

**BLUFFTON TOWNSHIP FIRE DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
Tuesday, August 21, 2018
Bluffton Fire District Headquarters
MINUTES**

Board Members Present: Mike Raymond, Joe Paolo, Ed Olsen, Elaine Lust, Paul Hamilton Louis Poindexter (arrived at 3:55 PM), Thomas Mike, Sr. (arrived at 3:11 PM)

Members Present: John Thompson, Paul Boulware, Rick Cramer, Dan Wiltse, Steve McKinley, Bob Payne, Joe Helms, Terry Sheriff, Pete Reid, Todd Harvey, Rhett Livingston, Nancy Hyer

VIA Video Conferencing: None.

Community Members: Linda Burton

Meeting called to order at 3:07 pm by Chairman Raymond.

Prayer & Pledge of Allegiance: Led by Chief Robert Payne

Board of Directors Roll Call

PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS: Chairman Raymond stated that he had a hip replacement 3 weeks prior. There is a special meeting today to discuss dispatch operations given the last major rain event and the things that went on. Ed Olson remarked that he read in the paper that because of the delay in getting to a fire scene due to the failure of the 9-1-1 phone system, the Lady's Island fire officer that was in charge at the scene would not let the officers near the scene for fear of injury to them because the fire was so hot, so this was a life and death issue. So it is not just an issue for the public, it is also an issue for the firefighters as well.

Chief Thompson and Chief Boulware introduced Linda Burton to the Board of Directors as the temporary administrative assistant filling Leslie Hart's position since her recent retirement.

JULY BOARD MEETING MINUTES: Director Lust motioned and Director Paolo seconded the minutes of the July 17, 2018 Board of Directors meeting be approved. Unanimous approval. (YEAS – Hamilton, Raymond, Paolo, Olsen, Lust. NAYS – None.)

FINANCIAL REPORT: Chief Boulware reported that we are one month into the new fiscal year. Currently we are through 08.33% of the current fiscal year budget. The total expenditures year to date are at 09.79%. The breakdown is as follows: Administration: 10.92%; Operations: 9.75%; Training: 9.21%; Fire Prevention: 9.52%; Maintenance: 8.95%. He added that the little spike is because the month of July had 3 pay periods, so it will balance out with the months that have 2 periods. Total revenue requested year to date is \$1,219,467 (8.16% of budget); total expenditures for July were \$1,463,517. Some of the expenditures were for the Moss Creek Road Contribution, Communication Equipment and Repairs, and Workers Compensation. Chief Boulware added that they are using a new worker's compensation company at a savings of nearly \$100,000. There was not any impact fee expense in the month of July.

Director Mike asked about an existing worker's comp. injury and if it was avoidable. Captain Reid said that there is an internal investigation that runs concurrently with the safety committee while the employee is receiving medical treatment, and that investigation is still ongoing at this time. There is also another employee that just came off of worker's compensation.

Director Olson asked how many people we have dispatched to the fires out west, and how we are compensated for that. Captain Reid explained that those deployments are treated similarly to a military deployment, and fall under Federal Program called USERRA. We currently have 4 men out there. They are furthering their training and getting more certificates. It was explained that the Fish and Wildlife service provides them with training and equipment to compensate for our men being dispatched to assist them.

Director Lust motioned and Director Paolo seconded July 2018 Finance Report be approved. Unanimous approval. (YEAS – Hamilton, Raymond, Paolo, Olsen, Lust. NAYS – None.)

CONSENT AGENDA APPROVAL: The Consent Agenda was approved by general consensus. No vote was taken.

- **Receipt of Training Update**
- **Receipt of Maintenance Update**
- **FIRE CHIEF'S REPORT:**
 - **Fire Prevention Update:** Chief Wiltse said there were 335 Fire and Life Safety Inspections for July. Development Plans and Approvals included The Landings at New Riverside Amenities Center preliminary development plan – it has been freshly bulldozed and some infrastructure has been put in; Hampton Lake Phase 11 – Final Development Plan; The Walk – Resubmittal, which is a residential community over by Burnt Church; Captain Woody's - Amendment to add to their kitchen area; Four Seasons of Bluffton Phase 1 – Preliminary Development Plan - it is going to be directly south of Cypress Ridge, Mill Creek Development. It is going to be a gated community.
 - **Public Education:** There were 43 outreach events conducted in July. 38 smoke alarms were installed in 16 homes, and 8 car seats were installed.
 - **Operations Report:** Chief Cramer stated that there were 524 calls in the month of July, for a total of 3,644 year to date, which are 88 more calls than the same time last year. Average response time for July was 6:46, with the yearly average of 6:30.
 - **Fire Station 38 Progress Update:** Chief Thompson reported that they are finishing schematic and they are starting work on specifications on the building. The plan is that building will go to bid in the November/December timeframe, and have a contractor by January. Construction would begin in January 2019. The land survey has been taken care of, and they are in the permitting process. There is 0.8 acres that belongs to the Zackey Corporation, LLC, so it needs to be decided whether it is more cost effective to purchase the property or to install a fence.
 - **Fire Station 32 Progress Update:** Going through staff review from County SRT. They do not have to do a formal SRT. They are working on permits, and are on pretty much the same schedule as station 38. They want to upgrade the sewer, and everything is moving right along.

