



Pinellas Suncoast Fire & Rescue

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FIRE CHIEF
SALVATORE A. D'ANGELO III

**MINUTES
FEBRUARY 21, 2017
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 Lou Snelling, Secretary/Treasurer Larry Shear, Commissioner Laura Martin, and Commissioner Gardella. 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.

ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS: None.

DISCUSSION ITEMS: None.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:01 p.m.

REGULAR MEETING CALLED TO ORDER AT 7:01 p.m.

ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO AGENDA:

OATH OF OFFICE -

Oaths of Office were administered by Fire Chief Sal D'Angelo for Firefighter/Paramedics Matthew Zeiner, Matthew Tomilonus, Christopher Wilfong, and newly promoted District Chief Jeremy Sidlauskas. Chief D'Angelo also presented District Chief Sidlauskas with a plaque to congratulate him on earning his Master's Degree.

MONTHLY BUSINESS:

1. Approval of Minutes: January 17, 2017 Workshop and Regular Meetings

Discussion: None.

A motion to approve the minutes of the January 17, 2017 Workshop and Regular Meetings.

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

2. Treasurer's Report: January, 2017

Discussion: Secretary/Treasurer Schear stated that all balance sheet accounts have been reconciled as of January 31, 2017. Current total assets are about \$4.8 million. Current liabilities are \$94,700. Fund balances are in line with the normal inflow of non-ad valorem assessments at this time of the year. Revenues for next year are projected to be 4.5% less than last year, due mainly to fewer impact fees generated through new building construction. This trend is expected to continue as the available land for building is used, but the funding will be replaced with the newly implemented ad valorem tax, commencing in FY2017/2018. The combination of the referendum and a favorable conclusion of the EMS legacy dispute would strengthen the District's financial capabilities to enable it to provide adequate capital requirements to fulfill its service obligations. The program for a capital expenditure program is in process and the outcome will provide a path to establish a permanent facility for Station 26 and an avenue for the replacement of specific aging apparatus. The Unassigned Fund Balance increased to 25.4% of total operating expenditures.

A motion to approve the January, 2017 Treasurer's Report.

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

3. Correspondence:

Secretary/Treasurer Larry Schear read a thank you card to Marshall Eiss for conducting a fire safety presentation at Starlite.

Secretary/Treasurer Schear next read a card from Alice Lawrence to Chief D'Angelo and personnel for attending Mayor Lawrence's memorial service.

Secretary/Treasurer Schear read a letter to Marshall Eiss from St. Jerome's Catholic Church thanking him for the donation to the Lifeline Ministry.

REMARKS FROM THE AUDIENCE:

[Public comments are in a clean transcript format. Comments have been edited for clarity.]

Ed Hoofnagle – [Did not state address] – “Before you start the timer, I just wanted to congratulate and thank the guys who did their new oaths, and also congratulations to the person who got the Master's Degree. Any comments that I make before that are not directed towards the men and women of the fire department who do an outstanding job. I'm here, as a commissioner of Indian Rocks Beach. It's nice to see you all. I'm trying to make a comment without singling out a specific commissioner, so please bear with me, even if I go over time a bit. Many of our commission meetings are having certain topics come up which have to do with the tax imposed by the District on the citizens of our city. Several times, our commission meetings may have 10 or 20 minutes' worth of public comment of citizens expressing frustration with respect to the double tax which will be levied, assuming that the lawsuit does prevail in our favor. So, I would like to, on behalf of many of the citizens, I would like to invite commissioners to have listening sessions with your constituents in a forum which would be professional and open, because many of them have asked me to come and ask you to have a listening session of some sort where they could express their opinions and frustrations about the financial impact of the double taxation. Thank you for your time and thank you for listening to me.”

