



FIRE CHIEF  
JEFFREY DAVIDSON

# *Pinellas Suncoast Fire & Rescue*

304 FIRST STREET  
INDIAN ROCKS BEACH, FLORIDA 33785-2587

(727) 595-1117 FAX: (727) 250-0111  
[www.psfrd.org](http://www.psfrd.org)

## MINUTES NOVEMBER 12, 2024 WORKSHOP AND REGULAR MEETING

Holiday Inn & Suites – Harbourside  
Key West Center  
401 Second Street  
Indian Rocks Beach, 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 Heather Fleming-Koskinas, Commissioner David Gardella, and Commissioner Mark Bolling. 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 Division Chief Louis Stoneburg were also present.

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**ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS:** None.

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### GENERAL REMARKS FROM THE AUDIENCE:

**Jacob Knighton** – Address Confidential – Mr. Knighton introduced himself as the new Seat 5 Commissioner who will take his Oath of Office at the next meeting. He gave a brief history of his experience and stated he looks forward to working with the Board and department personnel.

**Todd Grantham** – Address Confidential – District Chief Grantham spoke on behalf of Fire Chief Davidson. He stated that he believes the Union’s Executive Board is pathetic and untruthful. Chief Grantham said that Chief Davidson is the best fire chief the District has had in a long time, he believes he is very fair with discipline, and that a group of four individuals are going after him. Chief Grantham also discussed his history with the previous Fire Chief.

**Kavaris Service** – Address Confidential – Mr. Service stated that he recently resigned from

PSFRD as a firefighter and now works for Madeira Beach Fire Department. Mr. Service stated that he has been hearing rumors that he resigned because his seniors have not been training him, and that is not true. Mr. Service stated that he told Chief Davidson and Chief Stoneburg in an exit interview that he was leaving because he was unhappy about Firefighter Mary Miller's termination, and he feels that he now believes that the allegations he has heard against Chief Davidson since before he even worked at PSFRD are believable. Mr. Service stated that he believes Chief Davidson does not value his firefighters and only values his personal agenda. Mr. Service did add that he did mention to Chief Stoneburg that he does like that Madeira Fire's command allows them downtime to train. Mr. Service stated that it upsets him that he also heard rumors that he left over pay, when he had previously told Chief Stoneburg that he would only leave over morale, and because of this he feels that his voice did not matter.

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**DISCUSSION ITEMS:** None.

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**ADJOURNMENT**

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**REGULAR MEETING CALLED TO ORDER**

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**ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO AGENDA:**

**DELETE – Election of Board Officers – Postpone until next meeting.**

**DELETE – 24-37 – Oath of Office – Seat 4 Commissioner – Postpone until next meeting.**

**DELETE – 24-38 – Oath of Office – Seat 5 Commissioner – Postpone until next meeting.**

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**MONTHLY BUSINESS:**

1. Approval of Minutes: September 17, 2024 Budget, Workshop, and Regular Meetings  
September 24, 2024 Budget Meeting  
October 15, 2024 Workshop & Regular Meeting

**Discussion:** None.

**A motion to approve the minutes of the September 17, 2024 Budget, Workshop, and Regular Meetings, September 24, 2024 Budget Meeting, and October 15, 2024 Workshop & Regular Meeting.**

**MOTION: COMMISSIONER MCKENNA SECOND: COMMISSIONER BOLLING**

**All in favor, MOTION PASSED unanimously.**

2. Treasurer's Report: September and October, 2024

**Discussion:** Secretary/Treasurer Koskinas read the Treasurer's Report for the period ending September 30, 2024. She stated that the investment program is in accordance with policy at \$9.14 million held in interest earning accounts, \$3 million of which is restricted for Station 28, and \$429,000 in non-interest checking. General fund: Major fiscal year revenue totals include ad

valorem tax receipts total of \$3.62 million, fire assessments of \$4.91 million, EMS funding of \$2.2 million, grant revenue of \$422,000, fire prevention revenue of \$163,000, and investment interest of \$515,000. Major fiscal year expense totals include personnel services which include compensation totaling \$4.39 million and benefits of \$2.62 million, operating expenses of \$1.61 million, and transfers out of the capital fund of \$420,000. The capital projects fund includes a total of \$611,000 in capital expenditures funded by \$46,000 received in impact fee revenue and \$146,000 of grant revenue and a transfer in from the general fund.

