

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 **September 20, 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:

- Special Item: Proclamation: Fire Prevention Week
October 3 – 9, 2021
Chairman Maurice Gilbert**
- I. Call to Order
 - II. Approval of Minutes
**Regular Board Meeting: 08.09.2021
Proposed Budget Workshop: 08.31.2021
First Public Hearing: 09.07.2021**
 - III. Secretary/Treasurer's Report
 - IV. Attorney's Report
 - V. Chief's Report
 - VI. Committee Reports
**Pension Board Meeting Update
Charlotte Flynt, Fire Commissioner**
 - VII. Unfinished/Old Business
 - VIII. New Business
**Board Action: Request to Execute Documents - Miramar
Beach Fire Station
Ryan H. Crawford, Fire Chief**
**Board Action: Participation in Medicaid Supplemental
Payment Managed Care Organization (MCO) Program
Ryan H. Crawford, Fire Chief**
 - 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 – September 20, 2021

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

Commissioners Present: David A.C. Bailey (arrived 4:10pm), Brian Christenson, Charlotte Flynt, Mark B. Foley, Maurice Gilbert

Commissioners Absent: Tom Cooper, Mike Stange

Call to Order: 4:00 p.m.

Special Item: Fire Prevention Week Proclamation

Chairman Gilbert read into the record a proclamation proclaiming October 3 – October 9, 2021, as Fire Prevention Week in South Walton.

Chairman Gilbert announced that there was a quorum present.

On a motion duly made by Commissioner Christenson and seconded by Commissioner Flynt, the Board unanimously approved the minutes of the August 9, 2021, 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 31, 2021, Budget Workshop.

On a motion duly made by Commissioner Christenson and seconded by Commissioner Flynt, the Board unanimously approved the minutes of the September 7, 2021, First Public Hearing regarding the levying of ad valorem taxes and the FY 2021-2022 budget.

Secretary/Treasurer's Report: Commissioner Flynt read the July 2021 cash report into the record.

Attorney's Report:

On a motion duly made by Commissioner Foley and seconded by Commissioner Bailey, the Board unanimously approved Attorney Youell's August 2021 billing statement.

Fire Chief's Report:

Chief Crawford reviewed the Emergency Response Activity Report which included Beach Safety Responses. SWFD continues to trend 25% higher in total response activity YTD as compared to YTD last year. There was a 23% increase in total response activity for August 2021 when compared to August 2020.

Chief Crawford reported on significant fires in the Watersound Beach community. The first incident occurred on August 11, 2021, at Watch Tower Lane. This fire progressed to a 2nd alarm and required more than 50 firefighters including mutual aid received from Panama City Beach and Walton County. The fire resulted in a complete loss of the homes located at 25, 35, and 45 Watch Tower Lane and damaged several homes located along the adjacent street to the North. The cause remains under investigation by the State Fire Marshal's Office.

On August 13, 2021, fire crews were dispatched to a heavily involved structure fire also located in Watersound Beach community on Salt Box Lane. An aggressive fire attack was initiated by crews resulting in containment and extinguishment. The home experienced moderate fire damage to the exterior and destroyed a detached carriage house. The State Fire Marshal could not rule out electrical as a cause of this fire.

SWFD's Beach Safety Division experienced 15 Yellow Flag Days, 8 Single Red Flag Days, and 8 Double Red Flag Days during August 2021. From March 1st thru August 31st, 96 of the 184 days were under single red or double red surf conditions.

SWFD personnel participated in the 14th year of SWFD's Back-to-School Safe Driving Campaign the week of August 10th. This campaign is an effort to remind motorists of the presence of children along roadways and increased traffic around local schools.

In August, SWFD's Beach Safety personnel collaborated with South Walton Turtle Watch and Gulf World Marine Institute to provide lifeguards with greater awareness of sea turtle nesting identification and marine life/sea turtle rescue and response training.

