

**BLUFFTON TOWNSHIP FIRE DISTRICT  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
Tuesday, April 18, 2017  
Bluffton Fire Station #35, Headquarters**

**MINUTES**

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

**Members Present:** John Thompson, Paul Boulware, Rick Cramer, Dan Wiltse, Terry Sheriff, Brian Hart, Bob Payne, Pete Reid, Sandy Stroud, Joe Helms, George Brown Donald Bach, Nancy Hyer, Leslie Jones Hart

**VIA Video Conferencing:** Jason Brahm, Alex Sanchez, Sean Smith, Jeff Kuehn, John Roe, Mike McComas, Tom Lamb, Travis Boulware, Alex Elliott, Matt Baker, Carson Stone, Greg Linacre, Anthony Pavilonis, Austin Williams, TJ McCullion, Whitney Brady, Allen Cramer, Marcos Farr, Andrei Turner, Steve Arnold, Todd Shisler, Joe Sirigu

**Community Members:** Doug Volk, Norm Berard, Lou Poindexter

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

**Pledge of Allegiance and Prayer:** Chaplain/Director Hamilton led today's prayer.

**Board of Directors Roll Call**

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** None

**CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS:** None

**MARCH WORKSHOP MINUTES;** Director Mike motioned and Director Hamilton seconded the minutes of the March 14, 2017 Board of Directors Workshop be approved. The motion passed.

**MARCH BOARD MEETING MINUTES:** Director Hamilton motioned and Director Paolo seconded the minutes of the March 21, 2017 Board of Directors meeting be approved. The motion passed.

**FINANCIAL REPORT:** Chief Boulware reported that we are 75% through the FY 2017 budget year, with expenditures reporting at 73.65%, under budget overall. Paperwork for Hurricane Matthew reimbursement was sent to FEMA. We should have those funds, 75% from the federal government, before the end of this fiscal year. We have not heard when we will receive the state portion of 25%. The CAFR report has been certified and we have received the GFOA 2016 Certificate of Achievement for Financial Reporting along with the Award for Financial Report Achievement to Ms. Nancy Hyer as Financial Administrator. Congratulations! The current impact fee account balance is \$2,085,847. Director Hamilton motioned and Director Paolo seconded that we accept the financial report. The motion passed.

• **FIRE CHIEF'S REPORT:**

- **Fire Prevention Statistics:** Chief Wiltse reported the Prevention office performed 327 Fire and Life Safety Inspections in March. Development plans throughout the district include multiple single and multiple family residential areas, amenity centers, and several commercial projects. Public Education participated in 42 outreach events involving many schools, Sun City Neighborhood Rep Council and several neighborhoods inside Sun City, as well as Beaufort County Department of Special Needs. Beaufort County elected officials were also contacted at Legislative Day held in Columbia. There were 17 CPR classes held in February, with 269 people taught, including 77 May River High School students. One hundred eleven of the CPR students completed the Friends and Family program where no cards are received.
- **Training Report and Training Facility Construction:** In Chief Sheriff's absence, Chief Wiltse reported there were 5 courses held with 14 personnel in attendance. Training included musculoskeletal emergencies, airway, live fire training, and HazMat ops refresher training. Director Mike recalled an incident where several people died in a confined space due to toxic gases and asked how we train for such events. Chief Sheriff stated that all firefighters receive confined spaces training. Regarding the new tower, Chief said an electric meter has been installed, indicating we have passed inspection and we should get a Certificate of Occupancy. A date for a grand opening will be set soon.
- **Operations Report:** Chief Cramer reported a busy month, with 540 calls in March and a total of 1,479 calls for 2017 already. The average travel time in March was 6:20 with a yearly average travel time of 6:25 minutes. All hoses were tested last month, a total of over 25,000 feet of fire hose, and 100 pre-plans were conducted. There were several fires last month in which everyone did a great job. Director Lust asked about nuisance alarms and if we charge for them. Chief Cramer stated that while we don't charge for them, the nuisance alarms are not a big factor. They are turned over to the Fire Prevention office and most people correct the problem in a timely fashion. There is a County ordinance allowing us to charge for false alarms, but we do not charge as yet. The Town of Bluffton Building Department currently takes care of recurring issues. Director Paolo commented that maybe we should charge for inspections and fire code violations. However, an ordinance would be required for that. Chief Wiltse stated that compliance is more important and most people do so without the fees.
- **Maintenance Update:** In Chief McKinley's absence, Chief Boulware reported the Maintenance Division completed 129 work orders for March: 99 for BTFD, 13 for Bluffton Police Department, and 17 for the Town of Bluffton. Station work and repairs include: Maintenance – irrigation leaks and broken signal wires; Station 30 – lighting and irrigation maintenance; Station 31 – completed landscape project and continue with bay door framing and replacing the generator; Station 33 – quotes for bay door replacements; Station 35 – exterior trim replacement and painting quotes. Only 2 of 6 vendors called back to give quotes. All front pumpers are working and new fleet warranty issues have been resolved. The new staff vehicles have joined the fleet and the Battalion Chiefs vehicle is being outfitted.
- **Chaplains Update:** Director Hamilton reported everyone was busy with Easter events earlier this month and they were trained in CPR. The Chaplains are ready to help where needed.
- **Colleton River Fire Station Update:** Chief Thompson said the final SRT is scheduled for May 3 at the County. The OCRM permit has been received from DHEC and easements are done. Once the architect and contractor have signed contracts, we should be ready to break ground.

