



Pinellas Suncoast Fire & Rescue

**304 FIRST STREET
INDIAN ROCKS BEACH, FLORIDA 33785-2587**

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**FIRE CHIEF
JEFFREY DAVIDSON**

MINUTES FEBRUARY 21, 2023 WORKSHOP AND REGULAR MEETINGS

**Belleair Beach City Hall
444 Causeway Boulevard
Belleair Beach, FL 33786**

WORKSHOP CALLED TO ORDER PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL: Commissioners answering roll call were Chair Louis Snelling, Vice Chair Elizabeth “Betsey” McKenna, Secretary/Treasurer Lawrence Schear, Commissioner David Gardella, and Commissioner Heather Koskinas. A quorum was present with Chair Louis Snelling presiding. Attorney Jeff Albinson, Fire Chief Jeffrey Davidson, Assistant Chief Douglas Higley, and Finance Director Erin Brooks were also present.

ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS: None.

GENERAL REMARKS FROM THE AUDIENCE: None.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

23-03 Public Education Session – February 27, 2023

Discussion: Fire Chief Davidson stated that he is holding a public education session at Belleair Beach City Hall on February 27, 2023 at 6:00pm, followed by a question and answer session. The topic of this session is to address a gap in service that was identified by County over 15 years ago and still exists today. He also discussed that he has submitted the District’s EMS enhancement funding request, to include a rescue unit and two firefighter paramedics to enhance service in that area. Discussion ensued.

23-04 Compliance Engine Software

Discussion: Assistant Chief Higley stated that the software is a web-based service that provides

safety to firefighters, residents, and visitors by collecting, tracking, and categorizing third-party inspections for fire alarm systems, sprinkler systems, extinguishers, etc. He added that NFPA requires that the results of these inspections are sent to the AHJ but is often overlooked. Assistant Chief Higley discussed the software further, as well as some life safety statistics and goals for the District.

ADJOURNMENT

The Workshop was adjourned at 6:19 p.m.

REGULAR MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO AGENDA:

Real estate services first action item

MONTHLY BUSINESS:

1. Approval of Minutes: January 17, 2023 Workshop and Regular Meetings

Discussion:

A motion to approve the minutes of the January 17, 2023 Workshop and Regular Meetings.

MOTION: COMMISSIONER MCKENNA SECOND: COMMISSIONER GARDELLA

All in favor, motion passed unanimously.

2. Treasurer's Report: January, 2023

Discussion: Secretary/Treasurer Schear stated that the investment program is in accordance with policy at \$5.75 million held in interest earnings accounts and \$336k in non-interest bearing checking. Impact fees received during the month total \$10,497. Fiscal year to date impact fee collections total \$57,251. No capital expenditures were made during January. General fund projects are within the adopted budget. The FEMA claim for Hurricane Ian has been approved and is now with the State for their final review. The total expected reimbursement is \$119,370.

A motion to approve the January, 2023 Treasurer's Report.

MOTION: COMMISSIONER MCKENNA SECOND: COMMISSIONER KOSKINAS

All in favor, motion passed unanimously.

3. Correspondence: None.

GENERAL REMARKS FROM THE AUDIENCE: None.

REPORTS:

1. **COMMISSION:** None.

2. **ATTORNEY:** Attorney Jeff Albinson discussed that if members of the Commission attend the public information session, he advised that they should not comment or have discussion as it is not a publicly noticed meeting.

Attorney Albinson stated that he has spent time this last month working on the Collective Bargaining Agreement, having discussions with the Fire Chief related to station movement, and reviewing issues related to funding. He added that he also had the opportunity to introduce Chief Davidson to Chris Latvala, the new County Commissioner.

3. **CHIEF'S REPORT:** Chief Davidson announced that Lieutenant Steve Raisch and Firefighter Paramedic John Webber received the prestigious Life Saving Team Award at the John Morroni dinner last week for the successful outcome of a medical emergency involving an elected official during a public meeting.

