

**BLUFFTON TOWNSHIP FIRE DISTRICT  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
Tuesday, October 18, 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, Pete Reid, Rhett Livingston, Mike Rehill, Doug Favors, Mark Eiden, Mike McComas, Chris Garniewicz, Matt Henne, Clay Daley, Don Matchette, Steve Arnold, David Romine, Gio Scianna, Nancy Hyer, Leslie Jones Hart

**VIA Video Conferencing:** Walt Arlt, Keegan Alcock, Brent Phillips, Adam Corn, Mike Tuten, Duke Novak, Brandon Stevenson, Derek Beeler, Tyler Marion, Rod Oates, Dan Connelly, Charlie Schramm, Trey Fludd, Erik Ligeikis, Joe Sirigu, Andrew De La Cruz, Jeff Smith, Joel Martin, Cam Terio, Tim Walsh, Dave Adams, Brendon Long

**Community Members:** Doug Volk, Pastor Alvin Petty, Chaplain Maybin, Pastor Bennie Jenkins

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

**Pledge of Allegiance and Prayer**

**Board of Directors Roll Call**

- **PUBLIC COMMENT:** Director Lust thanked the Department for its wonderful response both during and after the hurricane. Chairman Raymond observed that a tropical storm was very different from a hurricane, but the community feels the District did its job well. Director Olsen stated that the refrigerated truck used for food was a smart decision. He also gave praises for the hard work. He also noted that we need more community involvement, such as the First African Baptist Church kick ball game and cookout and the Sunday dinner, to make our good community relations even better. Director Haaker gave a huge thank you from all the Sun City residents for the coverage. Director Hamilton echoed the sentiments of all for his community.
- **CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS:** None
- **SPECIAL PRESENTATION:** Chief Thompson acknowledged Steve Arnold, Gio Scianna, and David Romine, as well as Dave Adams and Enrique Baez, Matt Baker, and others who could not attend, for their involvement in the Tunnel to Tower run in Savannah and Columbia. This team has won for the 4 years they have been involved in Savannah and the 2 years in Columbia. The race proceeds go to establishing homes for wounded military personnel and first responders. Some expenses are covered by sponsors, the Department, and Auxiliary, while the runners absorb the rest of their costs. The Savannah race included over 30 additional runners and walkers from the Department and family members. Congratulations for your outstanding job and representing the District so well!
- Director Hamilton introduced Pastor Alvin Petty who has joined the District as a Chaplain. Pastor Petty, who is affiliated with First African Baptist Church on Hilton Head, will be assigned to Station 33. We look forward to your guidance and spiritual leadership.

- **SEPTEMBER BOARD MEETING MINUTES:** Director Paolo motioned and Director Hamilton seconded the minutes of the September 20, 2016 Board of Directors meeting be approved with the two corrections. First, Director Mike was marked absent but was present for the meeting. Second, Chairman Raymond asked that under the section of “Fund Balance,” the minutes reflect Chairman Raymond’s challenge to look at other ways of increasing the fund balance, including expanding our maintenance contracts, leveraging the new training facility, looking at possible fees for service and other possibilities. The motion passed unanimously with those corrections.
  
- **FINANCIAL REPORT:** Chief Boulware reported that we are 25.0% through the FY 2017 budget year, with expenditures reporting at 24.20%. Two departments, including Administration, are running over budget, with the remaining departments shown below budget. The Administration overage is due to the balance of the NovaTime time clock purchase. All quarterly payments have been posted. No additions to the impact fee account have been reported by the County. Chairman Raymond asked about our expenses incurred for Hurricane Matthew and how they will impact the budget. Chief Boulware stated most of those numbers will show on next month’s financial report and those funds will be pulled out in a separate, more detailed report. The estimated cost of the hurricane will be \$200,000-250,000, most of which is payroll expenses. Director Mike was told that FEMA reimbursements could take as long as 2 years. Director Olsen stated that those who lost trees can go to the IRS web site for property value loss credit information. Chief Boulware explained that Revenues are what we request from the County as a warrant when we pay our bills and expenses. He also stated Lisa Wechsler will be at the November meeting to discuss the audit. Chief Thompson explained how projected numbers are established and why we don’t have actual numbers. Any funds left over from what has been budgeted and what has been requested in warrants is applied to the general reserve funds. He also stated that Bluffton area has a 97-98% tax collection rate. The September Financial Report was taken under advisement.
  
- **FIRE CHIEF’S REPORT:**
  - **Fire Prevention Statistics:** Chief Wiltse reported the Prevention office performed 142 Fire and Life Safety Inspections in the month of September, a decrease from previous months. Development plans throughout the district include many home sites, healthcare sites, and a utilities project. Public Education participation information was not available due to computer issues. There were 14 CPR classes held with 85 students taught.
  
  - **Training Report:** Chief Sheriff reported there were 7 courses held with 20 personnel in attendance, no courses were cancelled, and 2 personnel withdrew from courses. Training highlights include physical fitness training, SCBA refresher training, and medical training in EMT refresher courses. Chief Sheriff explained the Leadership class that is a required class for Senior A, B, or C firefighters, as well as other explanations of classes and terms.
  
