

Sanibel Fire & Rescue District
Board of Fire Commissioners Meeting Minutes

Date & Time: Wednesday, June 17, 2026, at 9:00 AM

Location: 1456 Periwinkle Way, Suite A, Sanibel, FL 33957

Attendance: Commissioner Bruce Cochrane / Commissioner Richard McCurry / Fire Chief Kevin Barbot / Assistant Chief Chris Jackson / Fire Marshal Larry Williams / Administrative Assistant Greta Fulkerson / DVP Ed Zarick / District staff / Members of the public

*Commissioner Jerry Muench was excused and did not attend remotely.

*Deputy Chief John DiMaria was also absent from the meeting.

Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

- The meeting was called to order at 9:00 AM.
- The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all present.

Approval of May Meeting Minutes

- The meeting minutes from the previous meeting were reviewed.
- **A motion was made by Commissioner McCurry to approve the May meeting minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Cochrane, and the motion carried unanimously by the Commissioners present.**

Fire Marshal Williams' Report

- **Inspections and plan reviews:** Fire Marshal Williams reported 23 plan reviews and 120 inspections for the month of May.
- **Training opportunities from demolition projects:** The District is working with the Gulf Beach condominium property on East Gulf Drive, which is expected to be demolished in the coming weeks. Staff are coordinating with the HOA representative in hopes of using the property for training before demolition.
- **Library occupant load:** Fire Marshal Williams met with the Sanibel Public Library and completed an occupant-load review after the library restructured the interior layout. The updated layout allows the library to accommodate additional attendees.
- **New and ongoing occupancies:** The Island Wine location, in the former Clam Shack space, is moving toward opening. Fire Marshal Williams also discussed active work at Riverview behind 7-Eleven, including sprinkler testing on multiple floors, underground work completion, and fire alarm installation.
- **Major construction and redevelopment activity:** Projects discussed included By the Sea, Island Inn, LCEC, and Ding Darling. The Ding Darling project includes a bunkhouse and additional buildings, with plans reviewed by Fire Marshal Williams.
- **Flow testing and fire protection support:** Fire Marshal Williams and Assistant Chief Jackson completed multiple flow tests to support sprinklered projects. Island Water Association is contacted before flow testing so the District can obtain accurate readings.

- **Annual inspections and Knox boxes:** Annual inspections remain ongoing, and staff continue to address Knox box corrections and related fire prevention follow-up items.
- **Development trend:** Fire Marshal Williams noted that smaller condo remodels have slowed compared to the immediate post-storm period, while larger construction and redevelopment projects have increased across the island.
- The Board discussed several island properties, including Topsy Turtle, the former Chevron location, and ongoing remodel/new construction activity. Fire Marshal Williams noted that any new restaurant or occupancy would be required to address applicable fire protection requirements.

Assistant Chief Jackson's Report

- **Apparatus maintenance:** Assistant Chief Jackson reported that Ladder 171 was repaired for an air-conditioning issue and check-engine light, which was traced to a bad exhaust sensor. Engine 179 also had air-conditioning and check-engine issues repaired, including replacement of a bad turbo actuator.
- **Brush 171 GPS tracking:** Brush 171 now has a GPS tracker installed. The tracker supports incident command, brush-fire operations, and tablet command by allowing incident commanders and other units to see the vehicle location when deployed off island or into mutual-aid areas.
- **Vehicle and specialty-unit tracking:** Most District vehicles are equipped with tracking. The District discussed that certain specialty assets, including the rescue inflatable boats and Can-Ams, are not tracked through the same county system and must be managed by the officer or incident command structure during incidents.
- **Marine 171 overhaul:** Marine 171 is approximately five years old and is due for a major overhaul. Staff are obtaining quotes and recommendations, including input from LCSO and the Coast Guard. A Pine Island vendor is being explored.
- **Station 172 punch list and warranty items:** The long-awaited rope metal railing for Station 172 is in the County and being powder coated. Remaining items are largely punch-list or warranty-related. The countertop repair was not accepted by staff, and replacement of that section will be pursued. Retainage remains in place.
- **Station 172 landscaping:** The landscaping subcontractor retained by Manhattan has not been consistently appearing as required. The District advised that if the issue is not corrected, it will obtain its own service and seek to deduct the cost from retainage.
- **Station 171 demolition:** Demolition is progressing well. The main slowdown is the turnaround time for construction dumpsters traveling to and from the disposal site. The site superintendent anticipates demolition being 100% complete by Friday, June 26, 2026.
- **Station 171 construction preparation:** The rear portion of the fire and EMS side has been removed down to sand, including walls, floor, slab, and footers. Work is continuing on the former administration side. The north wall has been cut for the new build. Once demolition is complete, the contractor will lay out building corners, footer locations, column locations, the new water line, and the fire-suppression line.
- **Fire line plans:** The underground fire line plans for Station 171 were approved by Fire Marshal Williams.

