

**DAUFUSKIE ISLAND FIRE DISTRICT
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS' MEETING
400 Haig Point Road Daufuskie Island, SC 29915
March 18th, 2020**

PRESENT:	GEOFF BRUNNING (By Phone) CAROLE RIZZO BAUM NANCY LUDTKE ANDY MASON	CHAIRMAN COMMISSIONER COMMISSIONER COMMISSIONER
OTHERS:	RANDY LOPER EDWARD BOYS ERIN QUINN	CHIEF - DIFD CHIEF - DIFD ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT
GUESTS:	CHRIS INGLESE TANNER POWELL JOHN THOMPSON MIKE RAYMOND LEANNE COULTER	BEAUFORT COUNTY BEAUFORT COUNTY CHIEF – BTFD COMMISSIONER – BTFD CHARPERSON – DI COUNCIL
ABSENT:	BILL CRABTREE	COMMISSIONER

- 1. Call to Order:** Mason called the meeting to order at 1:04 PM.
- 2. Citizens' Comment Period:** No one from the community was present. No issues were submitted from the community.
- 3. Review and Approval of the Agenda and Minutes:** Mason opened the meeting with a request for approval of the minutes of the November 19, 2019, December 14, 2019, and February 26, 2020 commissioners' meeting. No one requested changes. The minutes were approved by Ludtke and seconded by Baum. All in favor.
- 4. February '20 Financial Report:** The February financial report was reviewed. Mason made a motion and approved by Ludtke and seconded by Baum. All in favor.
- 5. Consolidation Updates – Guest from Beaufort County and Bluffton Township Fire Department:** Chris Inglese, Deputy County Administrator of Beaufort County, presented on the current working plan for DIFD starting July 1st, 2020. The initial consolidation review showed that there would be a financial increase of 80-100k to have the BTFD debt reassessed and re-allocated to include DI residents. Beaufort County is prepared to bring documents forward on an alternative path that would not incur this administrative fee. DIFD as an independent commission would expire and become an administrative department under Beaufort County. Operations would be done under an agreement with BTFD. Millage rate would remain steady to the Daufuskie residents. Due to economics of scale and taking part in Bluffton's larger group plans, there would be an increase in insurance benefit coverage at a lower cost to the employee & employer. There will also be an increase in workforce salaries using the BTFD model. Since the DIFD Commissioners Board would be dissolved with this consolidation, there is the potential of a Fire Advisory Board of 2 or 3 people to continue on.

Chief John Thompson, Bluffton Township Fire Department, believes that there can be an increased level of service to DI at the same or lesser cost. BTFD is currently going through an accreditation process. All of their firefighters are EMTs and able to offer cross-services to the community. Every DIFD staff member will be offered a position with BTFD. DI Firefighters will be given a period of time to complete any coursework or certifications for their position. One of many benefits for DIFD and BTFD collaboration, if a DIFD engine is down, BTFD could barge over one from their fleet.

Staffing would be further supported for vacations, leave of absences, etc. Current staffing is 4 firefighters per shift. The goal over the next few years would be to increase to 5 then 6 per shift. Additional funding opportunities such as SAFR grants may be considered for staffing. Some of the current DIFD workforce may be considering retirement.

Volunteers are very helpful on Daufuskie. The program would be kept in place, suggesting monthly training on DI and the potential of a paid lead trainer. The volunteers can utilize the BTFD training facilities and streamlining their training options and gear specifications will result in cost savings to the district.

BTFD Firefighters are excited to work over on Daufuskie. There are some that enjoy more call runs and will continue to be offered those opportunities within BTFD.

Commissioner Mason asked what are the options if the agreement doesn't work out. Atty Ingelse explained that the dissolution of the current ordinance is with County Council and County Council can also create by ordinance.

Daufuskie Island Council President, Leanne Coulter, shared that there is a desire for a meeting, if not several, to review the details of the proposed consolidation with the Daufuskie Community. An informational meeting is scheduled for Tuesday April 14th at 1pm for the Daufuskie Island Council members to meet with representatives from Beaufort County, BTFD, and DIFD/DIFD Commissioners to ask questions. An additional community-wide meeting would be planned for after that meeting.

- 6. COVID-19 – Guidance & Precautions:** Review of procedures in place for anyone showing signs of COVID-19 for DIFD station, firefighters, Beaufort County EMS, and medivac transport by boat.
- 7. Other:** Nothing at this time.
- 8. Next Commissioners meeting:** Next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 20, 2020 at 1pm.
- 9. Adjournment:** Mason motioned for the meeting to conclude, Ludtke approved and Baum seconded. The meeting concluded at 2:50 PM.