

# 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 **January 11, 2021, at 4:00 p.m.** at the South Walton Fire District Administration building.

The agenda will include, but not be limited to the following:

- I. Call to Order
- II. Approval of Minutes  
**Regular Board Meeting: 12.14.2020**
- III. Secretary/Treasurer's Report
- IV. Attorney's Report
- V. Chief's Report
- VI. Committee Reports  
**Audit Committee Update**  
Mike Stange, Committee Chair
- VII. Unfinished/Old Business
- VIII. New Business  
**2019/20 Audit Report**  
Warren Averett
- IX. Public Comment\*
- X. 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 with respect to 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 – January 11, 2021**

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

**Commissioners Present:** Brian Christenson, Tom Cooper, Charlotte Flynt, Mark B. Foley, Maurice Gilbert, Mike Stange, Rick Talbert

**Commissioners Absent:** None

**Call to Order:** 4:00 p.m.

Commissioner Gilbert announced a change in the agenda order to discuss the 2019-2020 Audit report. Kevin Bowyer with Warren Averett presented the Board of Fire Commissioners with a copy of the 2019-2020 Audit Report and advised the Board of Fire Commissioners of SWFD's excellence in fiscal reporting. Mr. Bowyer also stated that the District is in sound fiscal condition. On a motion duly made by Commissioner Cooper and seconded by Commissioner Flynt, the Board unanimously accepted the 2019-2020 Audit Report as presented.

On a motion duly made by Commissioner Talbert and seconded by Commissioner Christenson, the Board unanimously approved the minutes of the December 14, 2020, Board of Fire Commissioners meeting.

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

**Attorney's Report:**

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

**Fire Chief's Report:**

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

The first round of COVID-19 vaccinations for SWFD employees began January 6, 2021.

Todd Bowser, Fire Inspector completed the new hire orientation process. Inspector Bowser has years of fire inspection experience and is a great addition to SWFD's fire prevention team.

Staff conducted interviews for the positions of Assistant Chief of Support Services, Public Information Officer, Life Safety Plans Examiner, and HR / Accounting Administrative Associate and plan to conduct Customer Service Specialist interviews soon.

Staff hired two (2) new firefighters due to vacancies created by recent retirements.

District Chief Corey Harned retired from SWFD on December 15, 2020. Chief Harned completed a 33-year fire service career with nearly 23 of those serving the citizens of South Walton. Chief Crawford publicly thanked Chief Harned for his years of service and congratulated him on a well-deserved retirement.

Chief Crawford briefed the Fire Commissioners on internal reassignments of SWFD staff. Customer Service Specialist Lori Brown accepted the Administrative Associate position. District Chief Daniel LaTour accepted the Division Chief of Training position.

On January 21, 2021, Chief Crawford is scheduled to attend a Florida Association of Special District's board meeting as well as a quarterly general membership meeting the following morning.

SWFD's Inlet Beach Fire Station's exterior paint project was completed in December.

Chief Crawford presented the Fire Board with an update on the 800MHz radio upgrade project.

Chief Crawford deferred to Chief Anderson to provide an update on Lord & Son Construction's change orders related to the Fleet Maintenance and Training Facility project. A Board Action Item will be presented to the Fire Board at the February 8, 2021, regular meeting which will define the final settlement on this project.

Chief Crawford reported that SWFD employees are scheduled to complete the second phase of the annual Life-Scan physicals through early February. Chief Crawford expressed his appreciation of the Fire Board's continued support in staff's ongoing efforts to provide advanced employee health and fitness screening.

On January 6, 2021, SWFD's Honor Guard assisted with providing fire service honors at the funeral for retired Navarre Beach Fire Captain Gary Diamond in Escambia County. Chief Crawford stated that he is incredibly proud of SWFD's Honor Guard ongoing commitment to represent the District.

Chief Crawford provided an update on the Wildfire Mitigation process and SWFD's ongoing effort to amend the Walton County Land Development Code. A draft was submitted to the Walton County Planning Director that provides alternative fire-resistant ground covering as well as a proposed process for vegetation thinning / bush hogging on vacant lands south of the bay. These recommendations will be submitted to the Walton County Board of County Commissioners for further direction.

Chief Crawford informed the Fire Commissioners that SWFD is in the final year of the three (3) year labor agreement with South Walton Professional Firefighters Association Local 3516. At Chairman Gilbert's direction, Chief Crawford researched professionals that provide similar negotiating services. Chief Crawford requested board direction regarding the retention of a lead labor negotiator. Chief Crawford indicated that he spoke at length with Linda Edwards of Rumberger Kirk and polled the board to proceed with vetting Ms. Edwards. On a motion duly made by Commissioner Cooper and seconded by Commissioner Talbert, the Board voted unanimously for Chairman Gilbert and Fire Chief Crawford to proceed with the execution of a contract with Ms. Edwards.

Chief Crawford presented an update on the Walton County Board of County Commissioner's efforts to amend the Beach Activities Ordinance and increase permitting fees. Chief Crawford stated that SWFD is identified in Walton County's Code of Ordinances as the permitting agency for bonfires. Chief Crawford further 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 which only the Fire Board can amend. Chief Crawford reported that Walton County does not currently collect a bonfire fee. Chief Crawford suggested

that Attorney Youell share SWFD's perspective with the Walton County's attorney. Chief Crawford further stated that if Walton County enacts a fee resolution, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) should be in place for SWFD to collect Walton County's bonfire fee when SWFD collects its beach bonfire permit fee. After a lengthy discussion, the Fire Board agreed with Chief Crawford and gave direction to move forward.

Chief Crawford provided an update regarding Walton County's decision to replace South Walton Fire District and South Walton Mosquito Control District seats on the TDC Advisory Council with the City of Freeport and the City of DeFuniak Springs. Attorney Youell stated that currently, there is no representation from the most populous special taxing district as required by Florida Statute. Commissioner Flynt suggested obtaining a reading from the Attorney General's office regarding §125.0104(4)(e) Fla. Stat. (2020), 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."

On a motion duly made by Commissioner Flynt and seconded by Commissioner Foley, the Board unanimously agreed to move forward with obtaining the Attorney General's interpretation of the enabling ordinance for a Tourist Development Council.

SWFD Administrative Offices will be closed January 18, 2021, in observation of Martin Luther King Day.

The next regularly scheduled Board of Fire Commissioners meeting will be at 4pm on Monday, February 8, 2021.

**Committee Reports:** The Audit Committee met January 7, 2021. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the South Walton Fire District's 2019/2020 Audit with Warren Averett, Certified Public Accountants and Consultants.

**Unfinished/Old Business:** None

**New Business:** None

**Public Comment:** None

**Adjourned:** The meeting adjourned at 5:01 p.m.