

**BLUFFTON TOWNSHIP FIRE DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
Tuesday, September 20, 2016
Bluffton Fire Station #35, Headquarters**

MINUTES

Board Members Present: Mike Raymond, Joe Paolo, Louise Haaker, Ed Olsen, Elaine Lust, Paul Hamilton, Thomas Mike

Members Present: John Thompson, Paul Boulware, Rick Cramer, Dan Wiltse, Terry Sheriff, Steve McKinley, Bob Payne, Joe Helms, Pete Reid, Randy Hunter, Rhett Livingston, David Rice, Matt Baker, Brian Brock, Derek Franks, Paul Woods, Jason Carle, Andrew Hatcher, Leslie Jones Hart

VIA Video Conferencing: Vernon Edenfield, Tom Lamb, Charles Eaton, Alex Elliott, Mike McComas, Steve Arnold, Donald Boyd, Carson Stone, Anthony Pavilonis, Austin Williams, TJ McCullion, Jeff Kuehn, John Roe, Whitney Brady, Dylan Taylor, Allen Cramer, Matt Henne, Tim Smith, Andrei Turner, Doug Favors, Dan Connelly, Roberto Cuevas, Jason Brahm, Alex Sanchez, Greg Linacre

Community Members: Doug Volk, USCB Nursing Student

Meeting called to order at 4:00 PM by Chairman Raymond.

Pledge of Allegiance and Prayer

Board of Directors Roll Call

- **PUBLIC COMMENT:**
- **CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS:** Chairman Raymond praised the department in their various 9/11 Memorial activities and events. The Honor Guard and Staff represented BTFD well and the public enjoyed seeing our participation. He also noted that Hurricane Hermine tested the department's resources and we performed well. Finally, the Rotary Club Walk for Water is Saturday, September 24, at the Oyster Factory Park. He encouraged the department to create a team and walk. BTFD will supply the water during the walk.
- **AUGUST BOARD MEETING MINUTES:** Director Haaker motioned and Director Hamilton seconded the minutes of the August 16, 2016 Board of Directors meeting be approved. The motion passed unanimously.
- **FINANCIAL REPORT:** Chief Boulware reported that we are 16.67% through the FY 2017 budget year, with expenditures reporting at 17.04%. Several departments are running over budget. All reimbursements have been received and posted. Our annual contract with Mike Ryan has been paid as well as the quarterly business insurance payment. The fire impact fee account balance is \$1,920,492. When asked, Chief Payne was told that new construction generates only one impact fee, either from the Town or from the County, depending on the location of the construction. The auditors are here for a few days to begin the audit process and CAFA report. The Financial Report was taken under advisement.
- **FIRE CHIEF'S REPORT:**

- **Fire Prevention Statistics:** Chief Wiltse reported the Prevention office performed 227 Fire and Life Safety Inspections in the month of August. Development plans throughout the district include many home sites, medical offices, and utilities projects. Many other areas are “in the works” and not yet to the Plans Review and Approvals stage. Public Education participated in 24 events, including National Night Out, several businesses, and various school facilities. Lt. Levesque also installed 41 smoke alarms in 17 homes. There were 19 CPR classes held with 93 students taught.
- **Training Report:** Chief Sheriff reported there were 9 courses held with 19 personnel in attendance, no courses were cancelled, and 2 personnel were denied courses. Training highlights include medical training in pediatric abuse and neglect, Probationary firefighter evaluations, and Map testing (knowledge of streets). Pediatric abuse and neglect training allows the department to alert police, DSS, etc. of child safety issues and removal if necessary. PACE testing for applicants will take place this Saturday, and those passing the PACE test will be permitted to take the written test on Sunday.
- **Operations Report:** Chief Cramer reported the monthly statistics of 480 calls last month, with 3,669 calls since January 1. We are running 373 calls ahead of a year ago. We ran 52 calls the day of Tropical Storm Hermine, more calls than any other day. The average response time was 6:12 minutes, with the yearly average of 6:29 minutes. A service call was explained as anything from smoke detectors beeping to elevator issues. Seventy percent of those calls are lift and assist calls. Nuisance false alarm calls are tracked by the Fire Prevention office, who then follow up to see if repairs or service is needed. We do not charge for those calls at this time.
- **Maintenance Update:** Chief McKinley stated all the new trucks are running well. The Fire District had 145 work orders for the month of August, 109 for BTFD, 22 for Bluffton Police Department, and 14 for the Town of Bluffton. Our numbers could increase as we added a new customer, SC SLED, for an emergency tire replacement. Several small station repair projects are being planned. Since 9/9/16, we have been tracking the status of the Alabama pipeline gas spill. Most of our fuel comes out of August, but we are now using Charleston-based fuel, which comes in by ship. This means we should not experience any fuel shortages while the Alabama pipeline repairs are being made. The security doors project will begin soon. We have received quotes from two electricians for running the wiring. We will purchase the equipment and our staff will install it. It is a smart system tied into the network and uses scan cards and will include all stations except Stations 36 and 37.
- **Chaplains’ Update:** While there is no official report, Director Hamilton stated the Chaplains are making progress.
- **Construction Projects Updates:**
 1. Maintenance Building Construction Close-out and Move-in: Chief McKinley reported the driveway entrance is awaiting DOT approval, after which BJSWA will connect the water supply. Landscaping is nearly complete and the dumpster enclosure is in place. Bay floors have been sealed and the decorative trellises are installed. We are getting furnishings, equipment, and fixtures in for the new maintenance facility. Some items have been delivered already. Move-in date should be the end of the month. The Certificate of Occupancy should be issued soon. The anticipated move-in date is the first week of October. The equipment list for the new shop has been finalized and will be ordered soon. All landscaping is in, ceiling tiles installed, and exterior door locks complete.
 2. Training Facility Construction: Chief Boulware stated the building should be delivered October 10. Sea containers will be used to store the materials while it is being built. Fraser Construction should have filed the permits for the foundation slab, which should be ready after curing for 14 days. He has a meeting this week to review the timeline.