John Pfansteil – [Did not state address] – “Good evening. On February 10th, I attended, at the meeting in Redington Shores, along with Chief D'Angelo and several of the commissioners here. At that meeting, you had confirmation from the Assistant County Administrator and the Redington mayors that they are moving ahead with a new North Redington Emergency Operations Center at 173rd Avenue. I strongly advise that you abandon your plans to place a PSFRD fire station on a site that is only one-tenth of a mile from the District's southern border at the Redington Shores town line. The Commission and the Chief have repeatedly expressed their concerns about subsidizing service in the Redingtons under Pinellas County's mutual aid agreement, so it makes absolutely no sense to move our station down to our neighboring district's border, because then you'll be guaranteeing to provide services on a frequent basis.

Plus, two of these new stations would only be one and a third miles apart. The District's taxpayers already lost our EMS funding at PSFRD Station 28 in Oakhurst because it was too close to Seminole's Station 31 which has much lower per-seat cost. It's fiscally irresponsible to repeat that mistake by building a new PSFRD station too close to a station we now know that Redington Beach and Pinellas County are building. Therefore, I ask one of you to make a motion tonight to cancel plans to purchase any lots south of Park Boulevard. Thank you."

Kelly Cisarik - [Did not state address] - "Yes, good evening. My name is Kelly Cisarik. I made a public records request on February the 13th for your updated Public Facilities Reports, because your most recent report from last month is supposed to contain an explanation of, and I'm quoting from the Handbook for Special Districts, 'How the special district proposes to finance each public facility,' and, this becomes very important, since purchasing land for an Indian Shores fire station was approved at the same meeting last month. I think you need to amend that Public Facilities Report again with the updated information since you still plan to purchase land in Indian Shores this year. Now, also, I want to follow up on something I talked about last month. I want to talk about an improvement that I've seen in the District. I wanted to thank Ms. Fugate for including the impact fee information and the by-laws as supplemental information with this month's agenda packet. That's exactly how a professional agenda packet looks, and I certainly appreciate having online access to that information before tonight's meeting. At the last meeting, I asked Chair Bruni to call for public comment after each agenda item. I would like to add that after the commissioners have had their discussion and before they vote is the proper time to allow the public to speak on agenda items. Attendees often don't know what they want to comment on until after hearing the commissioners' discussion. This is not a privilege I was trying to obtain for myself at the last meeting; rather, it's how public meetings are normally conducted in Florida, so that the public has a meaningful way to add to public discourse. The first meeting I attended here at PSFRD was last May when I came for a second reading of the ad valorem referendum. I read about it in a newspaper article. Unfortunately, I had to comment at the beginning of that meeting under public comments. Those of us that attended that meeting never had a chance to hear the referendum language read and it wasn't available in the agenda packet. I'm providing this example to demonstrate how important it is that this policy on public comment is corrected. Chair Bruni, will you allow for individuals to comment on each agenda item and provide their comment cards afterwards if they haven't already provided one?"

Chair Bruni: "No, ma'am. That's not how it is written for us to do it. Your agenda item will be submitted to me on the card, and then I will call you to the microphone after our discussion, as a Commission, and before we vote. On your card you have 'maybe' under agenda item; there is no 'maybe' on the agenda. So, do you have an agenda item in conjunction with what you're speaking about now?"

Kelly Cisarik: "I may. It would depend on what your discussion is."

Chair Bruni: "Do you have a copy of the agenda?"

Kelly Cisarik: "Yes, I do."

Chair Bruni: "Then you see what our discussions are going to be."

Kelly Cisarik: "That's true, but I don't know what your comments are among the commission. I'd like to afford the audience the opportunity to hear commissioners' discussions, educate themselves, and then, if they feel it's appropriate to comment, have an opportunity to comment."

Chair Bruni: "You're more than welcome to fill out a card after our discussion and put on there which agenda item you want to speak about before we vote."

Kelly Cisarik: "And, how would someone know what they want to speak about?"

Chair Bruni: "You're going to listen to us discuss. After we have our discussion, if you have something to say on the agenda item, fill out a card and place it on the agenda item."

Kelly Cisarik: "Okay, so you will accept additions?"

Chair Bruni: "Yes, ma'am."

Kelly Cisarik: "Thank you."

Chair Bruni: "I'm just trying to follow our protocol. Thank you."

