



Sanibel Fire & Rescue District
Board of Commissioners Meeting Minutes

DATE: Wednesday, June 19, 2024 @ 9:00 AM

ATTENDEES: Jerry Muench (Chairman) – *excused*
Bruce Cochrane (Vice Chairman)
Richard McCurry (Secretary Treasurer)

Kevin Barbot (Fire Chief)
John DiMaria (Deputy Chief)
Chris Jackson (Assistant Chief) - *excused*
Larry Williams (Fire Marshal)
Greta Fulkerson (Administrative Assistant)

John Reitenbach (Captain)
Todd Walter (Firefighter)

Tiffany Repecki (The Island Reporter) – *via Microsoft Teams*

The meeting was called to order by Commissioner Cochrane. Commissioner Cochrane led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Commissioner Cochrane noted that Commissioner Muench was excused from attending the meeting.

1. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the May meeting were reviewed. **A motion was made by Commissioner McCurry to accept the minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Cochrane. There was no discussion. The motion was approved unanimously.**

2. Community Appreciation Award - Jerry's Foods

This community appreciation award was presented by Chief Barbot, Deputy Chief DiMaria, Fire Marshal Williams, and Firefighter Moore to Jerry's Foods in recognition of their support and generous contributions to the Sanibel Fire & Rescue District for the Lee County Chili Cook-Off over the past few years. Chief Barbot added that this award goes way beyond the annual chili cook-off, expressing his thanks to Rick Winningham, manager of Jerry's Foods, for being there for the District and the island community post-Hurricane Ian.

3. Fire Marshal Williams' Report

There were 164 inspections and 103 plan reviews for May. Beach Comber and Blind Pass had been COed. The Sanibel Beach Club, Sanibel Inn and Tortuga Beach Club fire alarms had been finalized with all buildings close to being finalized. There were now separate electrical and fire alarm rooms in all buildings. Casa Ybel was still in progress but getting close. Most of Sundial Beach Resort had been completed, though Shima, the new restaurant, was waiting on the hoods. Penetrations and firewalls were in progress across Sanibel Sundial and Sunset South. The Atrium was now close to passing, with some issues outside the building needing a fix.

4. Assistant Chief Jackson's Report – presented by Chief Barbot

I) Brush Truck

Regarding the brush truck, they were still waiting on the chassis. They had requested Chief Jackson speak with the manufacturer to see if a prebuilt chassis could be provided. They had decided to stick with gas as this would be cheaper to maintain and better for idling. All gas engines had already been allocated on the eastern seaboard, but there were diesel engines available. The manufacturer had been willing to waive the difference in cost.

II) Repairs and Maintenance

Engine 179 had returned from annual maintenance and testing. The original estimate was \$19,315, but this has been reduced to \$11,898. Repairs were \$8,070, but a major failure during the pump test had added a further \$4,000. Repairs in the last three to four years had nearly doubled or tripled, with frequent issues arising. Ladder 171 went in for repairs last week to a new shop to see whether this could help achieve a higher quality service and better pricing.

III) Chevy Tahoe Auction

The red Chevy Tahoe had been sold to an island resident with the highest bid for \$10,200, who had wanted to help the fire department. He intended to donate the truck to a volunteer fire department affected by the wildfires in Texas.

IV) Grants

The Florida Firefighter Decontamination Grant and cancer grants had been received from the State. As a result of this, a new gear washer had been installed to replace the old one. Chief Barbot added that they were going to apply for the cancer grant again to obtain a secondary device for Station 172, and he requested permission from the Board to donate the old machine which they no longer had use for. Commissioner McCurry asked if the old parts could be replaced. Chief Barbot replied no, and that they would ensure that the new machine was functioning properly before giving away the old one. **A motion was made by Commissioner McCurry to donate the old gear washer asset. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Cochrane. There was no discussion. The motion was approved unanimously.**

They were still awaiting a verdict on the AFG grant. Nobody had yet been awarded the funds, though a total of 7,962 allocations had been received with a lump sum of \$3.7 billion of grant requests. They were in the final stages of application review. Meanwhile, they were holding off higher purchases whilst awaiting a verdict, though there was optimism they would receive the AFG grant.

V) Station 172

The Station 172 groundbreaking ceremony was successful. Thanks were given to Manhattan Construction, Deputy Chief DiMaria and personnel for helping with the event. The carport cover for Engine 172 would be installed next to the temporary trailer by Friday the 21st.

5. Deputy Chief DiMaria's Report

I) Call Volume

Last year, the call volume was 433 calls compared to the current year volume of 672, up by 54%. They were still reaching out of chute time above the 90th percentile.