Deputy Chief DiMaria's Report

- Chief Barbot presented Deputy Chief DiMaria's report on his behalf.

- **Call volume:** Year-to-date call volume was 743 for 2026 compared to 812 for the same period in 2025, an 8.5% decrease. May 2026 call volume was 141 compared to 126 in May 2025, a 12% increase.
- **Training hours:** The District completed 556 aggregated training hours during May.
- **Response performance:** Out-of-chute/turnout performance remains above the 90% target.
- **Current training priorities:** Online training for the month includes ventilation. Medical training includes burn management and associated protocols. Company officers will determine appropriate company-level training based on crew needs.
- **Marine operations training:** The District is emphasizing rescue inflatable boat training, marine operations, rescue swimmer deployments, and area familiarization in targeted bay and back-bay locations where victims or crews may become difficult to locate.
- **Truck Committee update:** The Truck Committee continued evaluation of available apparatus options and has narrowed its focus to a preferred configuration believed to meet current and future District operational needs, service demands, response capabilities, and long-term strategic goals.
- **Apparatus cost discussion:** Chief Barbot advised that a rough estimate for a similar engine is approximately \$1.3 million before equipment, compared to roughly \$750,000 for comparable trucks ordered several years ago. Lead time remains approximately three years from contract execution.
- The Board discussed the need for a formal bid process, development of a detailed specifications spreadsheet, review of multiple manufacturers, and consideration of pricing ranges and alternatives before moving forward. The Board emphasized balancing operational needs with fiscal responsibility.
- **Vehicle stabilization equipment:** A recent rollover crash highlighted the need for vehicle stabilization struts. Staff is pricing options, with an early estimate of approximately \$2,600 for a set. The equipment would improve patient and responder safety during vehicle stabilization and extrication incidents.
- **Community involvement:** Crews participated in a fire truck demonstration at the Sanibel Library and a bike safety day at the Sanibel Recreation Center. CPR classes continue to occur on a frequent basis and remain well received by the community.
- **Tunnel to Towers stair climb:** Chief Barbot reported on the Tunnel to Towers event in New York City. Firefighter Arian Moore and Firefighter Rob Bell, as well as himself, participated with a 15-member Sanibel group that included city and public-safety leaders. The Sanibel team was recognized as one of the top fundraising teams nationally, and the Board thanked the participants for representing the District and community.

Chief Barbot's Report

- **Preliminary property values:** Chief Barbot reported that June preliminary property valuation numbers showed the District down approximately 1%. He noted that the numbers are preliminary and may not yet fully reflect certain multi-family values. Final numbers will be monitored as the District develops the Fiscal Year 2026-2027 budget.
- **District finances:** Chief Barbot advised that District financials are tracking in line with expectations. A budget amendment was included later on the business agenda.
- **Bank and LGIP account consolidation:** Following prior Board direction, Bank of the Islands accounts were consolidated. Local Government Investment Pool accounts were

merged effective June 1 so the District would not lose accrued monthly interest. The consolidated accounts will be reflected on future balance sheets.