On August 16, 2021, SWFD activated its Hurricane Plan by taking protective actions for potential impacts from Tropical Storm Fred. This included the removal and storage of all lifeguard towers and assets from the beaches.

On September 5, 2021, the Northwest Region deployed a 5-engine strike team with EVT support in response to impacts in Louisiana from Category 4 Hurricane Ida. SWFD's Fleet Director Meadows along with Sgt Serpas deployed for a seven-day mission to support these strike teams. Their primary task was to provide support for the staffing of fire stations in the Thibodaux area and relieve local firefighters who had been affected by the storm. Chief Crawford commended all who deployed from our region but specifically the contributions of Fleet Director Meadows and Sgt Serpas.

SWFD's natural gas generator installation was completed at Headquarters. Chief Crawford shared that the generator replacement required close planning and coordination with vendors. Job well done by Chief LaTour for getting this completed without any issues.

On the morning of September 8, 2021, SWFD recognized a young boy approximately 5 years old for actions taken resulting in the saving of a life. His family was on vacation when his 2-year-old sister went missing. This young boy located his sister a short time later floating in a swimming pool and without hesitation jumped in and held her head above water until their father was able to pull them to safety. The little girl was evaluated by paramedics and fortunately did not require treatment or hospitalization. Circumstances like these surrounding young children and pools can often end very differently. On September 8, 2021, SWFD coordinated a visit between the family and the responding fire crews at SWFD's Miramar Beach Fire Station where this young boy was recognized for his actions by presenting him with the District's Citizens Lifesaving Award.

Negotiations with Sandestin Owners Association regarding renewal terms for providing lifeguard services have been completed. The agreement has a 2-year term with a 1-year option to renew which if executed would take the agreement through October 31, 2024. The draft agreement has been reviewed by counsel and is awaiting formal acceptance by the SOA Board. Once accepted by SOA, staff will place on the agenda for Fire Board consideration and acceptance.

Staff met with TDC Director Jason Cutshaw regarding revision language to the current TDC Beach Safety Contract. This revision is exclusively for the scope of services expansion for this upcoming final year of the agreement. SWFD's goal is to have it placed before the Walton County Board of County Commissioners for their action prior to the end of October. Once the revisions are accepted, SWFD's FY22 budget will require an amendment to address any increases in program funding and expenditures.

Assistant Chief LaTour attended The Fire Station Design Conference in St. Louis, MO in August. This conference allowed Chief LaTour to hear from industry experts on best practices for construction and the latest trends and developments in the design of fire stations which will be of value as SWFD designs fire station facilities for the future.

SWFD members participated in the PCB 9/11 memorial stair-climb on August 28, 2021, at Edgewater Beach Resort to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the tragic events of 9/11/01. The Fire District's Honor Guard was joined by Bay County Pipes and Drums where they presented the colors for the opening ceremonies. The District had nearly thirty employees, retirees, and family members climbing this year and were joined by Fire Commissioner David Bailey. Chief Crawford thanked Commissioner Bailey for attending.

SWFD members also participated in SWFD's Annual 9/11 Memorial 3.43-mile Run / Walk on September 11, 2021. There were more than forty employees and family members represented by retirees, admin staff, lifeguards, and firefighters. SWFD organized this annual event four (4) years ago as a way for our members to honor the legacy of the 343 firefighters killed on September 11, 2001, and as a reminder to our community that we never forget their sacrifices.

District Chief Herb Patterson is scheduled to retire following more than 22 years of service to the South Walton Fire District. Chief Patterson's fire service career began in 1988 with Destin Fire Control District where he was employed for nearly 12 years. Chief Patterson began his career with SWFD in 1999, was promoted to Lieutenant in 2001, and District Chief in 2008 where he has had command of B Shift for the past 13 years.

Sergeant CharLee Lanier is also scheduled to retire following more than 20 years of service with SWFD. Sergeant Lanier joined SWFD in June of 2001 as a Firefighter/EMT and was promoted to Sergeant in 2005.

