



# *Pinellas Suncoast Fire & Rescue*

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

**(727) 595-1117 FAX: (727) 250-0111**

**www.psfrd.org**

**FIRE CHIEF  
JEFFREY DAVIDSON**

**MINUTES  
MAY 16, 2023  
WORKSHOP AND REGULAR MEETINGS**

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

**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 Shear, 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.

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**ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS:** None.

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

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**DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

**23-16 Resolution – Short-Term Rentals (DRAFT)**

**Assistant Chief**

***Discussion:***

Assistant Doug Higley stated that the short-term rental resolution is a draft written in concert with the City of Indian Rocks Beach’s new resolution and uses existing language from Fort Myers Beach Fire Control District. He explained that PSFRD’s jurisdiction is not protected in its unregulated short-term rentals, to which Fire Chief Jeff Davidson added that the fire department must perform inspections in accordance with the Florida Fire Prevention Code which does not include single-family homes. Short-term rentals are now considered transient lodging and the District is now tasked with the responsibility to inspect those properties.

Commissioner Gardella asked about the fees referenced at the bottom of page two; Chief Higley said there is a fee associated with these inspections which will not be paid for by the tax dollars of the citizens of the District. He added that, for simplicity moving forward, the revised fee scheduled combines fees from all resolutions into one document. Chief Higley also explained that there will be an annual contact information update required, but no fees are attached to that;

however, there are fines if it is not completed.

***Public comment:***

**Kelly Cisarik** – Ms. Cisarik offered suggestions for clarification, to include a better definition of a “local resident,” as well as “owner-occupied,” as she stated that some homesteaded properties may have an owner that resides there for six months out of the year but utilizes it as a short-term rental the other part of the year. Ms. Cisarik stated that she has concerns regarding backyard fires and the language allowing 72 hours to abate a fire code violation. Assistant Chief Higley stated that is not included in the 72-hour correction, as bonfires are to cease immediately in accordance with ordinances of Pinellas County and the individual municipalities.

Assistant Chief Higley stated that this is going to be first tested in the approximately 1,500 short-term rental properties within Indian Rocks Beach, and eventually move on to Indian Shores and Belleair Beach.

Attorney Jeff Albinson stated that the District should draft a requirement in the resolution that the owner of the property post the inspection certificate somewhere visible to renters. Mr. Albinson added that the resolution has no “teeth.” He stated that the penalty should be somewhere clearer than the schedule of fees, and he also believes that the dollar amount is not steep enough to guarantee compliance. He stated that he will have to research the fire department’s authority in penalizing for noncompliance, but eventually he would hope that the penalty is more in line with the owner losing their Certificate of Occupancy by not complying. Attorney Albinson stated that he also feels there needs to be a penalty for failing to register. He explained that cities everywhere are dealing with this exact issue, and research should be done into the ones who have had success in their efforts. Discussion ensued regarding the placement of the decals owners receive upon a successful inspection. Chief Davidson stated that he does know that Indian Rocks Beach does make fire inspections part of its approval process.

Chair Louis Snelling stated that he is concerned about the extra workload on the District and feels that the District should work based on information provided by the City of Indian Rocks Beach as opposed to “tracking down” owners who have failed to register. Assistant Chief Higley added that the City uses software now to do just that.

***Public comment:***

**Kelly Cisarik** – Ms. Cisarik asked if Indian Shores does not have a registration program. She added that she knows Pinellas County has an occupancy limit of eight, and Belleair Beach and Belleair Shore prohibit short-term vacation rentals. She stated that if the cities do not have a registration program in place, she feels PSFRD is the only government entity that the owners are going to deal with, and since the District has an obligation to inspect other businesses in those cities, it should also be inspecting the short-term rentals.

**23-15 Resolution – Plans Review (DRAFT)**

**Assistant Chief**

***Discussion:*** Assistant Chief Higley stated the only change to this resolution was amending

language to refer to the new schedule of fees.

**23-14 Resolution – Fire and Life Safety Inspections (DRAFT)**

**Assistant Chief**

**Discussion:** Assistant Chief Higley stated the only change to this resolution was amending language to refer to the new schedule of fees.