- **Interest-rate review:** Chief Barbot followed up on Commissioner McCurry's request to review LGIP interest rates. Current rates were reported at approximately 3.84% to 4%, which Chief Barbot advised is comparable to available options through Bank of the Islands, Florida FIT, and Florida Prime.
- **Station 171 easement agreement:** The Station 171 easement agreement is underway. The District has received the engineer's drawing and narrative, and legal counsel is drafting the document. Chief Barbot advised that the agreement should not require City Council approval once the District Attorney and City Attorney agree on the language. The engineer's drawing and narrative cost approximately \$500 in District funds.
- **July BOFC meeting and Phoenix Awards:** The July 8, 2026, Board of Fire Commissioners meeting will be held at the Sanibel Public Library to provide a larger venue. The District plans to present Phoenix Awards for two lifesaving events, including recognition of District personnel, Sanibel Police, LCEMS, and others involved.
- **Station 171 schedule:** Chief Barbot reported that Manhattan's current schedule reflects substantial completion of Station 171 around May or June 2027. He described that schedule as aggressive but noted that completion of the new station will resolve the District's current meeting-space limitations.
- **Station 172 rescue inflatable boat:** The District received an \$8,500 donation from Bank of the Islands toward the rescue inflatable boat for Station 172, covering approximately 98% of the boat, motor, and equipment. The District is also working on a custom trailer with rollers, extended bunks, and wider tires to support beach launching and recovery. Chief Barbot recognized both Bank of the Islands and On Island for their support of the initiative.
- **Staff recognition:** The District recognized Fire Marshal Williams for 7 years of service and Fire Chief Barbot for 16 years of service.

Business Agenda Items

A. Resolution 26-005: Budget Amendment No. 1, Audited Carry-Forward Balance, and Impact Fee Fund Budget

- Chief Barbot explained that, following the annual audit, the District adopts the audited carry-forward balance and brings the amended budget into alignment with the audited figures.
- Resolution 26-005 adopts the audited carry-forward balance for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2025, approves Budget Amendment No. 1 to the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 budget, and approves the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Impact Fee Fund budget.
- The audited carry-forward balance was identified as \$15,587,422.
- The amended Fiscal Year 2025-2026 General Fund budget reflects total revenues and expenditures of \$27,947,334.
- The Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Impact Fee Fund budget recognizes \$31,377 in restricted and unearned impact fee funds, estimates \$7,500 in impact fee revenue, includes no planned expenditures, and projects an ending restricted and unearned balance of \$38,877.
- **Commissioner McCurry made a motion to approve Resolution 26-005 as read by Administrative Assistant Fulkerson. Commissioner Cochrane seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously by the Commissioners present.**

B. Resolution 26-006: First Amendment to the Fire Station 171 Construction Contract with Manhattan Construction Company, LLC

- Chief Barbot explained that the First Amendment corrects a schedule discrepancy between the Invitation to Bid and the construction contract for Fire Station 171.
- The original construction contract language reflected 325 days for Substantial Completion, while the Invitation to Bid contemplated 525 calendar days. The amendment corrects the Substantial Completion and Final Completion language.
- Chief Barbot stated that because the Fire Station 171 project is funded through HUD Community Development Block Grant - Disaster Recovery funds, the District is formally documenting Board authorization through resolution.
- Resolution 26-006 authorizes the Fire Chief to execute the First Amendment to the Fire Station 171 construction contract with Manhattan Construction Company, LLC and to take actions necessary to implement the amendment within the scope presented to the Board.
- **Commissioner McCurry made a motion to approve Resolution 26-006 as read by Administrative Assistant Fulkerson. Commissioner Cochrane seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously by the Commissioners present.**

C. Policy 1053: Firefighter Cancer Presumption Benefits and Leave

- Chief Barbot explained that a recent employee situation highlighted the need for a formal policy addressing firefighter cancer-presumption benefits, leave, return-to-work documentation, and light-duty considerations.
- The policy establishes a standardized process for both the District and employees when a firefighter cancer benefit claim is submitted or approved, including the handling of time off, medical documentation, light-duty eligibility, and return-to-work status.
- Chief Barbot advised that the policy had been reviewed and approved by District legal counsel, Lara Donlon, and had also been cleared by the union.
- **A motion was made by Commissioner Cochrane to approve Policy 1053, Firefighter Cancer Presumption Benefits and Leave, as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner McCurry, and the motion carried unanimously by the Commissioners present.**

