



# Pinellas Suncoast Fire & Rescue

304 FIRST STREET  
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FIRE CHIEF  
SALVATORE A. D'ANGELO III

## MINUTES FEBRUARY 16, 2016 WORKSHOP AND REGULAR MEETING

Held at the Indian Shores Municipal Center  
19305 Gulf Blvd., Indian Shores, FL 33785

**WORKSHOP MEETING CALLED TO ORDER AT 7:00 p.m.**

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**ROLL CALL:** Commissioners answering roll call were Chair Joe Bruni, Vice Chair Laura Martin, Secretary/Treasurer David Gardella, Commissioner Larry Schear, and Lou Snelling. A quorum was present with Chair Joe Bruni presiding. Attorney Jeff Albinson, Fire Chief Sal D'Angelo, and Finance Director David Martin were also present.

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**ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS:** None.

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### **DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

- 1. 16-03 Non-Ad Valorem Assessment Rates Fixed for 2016** **Board**  
**(Resolution 2016-01) First Reading**

**Discussion:** The resolution sets the non-ad valorem fire fee rate for the year as required by the Charter of the District. The resolution was read in full and is entitled as follows:

**A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE PINELLAS SUNCOAST FIRE & RESCUE DISTRICT PROVIDING FOR THE FIXING OF THE RATE OF NON-AD VALOREM ASSESSMENTS IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE CHARTER OF THE DISTRICT; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.**

- 2. 16-04 Ballot Question - November 2016 Election** **Fire Chief / Beth Rawlins**

**Discussion:** Chief D'Angelo stated that Beth Rawlins will read and discuss the proposed ballot question for the November 2016 referendum.

Beth Rawlins introduced herself and distributed copies of the ballot language. It read, "The Pinellas Suncoast Fire District is currently vested with the authority to levy an ad valorem tax up to 3 mills, subject to voter approval. Should the voters limit that authority to no more than 2 mills, with the amount set in an open budgeting process, with the understanding that the District intends to levy only 1/2 mill for necessary operating expenses in the upcoming fiscal year?" Beth stated that the ballot language meets the maximum word count of 75 and meets all legal requirements. She said, in her opinion, it gives the voter a thorough understanding of what they are authorizing. She stated that the lawyers have reviewed and approved this language. Chief D'Angelo clarified that, even though this has been approved through legal, the question brought forward is still able to be challenged.

The Chief stated that he has given the proposed millage rate a lot of thought; specifically,  $\frac{1}{4}$  mill compared to  $\frac{1}{2}$  mill, but he feels that  $\frac{1}{2}$  mill is what is needed to move forward with the purchase of the aerial apparatus, the property for Station 26, and to hire new personnel, and he asked for the support of the Board to move forward with this.

Commissioner Schear asked if there was a way to indicate what effect this amount will have on individual property owners, should they ask. Chief D'Angelo stated that this has already been completed by GSG; any millage amount can be entered, and it also has the ability to include the non-ad valorem assessment amount for each property.

Secretary/Treasurer Gardella stated that he is not sure that the verbiage "Should the voters..." is clear that we are giving the voters the cap of 2 mills. Beth Rawlins said that they are required to ask a question that can be answered in "yes or no" fashion. She continued that they are in a unique legal situation in that this is not a District Charter change; the voters are being asked to put their "stamp of approval" on what is constitutional authority offered to the District by the legislature at the time they passed the District's incorporating documents. She clarified that the authority comes from the legislature, but still ultimately from voter approval. She stated that she believes, when read in conjunction with the first sentence, that it will be clear to the voter.

Commissioner Schear asked why the cap is being limited to 2 mills. Beth stated that the financial analysis demonstrated that  $\frac{1}{2}$  mill is what is necessary for the foreseeable future. This is why they chose not to go with  $\frac{1}{4}$  mill, knowing there is an immediate need for  $\frac{1}{2}$  mill, so the voters know exactly what they are authorizing. There is also a value to the voter in taking the authority from 3 mills to 2 mills. Chief D'Angelo stated that the District has brought GSG on to assist the Finance Director with the non-ad valorem rates. In keeping the non-ad valorem structure the way it is, he stated that he is confident that 2 mills is appropriate for the District for the foreseeable future.

Attorney Jeff Albinson stated that the District's name, per Charter, is Pinellas Suncoast Fire & Rescue District; not Pinellas Suncoast Fire District. Chief D'Angelo agreed and said that it would be changed.

Attorney Jeff Albinson asked why it doesn't say "currently vested by Charter, with the authority to levy an ad valorem tax." Beth Rawlins said that it is not a Charter change, and, according to Lewis, Longman, and Walker, the District's authority is not vested by the Charter, but instead by the legislature via special act. Discussion ensued.