OLD BUSINESS:

- **Moss Creek Emergency Access Road:** The Moss Creek emergency access road was agreed upon in the earlier workshop but the process will take time to work through the County permits and regulations.
- **FY18 Budget Discussion:** There was no second budget workshop as we were still waiting for numbers from the County. Numbers show the new mil value is a 7.7% increase over FY2017. The County estimated mil value is \$550,129.00 and current mil rate ops is 24.64. The estimated tax revenue of operations equals to \$13,588,186 plus \$75,000 in estimated additional fees and revenues, bringing the total operating revenues to \$13,663,186. This is less than the FY2018 Operating budget requested amount of \$14,032,311. Chief Thompson stated the County historically underestimates numbers and feels they have done so again with these proposed numbers. If there are cuts to be made to our budget, he suggested that all new position hires could be postponed from 7/1/2017 to 1/1/2017. The new positions that would be postponed in the following order: 1) maintenance technician; 2) medical training officer; and 3) new firefighters for Hampton Parkway Station 38. This would give us an additional \$400,000. No tax increase has been considered or included in the budget. There will also be no cost sharing with the State for mandated retirement contributions. The health insurance claims have run low this year and we don't believe there will be an increase, however there is a 4% insurance increase built into the budget.

The board asked for another budget workshop at one time, but there was dissention in several line items during the first workshop. A motion was made by Director Lust and seconded by Director Hamilton that we pay \$35,000 for our share of the cost for the Moss Creek emergency access gate, with the understanding that this does not set precedence for future gates. The motion passed unanimously (YEAS-Raymond, Mike, Paolo, Lust, Hamilton. NAYS-None).

The second line item to be resolved is the Maintenance Technician. Much discussion ensued as to the value and necessity of such a position. Some felt that we should hire local businesses and support our citizens. Others felt this would ultimately save funds and that there is enough work to merit the position. Some cities have maintenance departments who also cover the fire departments. Large townships often have in-house maintenance employees. It was suggested that we hire someone for a year and then re-evaluate the position. Eventually, a motion was made by Director Paolo and seconded by Director Lust that we keep the position of Maintenance Technician in the budget. The motion passed with a 4-1 vote. (YEAS: Mike, Paolo, Lust, Hamilton. NAYS: Raymond)

The Salary Study has been proposed to study all positions, job descriptions, employee classifications, performance review, pay, etc. This will be completed by a third-party group and presented to the Board near the end of the year. The expectation is that any compensation takes place over a 5-year period. The study and recommendations would be used in creating the FY2019 budget. While the County just went through a salary study, it did not include fire service employees.

Director Mike motioned and Director Paolo seconded that we adopt the proposed budget for FY2018 as written. The motion passed unanimously. (YEAS: Raymond, Mike, Paolo, Lust, Hamilton. NAYS: None).

- **Fire Station #38 Update:** The District received a quote of \$211,755 from Court-Atkins for architectural and engineering drawings for Hampton Parkway Station 38. These drawings would allow us to begin the permitting process with the County. This project will use the proto-type plans of Station 30. The plans would include additional space for the second Battalion Chief, an operations center to be used during hurricanes and large events, a larger kitchen (needed during large events), and possibly a third bay. By utilizing the Station 30 plans, we can save \$100,000 in

costs. While we will not know the results of the SAFER grant until June or later, the growth in the Hampton Parkway area necessitates the need. We would meet with County Administrator and Finance Officer to discuss the best way to pay for this project. Director Lust motioned and Director Hamilton seconded we approve Court-Atkins as the architect of record for the Station 38 project so we can begin the process at the County level. The motion passed unanimously. (YEAS: Raymond, Mike, Paolo, Hamilton, Lust. NAYS: None)

- ***Lift and Assist Update:*** Chief Thompson has met with the new Sun City general manager and the board who are very supportive of the District. They are willing to help with addressing the lift and assist issues and financially support a substation within Sun City. While no action was taken at the meeting, more meetings will be held in the future.
- **NEW BUSINESS:**
  - ***New Board Member:*** A name of a new Fire Board member has been submitted to the County and the person has been vetted in the Governmental Committee and passed on to the full County Council for approval.
- **EXECUTIVE SESSION:** None
- **ADJOURNMENT:** Director Mike motioned and Director Hamilton seconded to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed and the meeting was adjourned at 5:29. (YEAS: Raymond, Mike, Lust, Paolo, Hamilton).