The Chief stated that an application has been submitted for the annual Assistance to Firefighters Grant, with the request totaling approximately \$450,000 to include new PPE, a gear extractor and dryer, radios, fitness equipment fire house, and four thermal imaging cameras. He added that award notifications typically start in September. If the District is fortunate enough to be awarded any portion of the request, it is only a 5% funding match.

Chief Davidson said that Assistant Chief Higley has done a great job in fire prevention and the District has seen an increase in the collection of impact fees and inspection fees that had been long overlooked due to policies and procedures that were not in place. He added that impact fees can only be used for capital items, so if the District is not awarded grant funding for bunker gear, the impact fees will pay for those.

On the subject of grants, Chief Davidson stated that the District will also be applying for the FEMA SAFER grant and requesting the additional of three, and possibly up to six, personnel. This will allow Squad 26 to be fully operational as an engine, which requires a minimum of three personnel, which will make a significant difference in fire coverage and keeping firefighters safer. After the SAFER, he added, the Fire Prevention & Safety grant opens, and a request will be made to address improvements in a total community risk reduction program.

Fire Chief Davidson stated that he will be in Tallahassee the week of March 6th attending FASD's Certified District Manager course, which the District was able to have the \$1,250 tuition paid for with a scholarship.

The District would like to begin holding an annual awards ceremony to recognize all employees, but the Chief explained that this has not been planned yet. He added that he does not feel the normal process of doing pinnings at normal Commission meetings does the employee or their families appropriate justice. Chief Davidson stated he will let the Commission know when a date has been set.

Chief Davidson stated that a firefighter paramedic vacancy has existed for some time, and since the referendum and now the new Collective Bargaining Agreement, the District has been able to recruit outstanding individuals. Conditional job offers have been extended to a candidate from Seminole Fire Rescue and Hillsborough County Fire Rescue. The second vacancy was due to Firefighter Logan Emry resigning due to a career opportunity he had with a family business.

ACTION ITEMS:

23-06 Real Estate Services

Discussion: [This item was moved to the beginning of the Regular Meeting.] Chief Davidson said that the District needs to solidify a property in Indian Shores and this has proven difficult without the help of a professional. Chief Davidson introduced Mike Lynch who recently submitted his resume to the District. Mr. Lynch introduced himself and stated that he is a broker who has been housed in Indian Shores for 40 years. He stated that Commissioner Gardella had recommended he speak with Chief Davidson and explained that he is happy to help guide the District in this endeavor. He added that he would only get paid by the seller if it were a listed property, but he is happy to help regardless. Discussion ensued.

A motion to authorize Chief Davidson to work with Mr. Lynch, with Mr. Lynch serving as the District's agent in seeking properties.

MOTION: COMMISSIONER MCKENNA SECOND: COMMISSIONER SCHEAR

All in favor, motion passed unanimously.

23-02 Collective Bargaining Agreement

Discussion: Chief Davidson explained that the current Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) expired September 30, 2022 and was a three-year agreement. Due to the uncertainty of the referendum, the agreement has been extended two times. Negotiations have been taking place in publicly noticed meetings, and most changes to the body of the CBA were just to clean up language. Chief Davidson explained that, for some time, firefighters were not given raises, but were given additional time off instead. He explained those were benefits those personnel earned at that time, and the new CBA has personnel exchange some of that time over the next two years for a substantial wage increase. Chief Davidson stated that holiday time was also negotiated, and it was decided that the person working the holiday will be the person who will get paid. One holiday was also added to observe 9/11. Chief Davidson stated that rolling back the time off will take a long-term debt off the District. The wage increase will be 8% at the time of signing, paid retroactively, minus overtime, to February 5th. At the start of the new fiscal year, there will be an additional 4% wage increase. These increases fall under the current budget and no amendments are needed due to exchanging time off, reducing overtime costs, as well as leaving the facilities maintenance position vacant. He added that the new CBA is also a three-year contract, with a couple reopener items in year three.

