

# 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 **October 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
  - Proposed Budget Workshop: 08.28.2025**
  - Regular Board Meeting: 09.09.2025**
  - First Public Hearing: 09.09.2025**
  - Final Public Hearing: 09.15.2025**
- IV. Secretary/Treasurer's Report
- V. Attorney's Report
  - Title Insurance Claim Update**
- VI. Chief's Report
- VII. Committee Reports
- VIII. Unfinished/Old Business
- IX. New Business
  - Board Action: Line of Duty Death Benefit Approval**  
Fire Chief Ryan Crawford
  
  - Board Action: Exos Physical Therapy/Trainer Program**  
Assistant Chief Brian Hughes
- X. Public Comment\*
- XI. Adjournment
- XII. Quasi-Judicial Ordinance
  - Ordinance No. 2025-01 Florida Fire Prevention Code**  
**Amendment Adoption**

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

Fire Marshal Sammy Sanchez

XIII. Public Comment\*

XIV. 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 – October 13, 2025**

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

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

**Commissioners Absent:** Mark Foley

**Call to Order:** 4:01 p.m.

**Public Comment:** None

Commissioner Gilbert announced that a quorum was present.

On a motion duly made by Commissioner Christenson and seconded by Commissioner Bailey, the Board unanimously approved the minutes of August 28, 2025, Board of Fire Commissioners' Proposed Budget Public Workshop.

On a motion duly made by Commissioner Christenson and seconded by Commissioner Bailey, the Board unanimously approved the minutes of the September 9, 2025, Board of Fire Commissioners' regular meeting.

On a motion duly made by Commissioner Bailey and seconded by Commissioner Christenson, the Board unanimously approved the minutes of the First Public Hearing regarding the levying of ad valorem taxes and the FY 2025-2026 budget on September 9, 2025.

On a motion duly made by Commissioner Christenson and seconded by Commissioner Flynt, the Board unanimously approved the minutes of the Final Public Hearing regarding the levying of ad valorem taxes and the FY 2025-2026 budget held on September 15, 2025.

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

**Attorney's Report:** Attorney Youell presented a brief of her services for the month of September 2025.

On a motion duly made by Commissioner Bailey and seconded by Commissioner Christenson, the Board unanimously approved Attorney Youell's September 2025 billing statement for payment.

**Fire Chief's Report:** Chief Crawford reviewed the Emergency Response Activity Report which included Beach Safety Responses. Chief Crawford also presented an overview of SWFD's major incidents since the regular meeting in September.

In September, Chief Crawford and Assistant Chief LaTour met with Walton County Sheriff's Office leadership for updates on the 800 MHz countywide radio system projected to be operational by early 2027. Walton County is seeking to mount antennas and equipment on the Kelly Tower located on SWFD property. American Tower, which leases this tower site from SWFD, has proposed a

ground lease extension through 2072 as part of these infrastructure improvements which includes a signing payment to SWFD and continued 15% compounding escalators be applied every five (5) years. SWFD currently benefits from no-cost antenna space for its VHF backup radio system. If accepted, the new agreement would also accommodate County radio antennas at no cost. A finalized proposal will be presented to the Board in the coming months.

Phase 1 of SWFD's annual firefighter physicals was completed in September. As part of SWFD's ongoing Firefighter Health and Wellness Initiative, Phase 2 is scheduled for November.

SWFD participated in a countywide Emergency Operations Center tabletop exercise on September 16, 2025. This exercise simulated a landfalling hurricane and utilized the WEB EOC system for mission response and coordination.

Fire Prevention Week activities began on October 4, 2025, with the Fire District's Annual Pancake Breakfast. SWFD fire crews and Life Safety Division members promote fire safety education in local schools and daycares throughout the month of October. Chief Crawford thanked Commissioner Flynt and Commissioner Foley for their attendance and support at the pancake breakfast.

In September, SWFD participated in a Build-A-Bucket Disaster-Preparedness event in Freeport and a Hometown Heroes Day at Silver Sands Premium Outlets. Both community engagement and safety education events were well-attended.

On September 11, 2025, SWFD hosted its 8th Annual 3.43-mile Memorial Run/Walk honoring the 343 firefighters who lost their lives on September 11, 2001. Chief Crawford extended his appreciation of Commissioner Gilbert and all community participants for their support.

Chief Crawford attended the Florida Association of Special Districts Legislative Preparedness Forum where he heard from several members of the House Select Committee on Property Taxes as they move toward a referendum to abolish or reduce the methodology in which property taxes are levied. This was a free forum for FASD members designed to prepare special districts with strategies for the 2026 legislative session.

