



# *Pinellas Suncoast Fire & Rescue*

304 FIRST STREET  
INDIAN ROCKS BEACH, FLORIDA 33785-2587

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[www.psfrd.org](http://www.psfrd.org)

FIRE CHIEF  
T. MICHAEL BURTON

## MINUTES AUGUST 17, 2021 WORKSHOP & REGULAR MEETINGS

Indian Shores Municipal Building  
19305 Gulf Blvd., 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Indian Shores, FL 33785

**SPECIAL BUDGET HEARING BEGAN AT 6:01 p.m.**  
**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**ROLL CALL:** Commissioners answering roll call were Vice Chair David Ardman, Commissioner David Gardella, and Commissioner Louis Snelling. A quorum was present with Vice Chair David Ardman presiding. Attorney Jeff Albinson, Chief Mike Burton, and Finance Director David Martin were also present. Chair Joseph Bruni and Secretary/Treasurer Lawrence Schear were excused.

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**ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS:** None.

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**GENERAL REMARKS FROM THE AUDIENCE:** None.

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**DISCUSSION ITEMS:** None.

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**ADJOURNMENT** – The Workshop was adjourned at 6:04 p.m.

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### **REGULAR MEETING CALLED TO ORDER**

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

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### **MONTHLY BUSINESS:**

1. Approval of Minutes: July 20, 2021 Workshop and Regular Meetings

**Discussion:** None.

**A motion to approve the minutes of the July 20, 2021 Workshop and Regular Meetings.**

**MOTION: COMMISSIONER SNELLING SECOND: COMMISSIONER ARDMAN**

**All in favor, motion passed unanimously.**

**2. Treasurer's Report: July, 2021**

**Discussion:** Finance Director David Martin stated balance sheet accounts have been reconciled as of July 31, 2021. Consolidated government funds, assets, and liabilities are \$3.6 million; the investment program in accordance with District policy is \$3.5 million; current liabilities are within normal end-of-month limits, at \$136,800; the capital projects fund revenues total \$95,700; the new E-26 is still scheduled for a December delivery. The remaining capital purchase plan for the fiscal year includes an air compressor for Station 27, one utility vehicle (PS-900), and two apparatus support vehicles (DC-27 & PS-600). General fund cost recoveries include \$28,900 for Hurricane Michael and \$338,400 for COVID-19. Total operating costs are projected to be \$11,500 (0.2%) over the amended budget due to excessive overtime costs. Projected ending ratio remains slightly ahead of GASB recommendations at 19.8%. The projection does not include FEMA cost recoveries for Hurricane Sally or Tropical Storm Elsa. Regarding the Tropical Storm Elsa claim, FEMA is not offering a traditional cost recovery system and covers no salaries other than from an EOC. Regarding the general fund, there are still significant contingencies included due to the unpredictability of overtime.

**A motion to approve the July, 2021 Treasurer's Report.**

**MOTION: COMMISSIONER SNELLING SECOND: COMMISSIONER GARDELLA**

**All in favor, motion passed unanimously.**

**3. Correspondence: None.**

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**GENERAL REMARKS FROM THE AUDIENCE: None.**

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**REPORTS:**

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**1. COMMISSION: None.**

**2. ATTORNEY:** Mr. Albinson stated that the previously discussed employment matter remains open and Attorney Berman is still investigation; a report and recommendations are forthcoming.

Mr. Albinson stated that a previous labor grievance brought forward has recently been closed, due to the grievant not filing his formal response in time in accordance with the Collective Bargaining Agreement at Step 3.

**3. CHIEF'S REPORT:** Chief Burton stated that there are challenges currently being faced in the EMS system county-wide due to unprecedented demand levels, and there are often two-hour bed delays at hospitals, so fire units and ambulances are being held up for that amount of time, and

resources are becoming scarce. Chief Burton stated that there is a plan to put 10 additional transport units in service, using personnel on overtime to staff those units during peak hours of 2:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m. He added that he is unsure as to how many paramedics will be willing to take on that workload with the overtime they are already working for the District. He explained that, since PSFRD does not have the ability to transport, a crew would be assigned to the Seminole station to staff a transport unit there. The hope is that the situation will get better in the coming weeks.

