin until after 4 pm and must be removed by 11 pm

Chief Crawford provided an update regarding Walton County’s new Short-term Vacation Rental (STVR) registration program. SWFD entered an MOU with Walton that provides funding to hire two fire inspectors through the STVR registration process. Chief Crawford and Fire Marshal Sanchez met with the County’s STVR coordinator to better understand where they currently are with the total number of STVR units identified as well as those who have completed the STVR registration process.

Staff recently facilitated a meeting with County Code Compliance leadership to refine SWFD’s new public-facing website for launch. The meeting was intended to obtain input into the website’s permitting limitations as it relates to beach bonfires.

Staff continues evaluating ways to enhance the 911 call intake process between both the Primary and Secondary 911 Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs). There has been interest shared by both agencies toward expanding the 911 intake system so that all 911 calls that originate in South Walton including Law Enforcement, Fire, EMS, or Beach Safety, ring at both 911 call centers (WCSO and SWFD) simultaneously. Staff is working closely with WCSO staff to create an MOU that would provide details on timelines for implementation, call center and dispatcher expectations, and generally evaluating the impacts this enhancement will have on SWFD’s 911 call center staffing.

On August 9, 2024, SWFD will host a public information-based course created and taught by PIO McClintock. The course is titled “Own Your Story” and is one of the first of its kind to be held in Northwest Florida. A flyer providing an overview of the course was included in the board packet.

Chief Crawford announced that SWFD has exceeded 40,000 followers on its Facebook page. SWFD’s social media presence on platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and X (formerly Twitter) are just a few of the tools leveraged to better connect with the community on news within SWFD’s service area and to promote important time-

sensitive messaging such as prescribed burns, road closures, and the ever-changing beach flag status reflecting current surf conditions.

Citizens interested in attending community CPR Classes may check on course availability by contacting SWFD's EMS Division at [cpr@swfd.org](mailto:cpr@swfd.org) or on SWFD's Eventbrite page for the latest availability of scheduled classes. To date, SWFD has registered a total of 75 public access defibrillators and certified or taught 584 students since the beginning of the year.

Firefighter Tommy Thompson will be retiring at the end of July after serving more than 30 years in the fire service. Throughout his career, Tommy served with Panama City Fire, Thomas Drive, Fort Walton Beach, and for the last 25 years at South Walton Fire District.

Tommy has served in several leadership positions here at SWFD and has been recognized with numerous awards and recognition including four Robert Heighton Lifesaving Awards, three Tim Padgett Exceptional Duty Awards, eight Unit Commendations, and selection as the SWFD's Firefighter of the Year in 2001 and 2011. Tommy's last official day is July 31, 2024.

Beginning July 15, 2024, Chief Crawford is scheduled to attend the Southeastern Association of Fire Chiefs Conference and Board of Directors meeting then attend the Florida Fire Chiefs Executive Development Conference, state working group, and Board of Director meetings returning on July 24, 2024.

Included in the board packet were letters received from citizens and visitors recognizing SWFD employees for their compassion and professionalism in their time of need.

Chief Crawford expressed the need for an Executive Session with the Board, Lead Negotiator Linda Edwards, and staff to provide an update on the status of labor negotiations and obtain the Fire Board's direction concerning a wage and benefits package. The board agreed on an Executive Session at 2:30 pm on August 12, 2024, before the next regularly scheduled Board of Fire Commissioners' meeting to be held on August 12, 2024, at 4 p.m. in SWFD's Logistics Building Board Room.

**Committee Reports:** None

**Unfinished/Old Business:** None

**New Business:** Fiscal Officer Martin presented a Board Action Item whereas Staff recommended that the Board set a millage rate of 1.0000 for inclusion in the required Truth in Millage (TRIM) notice, the First Public Hearing be held September 10, 2024, at 5:01 pm, and the Final Public Hearing be held September 16, 2024, at 5:01 pm.

On a motion duly made by Commissioner Hall and seconded by Commissioner Christenson, the Board unanimously set a millage rate of 1.0000, the First Public Hearing to be held September 10, 2024, at 5:01 pm, and the Final Public Hearing to be held September 16, 2024, at 5:01 pm.

**Public Comment:** Members of the public were invited to comment. There was no public comment.

**Adjourned:** The meeting adjourned at 4:51 p.m.