



Pinellas Suncoast Fire & Rescue

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FIRE CHIEF
T. MICHAEL BURTON

MINUTES OCTOBER 20, 2020 WORKSHOP AND REGULAR MEETINGS

Held Virtually Via Zoom

WORKSHOP MEETING CALLED TO ORDER PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL: Commissioners answering roll call were Chair Joseph Bruni, Vice Chair Lou Snelling, 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. Secretary/Treasurer Lawrence Schear was absent, and Commissioner David Gardella joined later.

ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS: None.

GENERAL REMARKS FROM THE AUDIENCE: None.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

20-22 OPTIMA Resource Modeling Study

Discussion: Chief Burton presented the Pinellas Suncoast Stations Optimization Study (OPTIMA Report) that was completed in a cooperative venture between the District and Pinellas County Fire and EMS Administration. He explained that the intent was to introduce the Optima report to the Commission, but with no planned action at this meeting.

Chief Burton provided an overview of the report and the background it was accomplished. The report compared five models that the District provided in an effort to confirm that the District needs three stations, and where those stations should be placed in the future to make improvements in response times. The study did not attempt to evaluate sites within the various models from a development or construction perspective, but rather addressed response times and emergency call volumes.

Chief Burton asked all Commissioners to review the report in considerable detail before the November meeting and to reach out if questions arose. The Commission will be asked to consider the adoption of the Optima Report at the November meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned.

REGULAR MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO AGENDA: None.

MONTHLY BUSINESS:

1. Approval of Minutes: September 15, 2020 Special Budget, Workshop, and Regular Meetings
September 24, 2020 Special Budget Meeting

Discussion: None.

A motion to approve the minutes of the September 15, 2020 Special Budget, Workshop, and Regular Meetings, and the September 24, 2020 Special Budget Meeting.

MOTION: COMMISSIONER ARDMAN SECOND: COMMISSIONER SNELLING

All in favor, motion passed unanimously.

2. Treasurer's Report: September, 2020

Discussion: David Martin stated balance sheet accounts have been reconciled as of September 30, 2020. Consolidated government funds, assets, and liabilities are \$2.4 million; the investment program in accordance with District policy is \$2.3 million; current liabilities are within normal end-of-month limits, at \$280,000; the capital projects fund revenues total \$11,000; general fund revenues exceeded the adopted budget, due to large tax sale and prior year refunded expenditures from the County; EMS contracted funds are in line with the adopted budget, and unbudgeted CME pass-through funding offsets the related overtime expenditures; due to COVID-19, inspections were on hold, affecting fees and investment interest rates continue to weaken; positive income variances will be eliminated by the COVID-19 expenditures, requiring a budget amendment for the fiscal year. Projected ending ratio remains slightly ahead of GASB recommendations at 23.6%. Mr. Martin explained there is currently a \$138,000 negative budget variance due to COVID-19; however, the claim currently being processed through FEMA exceeds \$275,000. He continued that Chief Burton and Chief Mortellite have done an excellent job of taking care of expenditures, and the year is ending with a surplus; however, half of what is required for reserve assignments.

A motion to approve the September, 2020 Treasurer's Report.

MOTION: COMMISSIONER SNELLING SECOND: COMMISSIONER ARDMAN

**A motion was made and seconded.
All in favor, motion passed unanimously.**

3. Correspondence: None.

GENERAL REMARKS FROM THE AUDIENCE: None.

REPORTS:

1. **COMMISSION:** Commissioner Ardman gave some additional information on the Gulf Blvd. undergrounding project and stated that it is scheduled to be completed by the end of November. He also discussed that the next Indian Rocks Beach City Commission meeting will have discussion regarding on-street parking, as well as other topics. Regarding other construction in the City, La Hacienda Drive is undergoing reconstruction; there will be replacement of the curb drainage system.

2. **ATTORNEY:** Mr. Albinson stated that he has been spending a considerable amount of time with Chief Burton, Chief Mortellite, and Ms. Fugate, addressing a series of public records requests from one firefighter, who was the former president of the union, and a series of public records request from the present president of the union. None of the requests were inappropriate, but some of which were considerably more difficult to respond to. Action Item 20-23 addresses the update of the public records policy to try to avoid future impositions on the time and resources of the District. He stated that he believes all but the most recent requests in the last couple days have been met. Mr. Albinson added that a lot of time has been spent by staff on this, and the lack of clarity in some of the requests had made them difficult to fulfill.