**A motion to approve the Treasurer's Report as amended.**

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

**All in favor, MOTION PASSED unanimously.**

3. Correspondence: None.

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**GENERAL REMARKS FROM THE AUDIENCE:**

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**REPORTS:**

1. **UNION:** Vice President Matthew Zeiner stated that the Union completed a climate survey with 33 of the 39 members – 84% of the membership – responding to 15 different questions. Vice President Zeiner distributed printed copies of the report to each of the Commissioners and provided a brief summary of the report. Vice President Zeiner stated he will provide an electronic copy to District Administrator Kimberly Hampton to include with the meeting minutes.

2. **COMMISSION:** Secretary/Treasurer Fleming-Koskinas reminded the Commission she will not be in attendance at the December meeting.

2. **ATTORNEY:** Attorney Albinson discussed that the November 5<sup>th</sup> election results cannot be certified by the Supervisor of Elections until at least November 15<sup>th</sup> since overseas ballots can be received up to 10 days after the election. He stated this is the reason that the Seat 4 and Seat 5 Commissioners cannot yet take their Oaths of Office.

Attorney Albinson said that there have been additional complaints made by an employee that he believes to be related to the existing complaints currently being investigated by Mr. Collins. Attorney Albinson stated that he will inform Mr. Collins of the complaints and that the complaints will be turned over to the insurance carrier.

Commissioner Gardella stated that the Seat 5 position was on his ballot in Belleair Beach and he said that he thought only the residents of the subdistrict for that seat could vote for that seat. Attorney Albinson explained that an error was made by the Supervisor of Elections and discussed the nature of that error. He stated that he and Mrs. Hampton have been assured by the Supervisor of Elections that only the Seat 5 subdistrict votes were counted. Mrs. Hampton added that the District did receive the results of the election, including the specific number of votes for each candidate from each of the three precincts in the Seat 5 subdistrict.

Attorney Albinson stated that he spoke with Mr. Collins this afternoon and Mr. Collins has been engaging in interviews over the last several weeks. Mr. Collins said that he has spent

approximately 40 hours on the investigation so far and likely has some other expenses as well. Attorney Albinson stated that Mr. Collins hopes to be done and have his report written by the end of November or beginning of December.

**3. CHIEF'S REPORT:** Chief Davidson stated that the 60% design phase has been surpassed in the Station 28 project. He stated that the District's team has been meeting with ZHA every week and the architect every two weeks, and it is expected to break ground in March 2025. Chief Davidson stated that he is working with ZHA and Attorney Carlyn Kowalski on proposing liquidated damages for the builder, which means if they do not complete the project by the date they say they will, they will have to pay the District a certain amount of money per day due to the District's ongoing expenses, such as temporary housing.

Chief Davidson stated that the District is still in the due diligence phase with the Church of the Isles property. He explained that it was thought that the property would need to be re-platted, but now it seems that it may just require rezoning. He said that they are still waiting to hear if the District will be grandfathered in with the drainage; if not, the District will not proceed with the purchase.

Chief Davidson stated that Stations 26 and 27 are still recovering from Hurricane Helene. He stated that Station 26 personnel had been operating out of Station 28 and are now in a temporary location on the beach. He said they will continue to look for a permanent location.

The Chief informed the Board that all personnel have completed PHTLS renewals as well as EMT and Paramedic license renewals.

Chief Davidson said that the Notice of Funding Opportunity is now out for this year's FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant, which will be open until December 20<sup>th</sup>. He stated he plans to have a meeting with staff over the next week to decide what will be applied for.

