

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

December 18, 2024 5:00 PM  
Diamondhead Beach Resort  
2000 Estero Boulevard

In attendance: Chairman John Bennett, Vice-Chairman Jim Knickle, Secretary/Treasurer Ron Fleming, Commissioner Keran Farrell, Commissioner Jacki Lyszak (arrived at 5:18PM), Fire Chief Scott Wirth, and District members.

1. Meeting Called to Order 5:05 PM
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Adoption of Agenda [Discussion/Approval]

Commissioner motioned to adopt the agenda. Commissioner seconded the motion and the motion carried 4-0.

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. Approval of Meeting Minutes from November 20, 2024
- B. Approval of Checks General Fund Checks 49061-49119 total \$204,336.65
- C. Approval of Capital Improvement Project Fund Check 1016 - 1018 total \$72,674.81

Commissioner Fleming motioned to approve the consent agenda. Commissioner Farrell seconded the motion and the motion carried 4-0.

7. Fire Chief's Report

Chief Wirth indicated his happiness that hurricane season is over and while we did not escape unscathed, it could have much worse had we taken a direct hit from Hurricanes Debby, Helene and Milton. Some lessons learned; having shared temporary EOC space with the Town of Fort Myers Beach was successful and learning the clarity of the type of high water vehicle needed for response. Members of our team are working toward rank advancement and members of USAR continue to obtain targeted training for specialty responses. Life Safety Specialist Chris Cox has expressed an interest in plans review and is currently training with Fire Officer Campbell. There are mixed emotions with the sale of the Station 31 property. This was the original fire station that has served us well for

over 75 years. A special thank you to DVP Williamson and his team for their professionalism and commitment to promote a positive labor/management relationship that contributed to successful negotiations. Technology and Security Administrator Craig Kaufman has been instrumental in implementing the sign board project that initially began prior to Hurricane Ian. Craig has also replaced all our apparatus Mobile Data Computers that interface with Lee County. Assistant Chief Randy Kraus has been working diligently to build out the enhanced features of the Operative IQ program. These features include job tickets for repairing facilities, bunker gear, radios, etc., and will track the repairs associated with each asset, allowing for easy access to historical repair information associated with each asset. Assistance Chief Armiger and Lt. Jensen completed the Blue Zone Hazzard Conference in Ohio; they will in turn relay what they learned to our crews. Chief Wirth also highlighted several operation staff for progressing in their careers. Chief Wirth also reviewed current and historical call volume. Prior to Hurricane Ian, 70% of our calls were EMS related and 30% fire related. Post Hurricane Ian, the calls are primarily fire related verses EMS. Total call volume is approximately sixty percent of what it was before Hurricane Ian. Chief Wirth also reviewed member anniversaries.

8. Unfinished Business

A. Update on Progress of High Water Vehicle [Information/Discussion]

Chief Wirth provided information regarding high water vehicles research and vehicles that have been test driven and will be test driven. He also discussed each of the vehicles researched and the pros and cons of each. Chief Wirth indicated that additional research is needed and will provide and updated information at the next meeting.

B. Update on the Sale of 3043 Estero Blvd [Information/Discussion]

Chief Wirth indicated that after a few minor delays, the closing occurred on December 12<sup>th</sup>.

9. New Business

A. Construction Contract and Guaranteed Maximum Price (GMP) for New Fire Station 31 [Information/Discussion/Approval]

Chief Wirth gave some background information and indicated that Wright Construction provided a GMP contract for \$11,940,849. The fire station is 13,450 square feet, representing a \$892 square foot price. We anticipate 14 months to substantially complete.

The agreement with the State of Florida provides for a March 2026 final date to complete this grant project. The higher cost is largely due to constructing a Level E building. Commissioner Fleming motioned to approve the contract. Chairman Bennett seconded the motion and the motion carried 5-0.

10. Fire Chief Remarks

Congratulation to Christina Ensor on the birth of her son. Our crews are working with the Beach Kids Foundation to provide Christmas toys to the youth in our community. Chief Wirth expressed his appreciation for the Board's leadership. He's also looking forward to the coming year, construction of the new fire station, promoting members and hiring to staff the new station. Chief Wirth wished everyone a merry Christmas and a safe New Year.

11. Commissioner Remarks

Commissioner Farrell thanked Chief Wirth and is excited to see the construction of our new station. He commended members of the operation staff for taking on the additional work toward professional development and obtaining certifications. Commissioner Farrell wished everyone a merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

Commissioner Liszak mentioned a Fort Myers Beach Council member whose family member required our services and mentioned that the crew was very professional and wanted to thank them for the care that was provided. She also thanked her fellow Board members and is happy to be part of this amazing Board and wished everyone a merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

Commissioner Knickle recognized that 2024 has been challenging. He is also excited about the new station construction. Commissioner Knickle would like to thank all the members for their incredible work this year, understanding the unique challenges to each individual and their families and how difficult it can be working shifts in dangerous situations. The holidays are a good time to reflect on how fortunate we are and looking forward to good year. He wished everyone happy holidays.

Commissioner Fleming is also pleased to see we are moving forward with the construction of Station 31. He mentioned his pleasure at members taking advantage of training and that the District is hiring to fill open positions. Commissioner Fleming reflected that Hurricane

Ian changed the mindset of many residents and was hoping Hurricane Milton did not impact the mental resiliency of the community. He believes that we are turning the corner.

Chairman Bennett thanked the Board and indicated he has enjoyed working with them.

He's looking forward to the New Year and the Board's annual retreat. Chairman Bennett is excited to begin construction of the fire house and the sale of the old station property and thanked everyone for their work and dedication. He also wished everyone a great holiday.

Chief Wirth added a special thank you to FPL for decorating our Station 33, it is beautiful and is truly appreciated.

12. Adjournment 5:48 PM