

**BLUFFTON TOWNSHIP FIRE DISTRICT  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
Tuesday, June 16, 2020  
Bluffton Fire District Headquarters  
MINUTES**

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

**Absent:** Thomas Mike

**Members Present via Zoom:** John Thompson, Paul Boulware, Rick Cramer, Robert Payne, Pete Reid, Terry Sheriff, Dan Wiltse, Steve McKinley, Adam Corn, Joe Helms, Amanda Cazenave

**Community Members:** None

**MEETING CALLED TO ORDER at 4:05 pm by Chairman Raymond.**

**INVOCATION:** Led by Director Hamilton

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**BOARD MEMBER ROLL CALL**

**ACCEPTANCE OF AGENDA:** Director Lust motioned and Director Hamilton seconded to accept the agenda as presented. Motion passed unanimously. (YEAS –Raymond, Poindexter, Lust, Hamilton, Paolo, Olsen) (NAYS – None)

**CHAIRMAN’S REMARKS:** Chairman Raymond stated that he is very proud of the work that was done on the budget and that the directors voted unanimously for a flat budget where there will be no increase in taxes to the residents of Bluffton Township. That is a tremendous feat, only possible because the staff said they can handle it and that speaks well to this organization. Some expenditures may have to be delayed but all the current staff will keep their job and benefits. He would like to thank everyone for working so hard in spite of the COVID-19 pandemic, the ransomware attack and everything else thrown at us recently and he is proud that we are still pursuing our national accreditation.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** None.

**APPROVAL OF BOARD MEETING MINUTES:** Director Lust motioned and Director Poindexter seconded the minutes of the February 18, 2020 and April 21, 2020 Board of Directors meetings be approved. Motion passed. (YEAS –Raymond, Poindexter, Lust, Hamilton, Paolo, Olsen) (NAYS – None)

**FINANCIAL REPORT:** Chief Boulware reviewed the Finance Report for the month of May, 2020. We have completed 91.67% of the current fiscal year budget, and the total expenditures

year to date are at 87.72%, currently 3.95% under budget. The revenue requested year to date from the county was \$13,486,273. The budget balance at the end of FY20 will be moved to the reserve account. Director Poindexter motioned and Director Lust seconded that the May 2020 Financial Report be approved as submitted. Motion passed. (YEAS –Raymond, Poindexter, Lust, Hamilton, Paolo, Olsen) (NAYS – None)

**CONSENT AGENDA APPROVAL:** Chairman Raymond stated that many training sessions are occurring via zoom. The maintenance division has 7 clients, other local municipalities such as the Town of Bluffton, Bluffton Police Department, TCL and others, that we service vehicles for with billings of nearly \$20,000 per month. The chaplains update will appear on the agenda only at request. Director Paolo asked about the freeze on hiring and the effect it will have on the new fire station. Chief Thompson clarified that the freeze will not affect current positions budgeted and accounted for. The open positions will be filled and promotions within ranks will continue but there will not be any new positions created in FY21 and the pay schedule will remain the same.

- **Receipt of Training Update**
- **Receipt of Maintenance Update**
- **Receipt of Fire Prevention Update**
- **Receipt of Operations Update**
- **Receipt of Accreditation Progress Update**
- **Receipt of Strategic Plan Implementation Progress**

**FIRE CHIEF'S REPORT:**

- ***Project Updates:***

***Fire Station 38/Hampton Parkway Update:*** Work is nearing completion on this station and we hope to be complete by the end of June. There was an issue with the concrete parking area where the contractor did not place relief cuts correctly and caused significant cracking across the parking lot. They are in the process of removing and replacing the concrete correctly. There was also a glitch with the floor in the EOC. They will be using a raised floor with panels to access wiring beneath the floor. A small gathering for the grand opening will be planned around the first week of August. Director Paolo asked about an update regarding the 80-foot tower planned for that station. Chief Thompson has been working with several people regarding the tower and the staff has a work around for radio communications until they can make progress with the tower.

***Fire Station 32/Callawassie Progress Update:*** Chief Boulware stated the new addition is all dried in and insulation and drywall are in progress. Once the new addition is completed the renovations on the “old” existing station will begin. Crews are still working out of the old existing station but will transition to the new addition once it is completed.