- **Other Updates:** : Regarding 31, Chief Thompson reported that Chief Cramer had a meeting with Dallas Wood, Heath Duncan and Ward Edwards regarding the concept plan at the parcel at the Red Barn and the town's plans. We now know that there will be a shared entrance. Town staff was involved with that. Now that there is a shared interest, they are involving the town because the town owns the majority of the property. They are working on writing the purchase agreement. It is the property at 170 and 46.

Chairman Raymond requested that Chief Thompson put together a summary on revenues and bonds upcoming on all of the different projects.

- **OLD BUSINESS:**

- **Dispatch Discussion:** Chairman Raymond thinks now is a good time for the Board to start understanding the current situation. The recent rain event, the 9-1-1 system going down, the follow up with emergency personnel and the public was less than could be desired. As seen by the fire up in Lady's Island, it's a life and death situation, and we have to do what we can do to push this forward and improve it. Director Lust asked who is in charge of the 9-1-1 system, and she was advised that it is the sheriff's office. Hilton Head Island Fire & Rescue have their own system, but there is a county tie in. Around 4:15 PM on Sunday, August 19, 2018 Century Link's selective router was destroyed in a lightning strike. The router didn't allow cell phone calls and some land line calls to transfer into our dispatch center. The sheriff's office was aware at that time, but Chief Thompson was made aware on Nixle regarding Jasper County at 7:15 PM Sunday evening. At 8:20 PM a Nixle came out to the public who subscribe to the application from Beaufort County that stated the 9-1-1 service in Beaufort County was down and to try to use a landline. At that time, we went onto our all of our social media platforms to inform the public. We do not have the authority to break into Emergency Broadcast System or go to the news channels and put a crawler on the television when it is a countywide event. We have been asked to coordinate with the County's PIO. There is currently no back up when the 9-1-1 system goes out. That was what Chief Thompson's email was about.

Chief Thompson also stated that sometimes there are issues with dispatch giving wrong addresses, etc. due to not using the CAD, or something gets misinterpreted. We report those issues to dispatch, and that is handled administratively within dispatch, but there is very rarely any follow up and we are just told that it was handled. There were 2 meetings that were scheduled – the first one was the Dispatch Advisory Board Meeting. He added that he is trying to be empathetic with the people that are running dispatch because there is a significant issue there. It was brought up to the county through the Fire Chief's Association that the Dispatch Advisory Board be reinstated. It had been meeting regularly until 4 or 5 years ago, and then it just stopped meeting. That board's mission was to come together as a group and to collectively solve issues that everyone is having and provide some sort of a discussion capability. This was the 2nd meeting since reinstatement. In the meeting it was learned that Dispatch is severely short staffed. The reason the CAD went down earlier in July was because there was a power failure in dispatch. When there is a power failure, there is UPS battery based back up system which is designed to keep the computers running until the backup generator gets back online. Under no circumstances should they ever lose power, because it is so vital to the community. The batteries were all dead in the UPS system that was in dispatch, so when the power went out and it tried to switch over for the generator to come on, the system shut down and then the system had to manually restart and all of the information had to reload. It was an enormous amount of information and restarting takes a considerable amount of time. There was a meeting held on 8/9/18 to have a new UPS installed on 8/13/18 and as of 8/20/18, it still had not been installed per the Beaufort County Emergency Management Division.

In the case of the 9-1-1 phone system failure Hilton Head had some capability in its dispatch center to rollover the calls non-emergency lines, so they were not affected.

There was discussion about possibly switching our dispatch service over to Hilton Head Island Fire & Rescue. However, trying to emulate what Hilton Head does would cause delays that would be detrimental to the time that it would take to respond to calls.

The Board would like for Chairman Raymond and Chief Thompson to write up a plan to help guide the rest of the board to tell them how to proceed, and then have the board sign the document.

Director Olson wondered if it would help if they went in unison with all of the other fire departments.

Director Lust stated that this has been going on for years, and thinks that the board should go over the sheriff's head. The board explained that they need to proceed with caution in a professional manner.

▪ **OTHER BUSINESS:**

Conflict of Interest Statement – Each Board member was asked to fill out the 2018 Conflict of Interest Statement that will be submitted to Beaufort County City Council.

▪ **EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

- ***Fire Chief's Evaluation*** - Motion was made by Director Lust to enter into Executive Session at 4:32 PM. Seconded by Director Paolo. Unanimous approval. . (YEAS –Hamilton, Raymond, Paolo, Olsen, Lust, Poindexter. NAYS – None.)

- The Board exited Executive Session at 5:16 PM. No votes were taken.

- **ADJOURNMENT:** Director Hamilton motioned and Director Lust seconded to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed and the meeting was adjourned at 5:18. (YEAS –Hamilton, Raymond, Paolo, Olsen, Lust, Poindexter. NAYS – None.)

Respectfully Submitted,

Linda Burton
8/23/2018