

# 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 **January 13, 2025, 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: 12.09.2024**
- 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
- 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 – January 13, 2025**

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

**Commissioners Present:** David Bailey, Brian Christenson, Mark Foley, Maurice Gilbert, Roger Hall, Mike Stange

**Commissioners Absent:** Charlotte Flynt

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

**Public Comment:** None

Commissioner Gilbert announced that a quorum was present.

On a motion duly made by Commissioner Foley and seconded by Commissioner Christenson, the Board unanimously approved the minutes of the December 9, 2024, Board of Fire Commissioners' regular meeting.

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

**Attorney's Report:** Attorney Youell reported there was no change from the previous Board meeting regarding the Notice of Title Defect for SWFD's Geronimo Street property.

Attorney Youell also reported that had been no change regarding the Trademark approval status.

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

**Fire Chief's Report:**

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

South Walton Fire District hosted its 11<sup>th</sup> New Years Day Polar Plunge where nearly 1,000 participants attended the event. The event raised approximately \$10,000 to support SWFD's community education efforts and risk reduction programs. Chief Crawford acknowledged the hard work and dedication of the SWFD's Department Relations Committee, Co-Sponsor Shunk Gulley, SWFD's Beach Safety Division, and the Walton County Sheriff's Office Posse toward the success of this year's Polar Plunge. Photos from the event were included in the board packets.

Interviews for several key staff positions including Training Captain and Assistant Communications Director were conducted in December. Conditional offers have been extended for both.

In December, twenty-one firefighter candidates were interviewed to build a current hiring eligibility list. Secondary interviews were conducted in January with the intent to hire as many as nine firefighters to fill both newly funded firefighter positions as well as short term overstaffing to fill projected vacancies.

Chief Crawford reported 115 Public Access Automated External Defibrillators are currently registered in South Walton. SWFD's EMS Division reached a record number totaling 861 CPR and First Aid students in 2024.

SWFD will host Walton County Emergency Management over the next few weeks as they facilitate Community Emergency Response Team training (CERT). This program was created through FEMA to prepare citizens to help their families and neighbors in the event of a disaster. Citizen volunteers learn disaster preparedness and receive training in basic disaster response skills such as fire safety, light search and rescue, and disaster medical operations. CERT teams are then able to augment local emergency services providing immediate assistance to victims in their local communities before emergency first responders arrive on scene.

Several staff members attended the Florida Fire Chiefs' Associations Annual Fire & EMS Conference and state working group and committee meetings in Orlando. EMS Division Chief Coker and Clinical Coordinator Smith served as Judges for the statewide Advanced Life Support Competition. PIO McClintock was recognized by FL Division of Emergency Management and the FFCA's PIO Section with a Deployment Team Mobilization Award.

The Fire District hosted a Leadership Walton through the Walton Area Chamber of Commerce where students were introduced to a scaled down version of the firefighter combat challenge to get a feel for what it's like to do the job of a firefighter.

A final inspection trip has been scheduled for two new ambulances. This inspection trip will take place at the Braun manufacturing plant in Ohio the week of February 3, 2025. After any punch list items identified are corrected, the trucks will be delivered where they will then undergo final upfitting by SWFD's Fleet Division.

SWFD's Beach Safety Division is gearing up for the seasonal return to the beaches beginning March 1, 2025, with daily staffing from 10am – 6pm at each of the Regional Beach Accesses. SWFD continues to advertise recruitment for seasonal lifeguards, in addition to providing them with the required USLA and EMR training and certifications.

SWFD Staff continues dialogue with Alys Beach Property Owners for contractual lifeguard services. Staff intends to have a draft agreement finalized for the February Fire Board meeting. If approved, SWFD is prepared to mobilize to this expanded location beginning March 1, 2025, to kick-off the 2025 season.

Chief Crawford reported that the Miramar Beach Fire Station rebuild continues to evolve toward a newly expanded facility. A pole barn has been erected that will house SWFD's fire apparatus when crews relocate to the new living quarters so demolition of the existing facility can take place for construction of a new drive-thru apparatus bay facility. Staff is hopeful that the crew move-in timeline will occur mid-February. The contractor is waiting to receive a transfer switch for the generator (ordered a year ago) and the move-in timeline will be dependent on when permanent windows arrive and/or if we are able to receive a temporary CO with temporary windows in place. We remain on track for substantial completion in late Summer.

An RFP for the solicitation of an architectural firm for engineering and design of fire station #6 was issued on January 8, 2025. Submittals are due February 11, 2025, with the first evaluation committee meeting scheduled for Tuesday, February 18, 2025. Staff plans to recommend a firm along with a negotiated contract at the March Fire Board meeting.

SWFD's Annual Awards Banquet is scheduled for Saturday, February 8, 2025, at the Hotel Effie. Chief Crawford encouraged the Commissioners to attend as members are recognized for the extraordinary job they do throughout the year. A "save-the-date" flyer was included in the board packet.

SWFD's Administrative Offices will be closed Monday January 20, 2025, in observation of Dr. Martin Luther King Day.

There was a lengthy discussion about the current California wildfire situation.

**Committee Reports:** None

**Unfinished/Old Business:** None

**New Business:** None

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

**Adjourned:** The meeting adjourned at 4:28 p.m.