  - **Operations Report:** Chief Cramer reported the monthly statistics of 512 calls last month, 100 more calls than September 2015, with 4,181 calls since January 1. We are tracking at 500 additional calls for the year of 2016. BTFD ran 49 calls on the day Tropical Storm Hermine passed through our area, the most ever in any one day. The average response time was 6:14 minutes, with the yearly average of 6:28 minutes. Chief Cramer gave a breakdown of call times. He also noted that ISO ratings are determined by mileage rather than response times.
  
  - **Maintenance Update:** Chief McKinley stated they are receiving equipment and furnishings for the new facility. The Fire District had 117 work orders for the month of September, 93 for BTFD, 12 for Bluffton Police Department, and 12 for the Town of Bluffton. Station 33 has started its parking lot beautification project. The new trucks are running well, but one had a power steering issue. The five staff vehicles have been ordered and we should receive them in 6-8 weeks. Old vehicles will be placed on a government site for sale. 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:** Director Hamilton stated various Chaplains will be giving the invocation and reporting to the Board each month. Chaplain Maybin, assigned to Station 37, stated the perspective of his role is to encourage firefighters to share on both professional and personal levels when necessary. He also feels that posting the Chaplains' pictures lets the Department get to know them. Bluffton Police Department has several Chaplains as well, two of whom are members of both departments.
- **Construction Projects Updates:**
  1. Maintenance Building Construction Close-out and Move-in: Chief McKinley reported the facility weathered the hurricane very well with no storm damage to the building. A few trees damaged the fencing but the construction supervisor is fixing those areas. We are lacking parking lights, but those are being worked on. We have water and the cleaning company has completed its final cleaning. A punch list is being completed in order to obtain a final Certificate of Occupancy. The automotive lifts are operational and all office furniture has been delivered. The fork lift was delivered and Captain Hart has been certified as forklift operator trainer. Move-in date should be the end of the month. The current generator at Station 30 will be moved to Maintenance and a smaller generator will be purchased to replace it.
  2. Training Facility Construction: Chief Thompson reported the building was delivered yesterday in 7 trailers. After several set-backs with the County, we will receive the slab permit in the next few days and we can then move forward.

- **OLD BUSINESS:**

- **Colleton River Fire Station Agreement:** Chief Thompson said the money for Colleton River Station 36 has been approved by the Finance Committee and County Council. We are waiting for the easement from SC Ports Authority and 3 minor contract points have been agreed upon, including arbitration, a typographical error, and liquidated damages for deadlines that are not met.

- **NEW BUSINESS:**

- **Hurricane Matthew Briefing:** Chief Thompson thanked everyone for a job well done. Chief Cramer gave a timeline of events leading up to, during, and after the hurricane. The Governor issued an evacuation order early, and the County went to OpCon 1, the highest level of alert. That also allowed the necessary spending for food, fuel, supplies that would be needed and bringing in all staff, except those deemed non-essential, on Wednesday, Oct. 5. Evacuation traffic was light throughout the process. The District was in "prep mode" during this time, getting stations, trucks, and equipment ready and renting a refrigerated truck for foods. All food needed for that day was delivered to each station. All stations were operational until Friday afternoon when Stations 36 and 37 were shut down and moved to the command center at USCB. Stations 32 and 33 were the next stations to be transferred to the command center. This was part of the County plan to use the new USCB gymnasium as command central for HH Fire and Rescue, BCEOC, and BTFD. As of Friday morning, we still had 4 stations operational. Personnel brought in their own personal equipment (boats, tractors, bobcats, trailers, chain saws) ready to be used in the event of the predicted 9-12' storm surge. All stations were closed at 6:00 PM on Friday evening. At that time, 29 employees went to EverCore and the rest of the employees went to USCB. The EverCore team became the reconnaissance team when they could get out after the initial storm hit. Chief Thompson noted that there was very little control from EOC at USCB, but our employees stepped up and began to clear roads and assess neighborhoods. Our staff left USCB on Saturday AM and back into stations. Everyone did an excellent job in showing how prepared BTFD is in emergencies. For 2 days, they worked practically non-stop clearing roads and making sure people were safe. Cameras and web sites were down, generators ran out of gas, and cell service was down. We communicated by radio, which worked well. EMS couldn't respond to calls because the closest operating hospital was in Orangeburg. Chairman Raymond recommended we take part in an

extensive de-briefing with all concerned personnel. We need to improve greatly on the communication level. Gated communities frequently have contracted with companies for tree removal. The Fire District only clears trees if they impede streets. There were issues with who was in command and how it was handled. We hope to be a part of a countywide critique when it is set up.

- ***FY16 Annual Report:*** Chief Thompson presented the FY16 Annual Report to the Board. He hopes to have copies placed on the web site and distributed throughout the community to show the citizens what we are doing.
  - ***Other:*** Director Paolo encouraged members to get involved with Auxiliary activities such as Rockin' the Pink Breast Cancer Walk.
- **EXECUTIVE SESSION:** None.
  - **ADJOURNMENT:** Director Paolo made a motion and Director Mike seconded to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed and the meeting was adjourned at 5:55.