

**BLUFFTON TOWNSHIP FIRE DISTRICT  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
Tuesday, April 16, 2019  
Bluffton Fire District Headquarters  
MINUTES**

**Board Members Present:** Mike Raymond, Paul Hamilton, Ed Olsen (via teleconference), Louis Poindexter, Joe Paolo, Elaine Lust, Thomas Mike, Sr.

**Absent:** None

**Members Present:** John Thompson, Paul Boulware, Terry Sheriff, Robert Payne, Rick Cramer, Steve McKinley, Derek Church, Lee Levesque, Ted Lange, Nancy Hyer, Linda Burton

**VIA Video Conferencing:** Joey Dembeck, Jason Carle, Missy Keller, Jacob Lemus, Julian Rhodes, Chris Himes, Kevin Feltner, Jayme Beach, David Romine, Riley, Dwane Wilkinson, Jason Williams, Jeremy Eby, Andrew Redhead, Derek Beeler, Guillermo Holzmann, Ian Evans, Justin Olds, Taylor Kamp, M. Prosolow, Emerson Kovalanchik, Andrew Hatcher, Tony Crosetto, Ben Rushing, David Mack, Phillip Horton, Cam Terio, Jake Walsh, Randy McGarvey, Joe Sirigu, Jeremy Malo

**Community Members:** Michelle Fraser, Erin McGuire of 14<sup>th</sup> Circuit Victims Services Center

**Meeting called to order at 4:01 pm by Chairman Raymond.**

**Prayer & Pledge of Allegiance:** Led by Director Hamilton

**Board of Directors Roll Call**

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** None.

**CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS:** Chairman Raymond acknowledged the tragedy of the fire yesterday at the Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris, and was thankful that there weren't any deaths. It is still devastating that an iconic landmark is gone. There were accessibility issues as far as fighting the fire.

**SPECIAL PRESENTATION TO THE BOARD – MS. MICHELLE FRASER and ERIN McGUIRE:** Chief Thompson introduced Ms. Michelle Thompson and Ms. Erin McGuire from the 14<sup>th</sup> Circuit Victims Service Center. He explained that this is a helpful resource for the firefighters to utilize when they are on the scene and the need arises for these types of services. Ms. Thompson began by stating that the goal of the building was to have a building that could encompass all of the women who are victims of a crime or a violent crime to get the help that

they need in our community. This community serves Allendale, Beaufort, Colleton, Hampton and Jasper counties, and the 14<sup>th</sup> Circuit Victims Services Center is located at 108 Traders Cross in Okatie. It is centralized for Beaufort and Jasper counties. Ms. Fraser reported that their office handles approximately 3,000 domestic violence cases per year, and approximately 2,000-2,200 of those cases are from Beaufort County. They have a Special Victims Unit, a special prosecutor for elder abuse, Lowcountry Legal Volunteers, Hopeful Horizons, Lowcountry Alliance for a Healthy Youth, and the Child Abuse Prevention Association. They are in need of pediatric Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners. They currently have one, but are in need of more. The organization also offers assistance to children, and they do everything they can to provide them with an environment in which they can feel safe. She feels that is important that the chaplains are aware of this program. This is a program that does not rely on law enforcement to refer suspected victims of abuse to them. Firefighters are able to refer women to their center, and may be more receptive to a firefighter suggesting they take advantage of such services, whether it's reported or unreported. Director Lust asked about a list of items needed, such as toiletries, etc. Currently, their major source of funding is provided through grants, philanthropic organizations, and service organizations. The Solicitor's office is funded through State funding and municipalities. This is the only center of this kind in the state, and the goal is to be run as a non-profit organization.

**SPECIAL PRESENTATION TO THE BOARD – MR. IAN WOLFSON, ERUS**

**ENERGY:** Mr. Wolfson was not present. Chairman Raymond and Director Paolo thought that County may have to weigh in on this matter before any changes were made to the infrastructure to the building relative to solar panels. Director Olsen inquired about Beaufort and Port Royal, who he thought switched over to solar. Chief Thompson explained that the City of Beaufort and Port Royal entered into an agreement with Johnson Controls to overhaul every facility. Solar was a very small portion of the project. They changed out air conditioning, HVAC units, etc. and it cost millions of dollars. Johnson Controls projected the cost savings over a period of years, but the savings has yet to be seen. Chairman Raymond would like the County to weigh in. There may be other ways of cost savings, such as switching over to LED lighting, or taking out hot water tanks and switching to tankless heaters. Chief Thompson will contact the County to see if there is any interest.

**MARCH BOARD REGULAR MEETING MINUTES:** Director Lust motioned and Director Hamilton seconded that the minutes of the March 19, 2019 Board of Directors meeting be approved. Motion Passed. (YEAS –Raymond, Olsen, Poindexter, Paolo, Lust, Hamilton) NAYS – None ABSTAIN – Mike, Sr.)

**FINANCIAL REPORT:** Chief Boulware reviewed the Finance Report for the month of March 2019. We are through 75.00% of the current fiscal year, and the total expenditures year to date are at 75.84%. Administration is reporting at 75.95% of its budget. Operations reporting at 76.66%; Fire Prevention is at 70.86%; Training is reporting at 70.36%, and Maintenance is reporting at 68.74% of its budget. The revenue requested from County year to date is \$10,832,076 which is 72.44% of our budget.