D. Station 171 CDBG-DR Grant Compliance / Lease and Revenue Restrictions

- Chief Barbot advised that the purpose of the discussion was to ensure the Board and future administrations clearly understand the restrictions connected to HUD CDBG-DR funding for Fire Station 171.
- Chief Barbot reported that he met with the Lee County Emergency Medical Services Director, who raised concerns about HUD restrictions on rental income, lease agreements, CAM/cost reimbursement, program income, and the District's future use of grant-funded property following project completion and closeout.
- Chief Barbot explained that the existing EMS arrangement tied to the prior Station 171 building is not a traditional lease agreement. The 2006 agreement reflected a buy-in toward the original station construction, including an upfront payment and annual payments over a 25-year term, along with CAM-related reimbursements.
- The current EMS agreement is expected to end in 2031. Chief Barbot stated that CAM reimbursements may continue to be treated differently from lease or rent payments because CAM relates to shared operating and maintenance expenses.

- For the new HUD-funded Station 171 building, Chief Barbot advised that the District should not collect lease payments, rent, or other revenue generated from the building during the applicable HUD compliance period. If such funds were collected, they may need to be returned to HUD.
- Chief Barbot noted that project closeout and post-closeout requirements may extend for several years after the project is completed and paid out. The Board discussed the importance of documenting this issue so future District leadership understands the restriction.
- No formal action was taken on this item.

E. Fire Hydrant Beautification / Art Program

- Chief Barbot explained that the District was initially approached by Rachel Pierce regarding painting a hydrant at Periwinkle Place. The District approved the initial hydrant painting, but later recognized that City rules regarding signage, appearance, and outside artwork needed to be considered.
- Chief Barbot contacted the City Manager, and the City expressed support for the concept. The City has since indicated support for the District overseeing a hydrant beautification/art program, provided the process is controlled and appropriate.
- A second hydrant was later painted without the same level of District notification or approval, which prompted the District to pause and develop a standardized process.
- Chief Barbot advised that the District owns the hydrants, while IWA has also been contacted and has no objection to the initiative. The District and IWA made clear that emergency use, maintenance, and access to hydrants remain the priority.
- The District is working on an authorization/sign-off form requiring the applicant to acknowledge that the hydrant remains District-owned, the District or IWA is not responsible for damage to the artwork during use or maintenance, the art must be maintained, and the District may repaint the hydrant if the art is not maintained or becomes inappropriate.
- The Board discussed the need for design approval, no offensive or derogatory content, no direct logos or marketing, no attachments or glued-on objects, and use of appropriate paint for metal surfaces.
- Public input and staff discussion focused on operational visibility. Concerns were raised that painted hydrants could be harder to locate at night or in vegetated areas if colors reduce visibility. The District will consider visibility requirements, road reflectors, hydrant markers, and location-specific review as part of the approval process.
- No formal action was taken on this item.

Commissioner / New Business Items

- No additional commissioner or new business items were brought forward after the business agenda discussion.

Union Items

- Union DVP Zarick reported that the chili cook-off was a success, with approximately \$1,000 raised and positive community feedback. The trophy was completed and delivered, and the event is expected to continue with strong participation next year.

- Union DVP Zarick also discussed the firefighter cancer policy and confirmed continued cooperation with the District on that issue.
- Union DVP Zarick reported attending the FPF conference, where legislative issues and potential tax reform impacts were discussed. The union expressed a desire to work side-by-side with the Chief and District as more information becomes available, noting that the issue affects both the District and employees.

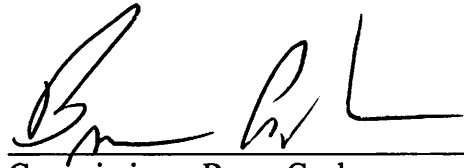
Public Input

- A member of the public who identified as a construction attorney asked whether the Fire Station 171 amendment had been checked to confirm that the references to days were calendar days rather than business days. The concern was that a business-day interpretation could unintentionally extend the project duration. Chief Barbot advised that nothing had been signed yet and that the District would confirm the language before execution.
- The Board confirmed that the meetings are public and encouraged community participation.

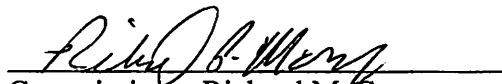
Adjournment

- There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 10:01 AM.

Commissioner Jerry Muench



Commissioner Bruce Cochrane



Commissioner Richard McCurry