

SOUTH WALTON FIRE DISTRICT BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS

Meeting Minutes – September 16, 2019

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

Commissioners Present: Brian Christenson, Charlotte Flynt, Mark B. Foley, Maurice Gilbert

Commissioners Absent: Jack Abbit, Tom Cooper, Mike Stange

Call to Order: 4:00 p.m.

Chairman Gilbert noted that there was a quorum present.

Special Item: Fire Prevention Week Proclamation

Fire Marshal Sanchez and Chairman Gilbert read into the record a proclamation proclaiming October 6 – October 12, 2019 as Fire Prevention Week in South Walton. On a motion duly made by Commissioner Flynt and seconded by Commissioner Christenson, the Board unanimously approved the proclamation.

Fire Marshal Sanchez introduced Claire Grice who had experienced a fire in her home in June. She spoke of the importance of smoke detectors and the excellent service she received from the SWFD response.

On a motion duly made by Commissioner Christenson and seconded by Commissioner Foley, the Board unanimously approved the minutes of the August 12, 2019 Board of Fire Commissioners meeting.

On a motion duly made by Commissioner Christenson and seconded by Commissioner Flynt, the Board unanimously approved the minutes of the August 27, 2019 Budget Workshop.

On a motion duly made by Commissioner Foley and seconded by Commissioner Flynt, the Board unanimously approved the minutes of the September 5, 2019 First Public Hearing regarding the levying of ad valorem taxes and the FY 2019-2020 budget.

Secretary/Treasurer Report: Commissioner Flynt read the July 2019 cash report into the record.

Attorney's Report:

Attorney Youell made a wording correction on her invoice stating that on 8/30, the charge was for a phone call with J.D. Simpson, not an email. On a motion duly made by Commissioner Christenson and seconded by Commissioner Foley, the Board unanimously approved Attorney Youell's August 2019 billing statement.

Fire Chief's Report:

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

Chief Crawford introduced two new staff members – Lois LaBarreare, Human Resources Coordinator, and James Kotowske, Information Technology Manager.

Chief Crawford thanked staff and particularly Fiscal Officer Martin for their work in developing the proposed FY 2019-2020 budget.

This past month District Chief LaTour hosted a regional Technical Rescue Team planning meeting here at SWFD HQ. Leadership from Escambia County, Ocean-City Wright, and Panama City Fire Department Technical Rescue Teams laid out training strategies for the upcoming year and were provided a brief tour of our new training facility at the conclusion of the meeting.

Fire Marshal Sanchez and Chief Crawford met with Florida Forestry and DEP Park Ranger officials to develop a plan for a public informational and educational session regarding community wildfire preparedness, benefits of proper forest management, and prescribed burning activities.

Staff attended the Walton County Proposed Connector Road public forum at Dune Lakes Elementary the evening of August 21st. The session provided an overview of potential locations for an additional connector road as well as an opportunity to provide public comment. Chief Crawford has submitted written comments along with the Board's previous resolution supporting an additional connector road.

On August 22, 2019, Chief Crawford attended an informational session on the EMS Supplemental Payment Program for Medicaid which was sponsored by the Florida Fire Chiefs Association. This program provides additional federally funded revenues to offset mandatory adjustments to Medicaid recipients from provided services of local governmental EMS providers. Chief Crawford is working with the firm "Public Consulting Group", who put on the presentation, to get more information on potential revenue for the Fire District and to learn specifics on enrollment in the program.

SWFD deployed several resources in support of the statewide response to Hurricane Dorian. Assistant Chief Anderson was mobilized to serve as a liaison at the State EOC, and others were deployed to strike teams. These expenses are reimbursable under the state and federal disaster declaration.

Operational personnel completed training on new incident reporting software and are working on final policies and procedures. A Go-Live date of October 1 is expected.

SWFD Honor Guard had four details this past month.

The District was well represented at the Panama City Beach 9/11 Memorial Stair Climb. Our Honor Guard presented the colors and Chaplain Emily Proctor provided the invocation and blessing of the helmets. Funds raised from this event go to the Emerald Coast First Responders Association and the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation.

SWFD Health and Fitness Committee coordinated a second annual 9/11 memorial 3.43 mile run to honor the 343 firefighters killed on 9/11/2001.

