



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 JULY 1, 2024 SPECIAL MEETING

**Indian Shores Municipal Building
19305 Gulf Boulevard
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, Commissioner David Gardella, and Commissioner Heather Koskinas. A quorum was present with Chair Louis Snelling presiding. Attorney Jeff Albinson, Fire Chief Jeffrey Davidson, Finance Director Erin Brooks, Division Chief Patrick Schwab, and John O’Grady with Fortress Secured, LLC were also present. Attorney Carlyn Kowalski was present virtually via Microsoft Teams.

ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS: None.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

24-11 Fortress Secured, LLC Interim Agreement

Discussion: Attorney Carlyn Kowalski provided a summary of the proposed interim agreement between the Pinellas Suncoast Fire & Rescue District and Fortress Secured, LLC for the delivery of Fire Station #28. She explained that this interim agreement sets a project budget of \$7.9 million. She stated that there is \$608,000 in pre-development activities, which is the amount not to be exceeded. Attorney Kowalski stated that the first step that will take place is the developer will begin the pre-development activities. Next, the developer will provide the District with a 30% design plan, a stipulated sum, and a final agreement. She explained that it is then at the District’s sole discretion whether the project will move forward or not. She confirmed that if the District is not satisfied, the project will be terminated and the District will not owe anything. If the District

is satisfied with what it proposed, the project will move forward. Attorney Kowalski explained that, during this pre-development time, the District will also be working on financing, and the District can still opt out as well if it cannot find suitable financing. Once all of these things have taken place, the District will have 40 days to make a decision. She explained that, if the District chooses to move forward at the 30% point, Fortress will then have 60 days to provide 60% plans, 60 additional days to provide 90% plans, and at that point a final agreement will be executed. She did confirm that the cost cannot go up.

Commissioner Gardella asked for clarification on what “30%” means. Chief Davidson explained that it means when the developer has completed 30% of the design of the building. Chief Davidson added that the developer has already been working on architecture, computer graphics, etc., to bring to District staff next week.

Chair Snelling asked what constitutes 30% of the design. Chief Davidson added to this question and asked if 30% meant all items in Exhibit A of the interim agreement. Mr. John O’Grady with Fortress Secured confirmed that it does include all items in Exhibit A. Attorney Kowalski clarified that Exhibit A is the pre-development investigation activities and explained that it is common in architecture to set 30-, 60-, and 90-day benchmarks.

Chair Snelling inquired about a temporary housing facility. Chief Davidson stated that the District will work with Fortress Secured on this, but the western portion of the current Station 28 property is being considered for temporary housing. Chief Davidson stated that Division Chief Patrick Schwab will work on finding something that can be rented or purchased for use during future projects. He added that Fortress does have options for the District to consider as well. Chair Snelling asked if there was any chance that personnel would need to work offsite at a different location. Chief Davidson stated that other locations have been considered, but he would prefer to remain there as that location best serves that area. Chair Snelling asked if that cost is the responsibility of the District, to which Chief Davidson replied that he is going to work very hard to make sure it is included in the total project cost, but would definitely prefer to purchase something rather than rent. Chief Schwab stated that a preliminary quote that he received to rent temporary housing was approximately \$4,000 per month.

Commissioner Gardella asked Attorney Carlyn Kowalski if she feels this interim agreement is customary for this type of contract, to which she replied she does. She added that she feels this agreement is actually a bit more efficient for the District, as there is no risk until the 30% plans have been received. She explained that developers typically require that pre-development costs are shared. She also said that District staff will be working with Fortress the entire time which allows for a lot of control throughout the entire process.

Commissioner Koskinas asked if financing activities have begun yet. Finance Director Erin Brooks stated that Fortress has provided four potential lenders for staff to review. Once those lenders have been reviewed, Director Brooks stated that she will make a recommendation to the Board for the Board to select which lender they would like to move forward with. She added that, to stay on target, the regularly scheduled August Commission meeting would be the preferred latest date for that decision to be made. She stated that she will have quotes prepared for the July meeting to allow for a month for the Commission to review to be prepared to vote in August.

Commissioner Gardella asked if Fortress' involvement with financing was only to provide the District with names of lenders and asked if he could provide a lender for District staff to consider. Director Brooks mentioned that she did send an email to all of the Commissioners some time ago to make recommendations on lenders, and she is still open to those recommendations. She stated that Dwin Horne with Fortress has been doing the legwork by providing the lenders with the District's information, some of which had been waiting on the recent audit report which has now been completed. She stated that Fortress is bringing the District their top recommendations, but each one has different requirements – such as changes to the District's banking relationships – and therefore the District ultimately needs to make the final decision.

Chair Snelling inquired about the timeline between securing financing and the 30% design point. Chief Davidson stated that it is his understanding that once the developer reaches the 30% mark, the District has 40 days to get financing in place and make a decision.

John O'Grady explained that, if the Board decides on a lender in August, District staff will begin working with that bank, and it will be 30 days that they can everything ready. He stated that Fortress will then have the 30% plans within 30 to 60 days. Chief Davidson asked, then, what is a realistic timeline? Mr. O'Grady stated that Johnnie Lohrum with Fortress, once given the greenlight, will likely need 90 to 120 days to be at 30%. After that, he explained, the District will have 40 days to decide. Chief Davidson mentioned that he thought it would be faster than that. Mr. O'Grady said it is very possible that it could be. Chief Davidson stated that there is a meeting scheduled for July 8th for Mr. Lohrum to show where he is at, and the District can then move forward with what his concepts are.

**A motion to authorize entering into the Interim Agreement with Fortress Secured, LLC,
drafted on June 26, 2024.**

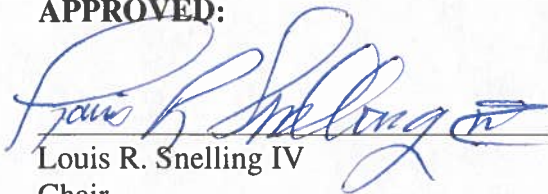
MOTION: COMMISSIONER MCKENNA SECOND: COMMISSIONER KOSKINAS

All in favor, MOTION PASSED unanimously.

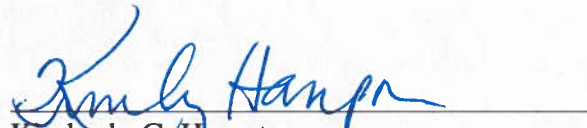
ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned in due form 6:34 p.m.

APPROVED:


Louis R. Snelling IV
Chair

ATTEST:


Kimberly G. Hampton
District Administrator


Date Approved