

# 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 **May 12, 2025, at 4:00 p.m.** on the third floor of the South Walton Fire District Logistics Building.

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

**Special Item: Emergency Medical Services Week Proclamation**

**May 18 – 24, 2025**

Chairman Maurice Gilbert

**Special Item: Beach Safety Week Proclamation**

**May 19 – 26, 2025**

Chairman Maurice Gilbert

- I. Call to Order
- II. Public Comment\*
- III. Approval of Minutes  
**Regular Board Meeting: 04.14.2025**
- IV. Secretary/Treasurer's Report
- V. Attorney's Report  
**Trademark Update**  
**Title Insurance Claim Update**
- VI. Chief's Report
- VII. Committee Reports
- VIII. Unfinished/Old Business
- IX. New Business  
**AirHeart 1 Flight Crew Memorial**  
Sammy Sanchez, Fire Marshal  
**2024/25 Audit Report**  
Joe Bradley, Warren Averett  
**South Walton Mosquito Control District Waiver Request**
- X. Public Comment\*
- XI. 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 concerning 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.

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**Page 1 of 1**

# **SOUTH WALTON FIRE DISTRICT BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS**

## **Meeting Minutes – May 12, 2025**

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

**Commissioners Present:** David Bailey, Brian Christenson, Brian Farmer, Charlotte Flynt, Mark Foley, Maurice Gilbert, Mike Stange

**Commissioners Absent:** None

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

Chairman Gilbert requested a moment of silence in honor of Jack Abbit, former Fire Commissioner.

**Public Comment:** None

Commissioner Gilbert announced that a quorum was present.

Commissioner Gilbert announced a change in the agenda order to discuss the 2023-2024 audit report. Joel Bradley with Warren Averett presented the Board of Fire Commissioners with a copy of the 2023-2024 Audit Report. Mr. Bradley stated that the District is in sound fiscal condition.

Chairman Gilbert read a proclamation into the record whereas the South Walton Fire District Board of Fire Commissioners declared the week of May 18 – 24, 2025, Emergency Medical Services Week in South Walton in recognition of the value and accomplishments of emergency medical services providers.

Chairman Gilbert read a proclamation into the record whereas the South Walton Fire District Board of Fire Commissioners declared the week of May 19 - 26, 2025, Beach Safety Week in South Walton.

On a motion duly made by Commissioner Bailey and seconded by Commissioner Flynt, the Board unanimously approved the minutes of April 14, 2025, Board of Fire Commissioners' regular meeting.

**Secretary/Treasurer's Report:** Commissioner Bailey read the March 2025 cash report into the record.

**Attorney's Report:** Attorney Youell reported no change in the Trademark status nor the Notice of Title Defect for SWFD's Geronimo Street property since the Fire Board's April meeting.

On a motion duly made by Commissioner Bailey and seconded by Commissioner Flynt, the Board unanimously approved Attorney Youell's April 2025 billing statement.

### **Fire Chief's Report:**

In Fire Chief Crawford's absence, the Fire Chief's report was presented by Assistant Chief LaTour.

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

In April, the new Engine 6 was placed into service which dramatically improves response capacity along the eastern side of the Fire District. Engine 6 brings three-four additional firefighters to the scene from Inlet Beach.

The Junior Lifeguard Program swim tests are scheduled at 9am on May 10, 11, and 17, 2025, at Ed Walline Beach Access. After passing a swim test, Junior Lifeguard participants will qualify for one of two sessions to be held June 10-26, 2025, and July 8-24, 2025.

Approximately 120 members of the public attended one of the Short-Term Rental Inspection Public Forums conducted April 28, 2025, through May 2, 2025. The forums were designed to inform the public of the fire code requirements to pass a short-term rental inspection.

In April, SWFD conducted Lieutenant promotional testing. Six candidates participated and all had passing scores which placed them on the promotional eligibility list. In preparation for anticipated vacancies as a result of upcoming retirements, SWFD plans to conduct a Battalion Chief assessment center in July 2025.

