

**BLUFFTON TOWNSHIP FIRE DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
Tuesday, January 17, 2017
Bluffton Fire Station #35, Headquarters**

MINUTES

Board Members Present: Mike Raymond, Joe Paolo, Louise Haaker, Thomas Mike, Elaine Lust, Ed Olsen (by phone)

Absent: Paul Hamilton

Members Present: John Thompson, Paul Boulware, Rick Cramer, Dan Wiltse, Terry Sheriff, Steve McKinley, Bob Payne, Pete Reid, Joe Helms, Lee Levesque, Derek Church, Emerson Kovalanchik, Mike Provo, Grant Turner, Jeremy Eby, Tim Walsh, David Mack, David Romine, Jerry Piccioli, Chris Himes, Tony Crosetto, Doug Favors, Adam Corn, Tom Lamb, Derek Beeler, Matt Urys, Matt Henne, Marcos Farr, Mike McComas, Whitney Brady, Brian Brock, Leslie Jones Hart

VIA Video Conferencing: Jim Thomas, Phillip Horton, Alex Sanchez, Ben Rushing, Paul Harrelson, Guillermo Holzmann, Jayme Beach, Jake Hartley, Parker Dennis, Joe Dembeck Justin Olds, Jason Williams, Ed Rhodes, Enrique Baez, Vasont Miller, Richard Dollahan, Gio Scianna, Andrew Hatcher

Community Members: Doug Volk, Levesque Family, Favors Family, Corn Family, Lamb Family, Beeler Family, Urys Family, Henne Family, McComas Family, Brock Family

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

Pledge of Allegiance and Prayer: Chief Payne led today's prayer.

Board of Directors Roll Call

Due to a lack of a quorum at the beginning of the meeting, Chairman Raymond asked Chief Thompson to proceed with the Promotional Ceremony. A quorum was met during the Promotional Ceremony with the arrival of Director Lust and Director Mike.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

- **PRESENTATION OF NEW HIRES:** Introductions are postponed until next month.
- **PROMOTIONAL AND GRADE ADVANCEMENT PRESENTATION:** A record number of people took part in assessments and testing. The following people were promoted:
 - Firefighter I* – Whitney Brady, Brian Brock, Jason Carle, Roberto Cuevas, Andrew De La Cruz, Vasont Miller.
 - Firefighter II* – Aaron Angel, Tony Crosetto, Parker Dennis, Jeremy Eby, Guillermo Holzmann, Greg Linacre, Tyler Marion, Mike McComas, TJ McCullion, Duke Novak, Brett Phillips, David Romine, Charlie Schramm, Tim Smith, Cam Terio, Andrei Turner, Jason Williams.
 - Senior Firefighter A* – Travis Boulware, Clay Daley, Paul Harrelson, Jake Hartley, Andrew

Hatcher, Taylor Kamp, Eric Ligeikis, Brendan Long, Joel Martin, Don Matchette, Carson Stone, Dylan Taylor.

Senior Firefighter B – Enrique Baez, Mark Eiden, Phillip Horton, Alex Sanchez, Austin Williams.

Senior Firefighter C – Marcos Farr, Matt Henne, Todd Shisler.

Lieutenant – Derek Beeler, Matt Urys.

Captain – Adam Corn, Doug Favors, Tom Lamb, Lee Levesque, Rod Oates, Jerry Piccioli, Tim Walsh.

Maintenance Technician II – Tyler Williams.

Maintenance Technician IV – Tim Tuten.

IT Technician II – Joe Helms

Congratulations to all on these wonderful achievements!

