

**BLUFFTON TOWNSHIP FIRE DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
Tuesday, January 21, 2020
Bluffton Fire District Headquarters
MINUTES**

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

Absent: None

Members Present: John Thompson, Paul Boulware, Rick Cramer, Robert Payne, Pete Reid, Terry Sheriff, Dan Wiltse, Rhett Livingston, Derek Church, Ben Rushing, Emerson Kovalanchik, Aaron Angel, Scott Smith, Andrew Hatcher, Mike Rehill, Marcos Farr, Nancy Miller-Hyer, Leslie Jones Hart

Community Members: Doug Volk, Mr. and Mrs. Dwayne Farr, Ms. Andrea Farr, Caroline Farr

VIA Video Conferencing: Rod Oates, Brian Brock, Veronica Gutierrez, Devin Montalvo, Jeff Kuehn, Dylan Taylor, Andrei Turner, Spencer Hexamer, Tom Lamb, Travis Boulware, Kevin Etheredge, Jason Brahm, Todd Shisler, Tim Smith, Sean Hyde, George Brown, TJ McCullion, Mike McComas, Donald Bach, Matt Baker, Kaleb Spears, Dustin Brown, John Roe, Tyler Griffin

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER at 4:04 pm by Chairman Raymond.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Led by Director Hamilton

BOARD MEMBER ROLL CALL

PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS: Chairman Raymond turned the floor to Director Lust. She stated that she was very proud of the crews who responded to a serious structure fire in Moss Creek on Sunday night. The firefighters did a great job to bring the fire under control. Chief Thompson noted that it was a difficult fire due to the undersized water lines in the area.

RETIREMENT RECOGNITION: Chief Thompson reported that Captain Anthony Pavilonis recently retired from BTFD after 17 years of service. A ceremony was held in his honor on Wednesday, January 15. Congratulations, Captain Pavilonis.

PROMOTIONAL RECOGNITION: FF Marcos Farr was promoted to Lieutenant, with his wife Andrea and daughter Caroline helping with the pinning ceremony. We are happy to recognize Lt. Farr as our newest officer. Congratulations!

DECEMBER BOARD MEETING MINUTES: Chairman Raymond asked that the minutes be corrected to reflect that the November Financial Report be approved as submitted with one correction to remove the statement on page 2 of the minutes that reads “Chairman Raymond stated that the November 2019 Financial Report be submitted for audit”. Director Lust motioned and Director Hamilton seconded the minutes of the December 17, 2019 Board of Directors Regular meeting be approved with corrections. Motion passed. (YEAS –Raymond, Poindexter, Lust, Mike, Sr., Hamilton, Paolo, Olsen) (NAYS – None)

FINANCIAL REPORT: Chief Boulware reviewed the Finance Report for the month of December 2019. We have completed 50.0% of the current fiscal year budget, and the total expenditures year to date are at 48.13%. Administration is reporting at 49.88% of its budget. Operations reporting at 48.41%; Training is reporting at 35.62%, Fire Prevention is at 55.78%; and Maintenance is reporting at 44.48% of its budget. The revenue requested from County year to date is \$7,576,162 which is 48.12% of our budget.

Total of all expenditures for December 2019 were \$1,133,208. December expenditures included the final CAFR payment of \$11,975 and \$10,925 for uniforms for the 10 new recruit firefighters. Fire impact fee balance as of Dec. 31, 2019 is \$1,007,673. Director Paolo motioned and Director Hamilton seconded that the December 2019 Financial Report be approved as submitted. Motion passed. (YEAS –Raymond, Poindexter, Lust, Mike, Sr., Hamilton, Paolo, Olsen) (NAYS – None)

CONSENT AGENDA APPROVAL: Director Lust asked about the number of class withdrawals in the Training Update. Chief Sheriff stated that due to the time of year and personal conflicts, there were several withdrawals. We are not charged for those classes, however. Director Lust motioned and Director seconded that the Consent Agenda be approved. Motion passed. (YEAS –Raymond, Poindexter, Lust, Mike, Sr., Hamilton, Paolo, Olsen) (NAYS – None)

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

FIRE CHIEF’S REPORT:

- **Fire Prevention Update:** Chief Wiltse stated that 116 Fire and Life Safety Inspections were performed in December, with a total of 3,069 during 2019. Development Plans included 81 Calhoun Street (2 mixed use structures), a master plan for the Village at New Riverside (branch library, early childhood center, and several retail/restaurant spaces), 71

Calhoun Street (3 building development), Washington Square (driveway removal and sidewalk relocation), Palmetto Bluff Block L5 (71 single family homes), and others. Pub Ed conducted 29 outreach events, installed 36 smoke alarms in 7 houses, and installed 5 car seats. Captain Levesque, the BTFD Fire Auxiliary, the American Red Cross, and volunteers from the May River Lutheran Church conducted a smoke alarm installation blitz in the Brighton Beach Community on Jan 18, installing 109 smoke alarms in 32 houses and replaced countless batteries in existing smoke detectors. The Santa truck, coordinated by FF Dustin Brown and FF Tyler Marion, was a huge success as it traveled the Bluffton neighborhoods throughout December.

