



**Sanibel Fire & Rescue District
Commission Meeting Minutes**

DATE: Wednesday, December 11, 2024 @ 9:00 AM

ATTENDEES:

Jerry Muench (Chairman)
Bruce Cochrane (Vice Chairman)
Richard McCurry (Secretary Treasurer)

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

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

1. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

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

2. Fire Marshal's Report

Fire Marshal Williams provided an update for November, noting that a lot of work had been completed with the condos. All work had been completed at the Sanibel Sundial and the Colony Inn. 83 plan reviews and 140 inspections were undertaken. A hood system was repaired for the American Legion. Other projects included working with a deli and bagel shop, Little Adventures, Love Boat Ice Cream and the Caloosa Comedy Club. Twenty inspections were planned on the day of the meeting. The main objective was to get people back into their units. A question was raised as to the percentage of completion and Fire Marshal Williams noted that there had been some setbacks following Milton and Helene. Many of the condos and businesses have had to start again after each hurricane. Possible solutions, such as waterproof boards, were briefly discussed. Storm surging may become an annual issue. The Community Church had been remodeled and was open. Work was starting at Shalimar, including three sprinkler system inspections. The Shalimar complex was the first to be rebuilt from the ground up as it was completely destroyed.

3. Phoenix Awards Ceremony

Deputy Chief DiMaria conducted a presentation. Deputy Chief DiMaria started by welcoming everyone to the meeting and noted the presence of a survivor at the session. It was observed that the Phoenix Awards were intended as a symbol of resilience, and the meaning of the name was linked to the mythical phoenix rising from the ashes. The award was intended to celebrate the skill and courage of those who work in life-threatening situations as well as the outcomes. Receiving a Phoenix Award indicated that overwhelming odds have been overcome. This award highlighted two lives saved by two crews on two different days. Mr. William Noon and his family were welcomed and thanked for their attendance. Deputy Chief DiMaria indicated that he had been assisted on November 27, 2024, by the crew, including Acting Officer Arian Moore, Firefighter Dayan Concepcion, Firefighter Craig Shelby, alongside Paramedic Kara Coltellino and EMT Devyn Jones. Exceptional teamwork and skills helped Mr. Noon recover from a cardiac arrest. Deputy Chief DiMaria also highlighted the actions of Lieutenant Brian Howell, Firefighter Ed Zarick, and Firefighter Mike Tejada who also assisted at a cardiac arrest on June 15, 2024. The crew worked tirelessly for almost thirty minutes, providing advanced life support, and administering medication and CPR. This led to the return of a heartbeat. This was another reminder of the resilience of the fire service and the importance of hope. Deputy Chief DiMaria indicated that this moment should remind all present of the strength of working together.

Mr. Noon joined Deputy Chief DiMaria to help present awards to the crew. Deputy Chief DiMaria read out the text of the awards, and Mr. Noon thanked each individual for their efforts. Commissioner McCurry joined Deputy Chief DiMaria and presented awards to Firefighter Mike Tejada and Firefighter Ed Zarick. Deputy Chief DiMaria asked for the families and crews to go outside and take some photographs with the fire trucks. Deputy Chief DiMaria offered a final thanks to everyone in attendance.

The meeting was reconvened.