Both men have made great contributions to the District throughout their careers, and SWFD wishes them wonderful and healthy retirements. SWFD will provide information on their retirement celebrations as details are finalized.

In August, staff conducted firefighter candidate testing. Between the vacancies created by the aforementioned retirements and SWFD's budgetary request to fund two (2) additional firefighters per shift, SWFD anticipates the need to hire eight (8) firefighters from this most recent selection process. Following final budget approval, staff will move quickly to onboard the selected new firefighter personnel.

SWFD's Highway 393 South property was vacated by Habitat for Humanity at the end of August. Staff conducted a site inspection and have returned the security deposit associated with the lease. SWFD is moving forward with plans to relocate the Beach Safety Division to this location during the off-season. Staff is evaluating proposed improvements (fencing, signage, etc.) that may require SWFD to go before the county's design review board as this facility falls within scenic corridor guidelines.

Chief Crawford attended an induction ceremony for the Public Safety Hall of Fame at Gulf Coast State College's North Bay campus. The Public Safety Hall of Fame was created to provide recognition and appreciation of public safety officials who have made significant contributions to the community. Chief Crawford accepted these honors on behalf of FF/PM Robert Heighton and his family. Recipients received a duplicate of the plaque which hangs in the college's "Hall of Fame". SWFD placed the plaque honoring FF/PM Heighton's legacy in the Main Conference Room at SWFD headquarters.

Chief Crawford reported that SWFD's negotiations team has reached a tentative agreement with labor on terms for a new collective bargaining agreement. Represented employees will be voting on the agreement in the latter part of September. Following their ratification vote, staff will provide a summary of all changes for Fire Board review at the October 11, 2021, regular board meeting.

Walton County is scheduled to hold two (2) public workshops for revisions to the Beach Activities Ordinance on Tuesday, October 5, 2021, at 1pm and Wednesday, October 6, 2021, at 4pm. Staff will attend both workshops.

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

Committee Reports: Commissioner Flynt reported on the Pension Board meeting of August 30, 2021. The Pension Fund earned a net of 5.07% for the quarter ended June 30, 2021, which brings the fiscal year-to-date earnings to a net of 18.83%. The Pension Board voted to lower the assumed rate of return for investments used to calculate required funding from 7.25% to 7%.

Unfinished/Old Business: None

New Business:

Board Action: Request to Execute Documents - Miramar Beach Fire Station

Fire Chief Crawford presented a Board Action whereas staff recommended the Board delegate authority to the Fire Chief and/or Chairman specifically to execute any documents necessary for the District to assume ownership of the current utility easement owned by South Walton Utility Company, Inc. and located between 217 S. Geronimo Street and 235 S. Geronimo Street as well as the authority to execute any documents necessary for the District to provide a new utility easement to relocate the 8" water main along the southern and eastern borders of 235 S. Geronimo Street.

On a motion duly made by Commissioner Bailey and seconded by Commissioner Foley, the Board unanimously delegated authority to the Fire Chief and/or Chairman to execute any documents which are necessary for the District to assume ownership of the current utility easement and to provide a new utility easement for the purposes of relocating the 8" water main along the southern and eastern borders of 235 S. Geronimo Street.

Board Action: Participation in Medicaid Supplemental Payment Managed Care Organization (MCO) Program Fire Chief Crawford presented a Board Action whereas staff recommended authorizing the District's participation in the Medicaid PEMT Managed Care Organization (MCO) segment of the PEMT program and to direct the Fire Chief to proceed with executing the Letter of Agreement with AHCA committing to the required IGT of funds.

On a motion duly made by Commissioner Flynt and seconded by Commissioner Bailey, the Board unanimously authorized Fire Chief Crawford to proceed with executing the Letter of Agreement with the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) committing to the required IGT of funds.

Public Comment: Commissioner Bailey commended Fire Marshal Sanchez on SWFD's fire prevention presentation for local property management groups.

Adjourned: The meeting adjourned at 4:47 pm.