On September 23, 2025, SWFD celebrated the grand opening of the reconstructed and expanded Miramar Beach Fire Station. Chief Crawford thanked the Fire Commissioners for their continued support of critical infrastructure improvements.

Chief Crawford reported that SWFD transitioned from Volunteer Firemen's Insurance Services (VFIS) to Preferred Governmental Insurance Trust (PGIT) for property, casualty, and liability. The change was effective October 1, 2025, achieving annual premium savings of \$158,000 (37.5%) while maintaining similar coverage.

Chief Crawford and Assistant Chief LaTour met with local Florida Division of Forestry leadership to begin a conversation toward long-term public partnership opportunities.

Several staff members attended a Florida Association of Special Districts (FASD)

Quarterly Meeting in Sandestin. This meeting covered public funds investment, cybersecurity, leadership, and AI in the public sector. Staff Accountant Brunza completed a Certified District Manager (CDM) program last week and was awarded the CDM professional designation at the FASD event.

Chief Crawford is scheduled to visit Ten-8 Fire Equipment in Bradenton, Florida to evaluate their liquid carbon dioxide gear-cleaning technology. This gear cleaning process is described to enhance carcinogen product removal and gear longevity. SWFD is evaluating this technology as a potential solution for annual and gross decontamination of our firefighting turnout gear.

Chief Crawford will represent the Florida Fire Service at the 2025 NFPA Fire Chiefs Forum in Quincy, Massachusetts November 3<sup>rd</sup> through 7<sup>th</sup>. Fire Chiefs representing each state and Canadian territory will address NFPA standards, firefighter health, recent construction and conflagration case studies, the impact of standards consolidation and emerging legislation popping up in states around the nation attacking fire codes and standards.

Chief Crawford announced that a new monument was erected at Pilcher Park honoring SWFD Firefighter/Paramedic Robert Heighton, Flight Nurse Jack Chase, and Pilot Tom Palcic who tragically lost their lives in the line of duty on October 20, 2004. This memorial was a joint effort between the Walton County Board of County Commissioners and the Board of Fire Commissioners of the South Walton Fire District and will stand as a lasting tribute to the crew's courage, sacrifice, and service to our community. An acceptance ceremony will take place at Pilcher Park on November 13, 2025, at 2pm to formally acknowledge the placement of the memorial.

Informational items included in the board packet were:

- TRIM Certification confirming acceptance by the Florida Department of Revenue.
- Florida Fires Division of State Fire Marshals Annual Report showcasing photographs of SWFD members in action.
- Florida Division of State Fire Marshal certificate awarding PIO McClintock (representing South Walton Fire District) as the 2024 Photo Contest Winner in the Incidents and Education category.
- An eight-page article in the Fall 2025 edition of 30A Beach Happy Magazine highlighting SWFD's Beach Safety and Education Program history. The article included organizational highlights and SWFD's status as an independent special fire control district, its governance, and an interview with Elizabeth Foley who survived a traumatic shark bite incident and was the recipient of immediate care from responding lifeguards.
- Pinning ceremony invitation for October 28, 2025 at 10:00 am.

**Committee Reports:** None

**Unfinished/Old Business:** None

**New Business:**

Chief Crawford presented a Board Action whereas Staff recommended the Board of Fire Commissioners approve the \$75,000 statutory benefit to be paid to Firefighter Daniel Corcoran's beneficiary, as his death has been affirmed by the State of Florida; Division of State Fire Marshal's Office to have occurred in the line of duty. SWFD's General Counsel

provided a written opinion affirming the District's obligation to remit the \$75,000 benefit payment.

On a motion duly made by Commissioner Flynt and seconded by Commissioner Bailey, the Board approved the \$75,000 statutory benefit be paid to Firefighter Daniel Corcoran's beneficiary.

Assistant Chief Hughes presented a Board Action requesting Board approval of agreement with Exos. A copy of the agreement was included in the board packet. This agreement aligns with national best practices in tactical athlete and first responder performance programs and supports SWFD's Strategic Objective "Investing in Our People" by advancing employee health, safety, and wellness.

On a motion duly made by Commissioner Flynt and seconded by Commissioner Bailey, the Board approved the agreement with Exos as presented.

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

**Adjourned:** The meeting adjourned at 4:43 p.m.

**Quasi-Judicial Ordinance:** Fire Marshal Sanchez presented Ordinance 2025-01 Florida Fire Prevention Code Amendment Adoption. Two readings were advertised and occurred during public meetings on August 11, 2025, and September 9, 2025.

On a motion duly made by Commissioner Christenson and seconded by Commissioner Bailey, the Board approved Ordinance 2025-01 Florida Fire Prevention Code Amendment Adoption as presented.

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

**Adjourned:** The meeting adjourned at 4:45 p.m.