Commissioner Gardella asked how we intend to request reimbursement for the bunker gear purchase. Chief Davidson stated that request will go through FEMA. Chief Davidson also mentioned that there are upcoming FEMA meetings that he has asked all of his administrative team to participate in so that everybody can start learning what needs to be done to help Finance Director Brooks with the reimbursement claims.

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

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**ACTION ITEMS:**

**24-37 Oath of Office – Seat 4 Commissioner**

*Discussion:* Postponed.

**24-38 Oath of Office – Seat 5 Commissioner**

*Discussion:* Postponed.

**24-39 FY2023/2024 Budget Amendment #1  
(RESOLUTION 2024-08)**

*Discussion:* Finance Director Erin Brooks explained that is the first budgt amendment for the last

fiscal year which ended September 30, 2024. She explained that all amendments to the budget must be completed within 60 days of year-end, and it is normal practice for the District to submit one summary budget amendment at the end of the year. She explained that the first page of the document is a synopsis of the changes, followed by the amended budget in spreadsheet format on the second page, which illustrates those changes compared to the original budget that was adopted. She explained that the third page shows the adopted budget and singles out the amendments and line items.

Attorney Jeff Albinson read Resolution 2024-08 in its entirety.

Vice Chair McKenna asked if this includes the bunker gear purchase, to which Director Brooks responded that since the District has not received the gear nor the invoice, it will be included in Fiscal Year 2025.

Commissioner Gardella asked if Director Brooks could provide a breakdown of the \$574,000 in additional operating expenses and \$310,000 in compensation. Director Brooks stated that the lion's share of the additional operating expenses is the anticipated ad valorem collection fees of \$202,000 and explained that process. She continued that it also includes unanticipated expenses for Truck 28 and Pumper 28, as well as approximately \$100,000 in bunker gear that was purchased before the storm. She stated that legal expenses were over trend by \$75,000. Director Brooks stated that non-audited overtime for the last fiscal year is projected at \$620,000, trending over budget that was about \$350,000 going into the year. She stated she does not have the exact breakdown of what was storm overtime versus other operational reasons, but she can provide that if needed.

Secretary/Treasurer Koskinas asked if the lobbyist was part of legal fees, to which Director Brooks responded that it was, totaling \$15,000.

**A motion to adopt Resolution 2024-08.**

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

**All in favor, MOTION PASSED unanimously.**

#### **24-40 Interlocal Agreement with Pinellas County – Plan Review Fees**

**Discussion:** Fire Chief Davidson stated that this agreement will allow Pinellas County to collect plan review fees for the District and resubmit to the District every quarter at no charge to ensure the District does not miss out on any revenues. He added that the District will soon be working on a similar agreement for the County to collect impact fees as well.

**A motion to authorize the Chair to sign the interlocal agreement with Pinellas County to collect plan review fees.**

**MOTION: COMMISSIONER GARDELLA SECOND: COMMISSIONER BOLLING**

**All in favor, MOTION PASSED unanimously.**

**24-41 Owner Direct Purchasing Policy  
(PSFRD SOP 268)**

**Discussion:** Chief Davidson stated, per State law, this policy must be approved by the Board. This allows us to enter into agreements in which we can purchase materials directly, such as for the upcoming station build projects, which allows the District to not pay sales tax. He continued that it is estimated that it will provide an estimated \$70,000 savings on the Station 28 project. He added the ZHA oversees that process.

**A motion to approve the inclusion of SOP 268 in the Standard Operating Procedures of the District as it appears on the agenda.**

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

**All in favor, MOTION PASSED unanimously.**

**24-42 Mary Miller Grievance  
Step 4 – Consideration by the Board of Fire Commissioners**

*[A five-minute break was taken here.]*

**Discussion:** Chair Snelling addressed the Notice of Termination of Mary Miller’s grievance. Mr. Tom Gonzalez introduced himself as special labor counsel for PSFRD and explained the grievance procedure in Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA). He quoted Article 5, Section 5, A. General Provisions, #7 – “Time Limits: All time limits set forth herein are of the essence and failure to complete an action within the applicable time limit shall serve to terminate the grievance if the failure is on the part of the grievant, or to move the grievance to the next step in the process if the failure is on the part of the respondent.”