- **PUBLIC COMMENT:** None
- **CHAIRMAN’S REMARKS:** Chairman Raymond stated that it was nice to see so many families attending the Promotional Ceremony. We have plenty to cover both in today’s meeting and also for the year of 2017. We have several capital projects planned and we need everyone to help make these decisions that could affect our citizens financially.
- **DECEMBER BOARD MEETING MINUTES:** Director Lust motioned and Director Haaker seconded the minutes of the December 20, 2016 Board of Directors meeting be approved. The motion passed.
- **FINANCIAL REPORT:** Chief Boulware reported that we are 50% through the FY 2017 budget year, with expenditures reporting at 47.95%. There were 3 payrolls reporting in the month of December, but the report only reflects 2 as the County has not yet sent the third one for posting. That payroll will be approximately \$289,000. Our health insurance provider invoice will be reduced by \$500 each month for removal of a compliance fee. The current impact fee account balance is \$2,004,078. A withdrawal of \$96,402 was made from the impact fee account to pay for our portion of the Raider Drive infrastructure and pavement. Raider Drive provides access to the District’s property off of Hampton Parkway for future fire station #38. Director Mike asked about the funds taken in from the Town for vehicle maintenance. He was told that those funds go into a special fund that will be used at the end of the year for Maintenance Department equipment or rolled into the general fund. Impact fees are generated by building permits applications, with \$481 of every residential permit fee earmarked for the fire district. Commercial permit fees are determined by the square footage and other criteria. Impact fee projects must be greater than \$100,000, used for items related to growth, and considered a system improvement. The funds cannot be used for operations or training. Director Mike motioned and Director Haaker seconded that we accept the financial report. The motion passed.
- **FIRE CHIEF’S REPORT:**
 - **Fire Prevention Statistics:** Chief Wiltse reported the Prevention office performed 248 Fire and Life Safety Inspections in the month of December and 2,467 inspections for the year. Development plans throughout the district include a proposed self-storage facility off Buckwalter Parkway, approximately 300 home sites at New Riverside, a 46,000 sf rehabilitation hospital off Highway 170, and several other residential and commercial projects. The Fire Prevention Department always looks at how these new developments will impact BTFD. This is how we determine new fire station locations and the number of engines at each station. Public Education participation included 26 outreach events, included several school contacts and neighborhood POA meetings. The Santa truck ran for 16 nights

and visited many of Bluffton's neighborhoods, and hundreds of Santa letters were answered as well. Thanks to Captain Hart and Ms. Bernadette Gannon for helping out in Capt. Levesque's absence. A total of 17 CPR classes were held in December with 94 students taught, bringing the total for 2016 to 1,406 students. Director Lust also praised Julie's efforts when she taught CPR at her temple. Chief Thompson also noted that we have raised enough funds through Arrhythmia Alliance to put 4 AEDs into the community. Those sites will be inside the shelter at DuBoise Park, Oyster Factory Park, Calhoun Street/May River Road near Corner Perk, and on Calhoun Street. While we encourage all citizens to take a CPR class, even an untrained person should be able to use these AEDs. Director Mike also stated that Captain Levesque made a fire prevention presentation at BJWSA and he and his colleagues were very impressed. Director Paolo asked if we had made any progress on charging inspection fees. While no progress has been made, the Town is planning to use us for business license inspections, just as the County currently does.

- **Training Report:** Chief Sheriff reported there were 2 courses held with 4 personnel in attendance, one course was cancelled, and 1 course was full. Training included situational awareness, physical fitness, and continued Haz-Mat training. Training highlights were basic airway management, wellness evaluations and medic evaluation. New Recruit school began last week with 17 students, 8 of which are new BTFD employees. There are 4 females in the class and it is quite diverse. The school will run 10 weeks long. At that time, 2 of 8 recruits will go on-line and the other 6 will begin EMT class.
- **Operations Report:** Chief Cramer reported the monthly statistics of 472 calls last month, with 5,728 calls for the year. The average response time was 6:40 minutes, with the yearly average response time was 6:27 minutes. One call where the crew was out of its district for training had a longer response time which increased the average time for the month. When asked, Chief Cramer agreed that the new Hwy. 278 fly-over seems to create more traffic issues, with increased traffic congestion, back-ups, and response times in that area. We do keep an eye on development and how it affects traffic and our access to emergency situations.
- **Maintenance Update:** Chief McKinley stated the Maintenance Division is about 90% complete with equipment and inventory placement and Training has finally moved in. Last month they completed 111 work orders, 93 for BTFD, 16 for Bluffton Police Department, and 2 for the Town of Bluffton. A yearly report will be forwarded to everyone soon. The building contractor and subcontractor continue to work on the punch list for the maintenance facility. The stand by generator tie in needs to be completed and hurricane screening installed. The new sign on Ulmer Road looks great. However, the Ulmer Road gate will remain locked as the construction company is using that area to build walls for the new training tower. Trees that were damaged during Hurricane Matthew will be removed on January 20. We should be able to claim this cost along with fence damage on insurance. Station projects include, Station 30 hurricane-damaged trees cut down, Station 31 old fence removed and new fence installed soon, and Station 31 replacement of the stand by generator and overhead bay doors. Several of the new pumpers are having engine fault codes. They have been taken to Cummins South in Savannah for the warranty work. One of the stabilizer cylinders on the Pierce ladder truck was leaking and is being repaired as well. Most of the new administrative vehicles will be delivered soon to the body shop for striping. We are currently working on a date for the Maintenance Facility Dedication and Open House. It was suggested that signage be added to the staff vehicles for identification purposes.
- **Chaplains' Update:** There was no Chaplains report.

