

SOUTH WALTON FIRE DISTRICT BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS

Meeting Minutes – December 14, 2020

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

Commissioners Present: Brian Christenson, Tom Cooper, Mark B. Foley, Maurice Gilbert, Rick Talbert

Commissioners Absent: Charlotte Flynt, Mike Stange

Call to Order: 4:00 p.m.

On a motion duly made by Commissioner Cooper and seconded by Commissioner Christenson, the Board unanimously approved the minutes of the November 9, 2020, Board of Fire Commissioners meeting.

Secretary/Treasurer's Report: In Commissioner Flynt's absence, Fiscal Officer Martin read the October 2020 cash report into the record.

Attorney's Report:

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

After reviewing items listed on Attorney Youell's billing statement, Commissioner Talbert commented on Walton County Code Director Cornman's request to raise bonfire permit fees in addition to taking over the bonfire program altogether during the December 8, 2020, Walton County Board of County Commissioners meeting. Commissioner Talbert stated that he is against any increase in bonfire fees by Walton County and against Walton County taking over the bonfire program. After much discussion to include an excerpt from Florida Statute Chapter 191, it was confirmed that Independent Special Fire Control Districts have the power to adopt ordinances and resolutions necessary to conduct district business of which bonfires fall in this category. Commissioner Talbert stated that FS Chapter 191 grants SWFD the authority to adopt ordinances and resolutions. Talbert further stated that there is language in a Walton County ordinance that identifies SWFD as the permitting agency for bonfires. Chief Crawford stated that, in the year 2010, SWFD Fire Board adopted Ordinance 2010.02 and Resolution 2010.10 which clearly define South Walton Fire District's ownership of the bonfire program and its fees. Attorney Youell stated that the authority is granted by the State, not Walton County, and therefore supersedes any action by the Walton County Board of County Commissioners.

On a motion made by Commissioner Cooper and seconded by Commissioner Christenson, Attorney Youell was given authority to send a letter to the Walton County Attorney regarding the Walton County Code Director's attempt to alter South Walton Fire District's bonfire program.

Commissioner Talbert commented on the amount of unanswered phone calls to Walton County Administration and their attorneys on Attorney Youell's report. Commissioner Talbert also stated that Attorney Youell was treated with the most unprofessional presentation by Attorney Clay Adkinson that he's ever seen during the December 8, 2020, Walton County Board of County Commissioners meeting, when stating her interpretation of Florida Statue TDC Advisory Council membership requirements. After a lengthy discussion, the fire commissioners unanimously disagreed with the Walton County Board of County Commissioner's decision to remove SWFD from the TDC

Advisory Council. Florida Statute 125.0104(4)(e) states whereas two members of the council shall be elected municipal officials, at least one of whom shall be from the most populous municipality in the county or subcounty special taxing district in which the tax is levied.

Commissioner Talbert stated the SWFD should continue to serve on the TDC Advisory Council, as it has from its inception, because it provides health and safety (including 26 miles of beaches) to its citizens and visitors and is the most populous special taxing district in which the tax is levied. Chairman Gilbert directed Attorney Youell and staff to explore options and do whatever is necessary from a legal standpoint to reinforce SWFD's position on the bonfire issue as well as the TDC Advisory Council issue.

Fire Chief's Report:

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

Chief Crawford reported that SWFD's Light Technical Rescue Team responded to a significant incident on November 19, 2020 under local mutual aid to Pier Park in Panama City Beach for a high angle rescue of six (6) individuals trapped on the Sky Wheel. The entire incident took approximately six (6) hours for firefighters to resolve. Chief Crawford stated that this was an extremely dangerous and atypical high-angle response by SWFD crews, and he is extremely proud of their professionalism in developing and executing a successful plan while ensuring everyone's safety.

Staff has completed the PEMT Fee for Service cost and data reporting for July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020. This is for SWFD's continued participation in the Medicaid supplemental payment program for ambulance providers. This year's supplemental compensation for the district's participation totaled \$34,350 prior to deducting for PCG's administrative fee. Staff anticipates receiving these funds sometime late spring.

After completing 21 years of service to the District, Lt. Mike Griggs retired in November 2020. A very small, private retirement celebration honoring his service was held on December 1, 2020. As a result of Lt. Griggs retirement, Sgt. Matt Cramer was promoted to Lieutenant and FF Doug Mishler was promoted to Sergeant.

A conditional offer of employment has been extended to Fire Inspector Todd Bowser. Todd comes to us from the Springfield, Ohio area where he retired as a line fire Captain / Paramedic this past July following a 33-year career with the Springfield Fire Department. Todd previously held the assignment of Assistant Fire Marshal and was also employed as a fire inspector with the City of Huber Heights the past seven (7) years. Bowser is scheduled to begin new hire orientation the week of January 4, 2021.

Staff completed the HR/Fiscal Administrative Associate position interviews. Chief Crawford anticipates bringing this new hire on board mid-January 2021.

Staff completed the advertising period for the newly funded Public Information Officer position and plan to schedule interviews the second week in January 2021.

Staff scheduled interviews for SWFD's Assistant Chief of Support Services position December 14-17, 2020. Chief Crawford hopes to have a new Assistant Chief on board

by late January or early February 2021. Assistant Chief Anderson is scheduled to retire the end of February and this timeline will allow for a smooth transition in divisional responsibilities.