Total of all expenditures for March 2019 were \$1,089,526; the communications equipment costs were \$11,254; SCBA (Self Contained Breathing Apparatus) equipment \$21,524; Medical Control Physician fee (which is an annual fee) \$10,000; the Workers Compensation payment was

\$39,801, and the Impact fee expenditure July 1<sup>st</sup> through December 31<sup>st</sup> was \$284,718. As of March 30<sup>th</sup> the Impact fee balance was \$470,865.

**MOTION:** Director Mike motioned and Director Paolo seconded that the March 2019 Financial Report be approved. Unanimous approval. (YEAS –Raymond, Mike, Olsen, Poindexter, Hamilton, Paolo, Lust NAYS – None.)

### **CONSENT AGENDA APPROVAL**

Director Lust inquired about the evaluation process for the probationary firefighters. Chief Cramer explained that evaluations occur every three months by Captain Hunter of the Training Department for the first six months to ensure that they are progressing through their initial months of training. They remain on probation for one year, at which time they are tested once more.

- **Receipt of Training Update**
- **Receipt of Maintenance Update**
- **Chaplains Update – No Written Report Received**

### **FIRE CHIEF'S REPORT:**

- ***Fire Prevention Update:*** Captain Levesque presented the March report. There were 263 Fire & Life safety inspections performed. Development plans that the Fire Marshals office received and/or is in the process of reviewing are as follows:  
The Landings Phase 2 – Amendment; Buck Island Road – Sidewalk; 184 Bluffton Road Public Project – demo two buildings and construct a parking lot; Cypress Ridge Phase 17 Final Development Plan – 53 single family homes; Choice Suites Hotel – 4 story hotel in Okatie area; Home2Suites – 4 story hotel in Okatie area; Palmetto Bluff Block K6 Final Development Plan – 72 single family homes; Palmetto Medical Center – Amendment – 5 office buildings totaling 48,500 square feet; Heartwood Ct. – Hampton Lake Amendment – change from quadraplex to duplex units.
- ***Public Education:*** 61 outreach events were conducted in the month of March. They are focusing on getting into the schools as much as possible, and every staff member in the BTFD school district has been trained on the use Jacob's Kits, also known as a Stop the Bleed kit. There have also been a number of other outreach events within the community, including disability and special needs homes, Sun City, and Hampton Lake.
- ***Operations Report:*** Chief Cramer presented the Operations Report for March. There were 590 calls; which historically was the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest call month ever. The increase was in the number of medical emergencies. The average response time was approximately 7 minutes. The 90<sup>th</sup> percentile was roughly 10 and 11 minutes. There was one that was 20 minutes, and that was due to a call in Palmetto Bluff where they were on standby for a woman who was hallucinating, and they were waiting for law enforcement to arrive and

make sure that the scene was safe. Rhett Livingston, the Accreditation Manager, is working with Fireworks to ensure the reports reflect the data that is needed.

- ***Accreditation Progress Update:*** Chief Thompson stated that they continue to work with Chief Donohue of Delaware, OH on the FESSAM, and are on schedule to give their presentation in Orlando, FL next March. Chief Cramer added that FF Livingston has spent the past month taking a tremendous amount of data from Firehouse and the data from Fireworks, which we switched over to in October 2018, and incorporating all of the data into the Standard of Cover. When that is complete he will focus on the FESSAM once more.
  
- ***Construction Projects Update***
  
- ***Station 38 Progress Update:*** Chief Thompson stated that he was going to ask the Board for a Resolution to award the contract to Paul S. Akins Company of Statesboro, GA, who had the lowest qualifying bid of \$2,656,520. The budget that the BTFD had is \$3,000,000. Chairman Raymond inquired about the EOC (Emergency Operations Center) and the previous communications with Sheriff Tanner. Chief Thompson stated that he was told by Colonel Baxley that Sheriff Tanner was investigating all of his options, and had been informed by Chief Edwards that Sheriff Tanner had looked at the building where Jasper County Emergency Services is now. There has been no further communication regarding this project from Sheriff Tanner. Chairman Raymond referenced a prior meeting with Sheriff Tanner and Neil Baxley regarding the performance levels at the dispatch center, and felt positive that everyone was going to work together to build something better than what was currently there. Chief Thompson stated that he would be happy to write a letter to Sheriff Tanner to follow up. Sheriff Tanner is aware of the progress on Station 38, and Chief Thompson was told to do what was needed to do to progress with the fire station. It initially seemed like they wanted to move the dispatch center off of Hilton Head Island and out to Bluffton or even possibly Jasper County. One of the concepts discussed was that if they wanted to build the EOC on the same property as Station 38, converting the 1<sup>st</sup> floor into a kitchen/break area, the second floor into an EOC, and utilize the third floor for dispatch. The Sheriff's major concern was a major water event. The fire house is a separate building from the possible EOC building. Chairman Raymond does not want to just walk away from the EOC without following up. Chief Thompson stressed that the fire station is a separate issue from the EOC. Approximately \$1,000,000 more is needed to complete both projects. It is Chief Thompson's suggestion that the EOC is either completed as a joint project, or that it is postponed until the impact fees come back and is done as a Capital project in the future. Chief Thompson stated that if we want to work with the Sheriff, then the basic infrastructure should be put up, and the bid is good for 90 days after the substantial completion in the contract. So there is still time to negotiate with the Sheriff. Chairman Raymond stated that unless there were any objection, that the Administration had made a recommendation to the Board to read the following Resolution aloud to award the contract to Paul Akins for the \$2,656,520 bid. After reading the Resolution, Chairman Raymond would then ask for a motion and a second to the motion. After discussion, the Board would then vote.

