

SOUTH WALTON FIRE DISTRICT

911 North County Highway 393, Santa Rosa Beach, Florida 32459

"Prompt, Competent, Caring Response in Time of Need"



The Board of Fire Commissioners of the South Walton Fire District will hold a regular meeting on **November 13, 2023, at 4:00 p.m.** at the South Walton Fire District logistics building - third floor.

The agenda will include, but not be limited to the following:

- I. Call to Order
- II. Public Comment*
- III. Approval of Minutes
Regular Board Meeting: 10.09.2023
- IV. Secretary/Treasurer's Report
- V. Attorney's Report
Trademark Update
- VI. Chief's Report
- VII. Committee Reports
- VIII. Unfinished/Old Business
Board Advisory: Multi-Year Contract Review
Fiscal Officer Carole Martin
Board Advisory: Firefighters' Retirement System Resident Trustee Appointment
Fire Chief Ryan Crawford
- IX. New Business
Board Action: Fire Board Meeting Schedule
Fire Chief Ryan Crawford
Board Action: Miramar Beach Fire Station Construction Contract
Assistant Chief Daniel LaTour
- X. Public Comment*
- XI. Adjournment

***Note:** Persons who wish to be placed on the agenda must contact the Administrative Assistant within five days of any meeting and provide the name of the person who will be speaking and the subject to be addressed. If a person decides to appeal any decision made by the Board of Fire Commissioners of the South Walton Fire District concerning any matter considered at such meeting or hearing, he or she will need a record of the proceedings and that, for such purpose, may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based.

SOUTH WALTON FIRE DISTRICT BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS

Meeting Minutes – November 13, 2023

*****PENDING APPROVAL*****

Commissioners Present: Charlotte Flynt, Mark Foley, Phil Friday, Maurice Gilbert, Roger Hall, Mike Stange

Commissioners Absent: Brian Christenson

Call to Order: 4:00 p.m.

Public Comment: Members of the public were invited to comment. There was no public comment.

Commissioner Gilbert announced that a quorum was present.

On a motion duly made by Commissioner Flynt and seconded by Commissioner Hall, the Board unanimously approved the minutes of the October 9, 2023, Board of Fire Commissioners' regular meeting.

Secretary/Treasurer's Report: Commissioner Flynt read the September 2023 cash report into the record.

Attorney's Report: Attorney Youell reported that SWFD's Trademark application continues to be in progress.

On a motion duly made by Commissioner Flynt and seconded by Commissioner Friday, the Board unanimously approved Attorney Youell's October 2023 billing statement.

Fire Chief's Report:

Chief Crawford reviewed the Emergency Response Activity Report which included Beach Safety Responses.

Throughout October, SWFD's Fire & Life Safety Division along with fire crews provided public education presentations for approximately 675 adults and 1,600 children throughout many local schools and daycares.

For the second consecutive year, SWFD held a poster coloring contest geared toward promoting fire prevention messaging with the 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders from Dune Lakes and Butler Elementary Schools. The first-place winners from each school received a ride to school with SWFD firefighters in one of the fire trucks in addition to a pizza party for the winners' classes.

SWFD partnered with Domino's Pizza in Miramar Beach for a unique smoke detector advocacy program. SWFD members spent an evening in front of Domino's Pizza providing prevention messaging and literature promoting fire safety. Later in the evening, a few lucky customers who had placed orders for pizza received a special delivery from both SWFD prevention and suppression personnel along with the Domino's Pizza crew.

Chief Crawford and District Chief John Adams attended the annual Florida Fire Chief's Health and Safety Conference in Orlando.

On October 12, 2023, SWFD hosted former Fire Chief Les Hallman for a return visit. Chief Hallman served as SWFD's Fire Chief between 1996-2006 and is credited with overseeing a period of rapid organizational growth which included the construction of the Watercolor, Santa Rosa Beach, and Mack Bayou fire stations, SWFD's acquisition of 911 Dispatch, the creation of the Beach Safety program, and the consolidation of Fire based EMS ambulance services in South Walton. Staff along with retired Assistant Chief Marc Anderson spent the afternoon providing Hallman with a tour of SWFD facilities.

SWFD hosted its contracted vendor throughout the month of October for the annual physicals of SWFD employees. Over the course of several weeks, they completed blood work, pulmonary function testing, ECGs, hearing and vision testing, fitness evaluations, and advanced cancer screenings. Chief Crawford thanked the board for the continued support in providing these comprehensive annual health screenings for SWFD employees.

On October 20, 2023, SWFD paused to remember the crew of Airheart 1 in honor of the 19-year anniversary of the fatal air ambulance crash that took the lives of all three (3) crew members. Following a general alarm and moment of silence, Chaplain Pete Hyde led us in prayer, and members of SWFD's Honor Guard presented colors. The brief ceremony concluded with Paramedic Laura Kerr playing "Going Home" on the bagpipes.

On October 23, 2023, SWFD held a pinning and promotional ceremony for several members. Firefighters Josh Pitts, Caylon Friend, and Dennis Langer were promoted to the position of Sergeant; and five new career firefighters, Decatur Smith, August Lang, Nathan Stow, James Morgan, and Marcus Cabanas all successfully completed the yearlong probationary process. Chief Crawford expressed how proud he was of each of them for achieving these career milestones.

Chief Crawford participated in a listening session with the State Fire Marshals' Office advocating for changes to state rule on reciprocity for out-of-state firefighters who are relocating to Florida and wish to obtain the Florida Firefighter certification. Florida currently accepts reciprocity for both EMT and Paramedic licensure from other states through the National Registry and has financially incentivized the process for law enforcement officers coming from other states. However, the reciprocity process for Florida's firefighter certification remains arduous and complicated. It is generally felt that streamlining the process will help abate some of the fire service recruitment and retention issues being observed around the state.

