

# 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 **April 14, 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:

**Special Item: National Public Safety Telecommunicator Week  
April 13 – 19, 2025 Proclamation  
Commissioner Maurice Gilbert**

- I. Call to Order
- II. Public Comment\*
- III. Approval of Minutes  
**Regular Board Meeting: 03.10.2025**
- 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  
**Board Action: Fire Commissioner Seat 3 Vacancy**  
Fire Chief Ryan Crawford
- IX. New Business  
**Board Action: Watercolor Beach Safety and Education Program Contract**  
Beach Safety Director David Vaughan  
**Board Action: Resolution 25-01 Surplus Property**  
Assistant Chief Daniel LaTour  
**Board Action: Architectural Services Watersound Fire Station**  
Assistant Chief Daniel LaTour
- 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.

**Leadership . Teamwork . Integrity . Community Service**

**Page 1 of 1**

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

**Meeting Minutes – April 14, 2025**

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

**Commissioners Present:** David Bailey, Charlotte Flynt, Maurice Gilbert, Mike Stange

**Commissioners Absent:** Brian Christenson, Mark Foley

**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 Bailey and seconded by Commissioner Flynt, the Board unanimously approved the minutes of the March 10, 2025, Board of Fire Commissioners' regular meeting.

**Secretary/Treasurer's Report:** Commissioner Bailey read the February 2025 cash report into the record.

**Attorney's Report:** Attorney Youell reported receiving a Trademark Notice of Allowance issued March 25, 2025. A statement of use and proof of commerce along with a \$250 processing fee shall be filed within 6 months. Commissioner Flynt directed Attorney Youell to file the appropriate documents as soon as possible and no later than the end of April.

Attorney Youell reported Old Republic is assigning another adjuster regarding the Notice of Title Defect for SWFD's Geronimo Street property.

On a motion duly made by Commissioner Bailey and seconded by Commissioner Flynt, the Board unanimously approved Attorney Youell's March 2025 billing statement.

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

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

After completing the new hire orientation training, nine firefighters have been assigned to their respective shifts. Most of these firefighters are providing for the expanded staffing of a secondary engine scheduled to go in service at the Inlet Beach Fire Station. This engine and crew will provide a critical resource throughout the eastern portion of the Fire District. As a result of this planned expansion of services, SWFD promoted six firefighters to Sergeant and three Sergeants to Lieutenant on April 1, 2025.

On April 7, 2025, SWFD held a retirement celebration for Sergeant/Paramedic Henry Apfelbach in recognition of his twenty-five years of service to SWFD. Apfelbach remains employed as an SWFD 911 telecommunicator.

In March 2025, fire crews relocated into the new living quarters of the Miramar Beach Fire Station. This relocation was followed by the demolition of the old fire station. Footers for the

new station have been poured, and the construction of the new apparatus bays are underway.

Chief Crawford attended a Southeastern Association of Fire Chiefs (SEAFC) Board of Directors meeting on March 21, 2025, in Franklin, Tennessee.

Chief Crawford also attended a Florida Association of Special Districts Legislative Symposium on March 25-26, 2025, in Tallahassee and met with legislators on bills affecting the Florida fire service.

On April 3, 2025, personnel from SWFD's Life Safety and Beach Safety divisions attended the 2nd annual Florida Fire Service Day on the Hill just outside the state Capitol building. SWFD highlighted the unique programs and services provided to its citizens.

Chief Crawford along with Florida's fire service leadership attended the charity Gala later that evening. The event benefits the Florida Fire Foundation, whose sole purpose is to raise funds in support of the two Florida Fallen Firefighter Memorials located at the Capitol in Tallahassee and at the State Fire College in Ocala.

Several Staff members attended the Fire Department Instructor Conference last week in Indianapolis.

Registration for the 2025 Junior Lifeguard Program opened April 11, 2025. There are approximately 160 children currently registered.

On April 5, 2025, SWFD's Beach Safety Division traveled to Orange Beach, Alabama to compete in the first of several surf racing competitions hosted by the Emerald Coast Lifesaving Association. More than 30 lifeguards from different Emerald Coast agencies competed. SWFD's Beach Safety Division was able to secure two of the top 10 finishes. The next event in the series will be in Destin on April 26, 2025, and then SWFD will host an event on May 7, 2025, at 8am at Fort Panic access (Tower 34).