II) Public Education

Regarding public education, a CPR class for 8th graders had been carried out, and routine blood pressure checks were continuing monthly. The day after the meeting, a CPR class was set to be held for the Wahine Toa summer camp, and an AED class had also been held for the VIP Realty Group after they had received two new AEDs for their property.

III) Training

An air consumption drill was conducted the previous week, which enabled personnel to gauge areas of improvement and physical condition. Many had managed to complete the full course. This would continue to be held twice a year, once in summer and once in winter. Firefighter Walter completed another Boat Operator Course with a group successfully. There had been continued improvement each time, with feedback that the class had been outstanding.

They were also looking to work with PD on a tie-off situation. Active Shooter Training with PD at the school had been conducted, and they were working on a plan to incorporate training for fire, EMS and law enforcement together. The location for the training was still undecided. Given a recent explosion incident that occurred in LA County, next week CNG gas training was set to take place with Larry Stillman there for three days. Waste Management had been contacted; with a high chance they would bring one of their trucks for a demonstration.

Regarding medical training, specifically for water emergencies, Dr. Abo had worked with rescue swimmers on water training similar to a previous water training event. In August, rescue swimmer evaluations were to be held, so further training sessions were set to be held before work on techniques prior to this date. This was important due to an uptick in water emergencies over the last year.

6. Chief Barbot's Report

I) District Financial Report

They were looking at a total of \$106,000 of unpaid taxes for the current fiscal year, which was low. Soft numbers were received on June 1st, with the City of Sanibel and Sanibel Fire & Rescue District taking a negative reduction in valuation. To get further clarification on this, a meeting had been held with the Property Appraiser. There has been a \$1.5 billion decrease in valuation for on island condos, taken off the tax roll due to hurricane damage. These condos have been deemed uninhabitable. If condos do not become habitable by January 1st, these properties are not added back onto the tax roll for their building values. The last few month have been active for properties coming back online, this will not help until next FY, this is another reason for the negative 1.8% decrease in property valuation. In future years, they would likely see this increase.

II) District Updates

Commissioner Muench was unopposed and would remain in his seat as Chairman for another four years.

Also, regarding Island Water Association, they had received Board direction to see whether they could get a reduction in water connection costs, which were currently \$6,000 for Station 172. This has been taken to the IWA Board, who unanimously approved the request, giving the District a saving of \$5,000.

Union negotiations were now underway, with the second meeting scheduled for July. Three additional dates had also been proposed.

III) State Budget Appropriations

State budget appropriations had been in progress since October 2023, with three trips to Tallahassee to speak with politicians. The District had recently been approved for \$2.1 million. Calculating the total amount of money brought in by FEMA, federal and state sources over the last 18 months, the District had received just under \$11 million.

Chief Barbot made a request for a revenue loss appropriation next year to go back to the state and try to recover money lost. A lobbyist would once again be necessary to assist with this matter. The Board agreed and approved Chief Barbot to move in the direction of going out to bid for an appropriations lobbyist.

IV) Staffing Updates

Fire Marshal Williams had reached 5 years of service, and Chief Barbot had reached 14 years of service.

7. Resolution 24-015 - Fire Hose Replacement Purchase

There was an NFP requirement to annually test hoses. Many hoses had failed testing, placing them below the required minimum for ISO. This meant they would need to purchase fire hose replacements. Three quotes had been received, with the decision to go for the lowest quote. Administrative Assistant Fulkerson read the resolution.

A motion was made by Commissioner McCurry to approve Resolution 24-015, purchasing necessary fire hose replacements. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Cochrane. There was no discussion. The motion was approved unanimously.

8. Resolution 24-016 - State Emergency Mutual Aid Agreement

This was a mandated required document that if they were to be under a state of emergency, they would be able to receive and send out mutual aid. The document gave an overview of the repayment for assets that the state would handle, giving the state authorization to bring in task force, strike teams, and assets into the District to help and vice versa. Administrative Assistant Fulkerson read the resolution.

A motion was made by Commissioner Cochrane to approve Resolution 24-016, authorizing the State Emergency Mutual Aid Agreement. The motion was seconded by Commissioner McCurry. There was no discussion. The motion was approved unanimously.

9. Commissioner Items

There were no items to discuss.

10. Union Items


The Union had started negotiations, which were currently in progress.

11. Public Input

There was no input to discuss.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:46 AM.

Commissioner Jerry Muench



Commissioner Bruce Cochrane



Commissioner Richard McCurry