



Sanibel Fire & Rescue District
Tentative Budget Hearing Minutes

DATE: Wednesday, September 4, 2024 @ 5:01 PM

ATTENDEES: Jerry Muench (Chairman – *present via Microsoft Teams*)
Bruce Cochrane (Vice Chairman)
Richard McCurry (Secretary Treasurer)

Kevin Barbot (Fire Chief)
John DiMaria (Deputy Chief)
Greta Fulkerson (Administrative Assistant)

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

Commissioner Cochrane noted that Commissioner Muench was excused, but in attendance via Microsoft Teams Meeting.

1. Budget and Tentative Millage Presentation / Board Discussion

Commissioner Cochrane explained that the primary goal was to offer a competitive wage and benefits package for personnel in addition to providing them with the essential life-saving equipment and tools of the trade. There was a responsibility to taxpayers to provide the highest quality services without compromising public safety. Chief Barbot stated that all relevant documentation would be available online after the meeting, highlighting that the roll-back rate would bring in approximately \$6.1 million to the District, a reduction of around \$40,000 compared to last year, although an additional \$2.1 million in state appropriations had been approved for Station 172. He clarified that while wages had been discussed and tentatively agreed upon, allowing for those figures to be included in the budget figures, they had not yet been ratified by the Union, and he had a meeting on September 9, 2024, to try and conclude this. Known or expected increases were identified in personnel services, with an overall increase of 4% or \$191,776 compared to last year, insurance, which is currently in negotiation but expected to increase by 80% to 100% based on other Districts' renewals, and vehicle maintenance, the latter two of which are the main cause of the 6% increase in total operating expenditures to \$1,247,204. Chief Barbot advised that a slight reduction in total capital outlay had been achieved, with the largest expense being the \$8 million to rebuild Station 172, all of which was State, Federal, and FEMA funding, and explained that \$100,000 had already been paid out of the impact fees towards the brush truck, with around \$130,000 remaining, including equipment costs. He concluded by noting that total expenses were slightly reduced from last year, being \$14,969,436 compared to \$15,483,179, but cautioned that several budget amendments were expected in light of the amount of grant and state funding, as well as other figures such as insurance and wages being finalized.

A motion was made by Commissioner Cochrane to approve a salary increase for the Fire Chief of 5%. The motion was seconded by Commissioner McCurry. There was no discussion. The motion was approved 2 to 0 with Commissioner Muench abstaining.

The Board discussed the usage of the roll-back rate, noting that the budget would be tight and require everyone to contribute to keeping costs down, although the reserve operating fund was available if necessary, and acknowledging the difficulties of taxpayers. The support from the State and FEMA around rebuilding Stations 172 and 171 was emphasized as critical in the District being in a position to use the roll-back rate.

2. Public Input on Budget and Tentative Millage Presentation

Commissioner Cochrane noted that no members of the public were in attendance.

3. Resolution 24-020 - Adopting the Tentative Millage Rate for Fiscal Year 2025

Administrative Assistant Fulkerson read **Resolution 24-020**, and the Board was asked to approve the roll-back millage rate of 1.3915 mills, with a public hearing to take place for final adoption.

A motion was made by Commissioner McCurry to approve Resolution 24-020 as read. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Cochrane. There was no discussion. The motion was approved 2 to 0 with Commissioner Muench abstaining.

4. Resolution 24-021 - Establishing a Tentative Budget for Fiscal Year 2025

Administrative Assistant Fulkerson read Resolution 24-021, and the Board was asked to approve the tentative Fiscal Year 2024-2025 budget, with a public hearing to take place for final adoption.


A motion was made by Commissioner Cochrane to approve Resolution 24-021 as read. The motion was seconded by Commissioner McCurry. There was no discussion. The motion was approved 2 to 0 with Commissioner Muench abstaining.

5. Set Date, Time, and Place for Final Hearing

Commissioner Cochrane noted that the public hearing for the final adoption of the millage rate and tentative budget would be held on **Wednesday, September 18, 2024, at 5:01pm at the Sanibel Fire & Rescue District Station 171, 2351 Palm Ridge Road, Sanibel, FL 33957.**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:28 PM.

Commissioner Jerry Muench



Commissioner Bruce Cochrane



Commissioner Richard McCurry