Moving forward, Beth Rawlins stated that, once the language has been determined, it will be formally adopted, and then sent to the Supervisor of Elections for inclusion on the ballot. Chief D'Angelo asked when the Board of Fire Commissioners is required to vote on the language. Beth stated that the Supervisor of Elections would prefer it be done as soon as possible. She added that there will need to be two formal meetings in order to adopt it, as well as time to commute to the Supervisor's office. Chief D'Angelo stated that it would be advisable that the language be discussed again at the March meeting, and then voted on in April. Beth said that both the ballot language and a 10 word ballot title will need to be included in the resolution.

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There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned by the Chairman at 7:24 p.m.

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**REGULAR MEETING CALLED TO ORDER AT 7:24 p.m.**

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**ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO AGENDA:** None.

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**MONTHLY BUSINESS:**

1. Approval of Minutes: • January 19, 2016, Workshop and Regular Meetings

*Discussion:* None.

**A motion to approve the minutes of the January 19, 2016, Workshop and Regular Meetings.**

**MOTION: COMMISSIONER MARTIN      SECOND: COMMISSIONER GARDELLA**  
**All in favor, motion passed unanimously.**

2. Treasurer's Report: January, 2016

*Discussion:* Secretary/Treasurer Gardella stated that the District's investments are doing fine. He explained that there were some changes on CDs that are held by the District, one of which was rolled over and Finance Director David Martin was able to secure a rate of return that was nearly double what the previous return was for that CD. The Unassigned Fund Balance is at 20.4 percent of total operating expenditures. The proposed budget deficit was originally \$390,600, but is now projected to be just over \$209,000, due to healthcare cost decreases and other cost management programs that are being adhered to.

**A motion to approve the January, 2016, Treasurer's Report.**

**MOTION: COMMISSIONER SCHEAR      SECOND: COMMISSIONER MARTIN**  
**All in favor, motion passed unanimously.**

3. Correspondence: There was no correspondence.

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**REMARKS FROM THE AUDIENCE (Non-Agenda Items):** None.

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**REPORTS:**

1. **COMMISSION:** Commissioner Schear stated that he and Chief D'Angelo traveled to Tallahassee to speak with representatives and senators from the State in reference to matters that affect the fire department. He said that he felt it was a very successful meeting. Chief D'Angelo added that he sent a link to all of the commissioners for the Florida Association of Special Districts (FASD) website. He continued that, while they were in Tallahassee, Commissioner Schear had inquired about the Certified District Officer (CDO) program. On the website, under "Professional Development," there are courses available for elected officials of the State of Florida who are associated with special districts. He recommended that everyone take some time to look at it.



**2. ATTORNEY:** None.

**3. CHIEF'S REPORT:** In reference to the Holiday Inn, Chief D'Angelo stated that he and Secretary/Treasurer Gardella attended the mediation conference with Decade Properties. There have been no agreements reached as of yet. Kevin Hennessy and the attorney for Decade Properties will be in contact to attempt to reach a settlement. Secretary/Treasurer Gardella stated that the issue is still ongoing and discussions are confidential, but they are working toward an understanding and will keep the Board informed as information is available.

Chief D'Angelo addressed an e-mail that the Board members were sent on February 11, 2016, from Will Newton, President of Local 4966, requesting a formal investigation into a report of Firefighter/Paramedic Ryan Olding making threatening phone calls while on duty to bargaining unit members, encouraging them to submit letters about Michael and Matthew Carpenter to the Fire Chief. He read the e-mail aloud. The Chief stated that he replied to that e-mail on February 13, 2016, and he gave an update on the investigation and listed actions that have been taken in reference to investigation, which is currently still ongoing. He asked the Board members to ensure that they read another e-mail from Will Newton from February 12, 2016, which included three public records requests. The requests are being worked on currently. He read additional related e-mail correspondence and discussed.

Chief D'Angelo stated that there will be an Officers' Meeting on February 23, 2016, and he will be presenting a new vision and strategy for the District with regard to the organizational structure of the fire department.

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**ACTION ITEMS**

**1. 16-03 Non-Ad Valorem Assessment Rates Fixed for 2016  
(Resolution 2016-01) Second Reading Board**

**Discussion:** Attorney Jeff Albinson read the resolution by title only:

**A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE PINELLAS SUNCOAST FIRE & RESCUE DISTRICT PROVIDING FOR THE FIXING OF THE RATE OF NON-AD VALOREM ASSESSMENTS IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE CHARTER OF THE DISTRICT; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.**

**A motion to accept Resolution 2016-01  
MOTION: COMMISSIONER SCHEAR SECOND: COMMISSIONER GARDELLA  
All in favor, motion passed unanimously.**

**A motion to adjourn.  
MOTION: COMMISSIONER MARTIN SECOND: COMMISSIONER GARDELLA  
All in favor, motion passed unanimously.**

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There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned in due form at 7:40 p.m.

**APPROVED:**

**ATTEST:**

  
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Joseph V. Bruni, Chair Date Approved

  
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Kimberly G. Fugate, Executive Assistant