- **Operations Update:** Chief Cramer reported a record setting month with 568 calls in December. Station 34 Sun City handled 185 calls, the largest in volume, with Station 30 downtown Bluffton having 140 calls and Station 35 headquarters following with 110 calls. There were a total of 6,589 calls in 2019. The average response time was 6:44 and Chief Cramer will respond to Director Lust's questions as to why some calls have a much longer response time than others.
- **Accreditation Progress Update:** Captain Livingston reported the Accreditation process is moving forward. Chief Olsen and the accreditation peer assessment team from CPSE will be visiting the week of March 15 for 4 days to tour the district, check our data, and review our policies and procedures. They will also visit dispatch. We are working on a MOA to get EMS times in the report to better calculate the ERF. We have identified 15 high risk calls, all cardiac events, and continue to collect data.

Strategic Plan Implementation Process: The first quarterly update is complete and found in the attached Director documents. Chief Thompson stated all groups are making good progress in all areas. Objectives 1 and 2 should be completed in 3 years, not 5. When asked about drones, Chief Payne stated that we already have one and some have completed training with it. We have also received FAA licensing for the drone.

- **Project Updates:**

Fire Station 38/Hampton Parkway Update: Work continues, with metal framing, concrete block walls, and roof trusses in place. Pictures of the progress are included in this packet. The completion date has been set for July/August of 2020. There were a few clarifications of the pictures, including a service area for the AC units and a radio tower near the building.

Fire Station 32/Callawassie Progress Update: We are waiting on the final permits to be obtained and construction is set to begin soon. The generator will need to be moved. The new section will be constructed first, with the old portion of the building being updated second.

Fire Station 31/New Riverside: Negotiations are taking place for the best construction cost. We met Dec. 12 regarding sharing costs with EMS, including sewer and shared

areas. We would pay for the storm retention pond. We are still working with the Town regarding the shared cost of moving. Chairman Raymond said we are close to getting the shared costs resolved. The developer is not willing to pay as much as we first thought toward the costs of moving the station 90 degrees.

Fire Station 34/Sun City: Very little progress has been made as yet. The County is using hospitality tax that limits funds to rehabilitation of a site. We would use impact fee funds that have other restrictions.

OLD BUSINESS:

- ***Consolidation with Daufuskie Island Fire Department Update:*** Chairman Raymond reported he and Chief Thompson met with County Administrator Ashley Jacobs to discuss ideas about the consolidation with DIFD. If BTFD takes DIFD over, there would be no benefit to our citizens, with an increase in taxes. There are inherent challenges to BTFD taking on DIFD, including the logistics of getting additional manpower during a major event. We would have to re-write the current bonds that we have, to the increased costs of thousands of dollars. The discussion included the idea of Beaufort County taking over DIFD and contracting with BTFD for services. This process would eliminate the tax increase to Bluffton citizens. It would also begin the process of creating two separate countywide fire districts, one south and one north of the Broad River. We will meet with Administrator Jacobs next month to see what progress has been made.

NEW BUSINESS:

- ***Fire Board Annual Elections:*** Director Paolo motioned and Director Hamilton seconded that the current slate of officers remain the same as last year. Hearing no objections for change, the motion passed. YEAS –Raymond, Poindexter, Lust, Mike, Sr., Hamilton, Paolo, Olsen) (NAYS – None) Director Lust mentioned that her term and others would expire in 2020. Chief Thompson will receive information from County Council and letters will be issued to renew those terms.
- ***Fire Chief's Annual Evaluation Process:*** Chief Thompson will send out the newest evaluation form to all Directors. Once completed, Directors will email them back to Chairman Raymond who will compile the results.
- ***Battalion 38 Vehicle Purchase:*** There is a 14-week lead time for the purchase of a new Battalion Chiefs vehicle that will be housed at Station 38. This vehicle will be used by the 3 new Battalion Chiefs who will be stationed there. The cost of the vehicle has already been budgeted as a capital line item in the 2020 budget. Additional costs to equip the vehicle will be funded through impact fees. Chairman Raymond made a motion to authorize the purchase of the Battalion vehicle that is already part of the 2020 budget. Director Paolo seconded the motion. Motion passed. (YEAS –Raymond, Poindexter, Lust, Mike, Sr., Hamilton, Paolo, Olsen) (NAYS – None)
- ***Other:*** Director Paolo recently overheard a County finance committee meeting at the Rec Center. He was concerned about where impact fees were going. Chief Thompson explained that while some fees are shared throughout the County (roads, school district),

the impact fees we take in for new construction stays within the BTFD tax overlay district.

ADJOURNMENT: Director Hamilton motioned and Director Lust seconded to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed and the meeting was adjourned at 5:22 PM. (YEAS –Raymond, Poindexter, Lust, Mike, Sr., Hamilton, Paolo, Olsen) (NAYS – None)
Respectfully Submitted,

Leslie Jones Hart
1-22-2020