Nancy Obarski – 708 Beach Trail, Indian Rocks Beach – "First, kudos to the Chief and to Commissioner Bruni for not losing your cool during the meeting with the Redington mayors and the fire chiefs. I'm not sure that I could have done as well. I learned a lot after the meeting. I was surprised to hear that the Seminole Fire Chief actually said that they come into our District more than we go into theirs. And, if that really is true -- she did not have the facts and figures -- but, if that's true, that whole Redington subsidy argument just went out with the bathwater, and I understand why they turned your request down for reimbursement. Another piece of information that I could have done without ever knowing is that the PSFRD has been known to hang out in the Redingtons, which is why you end up to be the closest responder in a lot of cases. I just can't figure out why in the wide wide world of sports that would be the case, especially when all the residents are sitting here paying four to six times what the Redingtons are. You're hanging out down there. And, if it's being done to strengthen your argument to have that station in the south end of the County, or, the south end of our District, I think it's way too close for comfort to the other station. You may want to re-think that. If you're truly interested in saving money, I would get as far away from the Redingtons as possible, unless I was called to assist. Aid is one thing, but 'freelancing,' as Chief Burford referred to it, is another. Each segment of the Fire District has a representative on the commission, and I would say in the case of Oakhurst, they're being pretty well-represented by the members of the panel that are assigned to those districts. The referendum was a virtual tie in Indian Shores, so I would say that it gives the Indian Shores representative a little bit of latitude to go either way. That's not true for Indian Rocks Beach. Our community defeated the fire tax, but you'd never know it based on the votes of our representative. Belleair Shore and Belleair Beach defeated it, too, but their representative has conducted himself in keeping with the wishes of the community and his constituents. Public officials actually have an obligation to put the public's interest above their own and when duties to family and friends conflict, the public duty must prevail. Because, let's face it, without the public trust, government doesn't work. It just simply doesn't work. After the passage of the bill in 2014, you're now required to comply with Florida ethics laws. Those are the ones that now include special districts. So, you might want to make sure that your website properly reflects that change. All of us admire the fact that you're up there in thankless positions, but the job is representation defined as acting or speaking on behalf of another, not yourself."

Bill Thomas – 470 20th Avenue, Indian Rocks Beach – "Last meeting, I brought up the issue of this brochure that I felt was misleading, where the front of the brochure stated that the PSFRD was proposing a 2017 half mill ad valorem tax to fund the necessary operating expenses. Made no mention about any other additional tax, other than the half mill for 2017. And, I did read the bottom part where it did state that if the tax was not approved in 2017, then at least one station would be closed, personnel would be cut, equipment would get older, leading to increased maintenance costs and services outages. It didn't say maybe, it said it will. I pulled up the Pinellas Suncoast Fire & Rescue District organization, the commission asked me to check with the District, and the District turned around and referred me to this Standard Operating Procedure on their Code of Ethics, Code 107, for the Pinellas Suncoast Fire & Rescue District, and, I looked through here, and back here, under Paragraph 107.3, Control of Policy, it states that 'Ethic questions relating to the District or official duties should be directed to the Fire Chief.' So, and 'the District may refer any former allegations of violations of the State's Code of Ethics to the State Commission on Ethics.' So, I would like to give this chance for the Fire Chief to respond to this brochure here, and, what was the story behind the brochure, and, why it did not encompass the full information to the voters that they were voting on."

Chair Bruni: "You can answer, Chief."

Chief D'Angelo: "What's your specific question?"

Bill Thomas: "My specific question is here, on the front page, it states that you're proposing a 2017 half mill ad valorem tax to fund necessary operating procedures. Is that a correct statement?"

Chief D'Angelo: "Yes, sir."

Bill Thomas: "Is it a fully correct statement?"

Chief D'Angelo: "Yes, sir."

Bill Thomas: "And, that's all the ad valorem - "

Chief D'Angelo: "You see the three firefighters we just swore in?"

Bill Thomas: "Yes, sir."

Chief D'Angelo: "Okay, if there's no referendum, and it goes away... you see those three firefighters? Their jobs are gone."

Bill Thomas: "Yes, sir."