Chief Burton stated that the Union believes the solution to the District's current overtime problem is to hire three more firefighters, but there has been no explanation as to how the three positions will help the overtime problem. He added that he will only bring this to the Commission if he determines it to be a fiscally responsible decision. He said that he is looking into the possibility of one floater position.

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**ACTION ITEMS:**

**21-16 Fixing Rates of Non-Ad Valorem Assessments for FY2021/22  
(Resolution 2021-03)**

*Discussion:* Attorney Jeff Albinson read Resolution 2021-03 in its entirety.

**A motion to adopt Resolution 2021-03.**

**MOTION: COMMISSIONER GARDELLA SECOND: COMMISSIONER SNELLING**

**All in favor, motion passed unanimously.**

**21-17 Finance Director Process**

*Discussion:* Chief Burton stated that he and Finance Director David Martin have been working on a replacement plan for Mr. Martin's position. He stated that they believe they have found the right candidate, and will move forward with that process as long as the Commission is fine with this process.

**21-14 Addition of 37<sup>th</sup> Firefighting Position**

*Discussion:* Chief Burton stated that his interest in hiring a firefighter in a "float" position is mainly to offset the unpleasant impacts that working excessive overtime hours has on the workforce. The goal is not to save money, although it likely will. The fully-loaded entry level cost for a Firefighter/Paramedic is \$86,500 annually, or \$34 per hour. After conducting an analysis, the fully loaded cost for an overtime shift is \$55 an hour. Each shift is scheduled 121 days each year, and after Kelly days, sick days, and PTO days, they will work 96 days per year. If the floater can be assigned deliberately to fill long-term vacancies, the break-even point is 64 days. If the position is successful less than two out of three times, the District will break even, and the Chief stated his confidence is high that it will be more successful than that. Additional discussion ensued.

**21-18 COVID-19 Vaccines**

**Discussion:** Chief Burton stated that he shared information on the subject of mandatory vaccinations from Florida Municipal Insurance Trust and legal opinions with Attorney Jeff Albinson. He added that, to his knowledge, no other fire department in Pinellas County has made COVID-19 vaccinations mandatory. The Chief explained that he is an advocate for the vaccine, but not for mandatory vaccines at this time. Mr. Albinson agreed that it is a difficult topic, particularly because the law allows employers to require the vaccination; however, in Florida, it is unlawful to require proof of vaccination. He stated that he feels that mandatory vaccinations would open the District up to litigation that it does not have the resources to take on. Some discussion ensued on allowable incentives to encourage employees to get vaccinated. Mr. Albinson stated that it would be his recommendation to not consider requiring vaccinations of employees at this time and staying informed on other agencies who do pursue enacting this requirement. Some additional discussion ensued. Vice Chair David Ardman shared some information from a memorandum of opinion from the Justice Department in favor of a mandate. Chief Burton confirmed that he will keep track of what is going on in the County on the topic.

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**ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION:**

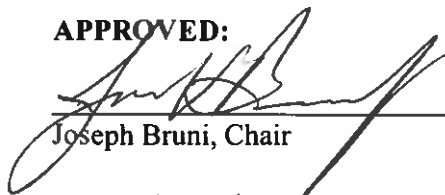
After 46 and a half years in the fire service, Chief Burton announced his plans to retire from the Pinellas Suncoast Fire & Rescue District effective January 14, 2022, with his last working day in early December 2021, using accrued leave through his retirement date. He discussed highlights of his career and stated that he is proud of the work that has been accomplished during his time with PSFRD. He thanked the Commissioners for their confidence in him the last four years. Chief Burton stated that he will begin working with Mr. Martin and Ms. Fugate on the job announcement and process so that there will be time for overlap in November to allow for a seamless transition. The Commission thanked Chief Burton for his service and dedication to the District.

Commissioner Snelling mentioned that the agenda states that the next meeting is September 7, 2021, but he believed the meeting was actually scheduled for September 8<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Martin stated that he will confirm the correct date with Ms. Fugate.

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There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 7:06 p.m.

**APPROVED:**

  
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Joseph Bruni, Chair

9/22/2021  
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Date Approved

**ATTEST:**

  
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Kimberly Fugate, Executive Assistant