**23-13 Resolution – Fire Prevention Code (DRAFT)**

**Assistant Chief**

**Discussion:** Assistant Chief Higley explained that Florida State Statute states that fire departments should adopt a fire prevention code, which can be its own, original code, or the Florida Fire Prevention Code. He stated that PSFRD Ordinance 04 passed in 1994 needed items updated in an effort to keep our community safer.

**Public comment:**

**Kelly Cisarik** – Ms. Cisarik stated that she feels Section 9 – Inspections by Fire Marshal does not specifically indicate the types of properties that are inspected. Chief Higley stated that he will clarify that section and add the language specified in the District Charter.

Commissioner Gardella asked if Section 20 – Special Considerations meant that the property is required to install a sprinkler system. Chief Higley stated that it does not; it only states that owners may receive credits or “trade-offs” for sprinkling buildings that do not otherwise need to be sprinkled.

Commissioner Gardella discussed the requirement of installing Knox Boxes and commented on the high price of these boxes. Chief Higley stated that Knox Box is the only box approved by Pinellas County Fire & EMS. The goal is to get to a one-key system throughout the County, particularly to assist in mutual aid efforts, and especially during hurricanes and deployments happen across the state. He also added that NFPA 1, Chapter 18 states that a security box of any kind may be utilized if it is compliant with UL 1037; however, the only box manufactured in the world that meets this compliance is Knox. He explained that he understands the associated cost and intends to transition to this over the course of the next two years to help people plan for it. Discussion ensued.

Assistant Chief Higley stated, regarding Section 27 – Reporting Requirements, he made a presentation in February on The Compliance Engine software. He stated that this software is beneficial to the Fire District as well as property managers and citizens, as it ensures contractor inspection reports are being submitted. He added that he particularly needs to see systems that are deficient so a plan can be put in place to get it back up and running. He stated that there is a \$17 fee per submission that the company charges that the District has no control over. He added that the resolution also addresses fines for non-compliance.

Chief Higley stated that this resolution addresses the issue of nuisance alarms, as businesses will sometimes not fix a faulty fire alarm system and the fire department is required to respond multiple times for false alarms, which could potentially take them out of service for a true

emergency.

Secretary/Treasurer Schear inquired as to if Section 27 requires an entry into the system every time a company does maintenance on a sprinkler system, to which Chief Higley stated it does. Discussion ensued on notifying the fire department when a system is down and the requirement to call central dispatch.

**23-12 Resolution - PSFRD Schedule of Fees (DRAFT)**

**Assistant Chief**

**Discussion:** Assistant Chief Higley stated that this is a culmination of the preceding resolutions. He explained that the Commission has already authorized the District to charge all of these fees, with the exception of a couple of them. He further explained that the District is authorized to charge, per Florida Statute, to recoup its costs associated with performing fire inspections, and the fees that have been in place for quite some time are minimal. He explained that the goal of any increases in these fees is to help the District cover at least part of an inspector's salary. Some discussion took place regarding public assembly. Chief Higley stated that fees associated with public assembly are to cover the cost of the use of District equipment. He also stated that mobile food truck inspections have been added.

**Public comment:**

**Kelly Cisarik** – Ms. Cisarik asked if the facilities in Category I are inspected, as the schedule states that there is no charge for first and second inspections. Chief Higley confirmed that they are inspected, and they are typically the most compliant occupancies, because their State licenses are tied to their inspections, and the District will now only charge them if they are noncompliant. Ms. Cisarik asked if not charging them will make them more difficult to track, such as a foster home that may easily slip through the cracks. Chief Higley stated that all of these facilities are registered with Pinellas County and tracked by PSFRD.

Commissioner Gardella asked if townhouses in Category G are charged per building or per unit, to which Chief Higley replied that they are charged per building. Commissioner Gardella asked about the dollar amounts in Category H were correct. Chief Higley said that it should read "\$100, \$150, \$200, \$250," etc. He confirmed that he will correct it in the final version. Commissioner Koskinas asked if the building size should say "5,001 to 10,000" and "10,001" to which Chief Higley replied that it should, and he will make that correction.

