

# 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 **March 11, 2024, 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: 02.12.2024**
- IV. Secretary/Treasurer's Report
- V. Attorney's Report  
**Trademark Update**  
**Title Insurance Claim Update**
- VI. Chief's Report
- VII. Committee Reports  
**Pension Board Quarterly Report**  
Roger Hall, Commissioner
- VIII. Unfinished/Old Business
- IX. New Business  
**2022/23 Audit Report**  
Warren Averett
- 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.

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# SOUTH WALTON FIRE DISTRICT BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS

## Meeting Minutes – March 11, 2024

\*\*\*PENDING APPROVAL\*\*\*

**Commissioners Present:** Brian Christenson, Charlotte Flynt, Mark Foley (left at 4:55 pm), Maurice Gilbert, Roger Hall, Mike Stange (left at 4:58 pm)

**Commissioners Absent:** Phil Friday

**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.

Commissioner Gilbert announced a change in the agenda order to discuss the 2022-2023 audit report. Joel Bradley with Warren Averett presented the Board of Fire Commissioners with a copy of the 2022-2023 Audit Report and report on SWFD's excellence in fiscal reporting. Mr. Bradley also stated that the District is in sound fiscal condition. On a motion duly made by Commissioner Christenson and seconded by Commissioner Hall, the Board unanimously accepted the 2022-2023 Audit Report as presented.

On a motion duly made by Commissioner Flynt and seconded by Commissioner Christenson, the Board unanimously approved the minutes of the February 12, 2024, Board of Fire Commissioners' regular meeting.

**Secretary/Treasurer's Report:** Commissioner Flynt read the January 2024 cash report into the record.

**Attorney's Report:** Attorney Youell reported that SWFD's Trademark application continues to progress. Youell also reported that a Notice of Title Defect for SWFD's Geronimo Street property was mailed to Old Republic National Title Insurance Company and Porath & Associates, P.A. There had been no response from either company at the time of this meeting.

On a motion duly made by Commissioner Hall and seconded by Commissioner Christenson, the Board unanimously approved Attorney Youell's February 2024 billing statement.

### **Fire Chief's Report:**

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

Kacie Brunza accepted SWFD's newly created accountant position. Chief Crawford welcomed Kacie to the SWFD team and introduced her to the commissioners.

Chief Crawford announced that Kathleen Nolan and James Miles joined SWFD's Communications Division as 911 Telecommunicators. In addition, Chief Crawford informed the board that five firefighters are scheduled to begin the new hire orientation process on March 18, 2024. This hiring will exhaust the firefighter eligibility list from SWFD's previous

testing process. SWFD plans to begin advertising for the next application period to conduct candidate testing in May 2024.

Chief Crawford announced that after serving over 25 years at SWFD, Lieutenant Bill Hartzog retired on February 29, 2024. Chief Crawford acknowledged his appreciation for Hartzog's dedicated service. As a result of Hartzog's retirement, a promotional ceremony was held on March 6, 2024. Sergeant Doug Mishler was promoted to the position of Lieutenant and Firefighter Rob Hall was promoted to the position of Sergeant. Firefighters Izec Isabella and Noah Collins who both recently completed their firefighter probationary process were sworn in and pinned.

Approximately two hundred members and guests attended SWFD's annual awards ceremony held on February 17, 2024, at Sandestin Hilton as members were recognized for their achievements during 2023. Chief Crawford thanked Commissioners Gilbert, Flynt, and Hall for attending the special evening. Florida's Chief Financial Officer and State Fire Marshal Jimmy Patronis attended as the guest speaker. Thank you, Commissioner Flynt, for helping make this happen.

Several SWFD divisions were represented at the Florida Fire Service Day at the State Capital in February. Fire departments across the state participated in this event showcasing specialized response apparatus and equipment, innovative programs and initiatives, and demonstrations aimed toward enhancing the safety, health, and well-being of their communities.

On February 16, 2024, a Notice to Proceed was issued for the expansion and reconstruction of the Miramar Beach Fire Station. Completion should occur no later than June 20, 2025.

Chief Crawford announced that SWFD received the preliminary geotech exploration report for the St. Joe property being considered for the future SWFD Station 6 at Watersound North. Staff awaits the civil engineer's evaluation of the report. In addition, Staff drafted an RFP for architectural design and engineering services for Station 6 and intend to proceed with the solicitation for an architectural firm to begin designing the facility to remain on track within project timelines.

