



Pinellas Suncoast Fire & Rescue

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FIRE CHIEF
T. MICHAEL BURTON

**MINUTES
JANUARY 21, 2020
WORKSHOP AND REGULAR MEETINGS**

**Held at Bellair Beach City Hall
444 Causeway Boulevard, Belleair Beach, FL 33786**

**WORKSHOP MEETING CALLED TO ORDER AT 6:00 p.m.
PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

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

ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS: None.

EMERGENCY VEHICLE TECHNICIAN OF THE YEAR AWARD – Chief Mike Burton recognized Tom Bruni for being named one of the Emergency Vehicle Technicians of the Year by Firehouse Magazine.

AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION – (This was postponed until the Regular Meeting)

GENERAL REMARKS FROM THE AUDIENCE: None.

DISCUSSION ITEMS: None.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:07 p.m.

REGULAR MEETING CALLED TO ORDER AT 6:07 p.m.

AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION – Ruth Quinlan, former President of the American Legion Auxiliary Unit 138, recognized Assistant Chief John Mortellite for his fundraising help with the Children and Youth fall festival program.

ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO AGENDA:

20-05 Budget Meeting Dates

Discussion: Fire Chief Burton explained that the Executive Assistant Kim Fugate is attempting to schedule dates for the FY2020/2021 budget meetings. Ms. Fugate asked the Board for concurrence on scheduling two special meetings prior to the regularly scheduled Workshop and Regular Meetings on September 15, 2020, one to fix the non-ad valorem rates of assessments for the upcoming year and the other to adopt the Tentative Budget. She requested concurrence also on scheduling an additional meeting, at a location to be determined, to approve the Final Budget, either on September 23rd, 24th, or 28th, depending upon location availability. There was concurrence from the Board members.

MONTHLY BUSINESS:

1. Approval of Minutes: December 17, 2019 Workshop and Regular Meetings

Discussion: No discussion.

A motion to approve the minutes of the December 17, 2019 Workshop and Regular Meetings.

MOTION: COMMISSIONER SCHEAR SECOND: COMMISSIONER ARDMAN

All in favor, motion passed unanimously.

2. Treasurer's Report: December 2019

Discussion: Secretary/Treasurer Schear stated all balance sheet accounts have been reconciled as of December 31, 2019. Consolidated government funds, assets, and liabilities are \$4.8 million; the investment program in accordance with District policy is \$4.6 million; current liabilities are within normal end-of-month limits at \$97,900; the capital projects fund revenues total \$3.4 thousand; general fund revenues are in line with the adopted budget, with the exception of the CME pass-through funding; due to realigning the capital plan for the fiscal year, the reserve ratio remains slightly ahead of GASB recommendations at 22.9%. The reserves depleted during the last ten years remain to be of concern. There are other areas of financial concern, including the deferment of the replacement of Squad 26, half of the communication radios, and two thermal imaging cameras. The funding loss due to the County has caused severe funding challenges, and the District must find other sources of revenue. See detailed Financial Report for further details.

A motion to approve the December, 2019 Treasurer's Report.

MOTION: COMMISSIONER ARDMAN SECOND: COMMISSIONER GARDELLA

All in favor, motion passed unanimously.

3. Correspondence: Secretary/Treasurer Larry Schear read a commendation email for personnel's response to an incident from Ian Man.

GENERAL REMARKS FROM THE AUDIENCE: None.

REPORTS:

1. **COMMISSION:** Secretary/Treasurer Larry Schear stated that he distributed a fire station RFP from Lealman Fire to potentially be used as a template in the future. He also discussed South Pasadena Fire is holding an open house. Commissioner Schear asked the Commission to consider participating in the "Adopt a Road" program, in which those involved "adopt" two miles of roadway maintenance at least once per quarter for two years. There is no charge. There was concurrence among the Board. Chair Bruni asked Commissioner Schear to keep the Commission informed on updates on this project.

Commissioner Ardman discussed that neither the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office nor the City of Indian Rocks Beach had any complains of fireworks being charged on New Years' Eve. Public Services Director Dean Scharman, the Commissioner explained, made him aware of a Pinellas County improvement project that may hinder traffic on Miami Avenue and affect the City boat slips. Commissioner Ardman also thanked Fire Inspector Robert Hill for meeting with him recently to discuss impact fee compliance in Indian Rocks Beach. He added that the Indian Rocks Beach City Commission is very interested about the District's plan to address code issues as they relate to short-term rentals.