On October 18, 2023, SWFD participated in an Active Assailant tabletop exercise held in Freeport, Florida, and a full-scale Active Assailant exercise at South Walton High School on November 9, 2023. The full-scale event included participation from the School District, the Walton County Sheriff's Office, other state and federal law enforcement agencies, Emergency Management, and Fire and EMS partners from Bay and Walton Counties. The exercise tested technological and interagency interoperability, unified command, surge in emergency services capacity, and patient triage and transport.

Beginning November 1, 2023, SWFD increased the daily staffing assigned at the Inlet Beach fire station to adjust response gaps created by the temporary Deer Lake Bridge / Hwy 30A road closure. SWFD will maintain a Battalion Chief, and 7-8 firefighters assigned to Engine 1, Rescue 1, Brush 1, and a Command vehicle to maintain these daily staffing levels through the conclusion of the Deer Lake Bridge construction project which is anticipated in April 2024.

SWFD kicked off its benevolent efforts for the holiday season by partnering with Food for Thought for the Heroes Against Hunger Food Drive. SWFD is collecting canned and non-perishable goods at each of its fire stations through November 18, 2023, to provide meals for those less fortunate in the community.

Chief Crawford stated that for the 23rd year, SWFD has hosted the Caring and Sharing Angel Tree program. This program continues to be a tremendous success because of the generosity of the community.

SWFD extended conditional offers and will be bringing on a few of the new FY24-funded positions including three firefighters and a part-time Plans Examiner. SWFD is currently advertising for the accountant position.

SWFD hosted a Walton Fire Council meeting that provided an extensive briefing by the National Weather Service in Tallahassee with regard to both current environmental and drought conditions as well as the long-range forecast. At the recommendation of the Walton Fire Council, the BCC issued a countywide burn ban on November 1, 2023. The Fire Council, which consists of Walton County's Emergency Management Director, the Fire Chiefs representing each of the five fire service organizations in Walton County, and a representative from Florida Forest Service, will continue to monitor these conditions closely. A recommendation to rescind the burn ban will occur as soon as wildfire and drought conditions have decreased enough to safely do so.

Chief Crawford, SWFD's Honor Guard unit, and SWFD's PIO will be representing the District at the Florida Fallen Firefighter Memorial Service in Orlando. The annual service honors those firefighters who lost their lives in the line of duty over the past year and formally enshrines their names onto the memorial. Each year honor guards and pipe and drum units from across the state convene for this special service to show respect for those who have given the ultimate sacrifice and for their surviving families.

On November 18, 2023, SWFD will host its second annual SWFD Fall Festival / Chili Cook-off. The event was created to bring SWFD members and their families together to provide some personal insight into the work life of SWFD members.

Chief Crawford reminded the board that they will need to select Board Officers and Committee Appointments for 2024 at the regular meeting in December.

The Pension Board's quarterly meeting is scheduled for 2:30 pm on November 27, 2023, at SWFD's Administrative conference room.

SWFD Administrative Offices will be closed November 23-24, 2023, in observance of the Thanksgiving holiday.

The next regularly scheduled Board of Fire Commissioners' meeting is scheduled for December 11, 2023, at 4 p.m. in SWFD's Logistics Building Board Room.

Committee Reports: None

Unfinished/Old Business:

At the Board of Fire Commissioners regular meeting on October 9, 2023, Commissioner Flynt requested staff to research and compile a list of all vendor contracts that had not been reviewed or renewed in the past five years. Staff identified the following contracts or agreements and provided a synopsis of each: Brooks Environmental Solutions, LLC, Gulf Coast Collection Bureau, and Reca Rene Youell, Esquire. Commissioner Hall

requested data on current EMS fee collections by Gulf Coast Collection Bureau. The board discussed continuing the Brooks Environmental Solutions, LLC contract. Chief Crawford and Chairman Gilbert will meet with Recca Rene Youell, Esquire to review her contract.

Firefighters' Retirement System Resident Trustee Appointment: Chief Crawford presented a letter of interest from Battalion Chief Nate Brown. Staff requested board direction as to continuing the solicitation for candidates for the Pension Trustee appointment or alternatively, consideration of the board to appoint Chief Brown to assume the Resident Trustee position being vacated by Assistant Chief LaTour which would become effective January 1, 2024. On a motion duly made by Commissioner Hall and seconded by Commissioner Flynt, the Board unanimously appointed Chief Brown to assume the Resident Trustee position effective January 1, 2024.

New Business

Chief Crawford presented a Board Action whereas Staff requested Board approval of the 2024 Board Meeting Schedule provided in the board packet. On a motion duly made by Commissioner Flynt and seconded by Commissioner Hall, the Board unanimously approved the 2024 Fire Board Meeting Schedule as presented.

Assistant Chief LaTour presented a Board Action whereas Staff requested board approval of a contract with Empire Builders Group, Inc. totaling \$5,871,389 for the construction of a new Miramar Beach Fire Station as well as authorizing the Fire Chief/Administrator authority to execute the contract. After a lengthy discussion, a motion was duly made by Commissioner Flynt and seconded by Commissioner Foley, and the Board approved the execution of the agreement with Empire Builders Group as presented. Commissioner Hall was not present during the vote.

Public Comment: Members of the public were invited to comment. There was no public comment.

Adjourned: The meeting adjourned at 4:57 p.m.