Chief D'Angelo: "Station 26 is gone. I'll most likely be laying off three more firefighters, for a total of six."

Bill Thomas: "So, the ad valorem was just for a half a mill, for 2017, that is stated in this brochure?"

Chief D'Angelo: "The half mill is for 2017, that's what the voters voted in. The half mill - "

Bill Thomas: "And that was it?"

Chief D'Angelo: "...and it also reduced the cap from three, which is in our current charter, to two."

Bill Thomas: "Where does it say in this brochure about that?"

Chief D'Angelo: "Is the ballot question on the back, sir?"

Bill Thomas: "Oh, read -- yeah, please read the ballot question. I would like to hear that one again."

Chief D'Angelo: "Ad Valorem for Fire District Operating Expenses. Pinellas Suncoast Fire & Rescue District is currently vested with the authority to levy an ad valorem tax of up to three mills, subject to voter approval.' That's a factual statement. 'Shall voters reduce the maximum millage rate to two mills and grant the District authority to levy and collect the reduced ad valorem tax, the final rate to be set in an open budget process, and not to exceed one-half mills in the first fiscal year.' That, too, is a factual statement, in regard to if the referendum prevailed. What does that mean? That means, commencing October 1, 2017, which is fiscal year 2018, the Fire District would implement a half mill."

Bill Thomas: "Correct."

Chief D'Angelo: "Yes, sir. Now, if that does not pass, if it does not prevail, I've already spoke to the firefighters, I think they're still here. I've talked to every one of them - "

Bill Thomas: "Yeah, I've talked to them. They know."

Chief D'Angelo: "They know. I have to be able to balance operational costs, capital expenditures, personnel costs. We cannot to operate the Fire District on the \$260 non-ad valorem fire assessment, which technically is not a tax. The other tax that is instituted in the Fire District, which is also instituted County-wide, is the .9158 millage rate, which is an EMS, County-wide millage rate. That is a tax, sir. That is the same thing as the half mill, which is a tax based on property valuations. So, everything in there -- and, I'll answer any more questions you have -- everything in there, sir -- and there were multiple, because I believe you were the one asking the questions last month -- there were multiple pieces of educational literature that were mailed out to the residents of the Fire District."

Bill Thomas: "So - so, the real thing was on the back that stated about the reduction from the three mills to the two mills?"

Chief D'Angelo: "Yes, sir. That was the actual question that the residents voted on in the Fire District."

Bill Thomas: "Okay."

Chief D'Angelo: "Okay."

Bill Thomas: "And - that's all I have. Thank you very much."

Chief D'Angelo: "Thank you for your question."

[End of clean transcript.]

REPORTS:

1. COMMISSION: Secretary/Treasurer Larry Schear stated that he has been pursuing the Certified District Official (CDO) training through FASD, per commission approval. He stated that he has been to three sessions so far, and there are two more in March and June. He asked permission to attend one of those two classes. He stated that the first is \$75 and the second is \$100. Secretary/Treasurer Schear stated that he will use a PSFRD vehicle and there are no additional expenses. He added that there are reduced rates for multiple attendees if other commissioners would like to attend. Chief D'Angelo thanked Secretary/Treasurer Schear for attending the CDO courses, and he thanked Commissioner Gardella for attending the FASD meeting in Tallahassee last year. He stated that he feels attendance of these classes and conferences is very beneficial for the commissioners.

A motion to allow Commissioner Schear to attend the upcoming FASD conference and continue the CDO courses.

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

Secretary/Treasurer Schear stated that he would like to ask the Board for permission to purchase a shirt, at his own expense, with PSFRD's logo to wear to the conferences. Chief D'Angelo stated that he has no problem with this, but does not necessarily feel that the commissioners should pay for shirts at their own expense. He said that he feels it should be part of the annual budgeting process, as it is part of the District's business. Chair Joe Bruni instructed Chief D'Angelo to decide how to handle it.

Commissioner Gardella gave an update on the potential property for Station 26. He stated that he and Chief D'Angelo have had discussions with the realtor regarding the price of the property, and it appears that the owners are set on their asking price. He stated that the District is not going to submit an offer at this time. Commissioner Gardella said they have continued to look at other options, but nothing has materialized.

