

**BLUFFTON TOWNSHIP FIRE DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS SPECIAL MEETING
Tuesday, January 15, 2019
Bluffton Fire District Headquarters
MINUTES**

Board Members Present: Mike Raymond, Ed Olsen, Louis Poindexter, Joe Paolo, Elaine Lust, Thomas Mike, Sr. (Arrived at 3:05 PM)

Absent: Paul Hamilton

Members Present: John Thompson, Paul Boulware, Terry Sheriff, Rick Cramer, Dan Wiltse, Rhett Livingston, Linda Burton

Community Members: None

Meeting called to order at 2:13 pm by Chairman Raymond.

Board of Directors Roll Call

PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

Chief Thompson spoke on behalf of FF Rhett Livingston. He began by explaining to the Board that there are three components to the accreditation process - The Standard of Cover, which was predominantly prepared by FF Rhett Livingston, the Strategic Plan for 2019-2023 and the FESSAM (*Fire & Emergency Service Self Assessment Manual 9th Ed.*). CPSE (*Center for Public Safety Excellence*) came in and spent one day with the public and several of the Board members to get their input as to which areas of service they wanted the Fire Department to focus on, and then spent three days with the Department heads, Battalion Chiefs, and several of the Firefighters of varying levels to get further input. Chief Thompson handed out a one page document of the Bluffton Township Fire District's 2018-2023 Strategic Plan that had been provided by the CPSE that was the *Bluffton Township Fire District's 2023 Vision* to each member, which was essentially a one page document that included the Fire District's new Mission, Values, and Goals. He also handed out commented compiled by Chairman Raymond. Chief Thompson added that the new Strategic Plan is much broader than the previous one.

Based on all of the information collected, the strategic initiatives in the Strategic Plan are as follows as of now, and some of them may be renumbered. A number of the goals are service oriented, and EMS was the number one priority identified by the community to increase the service level to the public.

1. Enhance the delivery of emergency medical services (EMS) to be more efficient and progressive for our community.
2. Improve the overall effectiveness of the community risk reduction program to enhance community safety.

3. Develop a comprehensive workforce plan to create, sustain, and retain a viable workforce that can support current and future initiatives.
4. Maintain current infrastructure as well as prepare for future growth to provide efficient services.
5. Improve the emergency management system based on interagency cooperation, teamwork, and shared information to improve community safety readiness.
6. Improve and increase the district's use of current and future technologies to improve the health and morale of personnel and improve efficiency of service delivery.
7. Improve and expand response capabilities of the Bluffton Township Fire District (BTFD) Special Operations Service Program (SOSP) to mitigate identified risks effectively.
8. Prepare for, pursue, achieve, and maintain international accreditation to better serve our community and to embrace excellence.

Chief Thompson stated that the old Mission Statement was about four paragraphs, and the new Mission Statement is much more straightforward. The vast majority of the public comments were positive. Chief Thompson reviewed each goal topic listed above in depth, addressed all of the Board's questions and concerns, and stressed the work that FF Rhett Livingston along with Chief Payne put in to come up with the data being presented to the Board.

A priority response system was also a topic brought up by Chief Thompson, because currently at dispatch everything gets assigned the same priority. He suggested that there be a priority system put in place from 1 (heart attack) through 3 (lift and assist).

Ms. Lust asked if we should have more EMS equipment, but Chief Thompson could not answer that definitively at this time. He explained that BTFD does not have the authority to transport emergency patients via ambulance. The Board members thought that it might be a good idea to bring up the issue with the City Council. There was extensive conversation regarding emergency response.

The community's concern for special operations and the hurricane center will be addressed by the capabilities of the new heavy duty rescue truck that the BTFD will be acquiring within the next 30-45 days. BTFD also just took delivery of a high water vehicle.

Technology is changing rapidly, so they are looking at how to better use technology, and also analyze whether the current technology is working, as well as community paramedicine.

Along with his detailed explanations, Chief Thompson also had a PowerPoint presentation of the Standard of Cover and Strategic Plan outlining each of the points he was making to the Board members. He discussed the rapid growth stages of a fire, and the importance of having the fastest response times possible. In addition, there were also benchmarks for response times for rural and urban areas, the actual current response times for the BTFD, and response times for the BTFD to

strive for. Chief Thompson suggested setting the 70th percentile as the new 90th percentile, and asked the Board if they thought that was attainable. Chairman Raymond questioned why he felt the department needed improvement since it has an ISO rating of 2, and the majority of calls are EMS related, and relatively few structure fires. Chief Thompson responded that there is always room for improvement, and that it is important to continue to have the motivation needed balanced with the funding needed, because capabilities need to be increased. This is in line with the accreditation goal that the BTFD has been working diligently on achieving.

Meeting adjourned at 4:06 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Linda Burton
January 18, 2019