

SOUTH WALTON FIRE DISTRICT BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS

Meeting Minutes – September 21, 2020

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

Commissioners Present (via video conference): Brian Christenson, Tom Cooper, Charlotte Flynt, Mark B. Foley, Maurice Gilbert, Mike Stange, Rick Talbert

Commissioners Absent: None

Call to Order: 4:03 p.m.

Special Item: Fire Prevention Week Proclamation

Chairman Gilbert read into the record a proclamation proclaiming October 4 – October 10, 2020, as Fire Prevention Week in South Walton.

On a motion duly made by Commissioner Talbert and seconded by Commissioner Christenson, the Board unanimously approved the minutes of the August 10, 2020, Board of Fire Commissioners meeting.

On a motion duly made by Commissioner Cooper and seconded by Commissioner Flynt, the Board unanimously approved the minutes of the August 25, 2020, Budget Workshop.

On a motion duly made by Commissioner Christenson and seconded by Commissioner Cooper, the Board unanimously approved the minutes of the September 8, 2020, First Public Hearing regarding the levying of ad valorem taxes and the FY 2020-2021 budget.

Secretary/Treasurer's Report: Commissioner Flynt read the July 2020 cash report into the record.

Attorney's Report:

On a motion duly made by Commissioner Flynt and seconded by Commissioner Talbert, the Board unanimously approved Attorney Youell's August 2020 billing statement.

Fire Chief's Report:

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

Chief Crawford accepted the resignation of an SWFD Life Safety Inspector in August. The vacancy has been advertised and SWFD plans to fill this position in the coming weeks.

Chief Crawford reported that SWFD was awarded a \$5K grant through the Preferred Training Incentive Program associated with the purchase of a secondary cache of firefighter turnout gear. Chief Crawford acknowledged Fiscal Officer Carole Martin for her initiative in applying and leveraging expenses to access these grant funds.

Several Fire District employees including staff, dispatchers, and lifeguards attended the University of Central Florida's virtual REACT (Recognize, Evaluate, Advocate, Coordinate, & Track) training designed to introduce, improve, and strengthen peer support skills among first responders.

Division Chief of EMS Orenic and the EMS Division continue to work with state and local Department of Health partners on COVID vaccine protocols and required MOU's. This process will allow SWFD paramedics to administer the COVID vaccine to SWFD members and possibly the general public. Logistical challenges are continuing to be addressed.

Chief Crawford and Fire Marshal Sanchez are continuing to meet with Walton County Planning Dept, the Florida Forest Service, and County Emergency Management staff on Wildfire Mitigation strategies as they work toward suggesting recommendations to the Walton County Board of County Commissioners on amending the Land Development Code.

Chief Crawford notified Walton County Administration of the Fire District's desire to renew its interlocal agreement as the provider of EMS ambulance transport services in South Walton. The renewal agreement request has been placed on the Walton County Board of County Commissioners September 22, 2020 meeting agenda for board direction.

SWFD staff provided the annual data to Public Consulting Group for our continued participation in the Medicaid Public Emergency Medical Transportation cost reporting and reimbursement program.

Several SWFD staff members along with Commissioner Talbert attended the memorial services for fallen St. George Island firefighter Brian Smith on Sunday, September 13th. Firefighter Smith tragically died in the line of duty while conducting a water rescue in Double Red Flag surf conditions in Franklin County.

SWFD lifeguards responded to a total of 31 beach related incidents throughout the 6 days of double red surf conditions between 8/24 and 8/31. These incidents were related to the surf created by Hurricane Laura which made landfall to our west. SWFD continues to encounter frequent public defiance toward the double red flag water closure.

Included the Board packet was a letter to Sheriff Adkinson requesting clarification on the official position of the Walton County Sheriff's Office regarding the enforcement of the Double Red water closure and specifically the position on the issuance of citations. This request resulted in several follow up meetings between SWFD Staff, WCSO and Walton County Code Enforcement. These meetings were intended to provide a review of the number of citations issued as well as an after-action discussion of what went well as well as identifying opportunities for improvement. Chief Crawford stated that based on the most recent occurrence of double red surf attributed to Hurricane Sally SWFD observed a more proactive position on enforcement at our regional beach access points.

On Friday, September 11, 2020, SWFD's Health and Fitness Committee coordinated the Annual SWFD Memorial Run / Walk along 3.43 miles of Highway 30A. This year's event was well attended by SWFD members, retirees and SWFD was honored to have a retired FDNY firefighter join as they set out to remember the 343 firefighters that died during the September 11, 2001 attacks.

On September 22, 2020, firefighters will be conducting a Live Fire Instructor Round Up on the SWFD's training grounds. This Round Up will be the first live fire training SWFD has been able to conduct in about two years due to construction delays, relocating the Conex boxes and shutting down all group training activities from COVID.

SWFD's Life Safety Division has been planning Fire Prevention Week activities with South Walton schools and daycares to occur throughout the month of October. This year's activities are being modified to provide for precautions with COVID and may include outdoor presentations as well opportunities to provide fire safety education virtually to schools through the Zoom platform.

The 2020 Pancake Breakfast, which is traditionally scheduled in October in conjunction with fire prevention week, has been cancelled as a result of the pandemic.

Chief Crawford reminded the Board that the Final Public Hearing is immediately following this meeting at 5:01pm – there are different ZOOM call numbers assigned.

The next regularly scheduled Board of Fire Commissioners meeting will be at 4pm on Monday, October 12, 2020.

Committee Reports: Commissioner Flynt reported on the Pension Board meeting of August 31, 2020. The Pension Fund earned a net of 11.91% for the quarter ended June 30, 2020, which brings the fiscal year to date earnings to a net of 7.31%.

Unfinished/Old Business: Assistant Chief Marc Anderson presented a Board Action Item on the Fleet Maintenance and Training Facility Close-out whereas the contractor, Lord and Son Construction, Inc. requested that the South Walton Fire District reimburse them the imposed liquidated and adjusted damages of \$500 per day for 219 days past the original contract deadline of May 15, 2019, equaling \$109,500.00. Staff did not recommend the reimbursement of the imposed liquidated and adjusted damages as Lord and Son Construction, Inc. requested and stated that the South Walton Fire District has fully complied with all terms of the contract and has paid the contractor, Lord and Son Construction, Inc. in full.

There was a lengthy discussion between the Fire Commissioners followed by final comments from Mike O'Grady with Lord and Son Construction, Inc. On a motion that was duly made by Commissioner Cooper and seconded by Commissioner Talbert, the Board agreed with Staff's recommendation and unanimously voted against reimbursing Lord and Son Construction, Inc. the imposed liquidated and adjusted damages for 219 days past the original May 15, 2019 deadline as stipulated in the contract.

New Business: None

Public Comment: None

Roll call votes were practiced during this meeting.

Adjourned: The meeting adjourned at 4:51 p.m.