Chair Joe Bruni stated that he and Chief D'Angelo attended a meeting with the three mayors of the Redington communities on February 10, 2017. He explained that Chief D'Angelo asked the mayors to be open to the idea of conducting business a different way, as the Redingtons contract their fire protection with the City of Seminole and the City of Madeira Beach; however, under the automatic aid agreement, which is an agreement only between the fire chiefs in Pinellas County, they were not very receptive to the idea of discussing the amount of money that they spend on those two departments, even though PSFRD is the third department that responds for their fire alarms and structure fire responses. Chair Bruni stated that he explained to the mayors that PSFRD has a responsibility to its taxpayers, and that PSFRD responding under the automatic aid agreement is subsidizing the Redington communities. He stated that discussions did not go any further. He continued that this is when they officially learned from the mayors and the Assistant County Administrator that Pinellas County had entered into discussions with the Redingtons about building a station, which certain PSFRD residents had discussed at prior public meetings.

Chair Bruni stated that the mayors were open to the possibility of having workshop discussions regarding creating a consolidated regional fire department; however, their intent appeared to be to start a new fire district, dissolve PSFRD, and each community would have their own fire station, with each community's mayor in charge of their own station. Chair Bruni stated that Chief D'Angelo attempted to explain that this is not how fire departments operate; there are independent fire districts, dependent fire districts, municipal fire departments, and county fire departments. Chair Bruni said that he welcomes the opportunity for PSFRD to enter into workshop discussions with the other elected officials and fire chiefs regarding how to move forward. Chief D'Angelo wanted to clarify that he was asked at the meeting if he was aware of the "Emergency Operations Center," which was, in fact, the first time that he was hearing it from the officials. He explained that, after the meeting, he did send an email to Mayor Queen and Chief O'Neal, stating that he recalled Chief O'Neal mentioning Rescue 26 at a previous meeting, but that he did not associate that with an EOC, as they are two different things. The Chief also stated that, since then, he has sent another email to Mayor Palladino to discuss the four organizational designs that could be pursued for a consolidated fire department, but he stated that he will table that meeting if they choose to have workshop discussions. Chief D'Angelo thanked Chair Bruni for attending the meeting on behalf of the District. Commissioner Gardella asked Chief D'Angelo if the Redingtons were definitely building a station in the location that was discussed. Chief D'Angelo stated that John Bennett said that Pinellas County had not spent any taxpayer dollars at this time, but a sum of money has been allocated in their Capital Improvement Plan. Chief D'Angelo stated that it was discussed to hold workshop meetings and have a mediator or liaison lead the discussions. The Chief agreed that this is a proper way to move forward.

2. ATTORNEY: Attorney Jeff Albinson stated that there had been a ruling in the case involving Michael Carpenter and it was a split decision. He stated that the arbitrator ruled that Mr. Carpenter should be reinstated with PSFRD, as he concluded that any representation that may have been made to the Chief was likely made through a third party who is no longer employed by the District, and therefore Mr. Carpenter could not be held accountable for that. He continued that the arbitrator declined, however, to allow Mr. Carpenter the promotion that had been earmarked for him. Attorney Albinson said that an agreement has been made between the parties and Mr. Carpenter is back to work.

3. CHIEF'S REPORT: Chief D'Angelo stated that PSFRD's Fire Prevention Bureau has entered into an interlocal agreement with Treasure Island to provide new construction and educational services. Inspector Bob Hill has been working on plans review for PSFRD as well as Treasure Island. He stated that Treasure Island is in the process of hiring a new fire chief, and once that person is on board, PSFRD and Treasure Island will have another meeting to assess the interlocal service agreement to determine if PSFRD will continue providing these services. He stated that the agreement has been working very well and Treasure Island has been very satisfied with how things are progressing.

Chief D'Angelo asked Attorney Jeff Albinson if the District Charter will need to change to reflect the new cap on the millage rate due to the referendum. Attorney Albinson stated that he will need to look into it further, but he does not believe so, as the ability to collect the millage rate is determined by referendum; therefore, the authorization through the referendum would already be limited to two of the available three mills.

