

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 **February 9, 2026, 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: 01.12.2026
- IV. Secretary/Treasurer's Report
- V. Attorney's Report
Title Insurance Claim Update
- VI. Chief's Report
- VII. Committee Reports
- VIII. Unfinished/Old Business
Board Advisory: Special Counsel / Legal Services
Ryan H. Crawford, Fire Chief
- IX. New Business
**Board Action: Interlocal Agreement with Walton County -
Emergency Medical Services**
Ryan H. Crawford, Fire Chief
- 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 – February 9, 2026

*****PENDING APPROVAL*****

Commissioners Present: David Bailey, Brian Christenson, Brian Farmer, Charlotte Flynt (arrived 4:12pm), Mark Foley (left 4:52pm) Maurice Gilbert (arrived 4:02 pm), Mike Stange

Commissioners Absent: None

Call to Order: 4:00 p.m.

Public Comment: None

Commissioner Bailey announced that a quorum was present.

On a motion duly made by Commissioner Christenson and seconded by Commissioner Foley, the Board unanimously approved the minutes of the January 12, 2026, Board of Fire Commissioners' regular meeting.

Secretary/Treasurer's Report: Commissioner Farmer read the December 2025 cash report into the record.

Attorney's Report: Attorney Youell presented a brief of her services for the month of January 2026. There has been no change in the Trademark status. Attorney Youell recommended the Board take action to revise SWFD's Geronimo Street Title Defect petition.

On a motion duly made by Commissioner Gilbert and seconded by Commissioner Christenson, the Board unanimously approved to replace former Chair Gilbert with current Chair Bailey as signatory on the Title Defect petition along with Fire Chief Crawford.

On a motion duly made by Commissioner Christenson and seconded by Commissioner Farmer, the Board unanimously approved Attorney Youell's January 2026 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 January.

Chief Crawford attended the Florida Special District Legislative Forum in Tallahassee. The Forum included board and committee meetings, legislative visits, and educational sessions focused on special-district financial oversight, governance, cybersecurity, and intergovernmental affairs.

Chief Crawford attended a Southeastern Association of Fire Chiefs Winter Board meeting in Henry County, Georgia.

Chief Crawford and Assistant Chief LaTour met with representatives from the Florida Forest Service to continue discussion focused on potential long-term opportunities which could lend support for future fire station locations.

The Request for Proposals (RFP) for architectural and engineering services for the 110 South County Hwy 393 parcel are due this Thursday, February 12, 2026, with the selection committee evaluation to occur on February 19, 2026.

SWFD Support Services completed several facility improvements at the Mack Bayou Fire Station including insulation remediation and installation of bunk room doors. The next phase of improvements includes replacement of ceiling tiles and installation of new flooring in the crew bunk rooms, dayroom, offices, and kitchen areas.

At the December Board meeting, the Fire Board approved the capital purchase of a Heavy-Duty Rescue Rehab and Air Apparatus not to exceed \$1,145,980. During discussion, the Board directed staff to evaluate the financial return between accepting a manufacturer pre-payment discount versus keeping those funds invested until delivery. Staff has since received updated production guidance indicating the apparatus is expected to be completed between late September and early December 2026, with October–November the most probable delivery window. Staff determined that pre-payment provides the greater overall benefit to the Fire District.

Chief Crawford stated that legislation was introduced this session that would mandate changes to the structure and governance of public safety answering points (PSAPs) across the state which would essentially force consolidation under a county-wide communication center that without agreement at the local level would default control to each Sheriff. Following discussions between legislative leadership and statewide public safety partners, the bill sponsor has indicated the bill will not move forward this year allowing stakeholders time to collaborate on concerns and develop recommendations for a future bill.

SWFD continues to advertise for seasonal lifeguards for the upcoming Beach Safety Season, which officially begins March 1, 2026.

Chief Crawford met with Niceville Fire Chief Alex Kukulus in January. Chief Kukulus relocated to Northwest Florida after retiring as Deputy Fire Chief in Reno, Nevada. The meeting focused on potential training opportunities for SWFD and Niceville personnel. The meeting concluded with staff introductions and a tour of Headquarters, as well as the Fleet, Logistics, and Training Facility.