3. NovaTime: Chief Boulware answered Director Paolo's questions regarding NovaTime by stating the program is running smoothly after just a few glitches. The program helped us track OT used during Tropical Storm Hermine and has simplified transmitting our payroll information to County.

- **OLD BUSINESS:**

- **Colleton River Fire Station Agreement:** Chief Thompson gave an overview of the Colleton River Fire Station progress. A soil engineer stated that soil compaction problems were found on the planned construction site, reporting that 2 feet of organic material would need to be removed and replaced at a cost of \$93,800. The soil test also recommended (but did not require) that seismic protection due to the soil being so sandy. That cost would be an additional \$79,300. These amounts would be added to the construction cost of \$1,106,059. This building will also need to be an essential structure due to it being an infrastructure building for the County and designed for a higher category for wind loads. That cost upgrade will be minimal. Additional cost for furnishings is \$30,000. Colleton River has already spent approximately \$50,000 in costs through engineers, architects, etc. Colleton River will absorb those costs. We, however, will pick up the necessary costs for remediating the soil. Since the seismic protection is not required and does not invalidate our insurance if we opt out of that protection, we will not include that in our plans. Another site is not recommended because neither DNR nor SC Ports Authority is willing to donate or sell any land, and any other site in the area would have the same soil issues. It would also further delate what has been a lengthy process and add to the costs. A motion was made by Director Paolo and seconded by Director Olsen to pay \$93,800 for the soil remediation and deny the seismic protection. A few other firms submitted bids, but they were higher. Cleland also is working with the general contractor. After discussion, the motion passed unanimously. The next step would be to move the process to the County Finance Committee. We could look at breaking ground after the first of the year.
- **Fund Balance Discussion:** There was concern at the August Fire Board meeting regarding a Fund Balance Report that was sent out by Mr. Kubik. The report showed BTFD having a fund balance of 13%, lower than any other agency or department in the County. At one time, we had a large surplus in fund balance and the County wanted BTFD to spend some of those funds. We built a new Station 30, purchased a ladder truck, as well as a few other projects, which brought our fund balance down. However, the Fire Board wanted to have a three month fund balance surplus, in case of an emergency, and the District has been doing this since then. Any funds we do not spend roll over into the surplus fund balance, any excess revenue taken in by the County also rolls over. Other ways to increase funds is by the Vehicle Maintenance program that Chief McKinley has initiated and charging for the lift and assist "program" in the future. It is natural that our funds are at their lowest point in October and November, right before the County begins collecting taxes in January. Raising taxes will not change the fund balance dramatically.

- **NEW BUSINESS:**

- **Hurricane Hermine Post Operations Briefing:** Chief Thompson thanked Captain Franks for commanding the Special Ops and Hurricane Hermine Preparedness plan. Everyone did an excellent job in showing how prepared BTFD is in emergencies. We started out 5-6 days ahead of the storm and became operational 12 hours prior to the storm hitting. Three brush trucks with 2 employees manning chain saws each cleared roads of downed trees and limbs for access only. Chief Wiltse was located at the Town and helped maintain communication there. Communication from the County was virtually nonexistent during this time. The storm included a command staff, on-line crew members, and 14 additional employees during this period. We received 35 storm-related calls, 9 medical calls, 1 service call, 1 fire call, and a boat that flipped on the May River. Dispatching was done with precision and professionalism. Food for firefighters for 3 meals for 2 days was delivered to each station prior to the storm. The overall cost of the storm was \$6,813 for the 24 hour period. Everything and everyone worked well. We have debriefed internally but not with the Town as yet.
- **Other:** Director Olsen suggested again that we create a foundation for the fire district. Captain Reid is in the process of establishing a 501c3 plan that the Cook Team, the Auxiliary, the T2T running team,

and the breast cancer walk, as well as others, would be a part of. This would allow individuals and businesses to make tax-deductible contributions.

Chairman Raymond encouraged the staff to be creative in not only spending money but bringing funds into the District through a variety of ways, including possibly charging non-residents for services.

Chief Thompson mentioned a NovaPad program that does something similar but they contact the insurance companies involved.

Director Lust thanked everyone for the Pancake Breakfast held on Sunday, Sept. 4. It was noted that \$850 was donated to the Tunnel to Tower Savannah Run, a Stephen Siller Foundation, who helps first responders and military personnel who need smart homes or home adaptations due to injuries.

- **EXECUTIVE SESSION:** None.
- **ADJOURNMENT:** The meeting was adjourned by Chairman Raymond at 5:27.