Chairman Raymond then read the following RESOLUTION:

I am recommending the award of the contract for construction of Bluffton Township Fire District Station 38 to Paul S. Akins Company of Statesboro, Georgia.

WHEREAS, the Bluffton Township Fire District Board is charged with recommending the acquisition of facilities and equipment to the County Council for purchase and;

WHEREAS, the Fire District Board presented the need for a new fire station in the Hampton Lakes area of the District to better fire and emergency response services and maintain the District's Insurance Office Organization Public Protection Classification Rating comparable to the remainder of the District and;

WHEREAS, the County Council authorized the purchase of General Obligation Bonds in December 2018 to fund the fire station and related equipment and;

WHEREAS, the Bluffton Township Fire District advertised for sealed bids from contractors to construct the station in accordance with the policies and procedures of the Beaufort County Procurement Code and;

WHEREAS, the Paul S. Akins Company of Statesboro, Georgia submitted the lowest qualified and responsive bid in the amount of \$2,656,520 and now;

THEREFORE, be it resolved by the Bluffton Township Fire District Board of Directors that it recommends Beaufort County Council to accept the bid submitted by the Paul S. Akins Company in the amount of \$2,656,520 for the project, and allow the District up to an additional contingency for the project for unforeseen circumstances up to but not to exceed ten percent of the contract amount.

MOTION: To approve the RESOLUTION to award the contract for construction of Bluffton Township Fire District Station 38 in the Hampton Lakes area of the District to Paul S. Akins Company of Statesboro, Georgia in the amount of \$2,656,520 for the project, and allow the District up to an additional contingency for the project for unforeseen circumstances up to but not to exceed ten percent of the contract amount.

Director Lust motioned and Director Paolo seconded that the motion be approved. Unanimous approval. (YEAS –Raymond, Mike, Olsen, Poindexter, Hamilton, Paolo, Lust NAYS – None.)

- ***Fire Station 32 Progress Update:*** Chief Thompson reported that Station 32 at Callawassie is out to bid. There is a mandatory pre-bid conference being held at headquarters at this Thursday, 4/18/19 at 2:00 PM, and a second mandatory pre-bid conference next Thursday, 4/25/19 at 2:00 PM, and the sealed bids will be opened at 3:00 PM on May 5, 2019. The District is ready to proceed with getting a Building Permit.
- ***Fire Station 31 Progress Update:*** This is the New Riverside Station. County Council has increased its allotment for this project. The District has allotted \$1.51 million as part

of the bond sell. There is a cost sharing with the Town of Bluffton that Mr. Orlando is working on in the amount of \$212,505.

- **Station 37 Progress Update:** Palmetto Bluff is very near completion.
- **Station 34/New Project Update:** The County removed the Project Coordinator that was working on this project, and was replaced with Wes Campbell. That project is expected to begin moving along.
- **Other Business:**  
None
- **OLD BUSINESS:**  
None
- **NEW BUSINESS:**

## **FY2020 BUDGET RESOLUTION**

Director Lust was absent at the Special FY20 Budget Meeting held on Tuesday, April 9, 2019. Chairman Raymond asked if everyone had read over the materials that Chief Boulware had read the Fiscal Year 2020 Budget Proposal, and if anyone had any questions about what was discussed at the meeting. Director Lust asked if there had been any changes made to the Proposal, and there were not.

Chairman Raymond stated that Chief Thompson will electronically send the summary sheet that will be presented to County Council to each Board Member. Chairman Raymond requested a Resolution that the Board recommend that the Bluffton Township Fire District adopt a budget at an expenditure level of \$16,349,031.

Motion: To adopt the Bluffton Township Fire District Fiscal Year 2020 Budget in the amount of \$16,349,031. Director Mike motioned, and Director Hamilton seconded that the motion be approved. Unanimous approval. (YEAS –Raymond, Mike, Olsen, Poindexter, Hamilton, Paolo, Lust NAYS – None.)

Chief Thompson added that they will be attending the meeting to present the budget to County Council on April 29, 2019 and invited the Board Members to attend as well.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Director Mike motioned and Director Hamilton seconded to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed and the meeting was adjourned at 5:55 PM. (YEAS – Raymond, Olsen, Mike, Lust, Paolo, Poindexter, Hamilton, . NAYS – None.)

Respectfully Submitted,  
Linda J. Burton  
4/23/19