***Fire Station 31/New Riverside:*** Attorney Tab Bendle of Howell, Gibson, and Hughes has been hired to represent it as we work with the Town to complete an intergovernmental agreement for shared costs for infra-structure on the site. The district and the county will each pay \$1,661,277 and the town will contribute \$222,557 for the project. The town will be paying for the new entry road to the property line where we will pick it up. The county is paying for the sanitary sewer for the area of the barn project. The town agreed that Fraser Construction can construct the road which is good for us not having to coordinate with an additional contractor for the project. The sign will be going up soon, the building permit is in hand and we are hoping to get the MOA signed in the next few weeks.

***Fire Station 34/Sun City:*** This project is now critical due to the close quarters during this pandemic and trying to keep personnel separated. The sleeping quarters specifically are an issue having a bunk room rather having separate sleeping quarters like in the newer stations. The county is planning to use ATax funds which can only be used for renovations. BTFD will be using impact funds which are attributed to growth for expansion. The difficulty is getting the renovation of the existing station and the planned addition to work out to a 50/50 cost share between the county and the district. The common thinking now is that we may need to enter into two separate contracts for the renovation and the addition. Director Olsen asked about potentially renting a trailer for the staff, which has been discussed. Director Lust offered the Board’s help to move this along if necessary. Director Poindexter asked about the county’s land there at the station and if the footprint is enough space to be able to add on there. Chief Thompson confirmed that yes there is room to add on what is necessary. He will also be having a meeting with Sun City’s board president for further discussion of a second full-service station and about Sun City in general.

## **OLD BUSINESS:**

- ***Daufuskie Island Consolidation Study:*** This project is officially on hold for the time being. We believe it is still the county administrator’s intent to proceed and we will likely revisit it around January 2021. The DIFD has presented a budget for FY21 rather than the BTFD. The BTFD has no legal obligations or liability for the DIFD.
- ***Beaufort County Fire Impact Fee Study:*** Based upon the growth needs of the District, the consultant is proposing an increase of \$472 up to \$953 per 2500 square feet for a single dwelling unit. This is a one-time fee for new construction only. There is a rebate suggested for homes built with a sprinkler system installed. There is still work to be done after the chiefs present this information to their Boards. The third reading with the County Council Committee is scheduled for October of this year. Chairman Raymond suggested an additional meeting to discuss this project. Builders won’t have to worry

about this increase if they already have their building permit prior to this becoming an ordinance. Director Lust suggested that people that install a sprinkler system should still pay something at a discounted rate rather than a rebate covering the entire impact fee. Chief Thompson stated that fire sprinkler systems have a significant impact on the resources needed to control a house fire thus reducing the districts costs. Director Paolo asked if we can have a face to face workshop when discussing this and Chairman Raymond suggested another location for that meeting to not contaminate the fire stations.

- ***COVID-19 Response Update:*** Chief Cramer reported that our response posture has not changed. We are still minimizing exposure regarding patient interaction. We are staging out of positive COVID patients and letting EMS take over when possible. PPE supplies are good and we are in good shape. We have had zero people exposed on call that we are aware of. We do have 1 employee that tested back positive on a COVID screening now out on sick leave. 17 people were exposed and have been tested. We have 5 employees currently monitoring status because of work related contact. We are still training but we are minimizing the numbers together in a group, minimizing outside people coming to train and minimizing staff going outside of the district to train. We are in good shape and are doing a good job staying safe and keeping our crews healthy. Director Poindexter asked about any lapses in certifications during this time. Chief Cramer stated that there have been extensions provided but everything is good with certifications. Chief Sheriff said the only issue they have come to is with fingerprinting required by SC DHEC for recertifications.
- ***Ransom Ware Attack: System Status Update:*** Chief Boulware reported that we have finished with the consultants that were hired and have received reports back from those, making a few minor suggested changes. We are in much better shape that we were. We are still in the process of rebuilding the financial software Incode and are working on paper continuously for purchase orders until we can get the old data back in and the system back online for everyone.

## **NEW BUSINESS:**

Director Paolo brought up a concern about a headlight out in an engine in Sun City. Chief Thompson said that the light was replaced by Tyler this week. He also asked about the MCIP, multi-county industrial park expense of \$75,000 per year. Chief Thompson explain that unfortunately because we are funded with county tax dollars, we are responsible for contributing to this project alongside the Town of Bluffton, Jasper County, Beaufort County and others.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Director Lust motioned and Director Hamilton seconded to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed and the meeting was adjourned at 5:25 PM. (YEAS –Raymond, Poindexter, Lust, Hamilton, Paolo, Olsen) (NAYS – None)

Respectfully Submitted,

Amanda Cazenave  
6-17-2020