

Minutes for the Work Session and Meeting of
the Fort Myers Beach Fire Control District Board of Commissioners

November 9, 2022 9:30am
South Trail Fire Station
635531 Halifax Avenue, Fort Myers, Florida 33912
[location change due to Hurricane Ian]

In attendance: Chairman Larry Wood, Vice-Chairman Ron Fleming, Secretary/Treasurer John Bennett, Commissioner Jacki Liszak (via phone), Commissioner Jim Knickle, Fire Chief Ronald Martin, Fire Official Jennifer Campbell, Finance Director Jane Thompson and District members.

1. **Meeting Called to Order** 9:31am
2. **Pledge of Allegiance**
3. **Adoption of Agenda** [Discussion/Approval]

Chairman Wood and Chief Martin proposed to moved item 8G up in order and add 8H relating to the Board authorizing the Fire Chief for RFP (request for proposal). Motion made by Commissioner Bennett and seconded by Commissioner Knickle; motion approved 5-0.

4. **Restate Agenda Items** [Information]
5. **Public Input on Non-Agenda Items** - *none*
6. **Consent Agenda** [Approval]

Items listed are considered routine, and action will be taken by one motion; if a Commissioner desires discussion, the specific item will be removed during the adoption of the agenda and considered separately.

- A. August 10, 2022 Work Session Meeting Minutes
- B. September 14, 2022 Tentative Budget Hearing Meeting Minutes
- C. Approval July Checks 47012 – 47091 = \$246,562.47
- D. Approval August Checks 47092 – 47174 = \$218,244.36
- E. Approval September Checks 47173 – 47223 = \$203,931.45

The consent agenda was motioned for approval by Commissioner Knickle and seconded by Commissioner Fleming; motion approved 5-0.

7. **Unfinished Business** - *none*
8. **New Business**

- A. Swearing in of Commissioners [Information]

Commissioners John Bennett and Jim Knickle were sworn in. Commissioner Liszak will be sworn in, in person, at a later date.

B. Election of Board of Fire Commissioner Officers

[Information/Discussion/Approval]

Commissioner Wood nominated Commissioner Bennett for Chairperson.

Commissioner Bennett nominated Commissioner Wood for Vice Chair.

Commissioner Bennett nominated Commissioner Knickle for Secretary/Treasurer.

All nominations carried unopposed.

C. 2023 Board of Fire Commissioners Meeting Schedule

[Information/Discussion/Public Input]

Chief Martin proposed that there be a quarterly work session and board meeting, moving to alternating times of 10:00am and 5:00pm to encourage community involvement.

Commissioner Liszak commented that she likes the time changes.

Commissioner Wood asked about scheduling dates. Chief Martin advised the calendar was planned based on the holiday and end of month schedule.

The schedule will be voted on in the December Board meeting.

D. Preliminary Update from meeting with Property Appraiser Office [Information]

Chief Martin shared information from his recent meeting with the Lee County property appraiser and briefly outlined financial planning for the District through recovery over the next few years. The property appraiser and their team will be working through all of the data to give a preliminary snapshot before planning the District budget. The District is anticipating a 30-40% reduction in ad valorem values.

E. Approval Community Relations Manager and Salary Range

[Information/Discussion/Approval]

Chief Martin proposed the creation of a Community Relations Manager to run social media, media inquiries and community engagement.

Commissioner Fleming agreed that there is a need for this position.

Commissioner Liszak agreed that voice to speak for the District and engage the community is necessary.

Commissioner Knickle agreed and noted the past month has shown a critical need for a communications position.

Commissioner Bennett noted the organization runs lean as it is, and given the current circumstances personnel do not have time to dedicate to this task.

Commissioner Wood agreed, adding that there needs to be a designated person to go to for information, not the Board.

Commissioner Wood motioned to approve, Commissioner Bennett seconded; motion approved 5-0.

F. Preliminary Hurricane Ian Cost Estimates To Date [Information]

Chief Martin advised the District has spent approximately \$1.5 million on hurricane recovery so far and the designated reserves are depleted. Approximately \$600,000 of that was spent on repairing facilities for operations.

G. BOFC Assigned Reserve direction [Information/Discussion/Approval]

Chief Martin asked the Board for permission to pull from the Millage Sustainment Reserve for ongoing disaster response, recovery, and mitigation.

Commissioner Wood motioned to approve, Commissioner Bennett seconded; motion approved 5-0.

H. Request for Proposal/Qualifications (RFP/RFQ) Approval

[Information/Discussion/Approval]

Chief Martin requested permission to engage a cost expert to assist the District in ensuring all requirements and benchmarks are met while designing and building the new headquarters.

Commissioner Bennett inquired if the existing designer expressed interest. Chief Martin advised they expressed interest in seeing through to completion and are

currently waiting to hear from FEMA. Major design changes to the new station include elevation, joint emergency operations and a safe room.

Commissioner Bennett motioned to approve, Commissioner Fleming seconded; motion approved 5-0.

9. **Fire Chief Remarks** [Information/Discussion]

Chief Martin gave a quick update on the status of the demolition of Station 31 and progress on the temporary facility. Chief Martin also gave a brief overview of the Bricks program funding for the new facility.

10. **Attorney Report**- *none*

11. **Commissioner's Remarks** [Information]

Commissioner Bennett remarked that it has been a busy seven weeks and he is proud of the District personnel and our community/neighbors, adding he is thankful for the support from state and local jurisdictions. He observed that District morale is good.

Commissioner Knickle shared he is proud of the men and women of the District for their hard work and thanked Chief Martin for his leadership.

Commissioner Fleming congratulated the three Commissioners on their new positions and stated he is proud to be part of this District.

Commissioner Lyszak extended thanks to Jacksonville for the donated engine and ambulance. She stated that the outpouring of support has been appreciated and thanked the entire team and Chief for their work through this situation.

Commissioner Wood noted that everyone has been impacted personally and stated he is grateful for the tremendous outpouring of support. He added that the Fire Chief has done a phenomenal job through all of this. He concluded congratulating John Bennett on his appointment as Chairman.

Chief Martin thanked the Board for their comments but reiterated that he is only as good as the team behind him.

Chief Rogers from South Trail Fire District added a public comment that he was recently at a meeting for the property appraiser's board. Chief Rogers recommends the Board issue a letter appointing a representative of the District to serve on the property appraiser board and Lee County to ensure the voice of the barrier islands is heard.

12. Adjournment 10:37am