

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

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

Absent: None

Members Present via Zoom: John Thompson, Paul Boulware, Rick Cramer, Robert Payne, Pete Reid, Terry Sheriff, Dan Wiltse, Steve McKinley, Derek Franks, Adam Corn, Joe Helms, Michael Provo, Jason Carle, Giovanni Scianna, Amanda Cazenave

Community Members: None

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER at 4:02 pm by Chairman Raymond.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Waived due to video conferencing

BOARD MEMBER ROLL CALL

PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS: Chairman Raymond would like to thank everyone for working to get technology up. Director Lust would also like to thank Chief Thompson and the staff for their work as first responders during this time.

MARCH BOARD SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES: Director Hamilton motioned and Director Lust seconded the minutes of the March 31, 2020 Board of Directors Special meeting be approved. 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 March, 2020. We have completed 75% of the current fiscal year budget, and the total expenditures year to date are at 71.10%. A detailed Department breakdown is unavailable at this time due to the Incode system being rebuilt and all financial processes are currently being done with spreadsheets, pen and paper.

The current impact fee balance as of April 3rd is \$1,091,997. There are not any planned expenditures for the current fiscal year, but there will be an expense of approximately \$380,000 for concrete for the training facility planned for the next fiscal year. There was over \$49,000 spent in March on computer repairs plus an additional \$30,000 this month that is all being

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submitted to insurance. Insurance will then inform Chief Boulware of what they deem recoverable.

Director Paolo motioned and Director Lust seconded that the March 2020 Financial Report be approved as submitted. Motion passed. (YEAS –Raymond, Poindexter, Lust, Mike, Sr., Hamilton, Paolo, Olsen) (NAYS – None)

CONSENT AGENDA APPROVAL: Director Paolo asked about inviting instructors to come to our academy to minimize travel to other locations. Chief Sheriff stated that some of the course locations are outside of their control and that the higher-level courses are more expensive to host. They do a cost benefit analysis to determine traveling to versus hosting training courses. Director Paolo also asked if all 17 recruits that graduated will be Bluffton Fire employees. Chief Sheriff stated that they had recruits from Lady’s Island and other locations as part of that class. Director Paolo asked about the maintenance at Fripp Island. Chief McKinley stated that there was a single call that they assisted with. He also clarified that unit 2520 referenced in the maintenance report refers to the tower truck for preventative maintenance.

Director Lust motioned and Director Olsen 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 149 Fire and Life Safety Inspections were performed in March. Development Plans included Heritage at New Riverside Phase 6, Palmetto Bluff Block L5, Four Seasons at Carolina Oaks Phase 1, May River Crossing Starbucks, and Island Plasters. They started a new program called the Birthday Breeze By to wish a child a happy birthday using social distancing. The Community Risk Reduction Division has conducted nearly 100 birthday breeze-bys using a reserve apparatus. The burn ban is still in effect for the Town of Bluffton, however the burn ban for unincorporated Beaufort County has been lifted.
- **Operations Update:** Chief Cramer reported 662 calls in March which is a record number for our district for a single month. Station 34 Sun City handled 188 calls, the largest in volume, with Station 30 in downtown Bluffton having 157 calls and Station 35 headquarters following with 120 calls. Station 37 also had an increase in call volume to 27 calls. The average response time was 6:57. The 90th percentile time for the District was 10:40. The highest response times tend to be on the west end of Sun City due to the difficulty of getting the apparatus from the station through Sun City to the far section. Chairman Raymond asked about the increase in call volume. Chief Cramer stated that

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57.44% of calls were medical in nature. There has been a 2-sided effect regarding COVID influence with both possibly more calls due to a fear of going to the doctor's office or urgent care and delaying getting treatment, while he has also heard comments about not calling the fire department due to fears of being infected. A social media blast went out about the precautions used to protect our firefighters and the community to ease minds. Director Paolo asked about securing property within Sun City for a station to minimize response times to the west end. Chief Thompson stated that it is unlikely to be able to purchase a home or homesite within Sun City due to residents not wanting a fire station beside them. There is money earmarked in the event of an easement and potential to build a station in the future.