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**ADJOURNMENT**

The Workshop was adjourned at 7:12 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: April 18, 2023 Workshop and Regular Meetings

**Discussion:** None.

**A motion to approve the minutes of the April 18, 2023 Workshop and Regular Meetings.**

**MOTION: COMMISSIONER MCKENNA SECOND: COMMISSIONER KOSKINAS**

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

2. Treasurer's Report: April, 2023

**Discussion:** Secretary/Treasurer Schear stated the investment program in accordance with policy, with \$5.2 million held in interest earning accounts and \$450,000 in non-interest checking. There was no capital projects activity during the month of April. Regarding the General Fund, non-ad valorem assessments and EMS funding are being received according to schedule. Expense projections remain within the adopted budget. Operating expenses during the month include \$5,000 in repairs on the high-water vehicle. An order was placed with MES for nine sets of bunker gear totaling \$41,000, with an expected delivery date of next fiscal year.

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

**MOTION: COMMISSIONER GARDELLA SECOND: COMMISSIONER KOSKINAS**

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

3. Correspondence: None.

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

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**REPORTS:**

1. **COMMISSION:** None.

2. **ATTORNEY:** Attorney Jeff Albinson stated that he has been working with Chief Davidson on projects related to securing funding, including the items indicated in a letter to Craig Hare that has been distributed to the Commissioners. Attorney Albinson stated that there was a retirement of one of a long-time employee of the District as well that Chief will discuss.

3. **CHIEF'S REPORT:** Chief Davidson stated that the letter written to Craig Hare is regarding the EMS enhancement request submitted by PSFRD. He explained that there is a very long distance between Station 27 and Station 44, and response times are not being met in north Indian Rocks Beach, Belleair Beach, and Belleair Shore, by units from either station, or by mutual aid partners. Chief Davidson stated that he learned this has been a long-term problem that was identified by the County in 2009, and a Levrum study illustrated that adding an additional unit on the northern end solves the problem. Through the Data Driven Focus Group and EMSAC, the

Chief explained that he submitted a request for a transport-capable rescue truck to better serve the beaches and the system as a whole. He discussed that there are other issues in addition to response time, such as the fact that Sunstar is currently down 47 paramedics, and PSFRD alone is on track to do 420 fire department ride-ins for the fiscal year. He explained that often the ambulance won't have a paramedic – only an EMT or EMR, and paramedics with the fire department must stay with the patient until they reach the hospital. This obviously causes areas of our fire district to be without coverage for at least an hour and a half, and sometimes all units are at the hospital. Chief Davidson stated that he received a denial without the required second meeting nor receiving a formal denial; only the mention that Engine 27 does not have a high enough call volume to justify a rescue unit, which is not what was even being requested. Chief Davidson explained how the response zones work and explain that zones PS43 and PS44 are underserved, sometimes experiencing calls such as cardiac arrests waiting over 40 minutes for an ambulance. The Chief stated that he has asked for an explanation for the denial in this letter, and he will share it with citizens and community groups and urged the citizens and Commissioners to do the same, as well as getting in touch with their County Commissioners.

Attorney Albinson explained that Levrum is an entity, and there is software that has three years of data on all calls throughout the County system; Levrum allows the user to take this data and run scenarios on it. Mr. Albinson stated that, currently, along Gulf Boulevard to the Clearwater station, the data shows that approximately only 80% of the time a unit is able to get to the call within the County's designated response time of 7 minutes and 30 seconds. He further explained that, using the County's same software in the presence of County employees, the data showed that placing a station on a piece of property in the north end of the District improved that number to 97%, basically completely eliminating the problem. He stated that the purpose of the County rejecting the request is unclear but has nothing to do with the factual foundation of the request. He added that there is money in the budget to fund this, but the County does not want to give it to PSFRD.

Chief Davidson stated that there is \$3 million in the County budget to rebuild Station 28. He explained that after multiple analyses on station location, including a Levrum study, it has been determined that there is nowhere that Station 28 is able to be moved. The Chief stated that he mentioned the Levrum study in the EMS enhancement request, and on that very same afternoon, the County sent an email stating that there was a problem with Levrum and no more analyses should be run through them. The Chief added that he contacted Levrum directly who confirmed that there were no issues. Jim Fogarty stated that the County would like to conduct a separate study and he would let PSFRD know what the results were, but Chief Davidson stated that he insisted he be there when the study was done. When the study was conducted by County staff, Chief Davidson stated that he was in attendance, as well as Assistant Chief Higley, Assistant Chief Karpinecz, and the analysis also showed that Station 28 was in the best location, and Mr. Fogarty still insisted that they could perform other studies. Chief Davidson said that he then met with Assistant County Administrator Lourdes Benedict and explained what has taken place. Ms. Benedict agreed that the study was done properly, and they just wanted to ensure they did their due diligence before bringing it before the County Commission, but she agreed with moving forward with a funding agreement. Chief Davidson said that while this process could take three months, the District is still able to move forward with the funding now being guaranteed.