2. **ATTORNEY:** Attorney Albinson stated that he and District staff have recently been made aware of a complaint filed against the District with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in regard to questions related to absenteeism. He confirmed there is nothing for the District to do at this time, but if the matter moves forward, he will keep the Board updated. Mr. Albinson briefly explained the process. He also discussed that he has been working with Chief Burton on updating Standard Operating Procedures in an effort to modernize them. Additionally, he stated that the Chief had asked him to review the Hold Harmless Agreement for the Largo Training Grounds and he feels it is fine for the District to enter into. Regarding the proclamation template, Mr. Albinson explained that he took some time at no cost to locate the template for the District to use.

3. **CHIEF'S REPORT:** Chief Burton stated that is working with Fire Prevention and Indian Rocks Beach staff to work on a process for short-term vacation rentals. He explained that Indian Rocks Beach has started a registry process for short-term rental properties. A short-term rental is defined as a single-family home which is rented more than three times per year for less than 30 days. He explained that there are fire code implications and he hopes to meet with Indian Rocks Beach officials soon to discuss non-compliance issues, as the District's authority is limited. Discussion ensued regarding the code requirements.

The Chief stated, from a long-range planning perspective, he has begun working with Pinellas County and Optima to try to determine station locations for the District and a five to ten-year replacement plan. Chief Burton stated that he has a conference call this Thursday with Pinellas County staff and Optima to discuss the preliminary information that has been gathered.

Chief Burton stated that staff will have the fire boat in service soon, and is working on equipment mounting, training, etc. He added that Assistant Chief Mortellite is working on operational procedures. He discussed that the boat lift project is underway and, regarding the discussion on the improvements on Miami Avenue, he stated that he has spoken to the contractor who believes he can work from the water-side of the roadway and not disrupt traffic. Chief Burton stated that the smaller inflatable boat, the marine rescue, is in the final stages before being placed into service as well.

Chief Burton stated that he was not in attendance at the December meeting as he was one of twelve trainers in the United States participating in a Train-the-Trainer course in Kansas City which educates those in leadership positions on social justice issues. The Chief stated that he is looking forward to sharing that training, and that he is sharing it tomorrow with Pinellas County instructors as part of their instructor development program.

Chief Burton stated that staff is working on obtaining a long-deferred inventory and maintenance software. The District is currently utilizing a completely manual, paper-based system for these items.

The Chief stated that the Growth Management Agreement went active on January 15th and is working as it should, which is keeping fire-based EMS services available for the higher acuity calls and the absolute lowest acuity calls handled by Sunstar only.

On New Years' Eve, the Chief, along with Inspector Hill and Engine 27 patrolled the streets of Indian Rocks Beach to assist in the City's no-fireworks approach. The public information campaign seems to have been effective, as nobody was found using fireworks.

Chief Burton stated that at the January Indian Shores Town Council Meeting, he was asked to provide more information on elevator calls during the February meeting to find frequent targets that the District is responding to repeatedly and determine what resources are available to ensure repairs are being made. He added that he will be attending the Belleair Beach meetings quarterly to provide updates as well.

Regarding the replacement of Squad 26, Chief Mortellite is leading a committee on what type of apparatus it might be replaced with. Chief Burton has challenged the group to conduct a needs assessment to determine unmet needs and design the apparatus that best fits those needs.

Chief Burton thanked Kim Fugate for working on the meeting schedule for the September budget meetings this early in the year.

The Chief stated that, to follow up on Commissioner Schear's mention on the Lealman fire station project, he is meeting sometime next week with Chief Graham to discuss the project.

Within the next couple weeks, Chief Burton stated that he will be sending the Commissioners a new policy on accepting gifts, as it applies to all employees, including appointed, so he would like to get feedback from the Commissioners before adoption.

Commissioner Gardella asked if condominiums and apartments are included in the short-term rental project; Chief Burton stated they are already inspected as they are multi-family buildings. Duplexes are also included as a short-term rental. Commissioner Schear stated that he feels the fire code requirements are reasonable; the electric smoke detectors may be the only issues for some. Commissioner Ardman thanked Chief Burton and staff for their work on New Years' Eve in Indian Rocks Beach. Chair Joe Bruni asked how many single-family homes fall into the short-term rental category; Chief Burton stated that he is unable to recall – potentially more than 100 but less than hundreds. He added that it should be a workload that can be maintained without adding staff, but a new fee will need to be added to the existing fee schedule.