Secretary/Treasurer Schear asked if the CBA was already agreed upon by the bargaining unit, to which Chief Davidson stated it has been. Commissioner Gardella asked how the 12% wage increase affect the budget. Finance Director Brooks stated that, from their calculations, it will not affect the budget and can still be made part of the 20-year plan. Chief Davidson added that the District went into the budget \$200,000 in the hole; therefore, the overtime issue had to be fixed. Commissioner Gardella inquired as to what the blank paragraphs and sections meant. Attorney Albinson stated they are intentional for easy editing and numbering in the future. Chair Snelling

stated that he has total confidence in the discussions and negotiations but wishes he had longer to view the entire document.

A motion to approve the Collective Bargaining Agreement as presented.

MOTION: COMMISSIONER SCHEAR SECOND: COMMISSIONER MCKENNA

All in favor, motion passed unanimously.

**23-05 Request for Proposal
Station Design-Build Project**

Discussion: Chief Davidson stated that the District received an unsolicited bid from the company that made a presentation at a recent Commission meeting. He added that he would like to be able to start building as soon as property is acquired. He stated that he would like to complete all legalities of advertising a Request for Proposal for design, engineering, and constructions of all three stations. He added that while no exact locations have been determined, the only items needed are standards and square footage. Chief Davidson said this process will take a few months. Chair Snelling inquired about the property dictating specifications of the stations. Chief Davidson agreed, but in looking at potential properties, he knows what the footprint needs to look like, and the square footage can always be scaled down. The Chief stated that he wishes to lock in pricing and begin receiving bids to see what the District's options are.

A motion to authorize the Fire Chief to advertise a Request for Proposal for three new stations.

MOTION: COMMISSIONER MCKENNA SECOND: COMMISSIONER KOSKINAS

All in favor, motion passed unanimously.

Remarks from the audience:

Kelly Cisarik – Ms. Cisarik stated that she has questions about Fortress Secured, LLC, as it seems that they have built primarily schools. She added that interest rates going up, and the risk the partner company takes on means they must stay in business with the fixed fee. She said she would question if the District's tax money is a lien and she would like to hear more from the company about this issue.

Commissioner Gardella asked if the focus will be on Station 28 due to the \$3 million from Pinellas County. Chief Davidson stated that 28 is an \$8 million project which will be addressed during the public education session on Monday. The County asserted that there were no stipulations on the money; however, it seems that might not be the case. Chief Davidson stated that Station 28 is where it already needs to be and further discussed training that he is attending this week on the same subject.

23-07 Public Facilities Annual Notice of Change

Discussion: Chief Davidson stated that this document is required by Florida Statute 189.08. He stated that, as nothing is being done this fiscal year, he left the report as simple as possible due to all the uncertainties at this time.

Kelly Cisarik – The best argument to move Station 27 north is that Belleair Beach is not being serviced as well as they should be and are actually being serviced by Station ~~41~~ ⁴⁴ most of the time. Discussion took place on traffic issues in that area.

A motion to accept the Public Facilities Annual Notice of Change.

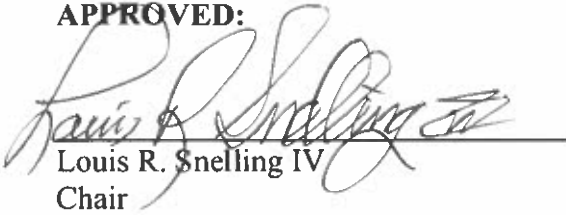
MOTION: COMMISSIONER MCKENNA SECOND: COMMISSIONER SCHEAR

All in favor, motion passed unanimously.

Chair Snelling stated that he would like to set a meeting with Chief Davidson to discuss a wage increase. All commissioners were in support.

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned in due form at 7:31 p.m.

APPROVED:


Louis R. Snelling IV
Chair

ATTEST:


Kimberly G. Hampton
District Administrator


Date Approved