

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

March 22, 2023 10:00am  
Diamondhead Beach Resort  
2000 Estero Boulevard  
[location change due to Hurricane Ian]

In attendance: Chairman John Bennett, Vice-Chairman Larry Wood, Secretary/Treasurer Jim Knickle, Commissioner Jacki Lyszak, Commissioner Ron Fleming, District Chief Scott Wirth, Finance Director Jane Thompson, Attorney Andrew Salzman, and District members.

1. **Meeting Called to Order** 10:03 am
2. **Pledge of Allegiance**
3. **Adoption of Agenda** [Discussion/Approval]
4. **Restate Agenda Items** [Information]
5. **Public Input on Non-Agenda Items**
6. **Consent Agenda** [Approval]

Items listed on the Consent Agenda 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 February 22, 2023 Meeting Minutes
- B. Check approval #47964 thru 48022 total = \$176,753.64

Commissioner Lyszak moved to adopt the agenda, Commissioner Fleming seconded the motion and the agenda was approved 5-0

7. **Fire District Operations Report:** Fire Chief/District Manager [Information].  
Chief Wirth shared updates on the District. The lobbyists is making progress with state legislation and will provide updates later in the week. Chief Wirth mentioned and thanked Chief Armiger for his work on the recent training in Bonita. Progress on the temporary Station 31 is moving forward. The Beach is progressing with rebuilding and there is an uptick in plan review and inspections. Chief Wirth recognized IT and Security Manager Craig Kaufman for one year of service with the District.
8. **Unfinished Business** -*none*
9. **New Business**
  - A. Fire Chief update on State Legislative work [Information/Discussion]  
Chief Wirth shared that Ms. Donaldson arranged meetings with members of house committees and the District will know soon if we make it into the initial budget.  
The Board had no questions.

B. Director of Finance Report on Ian cost recovery [Information/Discussion]

Finance Director Jane Thompson advised there is good news across board. AC Disaster recovery spent the past week going through everything and the handoff from the State representatives was smooth and cohesive. Between insurance and FEMA the District is almost at a break-even, however there are still outstanding big ticket items such as elevator and roof repairs. Station 31's damage under the 50% rule was signed off by the state and elevated to FEMA.

Commissioner Wood asked if insurance money for the damaged fire truck can be used toward alternate project. The funds can be used with approval of a scope of work for the alternate project.

Commissioners Knickle, Fleming and Lyszak all briefly shared thoughts and thanked Jane for her hard work.

C. Fire Chief Recruitment [Discussion]

Chief Martin resigned on Friday 3/17/23. The Board will need to decide on a process of Fire Chief Recruitment and they are looking for input from everyone on qualities and requirements of the position.

Commissioner Lyszak shared her thoughts on necessary traits of a candidate and that she does not want to rush into a decision.

Commissioner Fleming advised whomever is chosen needs to be able to start immediately, and that he feels the education requirements are too restrictive.

Commissioner Bennett noted that having a master's degree shows commitment, especially given the financial aspects of the job. If this requirement is too limiting he suggested it could be changed to preferred, not required.

Commissioner Knickle agreed that a master's degree is indicative of commitment, but he leans toward it being desired over required. He also inquired if the District would use assistance from an outside agency for recruitment.

Commissioner Wood inquired if there are any District personnel that currently meet the full qualifications, and if not, is it just the masters that precludes them from being considered.

Attorney Salzman added that obtaining a master's degree within a certain time

frame could be added as a condition of employment.

Commissioner Bennett previously spoke to Jane about the study done prior to the hiring of Chief Love and the recruitment firm that was used.

Jane will send the Board the most recent version of the Fire Chief job description so that they can discuss changes.

The Board agreed to discuss the hiring of a new Fire Chief further at the retreat scheduled for Friday, March 24<sup>th</sup>.

**10. Fire Chief Remarks** [Information/Discussion]

Chief Wirth shared that there was a structure fire over the weekend and thanked responding crews for a job well done. He also thanked Iona McGregor's PIO Megan Contreras for all of her assistance in the past few months.

**11. Attorney Report** - *none*

**12. Commissioners Remarks** [Information]

Commissioner Lyszak thanked everyone and shared that April 2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> is Southwest Florida days in Tallahassee. She will be meeting with legislators at that time.

Commissioner Fleming thanked the senior staff for keeping the District above water and thanked Chief Martin for his service.

Commissioner Knickle echoed the same sentiments and thanked Chief Martin for his dedication and service to community and organization.

Commissioner Wood also thanked Chief Martin and congratulated Commissioner Lyszak on her recent attendance at the State of the Union in Washington DC.

Commissioner Bennett shared he was sad to see Chief Martin go. He is confident that the organization will move forward and is grateful for a team that can fill the needed roles for the time being. He thanked the community members for being understanding and added that he wishes Chief Martin happiness and a bright future.

**13. Adjournment** 10:59am