4. Assistant Chief's Report

Assistant Chief Jackson provided an apparatus update, noting normal wear and tear. Brush 171 was at that time in the shop for maintenance due to a throttle issue. Five or six other issues have been addressed. Brushfire season was approaching, so repairs were being sought quickly. It was noted that the brush truck had already depleted 100% of the budget, so funds would have to be shifted around in a budget amendment. \$3,000 was allocated for repairs to the brush truck. The repair bill was already \$5,500 with a further \$3,000 expected. The issues caused by the storm and saltwater were flagged, including electrical issues and rust or parts needing to be changed. It was set to be a major expenditure year for Brush 171, but it was unsafe to operate without these repairs. A budget amendment will be brought to the Board as soon as possible. The trucks were also loaned from the State of Florida on the assumption that they were kept in good condition, in case the state needed to recall them. Brush 171 is a 1997 ex-military vehicle, meaning parts were becoming harder to obtain. The transmission cooler was leaking, and the vendor was trying to find a replacement. The trucks were handed out a decade ago and were a good source for an inexpensive vehicle, but this was becoming more problematic. Chief Barbot was working with the graphics package on the new brush truck, and the truck was progressing well and was on schedule. There was an ongoing dialogue to discuss tweaks to the truck. A date was to be arranged for final inspection prior to the fire conference in Orlando the week of January 6th, which was supposed to be the pick-up date. The new Can-Am was discussed. Assistant Chief Jackson noted that a rescue skid was on the back of it, holding medical supplies, and it had been delivered to the manufacturer and a ship date was expected within weeks. Once it had arrived, the graphics wrap and emergency lighting will be installed, hopefully by the end of 2024 or early January 2025.

Station 172 was discussed. Assistant Chief Jackson and Chief Barbot visited the day prior to the meeting. It was noted that a crane was in place at the station site, and steel beams were being installed. The beams would be fully installed this week, supporting the second floor of the building. This was quicker than anticipated. Next week, the corrugated decking was due to be placed on the beams and welded in place before the concrete flooring was poured. The concrete was scheduled for the week of December 23rd, with the blocks being added on top of this. Progress was going well on the station build.

5. Deputy Chief's Report

Deputy Chief DiMaria provided an update. Last year, 863 calls were received. The call information was provided in the meeting packet. This year to date, 1372 calls had been received, around a 50% increase from 2023. Crews were still maintaining the 90th percentile for average time. Training was discussed, and Deputy Chief DiMaria noted that there had been fire training on December 3rd, 4th and 5th. This was a live fire event with two different scenarios. One scenario was search and rescue and the other was fire attack, including hose management. Every crew did well and feedback to work on had been gained. It was hoped that this would be an annual live fire event in Bonita Springs. Every crew from the District went, although this did not include all employees due to vacation and sick time. A question was raised as to how employees could make up for this, and Deputy Chief DiMaria noted this was being planned for next year. Advanced notice may have meant that more employees can attend. The crucial nature of this training was highlighted, especially due to the live fire conditions. Deputy Chief DiMaria was in attendance for two of the three days and noted the high

temperatures experienced. Prior to this event, firefighter survival training took place. This included bailouts, window hangs, mayday operations and moving through a wire entanglement course. Deputy Chief DiMaria explained how this was constructed and the purpose of this, including how it helps firefighters to deal with wire entanglement in an active situation. All personnel attended this. Discussions have been held with firefighters about next year and it was suggested that the entanglement course could be smoked up. A punch-out was also constructed for the exercise. Firefighter orientation and online safety training was discussed. This month's training had included hypothermia events. Dr. Abo would include this in his in-service event on December 17th. Some crews have been working with medical equipment also, completing their medical training on their own. The intensity levels of the fire and medical training would be increasing, including scenario-based sessions with more difficulty. This would also include field-based sessions. Dr. Abo was also to be involved with this.

Deputy Chief DiMaria gave an update on public involvement. The Luminary Night went well. Santa Claus visited the station, and the fire truck dropped him off at Jerry's. The crews were also involved in the FISH 5K, including support during and at the end of the race. No calls were made for their services. There was a Health Fair at the Rec Center on January 4th. A table was due to be set up there with blood pressure checks and medical information. There was also a table at the Holiday Tree Lighting Ceremony, as part of a new strategy where approximately fifteen letters were collected from children to Santa Claus. The children will receive a response in the next week or so. A letterbox would be built so the children can drop off their letters in the future. Deputy Chief DiMaria, Lieutenant Steele, Firefighter Schelm, and Firefighter Basora all helped with the Boater Safety class at the Sanibel School. The students would be old enough in the next year to go out on a wave runner. They ran three 45-minute classes on water emergencies. Further education classes were held at Sundial, and more were planned.