The week of March 6, 2024, Motorola contracted technicians were onsite installing all new hardware for the build-out of the new computer-aided dispatch (CAD) system. Staff anticipates a go-live timeline with the new Motorola CAD being fully operational by October 2024.

In February, several SWFD personnel traveled to Auburndale, Florida to attend the Florida Public Safety Drone Operations Conference (FLOCON). Hands-on training included utilizing UAV platforms for incident intelligence gathering for incident command, capturing scene size-up imagery, and ultimately enhancing scene safety for responders. This was a great opportunity for SWFD drone operators to collaborate with some of the top drone programs around the country.

Lifeguards returned to the beaches on March 1, 2024, resuming seasonal coverage from the Regional Beach Accesses between 10 am – 6 pm daily as well as the private properties of Sandestin Resort and Rosemary Beach. SWFD continues to seek additional lifeguard candidates.

SWFD's PIO coordinated interviews with news media markets based in areas where South Walton Spring Break visitors are from. These interviews are intended to proactively

educate visitors on rip current awareness, the beach flag warning system, and generally the importance of swimming near a lifeguard.

On March 1, 2024, SWFD received notice that the Van Ness Butler Regional Beach Access would no longer be accessible to the public. It is Chief Crawford's understanding that this notice was the result of litigation between Walton County and Watercolor Community Association over an easement abandonment clause and customary use. Chief Crawford further explained that the Van Ness location is one of SWFD's designated lifeguard tower locations. Therefore, staff is in communication with Walton County leadership to amend the terms of the beach safety contract as tower locations are listed very specifically to the addresses of each Regional Beach Accesses. Eliminating the tower would create a distance of three miles between the Grayton Beach and Santa Clara lifeguard tower locations in an area known to have a heavy beach patron volume. SWFD has proposed relocating the lifeguard tower to the nearest available neighborhood beach access to the East rather than eliminating it which reduces this distance to approximately two miles. Staff will bring any proposed agreement revisions to the board for approval once the amendment language is finalized.

All remediation from last summer's flooding has been completed at the 110 South 393 facility allowing SWFD's Beach Safety Division to resume operations at that location.

The District's current agreement with labor will expire on September 30, 2024. Chief Crawford will continue to keep the board updated during the negotiation process.

SWFD continues efforts to locate and register all public access automated external defibrillators (AEDs). Chief Crawford reported that there are a total of 58 AEDs currently registered and geo-logged into the PulsePoint database. Anyone can access this data through the free PulsePoint smartphone application which shows device details, photos, and specific locations.

SWFD continues to promote free monthly community CPR training. The next free training class is scheduled for April 11, 2024. Citizens wishing to attend may either reach out to a member of SWFD's EMS Division at 850-267-1298 or email a request to [cpr@swfd.org](mailto:cpr@swfd.org).

Chief Crawford reported that SWFD certified 23 participants in CPR training in February. Also in February, SWFD's Beach Safety and EMS Divisions reached a total of 379 high school students providing hands-on CPR and first aid skills.

Staff applied for Federal grant funding through FEMA's Assistance to Firefighters Grant program. The application seeks federal funding to assist SWFD in the procurement of a firefighter rehab and air truck to effectively provide rehabilitation to its members on the fireground. The new apparatus would not only provide greater capacity with an onboard breathing air compressor to refill spent SCBA bottles on the scene but also transport critical equipment such as cooling misters, tents for environmental protection of SWFD firefighters, rehab chairs, nourishment and hydration, and medical monitoring equipment as is provided for in the NFPA 1584 standard. The vehicle would serve as a paramedic-capable resource for medical incidents on the East side of the District reducing the frequency of SWFD's high-profile ladder truck responses to medical-related incidents in the Seaside, Seagrove, and Watercolor. If awarded, this apparatus would be a 90% federal and 10% local cost share. The total project cost has been proposed at \$871,000.

SWFD's Retiree Breakfast is scheduled to be held at SWFD's Station 4 at 9 am on March 16, 2024.

Chief Crawford reminded the commissioners of the annual ethics training requirement for all elected officials of independent special districts.

SWFD Administrative Offices will be closed on Friday, March 29, 2024, in observance of Good Friday/Easter.

The next regularly scheduled Board of Fire Commissioners' meeting is scheduled for April 8, 2024, at 4 p.m. in SWFD's Logistics Building Board Room.

**Committee Reports:** Commissioner Hall reported that the Pension Board met on March 4, 2024. For the quarter ended December 31, 2023, the fund earned a net of 8.09% and the funded ratio is 94.0%.

**Unfinished/Old Business:** None

**New Business:** None

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

**Adjourned:** The meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.