3. **CHIEF'S REPORT:** Chief Burton stated a lot of his discussion will be covered in the action items. Regarding the public records requests, the Chief stated that he has never in his career seen as many requests come in at such a fast pace, and the depth has been extensive and exhaustive and has consumed a very large amount of time to fulfill them all. He added that the unintended consequence of that is that other things fall behind, such as the Indian Rocks Beach parking information he planned on working on for Commissioner Ardman. Public records requests have statutory implications with timelines, and therefore staff has been pulled off of other issues. Chief Burton thanked Mr. Martin and Ms. Fugate for working in a remote environment, and added that Mr. Martin has spent an extensive amount of time on COVID-19 reimbursement.

[Note: Commissioner Gardella joined the meeting at 6:40 p.m.]

ACTION ITEMS:

20-23 Public Records Policy

Discussion: Chief Burton presented a revision to Standard Operating Procedure 114 Public Records Requests (formerly Records Preservation). He stated that it is modeled very similarly to the Governor's Office policy on open government. He added that there still may need to be additional changes, to include charging the actual cost of the lowest person capable of fulfilling the request, which oftentimes he stated is himself. He stated that it is fair to the taxpayers to recover those costs, and often have required the use of not only administrative staff, but also IT and legal

counsel. Chief Burton gave examples of items in the requests and the resources required. Two recent requests included more than 400 pages and the other more than 700 pages, and each page must be reviewed and redacted by Mr. Albinson's office. Mr. Albinson added that requests for audio files are also significant in terms of their digital footprint, and it was decided the best way to respond to those requests was to purchase flash drives and download the material onto them. Commissioner Gardella asked if the subject matter being requested was related to union negotiations. Chief Burton replied that he was not aware of the basis for the requests. Commissioner Gardella stated that he believes the District should be compensated to the full extent the law allows. Mr. Albinson added that this is why the updated policy is required, and it will be posted on the website so that requestors have a better idea of what their obligations are. He added that the District has done their best to respond, but it has cost a lot of money. There was consensus among the Board for the Chief to move forward on implementing the policy.

**20-24 FY2019/2020 Budget Amendment #2
Resolution 2020-05**

Discussion: Mr. Martin discussed that this amendment is a cleanup of last year's budget and to cover the remainder of unbudgeted dollars for the COVID-19 overtime and applicable FICA taxes.

A motion to adopt Resolution 2020-05.

MOTION: COMMISSIONER ARDMAN SECOND: COMMISSIONER GARDELLA

All in favor, motion passed unanimously.

20-25 Increase of Maximum Capitalization Threshold

Discussion: Mr. Martin discussed changes made to DFS Rule 691-73, increasing the threshold for recording property from \$1,000 to \$5,000. He explained that the reason for this is because for costs for items that do not have a very long life expectancy, such as computers, it removes the administrative monitoring of such, and capitalization and depreciation through the audit process. There was consensus among the Board for this policy change to be implemented.

20-26 Fire Chief Employment Agreement – Update

Discussion: Chair Joe Bruni stated that he and Chief Burton sat down to discuss wage and benefits for the new budget year. Due to the District not yet receiving COVID-19 or hurricane reimbursement, the Chief has asked for no wage increase; he is only requesting to increase his annual time off, to be effective July 31st. In response to a question by Commissioner Ardman, Chief Burton confirmed that the maximum payout will remain the same at 480 hours, so there is no hard cost to the District. Mr. Martin explained further that this is a savings to the District compared to a wage increase, as there are no associated increased costs, such as FRS, FICA, and Workers' Compensation.

A motion to amend Chief Burton's employment contract to increase accrued PTO hours from 20 hours per month to 32 hours per month.

MOTION: COMMISSIONER ARDMAN SECOND: COMMISSIONER GARDELLA

All in favor, motion passed unanimously.

20-27 Resumption of Future Meetings and Location Update

Discussion: Chief Burton explained that, per the Governor's Phase 3 changes, October is the last month for which virtual meetings are authorized. The November meeting is scheduled to take place at Belleair Beach City Hall. He suggested reconnecting at that time and start phasing in service awards and other things that may have been missed.

20-28 Shade Session – Collective Bargaining Update

The shade session began at 7:21 p.m. and ended at 7:33 p.m.

At this time, Commissioner Gardella inquired as to the possibility of holding off on the replacement of apparatus currently scheduled. Discussion ensued. Chief Burton asked Commissioner Gardella to schedule a day to meet with him and Mr. Martin to discuss the matter further.

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned in due form at 7:46 p.m.

APPROVED:

ATTEST:



Joseph V. Bruni, Chair



Kimberly G. Fugate, Executive Assistant

11/17/2020
Date Approved