We celebrated Sergeant Mark Youngblood's 18 years of serving the District as he is retiring effective 9/30/19. This retirement leads to the promotion of Firefighter / Paramedic R J Mathews to Sergeant.

Sergeant Robert Wells is retiring October 31 after 25 years with the District.

This year's annual pancake breakfast is scheduled Saturday, October 5, 2019, at the Watercolor fire station to coincide with the beginning of Fire Prevention Week. Tickets are available to purchase for \$5.

Beach Safety Director Vaughan and Chief Crawford met with Panama City Beach officials to assist with formulating a plan to bring a beach safety program under the oversight of their Fire Department. Director Vaughan attended several of their public meetings providing a forum to answer questions on our own successful program.

Staff traveled to the Pierce plant in Bradenton for final inspections on our two new fire engines. Delivery is anticipated in September.

Staff has been working on a Purchasing and Procurement policy at the direction of our By-Laws Committee. Chief Crawford will be forwarding this to Attorney Youell for legal review and will bring back to the Committee for preliminary approval. Our goal is to place the proposed policy on the agenda for board consideration and adoption at an upcoming board meeting so that this policy may be referenced within the By-Laws under Article XII "Bidding Procedures".

Chief Crawford will attend the Northwest Florida Volunteer Firefighter Weekend at Northwest Florida State College Saturday, September 21. He will attend a state rule hearing workshop and speak on proposed changes to state firefighter minimum standards curriculum. Much of the proposed rule changes have to do with fire service occupational cancer mitigation and prevention strategies as well as incorporation of best practices on post fire decontamination techniques into the initial firefighter training.

Assistant Chief Hughes and District Chief LaTour will be traveling to Maryland later this month to attend grant funded weekend courses at the National Fire Academy.

The final budget hearing is this afternoon at 5:01pm. The next Board of Fire Commissioners meeting is scheduled for Monday, October 14, 2019, at 4pm.

Committee Reports: Commissioner Flynt reported on the Pension Board meeting of August 26, 2019. The Pension Board adjusted the turnover and disability assumptions used by the actuary to better reflect recent history which will increase the required District contribution by approximately \$200,000 annually. The investment return assumption will remain at 7.25%. The Pension Fund has earned 2.73% for the first nine months of this fiscal year.

Unfinished/Old Business: Board Advisory: 235S. Geronimo Street Property.

Assistant Chief Anderson reported that the asbestos removal and demolition of the house has been completed. Backfill was brought in and topped with crushed asphalt. The fence on the west side of the property is scheduled to be replaced in September. Architectural concept planning is included in the FY 2019-2020 budget.

New Business:

Board Action Item: Fire Commissioner Seat 3 Vacancy

Chief Crawford presented a Board Action Item whereas Commissioner Abbit provided written notice to Chairman Gilbert his intent to resign his Seat 3 Fire Commissioner position following the Board's selection of a qualified successor. At Chairman Gilbert's direction, Staff advertised the vacancy in the DeFuniak Herald on August 21, 2019 with a submission deadline of August 30, 2019. The Interim Seat 3 (Precinct 520) Board member will serve through November 12, 2020. Five submittals were received, and their qualifications were vetted with the Walton County Supervisor of Elections.

Chairman Gilbert thanked Commissioner Abbit for his almost 14 years of service.

On a motion duly made by Commissioner Flynt and seconded by Commissioner Christenson, the Board unanimously voted to accept the resignation of Commissioner Abbit effective with the swearing in of an appointed interim Commissioner.

Chairman Gilbert invited any candidates who were present to come forward and speak if they desired. Cynthia Dick and Michael Carter each spoke. After some discussion, the Board agreed they would select a replacement by paper ballot with each Commissioner writing the name of their choice on a piece of paper. Attorney Youell received and counted the ballots. Richard Talbert was selected with 2 votes. Cynthia Dick and Michael Carter each received one vote. The swearing in will occur at the October 14, 2019 Board of Fire Commissioners meeting.

Tourist Development Council Board Appointment: Chairman Gilbert announced that Commissioner Cooper would like to be replaced on the Tourist Development Council and that Commissioner Foley had volunteered to take that position. On a motion duly made by Commissioner Christenson and seconded by Commissioner Flynt, the Board unanimously voted Commissioner Foley as the Board of Fire Commissioners' appointment to the Tourist Development Council.

Public Comment: None

Adjourned: The meeting adjourned at 4:58 p.m.