On January 25 -30, 2026, the Florida Emergency Preparedness Conference (FEPA) took place at the Hilton Sandestin. SWFD's Honor Guard presented the colors and SWFD's Public Information Officer assisted Walton County Emergency Management in instructing the L-105 Public Information Basics course.

Recent promotions within the District are Lieutenant Jason Durko to Battalion Chief; Sergeant Josh Pitts to Lieutenant; and Firefighter Adam Yohn to Sergeant. A formal pinning and swearing-in ceremony will be scheduled once a preferred date has been selected.

SWFD will be represented at Florida Fire Service Day on the Hill on February 18, 2026. This annual event takes place at the State Capitol and highlights the diverse capabilities of Florida's fire service through the display of specialized vehicles and equipment, as well as program demonstrations and educational outreach. Later that evening, Chief Crawford will attend a black-tie charity event benefiting the Florida Fire Foundation. The event is jointly hosted by the Division of State Fire Marshal's Office and the Joint Council of Fire and Emergency Services. The gala honors the legacy and families of Florida's fallen

firefighters while raising funds in support of the Florida Fallen Firefighter Memorials in both Ocala and Tallahassee.

The Fire District's Annual Awards Banquet will be held Saturday, February 21, 2026. A flyer with event and RSVP details was included in the board packets.

Sergeant/Paramedic John Lawson has notified SWFD of his intent to retire February 27, 2026. Sergeant Lawson has served the South Walton Fire District for more than 26 years. A retirement celebration honoring John's service and contributions to the Fire District will be announced once plans are finalized.

Many SWFD members plan to attend the annual Ringing of the Bell ceremony in Tallahassee on the morning of March 3, 2026. This solemn annual event formally honors and permanently enshrines the names of Florida's fallen firefighters from the previous year at the Fallen Firefighter Memorial located at the State Capitol. SWFD will attend in support of Firefighter Dan Corcoran's family as he is honored during the ceremony. This observance falls on a particularly meaningful and difficult day, as it coincides with the anniversary of Dan's passing.

Chief Crawford announced that SWFD is in the early stages of creating a memorial tribute wall adjacent to the Station 3 flagpole at Headquarters. This space is being designed to permanently honor Firefighter/Paramedic Dan Corcoran and Firefighter/Paramedic Robert Heighton, ensuring their service, sacrifice, and legacy are never forgotten by SWFD or its community.

Our vision is to create a respectful place of remembrance that reflects the deep gratitude our Fire District holds for both Dan and Robert and their families. Memorial plaques were recently installed as the central element of the tribute wall while the surrounding landscaping and overall design will continue to evolve.

A Firefighters' Pension Board meeting is scheduled for Monday, March 2, at 2:30 p.m.

The SWFD Administrative Offices will be closed on February 16, in observance of Presidents' Day.

Committee Reports: None

Unfinished/Old Business: None

New Business:

Chief Crawford presented a Board Advisory regarding selection of Special Counsel/Legal Services. Profiles of the following firms were included in the board packets and were thoroughly evaluated by staff members:

1. Florida Environmental, Fire & Government Law, P.A. (EFG Law)
Principal Attorney: Laura Jacobs Donaldson
2. Lewis, Longman & Walker, P.A. (LLW)
Proposed Lead Counsel: Janice D. Rustin
3. Persson, Cohen, Mooney, Fernandez & Jackson, P.A. (PCM F&J)
Proposed Lead Counsel: Maggie Mooney

After a lengthy discussion, Staff was directed to negotiate a non-exclusive contract with Florida Environmental, Fire & Government Law, P.A. and to proceed without a Board Action requirement. All Commissioners agreed.

Chief Crawford presented a Board Action whereas staff recommended proceeding with approval of an Interlocal Agreement with Walton County Emergency Medical Services.

On a motion duly made by Commissioner Christenson and seconded by Commissioner Flynt, the Board unanimously accepted the Interlocal Agreement with Walton County Emergency Medical Services for the renewal period of October 1, 2026, through September 30, 2031, as presented.

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

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