6. Chief's Report

Chief Barbot gave an update. 25% of ad valorem revenue had been received to date, which represented a good figure for December. So far, just under \$1,500,000 had been collected. The first distribution for Station 172 had been received. Chief Barbot outlined the process for this which had taken place over the last twenty months, starting with hiring a lobbyist, go to Tallahassee, working on packets and knocking on doors with the aim of getting \$2.1 million awarded to the station. The process had required going through the legislation, getting approval and working on the funding agreement, but the first direct deposit had been received into their operations account two weeks ago. Every month, a distribution would be received from the State covering the expenditure for the month. Chief Barbot emphasized the amount of work that went into this project and how impressive the benefits are. It was confirmed that the expenses had to be paid upfront, and they were then reimbursed, so there was no interest. Two other operational grants, for \$6 million and \$2 million, did require interest to be paid back quarterly. The overtime budget was higher than it should have been, resulting in a loss versus budget. The budget was higher in the finance report due to the impact of recent hurricanes. Work with FEMA was underway to gain reimbursement for overtime costs, labor costs, equipment costs. Hagerty Consulting was not asked to help support during these two most recent storms, due to the team having sufficient experience from Hurricane Ian, and a consultant not reducing the amount of work for the team. FEMA would also send a representative to ensure they would get what they were supposed to and overlook the documents. They hoped all this would save the District money and avoid going through a Cat-Z reimbursement for administrative costs. It was anticipated that the reimbursement would be between \$75,000 and \$100,000 from FEMA. Work was ongoing regarding funding for State deployment. The State had asked

for various reviews and documents, and it was expected that they'd ask for more of them in time, but that they'd get the funding in the end. The grant and funding agreement for Station 171 had been postponed until January due to the County. Work was still continuing on this, and the request for proposal was completed. This was ready to be submitted and go out to the public. A bid for a designer was the next step. The goal was to have a proposal for the Board to vote on regarding an architect and design to start the project, hopefully with the funding agreement also in place.

Chief Barbot provided an update on the beach campfire permits. The process for this had been streamlined and was now part of the online service. Positive feedback had been given from the public regarding this.

Chief Barbot shared that Chief McMahon had passed away recently. He had worked at the station for four or five weeks. Members of the District attended the funeral and offered coverage to South Trail Fire to allow firefighters to attend. The need to pay it forward with other stations and areas was highlighted, particularly in light of the support given after the recent storms.

A request was made to push back the January meeting by a week, if possible, due to the fire conference and the collection of the new brush truck. This was approved. The meeting was to be scheduled for Wednesday, January 15, 2025.

The cost of the demolition of the old garage at Station 172 was \$49,169. The recommendation was to go ahead and demolish the structure. Problems would have continued with the structure, such as flooding following the recent storms, reaching up to 28 inches of salt water inside the station, and the likelihood of future similar issues, due to water run-off pushing in that direction. The rebuild was already \$150,000 over budget, but this was brought down to \$95,000. The demolition will reduce this to the mid to high 40s. It was noted that the garage was a liability. Approval was granted unanimously for the demolition.

Chief Barbot shared some further updates. Assistant Chief Jackson had completed 21 years of service, Engineer Walter 9 years, and Engineer Moore 8 years.

7. Business Agenda Items

A) Resolution 25-001 - ZOLL - Extended Warranty & Preventative Maintenance Contract

Chief Barbot noted that this was a standard purchase but needed a resolution due to the invoice amount. The contract covered ZOLL cardiac monitors with extended warranties. A new monitor was \$45,000. Administrative Assistant Fulkerson read out the resolution in full, including the details of the contract. The total cost was \$12,044. A motion was made by Commissioner Cochrane to accept Resolution 25-001 as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Mueach. There was no discussion. The motion was approved unanimously.

