

**BLUFFTON TOWNSHIP FIRE DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
Thursday, November 17, 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, Joe Helms, Doug Favors, Matt Garnes, Chris Garniewicz, Matt Henne, Clay Daley, Shawn Fitzpatrick, Keegan Alcock, Nick Thompson, Leslie Jones Hart

VIA Video Conferencing: Walt Arlt, Eric Ligeikis Stephen Jansen, Adam Corn, Mike Tuten, Duke Novak, Derek Beeler, Dustin Brown, Cam Terio, Rod Oates, Dan Connelly, Charlie Schramm, Brett Phillips, Trey Fludd, Joe Sirigu, Andrew De La Cruz, Mike Rehill, Jeff Smith, Joel Martin, Tim Walsh, Dave Adams, Brendon Long

Community Members: Doug Volk, Pastor Sam Joyner

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

Pledge of Allegiance and Prayer: Chaplain Joyner led today's prayer.

Board of Directors Roll Call

- **PUBLIC COMMENT:** None
- **CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS:** Chairman Raymond wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving and noted that the year is coming to a close soon.
- **OCTOBER BOARD MEETING MINUTES:** Director Mike motioned and Director Hamilton seconded the minutes of the October 18, 2016 Board of Directors meeting be approved. The motion passed unanimously.
- **FINANCIAL REPORT:** Chief Boulware reported that we are 33.33% through the FY 2017 budget year, with expenditures reporting at 33.34%. These figures include Hurricane Matthew expenditures and an initial payment for the audit. Our current impact fee account balance is \$1,983,420.73. While Chief Boulware doesn't get a list of commercial buildings that are included in the impact fee account, he noted that the fees are paid before permits are issued. Therefore, if construction has begun, the fees have been paid. The property does not go on the tax roll, however, until the Certificate of Occupancy is issued. The preliminary report from the auditor shows we did quite well as far as the revenues. The excess revenue means our fund balance will grow. The auditor is still waiting on a few reports from the County to complete our audit. She will be at the December meeting to review the audit. We have also received a memo from the County Treasurer's office stating that errors were made in the automobile tags tax collection. The result is the County owes us approximately \$164. Director Lust reported that she had read the County also overcharged people on property taxes as well. Director Paolo motioned and Director Olsen seconded that we accept the Treasurer's Report. The motion passed.

- **FIRE CHIEF'S REPORT:**

- **Fire Prevention Statistics:** Chief Wiltse reported the Prevention office performed 151 Fire and Life Safety Inspections in the month of October. The bi-annual gate inspections have also been completed. Development plans throughout the district include home sites, commercial projects, and healthcare sites. Noting the number of development plans for new businesses, Director Olsen requested a total of square footage of new commercial space in the past year. It was noted that these new projects drive the choice of future equipment purchases. Public Education participation included many outreach events with schools as well as a variety of businesses. There were 8 CPR classes held with 71 students taught.
- **Training Report:** Chief Sheriff reported there were 6 courses held with 6 personnel in attendance, one course was cancelled (due to the hurricane), and 3 personnel were denied courses. Training highlights include physical fitness training, ropes and knots reviews, and National Registry EMT re-certification refresher courses.
- **Operations Report:** Chief Cramer reported the monthly statistics of 582 calls last month, with 4,763 calls since January 1. We are tracking at 583 additional calls for the year of 2016. BTFD ran 75 calls on the Saturday of Hurricane Matthew. The average response time was 6:23 minutes, with the yearly average of 6:27 minutes. .
- **Maintenance Update:** Chief McKinley stated they have been catching up from all the hurricane preparedness and recovery events. They are now working completely out of the new Maintenance Facility and had no lapse of service for the District or the Town during the moving process. The Maintenance Division had 86 work orders for the month of October, 66 for BTFD, 14 for Bluffton Police Department, and 6 for the Town of Bluffton. An open house will be scheduled for the new facility. Director Olsen suggested we tap into the schools and churches when we have the open house. Station 31 will have fencing placed on its property on Monday and the crews installed pavers surrounding the flagpole. Station 33 completed its parking lot beautification project. They are also building a canopy over the standby generator. Chief Thompson appreciated and noted the station pride in these projects. We also had a few pumpers with Cummins engine issues that were taken care of by the dealer. We still do not have a date as to when we will receive the new administration replacement vehicles although they have been ordered.
- **Chaplains' Update:** Chaplain Joyner stated he is currently assigned to Station 32 on Callawassie Drive. He is getting to know the crews and feels they are building a good relationship.
- **Construction Projects Updates:**
 1. Maintenance Building Construction Close-out and Move-in: Chief McKinley reported the facility had a CO inspection and the Certificate of Occupancy is in the process. All equipment is in and operational. Some landscape material needs to be replaced from the hurricane. As previously stated, a date for an open house will be set and the public will be invited. The automotive lifts are operational and all office furniture has been delivered. We would like to be out of the old facility by Friday.
 2. Training Facility Construction: Chief Sheriff reported the footings have been poured and the slab will be poured this Monday. After the slab cures for 14 days, construction will begin on the building.

