

**BLUFFTON TOWNSHIP FIRE DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
Tuesday, December 17, 2019
Bluffton Fire District Headquarters
MINUTES**

Board Members Present: Mike Raymond, Paul Hamilton, Louis Poindexter, Elaine Lust, Thomas Mike, Sr., Joe Paolo

Absent: Ed Olsen

Members Present: John Thompson, Rick Cramer, Steve McKinley, Robert Payne, Pete Reid, Terry Sheriff, Dan Wiltse, Rhett Livingston, Chris Garniewicz, Matt Henne, Woody Childs, Derek Franks, Mike Rehill, Tony Gibson, Nancy Miller-Hyer, Leslie Jones Hart

Community Members: None

VIA Video Conferencing: Eric Ligeikis, Matt Wallett, Matt Ortiz, Kaleb Spears, Gio Scianna, Brett Phillips, Taylor Horton, Ted Lange, Trey Fludd, Tyler Marion, Andrew Eldridge, Walt Cooler, Jeremy Eby, Craig Hysell, Jason Williams, Brandon Stevenson, Brendan Long, Wesley Crum, Phillip Horton, Walt Arlt, Duke Novak, Andrew De La Cruz, Mark Eiden, Clay Daley, Doug Favors, Joel Martin, Mike Tuten, Ian Evans, Tim Walsh, Dave Adams, Daniel Heslin, Devon Quance.

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER at 4:00 pm by Chairman Raymond.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Led by Director Hamilton

BOARD MEMBER ROLL CALL

PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS: Chairman Raymond stated that 2019 has been a busy year, but 2020 will be even busier. The District has a lot of activities going on and we continue to have more with construction and remodels of stations, possible consolidation of Daufuskie Fire Department, and staff and crew that are growing.

INTRODUCTIONS: Chief Thompson introduced our newest employees to the Board. Tony Gibson will serve as Facilities Maintenance Tech, making sure our Stations are in good repair. Woody Childs will serve as Training Captain, working closely with Chief Sheriff to train our crews. Captain Hunter has taken over the CPR/AED training as well as some duties for PIO. He is working out of the Fire Prevention office.

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

FINANCIAL REPORT: Chief Reid, reporting in Chief Boulware’s absence, reviewed the Finance Report for the month of November 2019. We are through 41.67% of the current fiscal year budget, and the total expenditures year to date are at 41.20%. Administration is reporting at 42.93% of its budget. Operations reporting at 41.49%; Training is reporting at 30.14%, Fire Prevention is at 47.08%; and Maintenance is reporting at 37.27% of its budget. The revenue requested from County year to date is \$6,468,183 which is 39.56% of our budget.

Total of all expenditures for November 2019 were \$1,606,147. November expenditures included business insurance payment (\$40,939), maintenance and tech support for Nova-Time (\$3,720), Special Teams equipment and gear (\$8,310), and medical supplies (\$3,421). The Impact fee balance as of November 30 is \$949,004. Director Mike asked for clarification of impact fees collected for the District and those collected for the BCSD. The difference is substantial, with BCSD receiving much more.

Chairman Raymond stated that the November 2019 Financial Report be submitted for audit.

CONSENT AGENDA APPROVAL: Chairman Raymond stated that he had several questions regarding the Maintenance Update. He asked if the \$300,000 billing per year for the Maintenance Division is offset by the money we receive from those organizations whose equipment we service. Chief McKinley stated that the money helps offset the costs. Chairman Raymond then asked if we are billing for use of the burn building and training center. Chief Thompson explained that we do not charge at this time. Most of the training done with Jasper County, Hardeeville, and Hilton Head is part of mutual aid training. Chairman Raymond remembered the sales pitch several years ago regarding the burn building. The burn building was created with tax payer dollars. Chief Thompson said training beyond mutual aid can be charged.

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

MOTION: The November 2019 Consent Agenda was approved by general consensus. No motion was made.

FIRE CHIEF’S REPORT:

Fire Prevention Update: Chief Wiltse stated that 154 Fire and Life Safety Inspections were performed in November. Development Plans included Watercrest ALF (an assisted living and memory care facility), Cypress Ridge Phase 18 (with 62 homes), 2 commercial building developments at 5 Red Cedar Street, Washington Square (a mixed used development of retail, office, residential, and restaurant space), and Palmetto Bluff Block M1, with 36 homes. Pub Ed

conducted 32 outreach events, installed 36 smoke alarms in 9 houses, and installed 3 car seats. Captain Levesque will conduct a smoke alarm installation blitz in the Brighten Beach area on Jan 18.