B) Resolution 25-002 - Bennett Fire Products - Purchase of 7 Sets of Bunker Gear

Chief Barbot noted that this was related to the purchase of bunker gear and that the District had been using these products for a long time. This was part of a longer-term contract with Lake County so there was no need to go out for bids. A resolution was required due to the invoice amount. Administrative Assistant Fulkerson

read out the resolution in full, including the individual items to be purchased. The total cost was \$26,600. A question was raised as to how the purchase accounted for the different sizes of firefighters. Chief Barbot indicated that each individual was personally sized by a representative from Bennett Fire Products. The gear had a ten-year expiration date. Many of the employees had gear that was expiring or was new. A motion was made by Commissioner McCurry to accept Resolution 25-002 as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Cochrane. There was no discussion. The motion was approved unanimously.

C) Resolution 25-003 - AFG Grant Award Procurement - Gym Equipment for Stations 171 and 172

Chief Barbot indicated that this resolution related to a FEMA grant for gym equipment. This had been discussed in previous meetings. The grant amount was \$36,030.90. There was a 5% cost share, and the District was responsible for shipping fees. Administrative Assistant Fulkerson read out the resolution in full, including the items to be purchased and how this fitted with the District procurement policies. The shipping and cost share would total \$4,741.54. A question was received as to how the types of equipment were chosen. Chief Barbot confirmed that this was handled mainly by one of the District's firefighters who is an expert in the workout world so to speak, who also consulted with the other firefighters who work out the most at the station. It was confirmed this was for two gyms. AFG also only provided specific amounts for specific equipment, meaning that not all recommendations from the firefighters could be met. Some items had specific costs associated with shipping, but this was still cheaper than using the station's own funds. A motion was made by Commissioner Muench to accept Resolution 25-003 as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner McCurry. There was no discussion. The motion was approved unanimously.

D) Resolution 25-004 - Dock Repair - Hurricane Damage

Chief Barbot indicated that the dock had been damaged in the recent storms, meaning that work was required. There was an agreement with the City for a 50-50 cost share to the public safety dock. The City would take care of all electrical work, including the control board on the lift. In return, the District needed to repair the dock. A temporary dock was built by a crew to allow access. A question was received as to the extent of the damage on the dock. Chief Barbot confirmed all of the stringers underneath were rotted and loose, meaning the pilings were also working loose. The wave break would also need to be replaced. The amount of work needed was substantial. Assistant Chief Jackson noted that deck boards and damage was evident before the most recent storms, and that he had been replacing the boards regularly. The wood was no longer strong enough to hold screws. The difficulty of finding a company available to repair the dock was noted, due to the recent increase in demand for repairs. Three quotes were secured. The columns for the lift would stay, but the decking supports would be replaced. The deck would not be raised any further. Administrative Assistant Fulkerson read out the resolution in full. The total cost was \$14,660. A motion was made by Commissioner Cochrane to accept Resolution 25-004 as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner McCurry. There was no discussion. The motion was approved unanimously.

E) District Policy Approvals

Chief Barbot noted that progress was being made with policies. A packet of current policies had been sent to the Board for review. No questions were received. The policies were reviewed as listed:

1050 – Disaster Compensation Policy
1209 – Credit Card Policy
1023 – Workplace Violence
500 – On Scene Rehabilitation
920 – Heat Index and Weather Effect on Training
907 – Heat Illness Prevention Program
307 – Atmospheric Monitoring for Carbon Monoxide
318 – Hazardous Materials Response

A motion was made by Commissioner Muench to accept the policies as listed in the agenda. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Cochrane. There was no discussion. The motion was approved unanimously.

8. Commissioner / New Business Items

Commissioner Cochrane extended his thanks to Chief Barbot and Assistant Chief Jackson for their work on Station 172.

9. Union Items

No items to discuss.

10. Public Input

No input to discuss.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:55 AM.



Commissioner Jerry Muench



Commissioner Bruce Cochrane



Commissioner Richard McCurry