Attorney Jeff Albinson mentioned that a Levrum study also showed that there was no need for a

station in the Redingtons, as all of their needs were currently being met 93% of the time in Redington Shores, of which approximately 94% are handled by PSFRD and the other 6% by Madeira, but, still, they are building the station in the Redingtons.

Commissioner Schear inquired about Station 26 if a property was identified. Chief Davidson stated that Station 26 currently serves the needs of the District. He added that since the District has been unable to locate a property at this point in time, with the permission of the owner, a cover will be put up over the apparatus and some improvements will be made in the event that it has to serve us for the next couple of years.

Commissioner McKenna asked if the owners of the property in the north end of the District are still willing to sell. Chief Davidson they are, and they are offering a good price based on a recent appraisal that was conducted. He added that he hopes to get an additional unit to put temporary housing there right away. The Chief explained that everything is lined up to move forward once ad valorem funding starts being received in November.

On another topic, Chief Davidson stated that Firefighter EMT Christopher Barnes was recognized last week at a County Commission meeting as EMT of the Year for all of Pinellas County. Chief Davidson thanked Commissioners Gardella and Schear for attending.

Chief Davidson stated that two Commissioners from the City of Indian Rocks Beach, as well as Commissioners Gardella and Koskinas, attended Fire Ops 101 last Saturday. He added that it was a great day and PSFRD's crew did a great job teaching extrication.

Chief Davidson announced that Deputy Chief John Mortellite retired from PSFRD after 27 years of service. The Chief stated that he thanks Chief Mortellite for his service and plans to honor him at the upcoming awards banquet. Until the promotional process, he stated that District Chief David Karpinecz will be interim Assistant Chief taking over EMS responsibilities.

The Chief stated that May 20, 2023 from 6:00pm until 10:00pm is the first annual recognition and awards banquet, and will be held at Church of the Isles.

Lastly, Chief Davidson stated that the Hurricane Expo will take place June 8<sup>th</sup> from 1:00pm until 6:00pm at Belleair Beach City Hall, with food being sponsored by the Union, giveaways, a water rescue demonstration, as well as meteorologists being in attendance.

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**ACTION ITEMS:**

**23-17 Special Meeting to Review RFQ for Professional Services Respondents**

**Fire Chief**

**Discussion:** District Administrator Kimberly Hampton stated that the RFQ deadline is Friday, May 26<sup>th</sup>. She explained that the Commission has the option of holding a special meeting ahead of the regularly scheduled June 20<sup>th</sup> meeting to select a respondent to move forward with in an effort to move the process along more quickly.

Commissioner Gardella noted that the "No Response" page has a Fort Myers address on it.

**A motion to hold a special meeting to review and select a respondent to the RFQ on June 6, 2023 at 6:00pm at a location to be determined.**

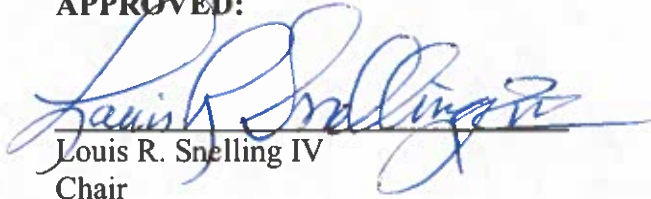
**MOTION: COMMISSIONER MCKENNA SECOND: COMMISSIONER GARDELLA**

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



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There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned in due form at 8:00pm.

**APPROVED:**

  
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Louis R. Snelling IV  
Chair

**ATTEST:**

  
  
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Kimberly G. Hampton  
District Administrator

June 20, 2023  
Date Approved