- **OLD BUSINESS:**

- **Colleton River Fire Station Agreement:** Chief Thompson said we are making good progress on Colleton River Station 36. SC Ports Authority and BTFD have agreed on the easement and the contract is ready to be signed. The vote in Colleton River to sell the land for \$1 passed easily. We have the approval from the County to spend the impact fees for construction of the station. The architect is working with the County and the contractor putting together the construction contract. The architect

will work as the construction manager for the project. Next Tuesday we will meet with County and have the pre-construction conference.

- **NEW BUSINESS:**

- ***Hurricane Matthew Report:*** Chief Thompson stated they began having conversation 2 weeks prior to Hurricane Matthew's arrival. We have already filed the documentation with FEMA necessary for reimbursement of funds. We have been given permission to file the claim directly to FEMA. Chief Cramer gave a detailed overview of what happened beginning with the planning stages of hurricane preparedness on Sept. 28 and continuing to current. He reported the steps of evacuation, firefighter recall, and how stations and equipment were readied for the storm. Stations were shut down in groups and sent to USCB where the Southern Command post was established. Station 35 was the last station to shut down and they were moved to Evicore. After the hurricane had passed on Saturday, Oct. 8, several groups went out as reconnaissance teams to begin clearing roads and check on citizens. Station 35 was the first station to bring back up. Stations 30 and 33 were then added and back on line. Several stations were blocked off due to power lines and trees. The first of three waves of firefighters to be released from USCB at 10:00. Firefighters immediately began checking and clearing roads. That continued until dark when it was no longer safe due to downed power lines and debris. Chief Cramer stated they removed hundreds to trees in road right of ways to make sure they had access for medical and safety issues. Seventy-five calls were made that day with 16 units in operation. Each time firefighters cut a tree up, checked on a home, etc., a report was made. Those reports are being used as documentation for FEMA. Reimbursement should be made at 75% from FEMA and 25% from State. However, we may not receive reimbursement this fiscal year. Our firefighters did an excellent job, and what is even more important is that not one firefighter was injured in the entire process. By Sunday afternoon, some firefighters were sent home and on Monday we were back into normal operations. Excess food and the refrigerated truck were sent to Hilton Head as they were without power and eating MRE's. We also sent crews to help with backfill and Urban Search and Rescue to assist with cutting trees.

BTFD held our internal after action review on Monday, Nov. 14, completely reviewing each aspect of the process. Tuesday, Nov. 15 was the state-wide critiquing for fire districts only where they found the same challenges that our district had. On Nov. 29, there will be a county-wide review with fire, police, and EMS. Chairman Raymond stated that it is critical that everyone is involved in the critiquing process so we can continue to serve our citizens well and learn from each incident. He knows BTFD did a great job, but not all agencies worked well.

Director Olsen would like a pictorial put together, using both Captain Hunter's many pictures and pictures from citizens, to show what it was like during the hurricane. Director Haaker was told that each family has its own evacuation plan but we do keep a list of where everyone goes. The District web site is also updated on a regular basis to keep families informed. Some insurance companies help with relocation expenses, deductibles, and property damages to first responders.

Costs of the hurricane exceeded the budget for food, supplies, and especially labor costs that ran \$233,413. Total costs ran \$247,472. Request for public assistance has been sent to FEMA for reimbursement. Through all of the hurricane costs, the District remains on firm financial ground.

- ***Bluffton Township Fire District Foundation:*** Per Captain Reid, we have begun the work to create a 501(C)3 foundation, named the Bluffton Firefighters Foundation. We have received the certification paperwork from the SC Secretary of State and will complete the paperwork to receive the IRS certification as well. All of the charitable units of BTFD will be under this foundation which will enable us to go after corporate donors for community projects. We may also provide scholarships for firefighters children and possibly area students. Director Haaker offered her expertise as a grant writer when establishing this foundation and writing the mission statement. No motion by the Board is needed as the foundation will be an independent entity. However, it is important that BTFD has a level of oversight due to the name of the foundation.

- **EXECUTIVE SESSION:** None.
- **ADJOURNMENT:** Director Olsen made a motion and Director Haaker seconded to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed and the meeting was adjourned at 5:26.