- ***Operations Update:*** Chief Cramer reported a record setting month with 620 calls in November. Station 34 Sun City handled 196 calls, the largest in volume, with Station 30 downtown Bluffton and Station 35 headquarters following. The average response time was 6:55. Chief Cramer also mentioned a new wet suit was used in a rescue of someone who drove into a pond off Bluffton Parkway. Director Lust was given clarification of the Colleton River/Moss Creek click-to-enter gate used for emergency vehicles.
- ***Accreditation Progress Update:*** Captain Livingston reported the Accreditation process is moving forward. We are currently waiting on CAD installation to allow us to collect the information we need for the report. The new information will be submitted and should meet the requirements for accreditation. We are currently waiting on the return of an MOA that was sent to County.
- ***Project Updates***

Strategic Plan Implementation Process: Chief Payne has met with his committee twice over the last two months. The quarterly update report will be presented at the next meeting.

Fire Station 38/Hampton Parkway Update: Work continues, with metal framing up door entry equipment installed. The gas line easement issue has been resolved. We will not receive a bill from Dominion Electric as the easement was never recorded. When asked, Director Paolo was told the block structure behind the station was for the back-up generator that will be installed.

Fire Station 32/Callawassie Progress Update: The contract has been signed by County and a pre-construction meeting will be set for early or mid-January.

Fire Station 31/New Riverside: Negotiations are taking place for the best construction cost. We met Dec. 12 regarding sharing costs with the Town of Bluffton, including sewer, entry roads, and infra-structure. We would pay for the storm retention pond. We are still working with the Town regarding the shared cost of moving the location of the fire station. We hope the developer will pay those costs. A meeting will be set up for January for more discussion on this. Chief Thompson has authorized paying the cost of a survey of the land donated by Palmetto Bluff. Chairman Raymond has concerns regarding access near the traffic circle and traffic control when exiting the station during emergencies. With the exit 150 feet further away from the circle, Chief Thompson doesn't think this is as much a concern.

Fire Station 34/Sun City: Chief Thompson received an email from County regarding entering into a construction MOA for 50% of the cost of construction. The County is using hospitality tax for its contribution to the project. The District will likely use impact

fees. Hospitality taxes are restricted funds and can only be used in the rehabilitation of a site or facility. Impact fees are also restricted funds and can only be used for expansion due to growth. We feel a complete renovation is needed, which will include an expansion of the facility as the response area has grown and become more populated requiring additional staffing to handle call volumes. The MOA calls for the County and District to split the costs 50/50. However, it is difficult to determine how much of the cost will be rehabilitation and how much will be expansion. Therefore, we are currently at a standstill while the County hired architect develops the plans. Chief Thompson asked the Board for guidance and Directors Lust and Pointexter will be part of a committee to discuss the project. The building is currently designed for 3-4 people but needs to accommodate 8-10 people.

OLD BUSINESS:

- ***Marina Fire Presentation:*** Chief Cramer gave a video presentation on the overview of how we currently respond to marine emergencies in the area. We have many docks and boat storage areas throughout the district, with fuel and fire hazards at all locations. Each location has its own set of challenges, from distance and access to fuel locations and life safety. Long piers create challenges for pressurized water and make firefighting difficult, especially at night. We currently have an 18' boat that works well in calm waters but it is without firefighting capabilities. We also have 2 inflatables, a 15' and a 13', both which are good for ponds, lakes, flooding situations. They have no firefighting capabilities either. There are no fire boats between Savannah and Charleston. If a boat catches fire, we can do nothing to help. Chief Cramer suggested purchasing a 50' boat with grant money that would cover 90% of the cost. It could be used to transport crews to and from Daufuskie if we consolidate with them. The boat could also be used to transport medical patients if needed. While Chairman Raymond did not feel the boat was needed, Director Lust would like to revisit the idea at next month's meeting.
- ***Consolidation with Daufuskie Island Fire Department:*** Chairman Raymond stated the preliminary study by Chief Thompson gave a very thorough overview of the consolidation of Daufuskie Island Fire Department with BTFD. There has been speculation of creating two separate countywide fire districts, one south and one north of the Broad River. Daufuskie would consolidate with BTFD to create the SOB district. The consolidation would act as a model for the NOB districts of Beaufort, Burton, Port Royal, Lady's Island, and Sheldon. By creating a south of the Broad River district, excluding Hilton Head Island which is a municipality, we create more leverage and a stronger voice in the possible County-wide fire district, or two districts of south and north of the Broad River. County has hired an attorney for purposes of consolidation. Chief Thompson and Chairman Raymond will attend a meeting with County officials on December 31. After much discussion, the Directors will continue the discussion at the next Board meeting after hearing the County's position.
- ***Formal Adoption of FY2019 CAFR:*** Director Poindexter motioned and Director Hamilton seconded the FY2019 CAFR report be accepted. Motion passed unanimously.

YEAS –Raymond, Poindexter, Lust, Hamilton, Paolo) (NAYS – None) (Director Mike left at 5:30 PM.)

- **Other:** Director Paolo welcomed Leslie back to BTFD. (Thank you, one and all, for your kind words. ljh)

ADJOURNMENT: Director Hamilton motioned and Director Poindexter seconded to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed and the meeting was adjourned at 6:22 PM. (YEAS –Raymond, Poindexter, Lust, Hamilton, Paolo) (NAYS – None)

Respectfully Submitted,

Leslie Jones Hart
12/18/2019