- **Construction Projects Updates:** Training Facility Construction: Chief Sheriff reported the slab has been poured and crews are on site since last Thursday. They are currently inventorying materials and building walls. Next week they will start to go vertical with those walls. The tower should be complete in approximately 3 months.
- **Colleton River Fire Station Agreement:** Chief Thompson said Ward Edwards is the new engineer for the project. We have worked with them on other projects and they are familiar with the County permitting process. We now may have to have a subdivision permit since we are purchasing the property that includes set back issues and changes the way the building is sited. Permits should take about 6 months and we continue to push forward.
- Director Mike asked about jurisdiction with regard to Hardeeville and Jasper County. He was referring to an accident approximately 1 mile from the Callawassie Drive Station 32. What seems to be happening is that a cell phone call comes in and the nearest tower, often in Jasper County, routes the call to Jasper County Dispatch. The calls usually then transferred to Beaufort County Dispatch, but there could be a 10 minute lag time. This creates a very dangerous situation, one in which we could be held liable. Chief Cramer is currently working on this issue.
- **NEW BUSINESS:**
 - **New Hampton Parkway Fire Station #38:** Chief Thompson summarized the need, coverage area, and costs associated with building a new station off Bluffton and Hampton Parkways. The station will border the River Ridge Academy sports complex on Raider Drive. Continued and rapid growth of Hampton Lake, Lawton Station, and other developments, as well as planned medical and commercial properties creates the need for a new station so homes are compliant with ISO regulations. Many of these areas of growth are nearing the 5-mile limit for coverage and will soon exceed that limit. Because this will be the 9th station in the township, we will need to hire 15 people, 4 engine crew members and a battalion chief per shift. The cost of the station alone will be approximately \$2.5 million which will include a large room over the bay for a central command post center. The floor plan would include office space for the second Battalion Chief. A Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant, with a due date of February 10, is currently being written to help offset the costs of new hires. For the first 2 years, this federal grant will pay 75% of the new employees' salaries, 35% for the third year, and we would pay the full salaries from the 4th year and on. New employees would be hired January 2018. If growth continues at its current rate, there would be no tax increase. If we choose not to hire these employees, we would not accept the grant. We would be looking at debt service to cover the cost of the station and its apparatus. The apparatus recommended would be a Quint, a combination of a pumper and aerial truck with a shorter wheel base for ease in getting around subdivisions. The Quint will take about 12-15 months to build and cost approximately \$850,000. If the SAFER grant is not received, the hiring would be done in phases over 2018, 2019, and 2020. If the BTFD Board of Directors agrees that we need a new station, the County usually backs the decision. The plan is to have the station open by the beginning of FY2019. The station and the apparatus could be funded with impact fees but the new hire costs could not. Director Paolo asked about a one-time special fee to all homeowners to cover the cost of the new station. It was suggested that we may want to look at all options, but the SAFER grant looks like the best way to go. However there is no guarantee that we will receive it. Director Haaker would like more information to understand the necessity of an additional station. Chief Thompson will pull together additional information as to the number of homes going in and the distance of those homes from the nearest station. This project will be included on the February 21 Board of Directors meeting agenda.

- **ADJOURNMENT:** Director Haaker motioned and Director Paolo seconded to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed and the meeting was adjourned at 6:21.