Chief Crawford and Assistant Chief LaTour met with St. Joe to finalize the access and utility easement for fire station #6. Staff is working with FP&L to obtain a similar access and utility easement across the high-tension powerline parcel as the St. Joe easement will align and traverse this location. Once confirmed by FP&L, staff should be able to obtain title commitment and schedule a closing shortly thereafter.

Phase II of the Miramar Beach Station #5 construction project continues to progress. The construction of the engine bays, front and rear driveways, bunker gear storage area, and mezzanine are all well underway and on track for a completion date of August 15, 2025. Feedback from the fire crews occupying the completed portion of the fire station living quarters has been incredibly positive overall.

Chief Crawford and Fire Marshal Sanchez attended a Walton County Board of County Commissioners (BCC) meeting this past month to ask for the BCC's support for a memorial to be erected at Pilcher Park honoring the fallen members of the Airheart 1 crew. The BCC affirmed their support and indicated they are willing to help financially with up to \$8,000. Chief Crawford and Fire Marshal Sanchez are working with county staff on final design and cost estimates.

SWFD's Fire Station Alerting platform went live in April. This was an FY24 project that required integration into the new Motorola CAD system. The new station alerting technology now provides for "Alexa style" initial dispatching of information and escalating station tones that are specific to a firefighter's bunkroom based on their riding assignment for the day alerting only those which are assigned to the specific call. This provides for better rest for crews which should result in reduced injuries and improved working conditions for our first responders.

This past month, staff completed a new board member orientation with Fire Commissioner Brian Farmer.

On May 2, 2025, Firefighter Anthony Malko was recognized as the Firefighter of the Quarter. In the words of his peers, Malko can consistently be found making improvements, as well as investing in the firefighters who work alongside him. Malko is

described as a mentor who is passionate about the fire service. A few contributions include his work on our EMS Committee and Technical Rescue Team. Malko's knowledge, research, and drive to push our agency forward have resulted in clear advancements in both our training and equipment.

SWFD's Training Division hosted Chief Jason Hoevelmann where he presented "Command Considerations and Garden Apartment Fires" which is the same course he presented at FDIC 2025. This is incredible training for our team.

Staff have begun developing the FY26 budget. While early in the process, Staff is keeping a close watch on the fiscal impacts of state legislation and/or the state budget impacts on local property tax revenues.

On May 19 – 22, 2025, Assistant Chief LaTour will attend the Station Design Conference in Glendale AZ. The annual conference includes sessions covering design trends, best practices, and lessons learned in fire station design and construction.

Lieutenant Eric Lang will retire on May 27, 2025, and will be SWFD's first retiree with a total of thirty years served with SWFD. His retirement celebration will be held on June 5, 2025 at 3pm. Firefighter Coy Surprise will retire on May 31, 2025, after serving twenty-one years with SWFD. His retirement celebration will be held on June 12, 2025, at 3pm.

Assistant Chief LaTour reminded the Fire Board that their FORM-1 Financial Reporting must be completed through the Florida Commission on Ethics web-portal no later than July 1, 2025.

SWFD's Administrative Offices will be closed Monday, May 26, 2025, in observation of Memorial Day.

Committee Reports: None

Unfinished/Old Business: None

New Business: Fire Marshal Sanchez presented a Board Action whereas Staff requested approval for the Fire Chief to proceed with the purchase of a granite monument to be erected at Pilcher Park in honor of the flight crew of AirHeart-1. The total cost of the monument shall not exceed \$10,000.

On a motion duly made by Commissioner Christenson and seconded by Commissioner Bailey, the Board unanimously approved Fire Chief Crawford to proceed with the design and purchase of the monument.

Darrin Dunwald with South Walton Mosquito Control District requested a \$270 review fee waiver.

On a motion duly made by Commissioner Bailey and seconded by Commissioner Christenson, the Board approved the review fee waiver.

Public Comment: Members of the public were invited to comment. There was no public comment.

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