Mr. Gonzalez explained that the parties went through the first steps and complied with all the time limits which brought the grievance to the step that allows for consideration by the Commissioners. He continued that, no later than 15 days before the Board hears the grievance, the Union must provide to the Fire Chief a statement of the grievance and the items they intend to argue. He stated that the Union did not do that and still has not done that, but they did send a letter to the Chair of the Board, stating they did not feel comfortable providing it to the Fire Chief. Mr. Gonzalez stated that the Union does not have that option, as the Union and the District are parties to an explicit contract and mentioned that the Union has done this before during Matthew Tomilonus’ grievance. Mr. Gonzalez stated that he is asking on behalf of the Fire Chief to terminate the grievance. He stated that the Union has the right to appeal the termination at arbitration.

Mr. Robert McKee introduced himself as legal representation for the Union, Local 5374. He stated that the notice cites several alleged failures by the Union to comply with technical and timing

requirements in the grievance procedure. He explained that the Board's job is to consider the presentations made by the Union and by the Fire Chief on the grievance related to the termination of Firefighter Mary Miller. He continued that a Board member propose a resolution and if that resolution is voted on and accepted by the majority, then the grievance ends there, He stated that if the Board decides to reject the grievance because of the alleged issues, that is their right and, at that point, the Union will demand to go to mediation and then to arbitration. If the Commission or Fire Chief do not wish to cooperate with those, he explained, then the Union will file an action of Motion to Compel Arbitration in a circuit court. He explained that a judge is not going to decide whether there was a failure on the part of the Union in the grievance procedure; a judge will acknowledge there is an arbitration provision in the contract and send the parties to arbitration. He explained that it could potentially be the same outcome, just with additional hoops to jump through.

Mr. Gonzalez reiterated and discussed the importance of honoring the Collective Bargaining Agreement.

***Public comment:***

**Jacob Knighton** – Address Confidential – Mr. Knighton stated that arbitration will incur legal fees and will end up right where we are currently at. He stated that his biggest concern is fiscal responsibility. Mr. Knighton explained that he has not had a chance to review the contract and does not have information on the terminations but inquired as to the potential cost and financial impact will be to the District to go to arbitration, then still have to hear the grievance and then possibly go to arbitration again.

**Brittany Tomilonus** – Address Confidential – Mrs. Tomilonus stated that everything going on has deeply affected her family. She reminded the Commission that she asked the Commission to ensure the investigation would go back to February when her husband, Matthew Tomilonus, was wrongfully demoted. She stated that she feels that is when the true colors of the department started to show, both in administration and the Union. She said that, while the Union Executive Board may have the correct motivation, they are highly inexperienced and are not fit to be in their roles. Mrs. Tomilonus also expressed that she feels it is inappropriate for Mary Miller to hold her position on the Executive Board when not employed by PSFRD and asserted that she inappropriately used meeting minutes to share her own opinions.

Chair Snelling provided a recap of the situation.

Commissioner Gardella asked why the Union did not respond in time. Chair Snelling said that the reason was stated in the email.

Union President Gregory Hott explained that we have been under a State of Emergency until yesterday, November 11<sup>th</sup>. He explained that there were recent email interactions between himself and Chief Davidson in which Chief Davidson cited a portion of the Management Rights section of the CBA that states Union activity is to be suspended during a State of Emergency, and Chief Davidson told him he was disappointed in the Union for trying to conduct Union business during the declared State of Emergency. President Hott added that a few other things have made it difficult, such as the Commission meeting being rescheduled for a week earlier, and the fact that

he has not had a positive working relationship with Chief Davidson with everything that has been going on in the department.