- **Accreditation Progress Update:** Chief Thompson reported that the fall meetings have been cancelled and that we have been issued a 12 month extension. The CPSE Peer Assessment Team is planning a site visit around September or October.

Strategic Plan Implementation Process: Implementation teams continue to work on their strategic goals. The next quarterly update will be presented to the Board at the May 19, 2020 meeting.

- **Project Updates:**

Fire Station 38/Hampton Parkway Update: Work continues, with only slowing slightly. Many updates can be seen driving by including the sign. The completion date is now estimated for late June.

Fire Station 32/Callawassie Progress Update: The slab has been poured and framing is underway. The expansion portion of the station is under roof and in the process of being dried in.

Fire Station 31/New Riverside: The plat in front of the station has been donated by Palmetto Bluff and is at the Town awaiting the next DRC meeting.

Fire Station 34/Sun City: Nothing to report due to COVID-19. They are still working on the MOA.

OLD BUSINESS:

- **Consolidation with Daufuskie Island Fire Department Update:** The IGA passed the BTFD Board, however in the scheduled April 6th meeting the chairman of the Daufuskie Island Fire Board informed Mrs. Jacobs that they want to wait until the end of the COVID-19 pandemic and they can have face to face meetings due to the concern that not all residents are on board. They also want more representation on our fire board. It has not been presented to the executive committee yet. They are looking to May or June for public meetings and may push back the July 1 date to possibly January 2021. Chairman Raymond stated that they are protective of their fire district and rightfully so. As this is to no advantage of Bluffton but rather a part of the county's and Mrs. Jacob's vision, we

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will be team players in giving them the time they need. Directors Paolo and Lust voiced concerns and questions about the agreement to manage Daufuskie Island fire district. Chairman Raymond requested that they send in their comments and suggestions to himself and Chief Thompson for review.

Chairman Raymond stated that the county could take a 20% hit in revenue, though it may not affect the fire district. With 97% of the budget allocated to personnel it wouldn't hurt to tighten spending. Director Olsen asked if there could potentially be a waiver to use impact fees if necessary. Chief Thompson said it was more likely that they could use reserve funds if needed. Director Poindexter commented about the importance to build up the reserve to 3 months budget. Chief Boulware reported that we currently have \$3.3 million in reserve putting us between 2 and 3 months budget.

NEW BUSINESS:

- ***Beaufort County Fire Impact Fee Study*** - Chief Thompson reported that consultants are looking into restructuring impact fees and updating county ordinances. We provided a lot of information that they requested to get started.
- ***COVID-19 Response Update*** – Chief Cramer reported that daily Incident Action Plans began on March 16th that include state and county statistics and best practices. They also include additional special directives regarding how they response to calls, forms and data tracking using the software, screening and monitoring health of our personnel. We have had no one coming in and not meeting the threshold. We have had people exposed that were isolated and self-monitored, but all are back to work now. The workforce has been outstanding. It was difficult in the beginning adjusting to the new procedures but they have done a great job. PPE supplies started out critical but the community has gathered supplies and we have received 3 shipments from the Strategic National Stockpile. We are no longer critical and have enough on hand and plan to keep some on reserve in the event it is needed in the future.
- ***Ransom Ware Attack: System Status Update*** – Chief Boulware reported that we are currently having our Incode software rebuilt with accounts and data restored from mid August 2019. When that is completed we will be working to backfill data to current so then we can return to using the software going forward. He is forecasting using paper until the new fiscal year in July. We have hired Soteria and Katalyst that are making adjustments and modifications to our security and firewalls. We have spent approximately \$70k already on items related to the ransom ware attack and will likely be up to \$100k to get us back to fully operational.

ADJOURNMENT: Director Paolo motioned and Director Hamilton seconded to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed and the meeting was adjourned at 5:26 PM. (YEAS –Raymond, Poindexter, Lust, Mike, Sr., Hamilton, Paolo, Olsen) (NAYS – None)

Respectfully Submitted,

Approved by the Fire Commission 6/16/2020.

Amanda Cazenave
4-22-2020

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