ACTION ITEMS:

19-33 Fire Chief Job Description

Discussion: Chief Burton discussed that he has been working on updating all job descriptions up to date, but did not feel it was appropriate for him to approve the Fire Chief description himself. He added that the standards are more rigorous than they have been in the past, but future dates are set in place so that interested personnel will have time to obtain the required training. There was some discussion. Commissioner Ardman stated that on page 2, 4th sentence, the word "personal" is likely meant to be "personnel." The Chief stated that he actually would prefer it just states "assumes command."

A motion to accept the Fire Chief Job Description.

MOTION: COMMISSIONER SNELLING SECOND: COMMISSIONER GARDELLA

All in favor, motion passed unanimously.

20-01 Hold Harmless Agreement – Largo Training Grounds

Discussion: Chief Burton stated that Largo has a fire training facility and pump test site. Due to changes in the City Attorney’s Office, they would now like this document signed annually. Since it requires authorization to sign it, the Chief is asking, as a matter of efficiency moving forward, if the Board would authorize the Fire Chief to sign it for the next three years, providing there are no material changes.

A motion to authorize the Fire Chief to enter into the Hold Harmless Agreement for the Largo Training Grounds for three consecutive years provided there are no material changes.

MOTION: COMMISSIONER GARDELLA SECOND: COMMISSIONER ARDMAN

All in favor, motion passed unanimously.

20-02 Proclamation for PSFRD Supporters

Discussion: Chief Burton stated that Mr. Albinson had mentioned that he provided the attached draft template for the District to use to thank agencies that provide assistance to the District. Commissioner Schear stated that he feels the second paragraph should be spaced differently to ensure clarity. Attorney Albinson mentioned that this motion will be only to approve the template – any use of the proclamation in the future will be approved by the Board.

A motion to accept the Proclamation template as presented.

MOTION: COMMISSIONER GARDELLA SECOND: COMMISSIONER SCHEAR

All in favor, motion passed unanimously.

20-03 Fee Schedules for Inspections and Non-Compliance

Discussion: Chief Burton stated that he is only requesting an expression of consensus on this item. The fee schedule used for inspections, plans reviews, etc. has not been updated since 2012. He has reached out to the Pinellas County Fire Marshal’s Association to obtain a body of data available for what the market is charging throughout the County, then bring the information back to the Board at some point in the future. The other element which causes concern is non-compliance, as the fee schedule provides for a \$25 reinspection fee, then \$50, then \$75, then \$100 seven more times, but then the District has no further recourse and never gains compliance. Finance Director David Martin stated that the only recourse the District has is a lien, which is a very arduous process, and, again, the District still does not gain compliance. All commissioners were in concurrence to allow the Chief to move forward with this process. Chief Burton also stated that the other element to this is to have discussion with the District’s

municipal partners to see if there is an opportunity in their municipal code to handle a code violation on the District's behalf, as that may bring about more change. Commissioner Schear asked if there was a difference between a fee and a fine; Mr. Albinson confirmed there was, and some differences were discussed. He stated that he will work with Chief Burton on this and report back to the Commission.

20-04 Fire Marshal Position

Discussion: Chief Burton stated that the District Charter indicates that a Fire Marshal shall be appointed. He discussed that he is unable to find any record of the Board appointing a Fire Marshal since the position was vacated around 2012. Chief Burton asked the Board to consider naming the Fire Chief the Fire Marshal at this time, until there is a Fire Marshal position available. Attorney Jeff Albinson mentioned that this might need to be added to the Fire Chief job description.

A motion to appoint the Fire Chief as the Fire Marshal until such time as the Board decides otherwise.

MOTION: COMMISSIONER SCHEAR

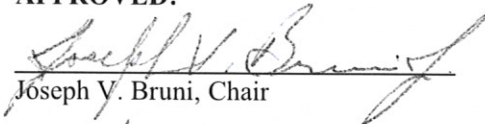
SECOND: COMMISSIONER ARDMAN

All in favor, motion passed unanimously.

REMARKS FROM THE AUDIENCE: None.

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned in due form at 6:59 p.m.

APPROVED:


Joseph V. Bruni, Chair

ATTEST:


Kimberly G. Fugate, Executive Assistant

2/18/20
Date Approved