Staff completed the spray foam insulation project which was a capital project to address inadequate insulation in the ceiling of the administrative building second floor where the HVAC systems were unable to maintain temperature. This project required staff to relocate SWFD Communications Center to the board room for approximately ten (10) days. This move allowed SWFD to test its remote dispatching capabilities. Chief Crawford shared that the remote dispatching operation went without issue. Chief Crawford thanked Assistant Chief Anderson for overseeing this project and our communications personnel for their flexibility while completing this necessary improvement to the facility.

On December 11, 2020, SWFD facilitated a leadership workshop with Readiness2Lead at the Sandestin Hilton. This training was led by retired Marine Colonel Bob Cohen and a variety of distinguished speakers including retired circuit judge Kathleen Kearney, Retired Air Force Colonel Bruce Grant, Professor of Health Policy and Management and Co-Director of the 2nd Alarm Project Dr. Kellie O'Dare, along with several others. The training was provided through grant funding through the 2nd Alarm Project and the venue was provided through the generosity of the Sandestin Hilton. SWFD chaplains, chief officers, and staff, along with leadership from Walton County Fire Rescue, City of DeFuniak Springs Fire Department and Okaloosa Island Fire Department participated in this workshop.

SWFD is conducting all lab and blood draws for its employees as a component of the comprehensive Life-Scan physicals that are required annually of SWFD employees. The remaining portions of the employee physicals will be completed in January 2021.

Staff is actively preparing to host a closed COVID-19 Point of Distribution or POD site for vaccine administration for SWFD's high-risk employees. This vaccine administration will be done in coordination with Florida Department of Health and Walton County Emergency Management. A closed POD simply means that SWFD will receive vaccine and have the capacity to inoculate its employees should they choose to receive the vaccine.

SWFD's annual holiday celebration and the Polar Bear Plunge have been cancelled due to impacts from COVID-19. In an effort to show gratitude for the incredible job SWFD employees have done throughout a difficult year, staff has coordinated a catered holiday meal for all SWFD employees the week of Christmas.

SWFD Administrative Offices will be closed December 24-25, 2020 in observation of the Christmas holiday and January 1, 2021 for New Year's Day.

The next regularly scheduled Board of Fire Commissioners meeting will be at 4pm on Monday, January 11, 2021.

Committee Reports: In Commissioner Flynt's absence, Fiscal Officer Martin informed the Fire Board that the Pension Board met on November 30 and received the final performance report for FY2020 and the annual valuation. The fund earned a net of 11.81% for FY2020 and is 96.9% funded as of 10/1/2020. A state mandated change in mortality tables caused the slightly lower funded ratio and will cause the required District contribution to increase \$324,393 in FY2022 over the amount we are funding in FY2021. The board kept the expected rate of return at 7.25%.

Unfinished/Old Business: None

New Business:

SWFD Fire Board Officer Appointments for 2021 are as follows:

On a motion duly made by Commissioner Cooper and seconded by Commissioner Talbert, the Board voted unanimously to reappoint Commissioner Maurice Gilbert to Fire Board Chair for 2021.

On a motion duly made by Commissioner Talbert and seconded by Commissioner Christenson, the Board voted unanimously to reappoint Commissioner Tom Cooper to Fire Board Vice Chair for 2021.

On a motion duly made by Commissioner Christenson and seconded by Commissioner Cooper, the Board voted unanimously to reappoint Commissioner Charlotte Flynt to Fire Board Secretary / Treasurer for 2021.

The SWFD Fire Board Committee Appointments for 2021 are as follows:

Chairman Gilbert polled the board and all were in agreeance that the committee appointments will remain the same as year 2020 with the exception of the HR/Employee Benefits Committee.

FINANCE AND INVESTMENT COMMITTEE – One Year Term

- Maurice Gilbert, Fire Board Chair
- Ryan H. Crawford, Fire Chief/Administrator
- Carole Martin, Fiscal Officer

AUDIT COMMITTEE– One Year Term

- Mike Stange, Committee Chair
- Tom Cooper, Commissioner
- Charlotte Flynt, Commissioner
- Carole Martin, Fiscal Officer attends all committee meetings, but is not a voting member of this committee

HR/EMPLOYEE BENEFITS COMMITTEE– One Year Term

- Brian Christenson, Commissioner
- Tom Cooper, Fire Board Vice Chair
- Mark Foley, Commissioner

- On a motion duly made by Commissioner Talbert and seconded by Commissioner Christenson, the Board voted unanimously to replace Fiscal Officer Martin appointment with HR Manager Lois LaBarreare

BYLAW COMMITTEE– One Year Term

- Charlotte Flynt, Committee Chair
- Brian Christenson, Commissioner
- Rick Talbert, Commissioner
- Carole Martin, Fiscal Officer

PENSION BOARD - Two Year alternating terms

- Charlotte Flynt, Fire Commissioner – term ends December 31, 2022.
- Daniel LaTour, Resident Trustee - term ends December 31, 2021.

Public Comment: None

Adjourned: The meeting adjourned at 5:17 p.m.