Secretary/Treasurer Koskinas asked President Hott why he would wait until the 5<sup>th</sup> it was due on the 28<sup>th</sup>. President Hott stated that, if he is being transparent, he does not get paid to be in this position. He continued that he has two small children, there were two concurrent States of Emergencies, as well as a time crunch caused by the meeting being moved up a week.

Vice President Zeiner cited Article 3 of the CBA, Management Rights, Section 2 – “...Agreement may be suspended during the time of the declared emergency, provided that wage rates, overtime, and other monetary benefits shall not be suspended. The time limits for any grievances or other actions pursuant to this Agreement arising during the declared emergency shall not begin until the conclusion of the declaration, and any grievances or employment actions which are in process shall have the time limits tolled for the duration of the emergency conditions or authorization.

Vice President Zeiner stated that, per the CBA, the Union is actually abiding by the contract as it states that the time limits are stopped during the declared State of Emergency.

Mr. Gonzalez stated that this is all fantasy and coming out of nowhere. He said what was submitted did not comply with the contract, was several days late, and there was never a request for an extension, nor a declaration that there was a suspension of these items. Dialogue continued between Mr. Zeiner and Mr. Gonzalez.

Attorney Albinson stated that there should not be crosstalk, as this is a presentation to the Board. Vice President Zeiner apologized.

**A motion to approve of the termination of the grievance based on the nonperformance of the timeframe in the contract.**

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

**Public Comment:**

**Graylon Hampton** – No Address Given – Mr. Hampton stated that he wanted to remind the Board they are talking about a person and a soldier. He stated that he believes Firefighter Mary Miller to be a good person and a good firefighter, and he feels she is being talked about as if she is a technicality and believes they are ruining somebody’s life but not hearing the grievance. He expressed concern at the fact that it is the Union’s job to send the Fire Chief their full strategy and agreed that the CBA is poorly written. He added that the meeting got rescheduled because the Fire Chief has a cruise to go on, and now Firefighter Miller is not able to attend or defend herself because she is at military training. He added that the Fire Chief is aware of Firefighter Miller’s military training schedule. He stated the Board should be ashamed of not hearing the grievance. Vice Chair McKenna told him to sit down because she would like to speak. Dialogue ensued between the Vice Chair and the citizen.

Secretary/Treasurer Koskinas asked if this item needs to be voted on tonight or can it be continued.



She stated that she does not feel that she has enough information to make a decision tonight and would like to review the CBA further. Attorney Albinson stated she could make a motion to table the discussion until the next meeting. Chair Snelling stated that Secretary/Treasurer Koskinas will not be in attendance at the next meeting, and called for a vote on the motion. Attorney Albinson asked to clarify if Secretary/Treasurer Koskinas was making a motion, to which she responded she was not, only because she does not want to delay the process any further. A vote was then taken on the motion.

**Commissioners Koskinas opposed; MOTION PASSED 4 – 1**

**24-43 Special Meeting – Investigation Findings**

**Discussion:** The Board agreed unanimously to hold a special meeting on December 9, 2024, for the purpose of hearing the investigation findings by Attorney Milton Collins at a location to be determined.

**A motion to adjourn.**

**MOTION: COMMISSIONER BOLLING SECOND: COMMISSIONER GARDELLA**

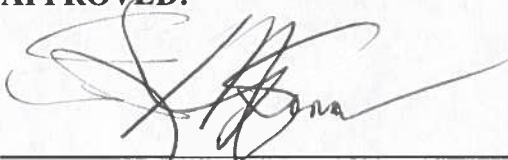
**All in favor, MOTION PASSED unanimously.**

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There being no further business to come before the Board, the Regular meeting was adjourned in due form.

**APPROVED:**

**ATTEST:**

  
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Elizabeth "Betsey" McKenna  
Chair

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Kimberly G. Hampton  
District Administrator

12/19/24  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date Approved