The Chief stated that NFPA released its 2015 Fire Service Needs Assessment Report and he feels that it is important for residents to know what is going on in the fire service all over the country. He stated that the report found that, the smaller the communities protected, the greater the need. He read that some of the key findings were: Departments with SCBA over 10 years old have increased. As PSFRD continuously looks for alternate revenue sources, the District was able to ascertain a federal grant to replace its SCBA which were also over 10 years old. Additionally, the number of departments with personal protective equipment (PPE) over 10 years old had increased. Two out of five fire departments reported that their structures were at least 40 years old, and 43% said that they have engines and pumpers over 15 years old. Chief D'Angelo stated that these are things that he tries to educate the public on, as they are issues in our own fire department, as well as issues in fire departments around the United States.

Chief D'Angelo invited the residents who truly wish to do something good for their community and promote a positive mindset in the fire department to join the Community Emergency Response Team. Chief D'Angelo stated that CERT currently has ten active members, four of which are from Indian Rocks Beach. He added that some members do not even live in the District, but they donate their time and efforts to make our community better.

Chief D'Angelo noted that, earlier in the meeting, he heard incorrect numbers regarding the referendum and wanted to ensure that everyone had the correct information. He stated that the District won the referendum by about 4%. He said that the final votes for "yes" were 5,335, and the final votes for "no" were 4,919; a difference of 52.03% to 47.97%.

Chair Joe Bruni echoed Chief D'Angelo's comments and encouraged residents to become members of the CERT team and find out what the organization actually does and to witness firsthand how their fire district actually operates.

Chair Joe Bruni also addressed Mr. Hoofnagle's comments regarding his suggestion of meeting with citizens who have concerns and opinions, and stated that he is more than willing to participate in this with Chief D'Angelo. He stated that, to do this as a commission, the meetings would need to be advertised under the Sunshine Law as a formal meeting; however, as an informal gathering, any citizens who would like to come together to meet at Station 27, or any other location, he stated that he is more than happy to join Chief D'Angelo and the citizens in those discussions. Chief D'Angelo said he fully supports and encourages this.

ACTION ITEMS:

17-03 Commissioner By-laws Revision

Discussion: Attorney Albinson stated that the by-laws are general protocols, written in a manner so that anyone could read them and have a fairly good idea of how the District operates. He added that they should typically be updated on a somewhat regular basis. He asked the Board to look them over between now and a week before the next meeting, and if anyone individually has any questions or input, he will work on a new draft. He added that commissioners should be sure to not talk amongst themselves and should not send him an email that is also sent to other commissioners. He also discussed that public comments need to be conducted in a way that maximizes the value of the citizens' input. He discussed how the miscommunication on the issue of public comments is only because it has not been an issue over the last 20 years. He said that the by-laws state, "Persons wishing to speak will complete a citizen comment request card at the entrance of the meeting room and submit the card to the Secretary to the Board. When recognized by the Chair and called to the podium, speakers will give their name and address for the record. Persons may speak on an agenda item when the Board has finished their discussion on that item and prior to the vote. To speak on a non-agenda item, speakers will be called during the Remarks from the Audience section of the agenda." Attorney Albinson added that there's no clear direction on how any individual body should go about the process of taking citizen comments anywhere in law, and every board approaches it differently. Chief D'Angelo suggested it may be beneficial to have two separate public comment cards for agenda and non-agenda items, which Attorney Albinson agreed with.

**17-04 Impact Fees
(Resolution 2017-02) First Reading**

Discussion: Attorney Jeff Albinson read Resolution 2017-02 in its entirety, to include Schedule A to Resolution 2017-02. Chief D'Angelo stated that these changes could be implemented after the second reading at next month's Board meeting. He added that any projects that had already been permitted prior to that time would have to be assessed at the old rate.

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned in due form at 8:24 p.m.

APPROVED:



Joseph V. Bruni, Chair Date Approved

ATTEST:



Kimberly G. Fugate, Executive Assistant