



Pinellas Suncoast Fire & Rescue

**304 FIRST STREET
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**FIRE CHIEF
T. MICHAEL BURTON**

MINUTES JANUARY 3, 2019 SPECIAL MEETING

**Held at the Indian Rocks Beach City Hall Auditorium
1507 Bay Palm Boulevard, Indian Rocks Beach, FL 33785**

**SPECIAL 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 Schear, and Commissioner Laura Martin. A quorum was present with Chair Joe Bruni presiding. Attorney Jeff Albinson, Fire Chief Mike Burton, and Finance Director David Martin were also present. Commissioner David Gardella was excused.

ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO AGENDA: None.

GENERAL REMARKS FROM THE AUDIENCE:

John Pfanstiehl – [Did not state address] Mr. Pfanstiehl thanked Chief Burton for his level of communication with the residents. Mr. Pfanstiehl stated that the Fire District has not been meeting the minimum response standards on Harbor Drive North and Harbor Drive South in Indian Rocks Beach and asked how the \$100 assessment increase would help the District achieve those minimum standards set by Pinellas County EMS.

Fire Chief Mike Burton stated that he has not looked at the data on those two streets in a few months, but will run the data again and get back in touch. He explained that the last time that data was examined, some of the responses were downgraded and some were dispatched as non-emergency. Chief Burton continued to explain that, in the absence of some relief to the District's financial struggles, there is no way the relocation of any resources will take place with the current funding restrictions. He stated that one does not equal the other, but without it, the District will continue operating in the same manner it is now, at best. Chief Burton stated that the \$100 increase, over the long term, gives the District the ability to have some capital investment infrastructure reserves to consider relocating fire stations to their optimal locations.

Commissioner Schear stated that the City of Belleair Beach offered to give the District a property next to their Town Hall building, which would be an ideal place to put a rescue unit, for instance, if the last

referendum that passed was allowed to proceed. He explained that this proposed increase does not provide the same funding level, so the District will have to consider this in the future, if at all.

ACTION ITEMS:

**19-01 Requesting a Referendum on the March 12, 2019 Ballot
Resolution 2019-01 (First Reading)**

Discussion: Fire Chief Burton stated that he would like to offer some introductory comments, some of which are historical in nature. He explained that the resolution before the Commission is the result of a community-based effort by the Stakeholder Task Force which held 11 public meetings. The Task Force came to an agreement on the language that is being considered presently. He recalled that, regarding revenue, the Task Force examined millage comparisons among the other fire districts, EMS funding and the determinants used, impact fees, breakdowns of various property types, 2020 Penny for Pinellas funding, assessment of commercial properties, hotel and motel assessments, statutory exemptions from property taxes, and the EMS settlement agreement. Chief Burton explained, regarding the District's financial status: FY 15/16, reserves were reduced by \$218,000 to meet operational needs; FY 16/17, reserves were reduced by \$394,000 to meet operational needs; FY 17/18 was an anomaly in that for one year, based on the EMS settlement agreement, reserves increased by \$104,000; FY 18/19, reserves are estimated to be down by \$249,000 to meet operational needs; and, this current year, EMS revenue from Pinellas County was decreased by \$261,000, based on the settlement agreement. Chief Burton explained that it is too early in the budget year to make reliable predictions on actual versus budgeted. This year, the District will see a slight one-time relief from a FEMA reimbursement of \$125,000, which is a reimbursement for funds spent last year. Chief Burton stated that in FY 19/20, it can be expected that those reserves will be decreased by at least \$250,000, without a significant reduction in the level of service or an increase in the source of revenue. Chief Burton stated that, regarding conservative estimates for reserve requirements, \$236,000 is needed annually to properly fund and maintain apparatus with a 10 to 15 year lifespan, and \$225,000 is needed annually over a 30 year timeframe to get facilities up to speed. He stated that current restricted reserves are \$343,000 and unrestricted reserves at \$1.28 million. He added that the more concerning news, barring an increase in revenue or a significant reduction in service levels, the spending down of reserves will place the District in an untenable financial situation no later than 2024.

Attorney Jeff Albnison read Resolution 2019-01 and Schedule A to the resolution in their entirety. He identified one typo in the word "categories" in the bottom of the page that will be corrected before the final reading. He then asked if there were any questions, and mentioned that this resolution was read as a courtesy at the December meeting, and a few very minor changes were made since then, including the word "Title" changed to "Ballot Language" and "Question" changed to "Ballot Summary." He also stated that, in the ballot language itself, the letter "A" was capitalized in the word "annual" so that the fact that it is an increase to the annual rate was easily understood by the voter.

REMARKS FROM THE AUDIENCE:

Kelly Cisarik – 448 Harbor Drive South, Indian Rocks Beach – Ms. Cisarik stated that she has concerns about the ballot language using up all of its words describing the various commercial categories and not giving any sense of urgency, nor the reason the District is seeking a resolution. She stated that she realizes

that this is a problem due to the decision to include commercial categories, and hopes that the urgency can be conveyed to the voters through public outreach.

Tom Rask – [Did not state address; stated that he owns property in District and lives in unincorporated Seminole] – Mr. Rask stated that he had communicated with Attorney Albinson earlier and apologized that he did not notice the disclaimer regarding appeals on the meeting notice. Mr. Rask also mentioned that there were concerns regarding the referendum documents being submitted to the Supervisor of Elections in time and asked if the resolution would have to be adopted at the present meeting. Attorney Albinson stated that it did not, and explained that this is the reason the intent resolution was adopted in December by the Board, as it authorized staff to work with the Supervisor of Elections to move forward with any items required. He added that the resolution itself being adopted afterward is allowable. Mr. Rask also mentioned that he had emailed Chief Burton a while back in regard to a property in Indian Shores which might be a good location for a substation. He stated that, as a citizen, he just asks that the Chief consider the property when planning for the future.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned in due form at 7:23 p.m.

APPROVED:

ATTEST:



Joseph V. Bruni, Chair



Kimberly G. Fugate, Executive Assistant

1/15/19

Date Approved