Short Term Rental Inspection Forums have been scheduled for April 28, 2025, through May 2, 2025, at SWFD's Logistics and Training Facility. These forums are an effort to inform short-term rental owners of what is required to pass the short-term rental inspection.

PIO McClintock is scheduled to attend a Social Media Strategies Summit for First Responders on April 23-24, 2025.

On April 8, 2025, South Walton High School Baseball hosted a First Responders Night at their home game. SWFD personnel took part in the festivities including the ceremonial first pitch. Chief Crawford expressed appreciation to South Walton High School for their continued support allowing us to make an impact on local youth.

SWFD plans to host the 2025 HERricane Summer Camp which is facilitated by Walton County Emergency Management. The goal is to inspire young women to become community leaders and consider a career in public safety or emergency management. The camp is scheduled for the end of July.

SWFD was honored to play a small part in the funeral services honoring Walton County Sheriff's Deputy Will May on Saturday, April 12, 2025. This included the static display of the US flag from one of our aerials and an engine representing SWFD in the funeral procession

to the final place of rest. SWFD also provided Fire and EMS response coverage in the Freeport area and to WCSO communications center coverage across three shifts. This coverage allowed telecommunicators and firefighters from Walton County Fire Rescue and the Sheriff's Office to attend services without any gaps in coverage.

Lieutenant promotional testing has commenced for this testing cycle with six candidates participating. Phase two of the testing is scheduled for April 21, 22, and 23, 2025.

Chief Crawford reported that the final pension valuation shows a 96.4% funded ratio. SWFD's contributions for FY26 will be \$316,363 lower than required for FY2025.

SWFD Auditors commenced work on the annual financial audit for FY24. Staff anticipate the presentation of the audit report at the regular May Board meeting and have scheduled an Audit Committee meeting for May 8, 2025, at 2:30 pm to allow for any questions or comments from the Audit Committee prior to the Fire Board presentation.

PIO McClintock presented SWFD's Annual Report for 2024. A copy was provided for each commissioner.

SWFD's Administrative Offices will be closed Friday, April 18, 2025, in observation of Good Friday.

#### **Committee Reports:** None

**Unfinished/Old Business:** Chief Crawford presented a Board Action on the Fire Commissioner Seat 3 vacancy. Letters of intent from Andrew Bennett and Brian Farmer were received by the advertised deadline and included in the board packet. Staff sought Board Action on the selection of a candidate. Both candidates were asked to address the board.

The commissioners voted via paper ballot then submitted to Attorney Youell to tally. Attorney Youell announced that Robert Brian Farmer was selected. Farmer was then sworn in as Fire Commissioner, Seat 3.

**New Business:** Beach Safety Director Vaughan presented a Board Action whereas Staff recommended that Chairman Gilbert execute a negotiated contract with Watercolor Community Association for Beach Safety Services.

On a motion duly made by Commissioner Flynt and seconded by Commissioner Bailey, the Board unanimously approved Chairman Gilbert to execute the negotiated contract with Watercolor Community Association for Beach Safety Services.

Assistant Chief Daniel LaTour presented a Board Action whereas Staff recommended the approval of Resolution 2025-01 Surplus Property and to proceed with the disposition or sale of the property below in an open, transparent, and cost-effective manner.

1. 2013 International / Horton Ambulance
2. 2015 International / Horton Ambulance
3. 2008 Chevrolet Tahoe

#### 4. 2006 Brute Pander Hose Expander

On a motion duly made by Commissioner Bailey and seconded by Commissioner Flynt, the Board unanimously approved Resolution 2025-01 Surplus Property as presented.

Assistant Chief Daniel LaTour presented a Board Action whereas Staff recommended the approval and authorization for the Fire Chief/Administrator to proceed with executing a Standard Form of Agreement Between Owner and Architect between Short Elliot Hendrickson, Inc. and South Walton Fire District dated March 28, 2025, after closing and taking ownership of the parcel described within the Land Transfer Agreement between SWFD and St. Joe Timberland Company. A copy of the agreement was included in the board packet.

On a motion duly made by Commissioner Flynt and seconded by Commissioner Bailey, the Board unanimously approved and authorized the Fire Chief/Administrator to proceed with executing a Standard Form of Agreement Between Owner and Architect between Short Elliot Hendrickson, Inc. and South Walton Fire District dated March 28, 2025, after closing and taking ownership of the parcel described within the Land Transfer Agreement between SWFD and St. Joe Timberland Company.

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

**Adjourned:** The meeting adjourned at 5:03 p.m.