

**Minutes for the Meeting of
the Fort Myers Beach Fire Control District Board of Commissioners**

January 17, 2024 10:00am
Diamondhead Beach Resort
2000 Estero Boulevard

In attendance: Chairman John Bennett, Vice-Chairman Larry Wood, Secretary/Treasurer Jim Knickle, Commissioner Ron Fleming, Commissioner Jacki Lyszak, Fire Chief Scott Wirth, Finance Director Jane Thompson, Attorney Andrew Salzman and District members.

1. **Meeting Called to Order** 10:00am
2. **Pledge of Allegiance**
3. **Adoption of Agenda** [Discussion/Approval]

Commissioner Fleming motioned to approve the agenda, Commissioner Knickle seconded and the motion passed 5-0.

4. **Restate Agenda Items** [Information]
5. **Public Input on Non-Agenda Items** - *none*
6. **Consent Agenda** [Approval]

Items listed are considered routine and action will be taken by one motion; if a Commissioner desires discussion, the specific item will be removed during the Adoption of the Agenda and considered separately.

- A. Approval of Meeting Minutes from December 13, 2023
- B. Approval of December checks 48522-48563 total \$216,232.39

Commissioner Lyszak motioned to approve the consent agenda, Commissioner Knickle seconded and the motion passed 5-0.

7. **Chief's Report**

Chief Wirth gave a brief report on recent events, highlighting the recent New Year's Eve fireworks show.

The Town recently held a Q&A event with condominium board associations and the Fire District received some suggestions on how to improve service and compliments on the Life Safety Team's efforts.

Chief Wirth welcomed new Life Safety Specialist Michael Koliass.

Auditors completed on site testing before the Christmas holiday and they will likely share their findings at the February meeting.

The District is continuing to work through FEMA projects and look to close many before the summer.

December run numbers show that calls are distributed 50/50 between medical and fire calls. The District has averaged 130-140 calls for the month of December the past two years due to less people on the island.

Firefighter gear with PFAS free materials became available recently. The District will be purchasing six sets to properly outfit some of the newer firefighters currently wearing used gear that is not ideal for them. The District plans for a full replacement once the gear has been tested and will continue its five year replacement plan.

Chief Wirth advised the District will be purchasing new air packs to replace those in need of repair or lost during hurricane Ian, bringing the quantity up to twenty.

Promotional exams will be posted for Lieutenant and Battalion Chief. The list will be good for two years.

Chief Wirth recognized December District anniversaries.

Commissioner Fleming expressed he would like to see the District purchase ten sets of firefighter gear instead of six. Chief Wirth and the Board discussed the purchase of new gear and current policies to prepare for an increase in calls as the island recovers.

Commissioner Fleming expressed that he would like to see the District hire a HR director and a 40-hour training chief.

8. Unfinished Business

A. Progress on Station 31 [Information/Discussion]

Chief Wirth shared the status on the rebuilding of station 31. The architect is currently working out the elevation of the building. Chief Wirth has a scheduled meeting for follow-up with the architects.

Commissioner Fleming shared that he would like to see the 9-11 memorial moved to the new Station 31.

B. Update on FMB / Iona Merger Study [Information/Discussion]

The attorney's office and the Districts have been working on drafting an agreement. More discussion on the topic will take place under item 9B.

9. New Business

A. Consider Purchase of Stock Sutphen Fire Engine [Information/Discussion/Approval]

Chief Wirth presented information on a Sutphen engine that is available for purchase

at a discounted price. Chief Wirth and the Board discussed the features on the engine and what features were wanted by the committee of line personnel.

Commissioners asked questions and shared their thoughts. DVP Gordon shared information and thoughts from the committee and line personnel. A representative from Sutphen answered the Board's questions about the options on the engine. Chief Wirth shared his recommendation that the District wait to find an engine that better fits the needs and wants of the District.

Commissioner Fleming motioned to purchase the Sutphen engine. There was no second and the motion did not move forward to a vote.

B. Resolution 2024-01 for Merger Study [Information/Discussion/Approval]

Chief Wirth presented a resolution for a merger study. The resolution authorizes the District to move forward with an RFQ to get proposals on a study. Fort Myers Beach Fire and Iona McGregor Fire will split the cost of the study.

Commissioner Bennet made a motion to approve Resolution 2024-01, Commissioner Wood seconded the motion. The roll call vote was as follows:

Commissioner Knickle- yes

Commissioner Fleming – no

Commissioner Liszak – yes

Commissioner Wood- yes

Commissioner Bennet – yes

The motion passed 4-1.

C. Purchase of Property at 1101 Shrimp Boat Ln [Information/Discussion/Approval]

Chief Wirth and Mr. Salzman presented the contract for the property at 110 Shrimp Boat Lane. The Board asked questions regarding existing buildings on the property.

Commissioner Wood motioned to approve the purchase of the property at 1101 Shrimp Boat Lane for the cost of \$3.4 million plus the cost of closing. Commissioner Knickle seconded the motion.

Mr. Erickson, the neighbor of the property, expressed his need of use of the waterfront on the property. The Board advised that the District is not in a place to extend any form of agreement as the District does not own the property yet.

The roll call vote was as follows:

Commissioner Knickle- yes

Commissioner Fleming – yes

Commissioner Liszak – yes

Commissioner Wood- yes

Commissioner Bennett – yes

The motion passed 5-0.

10. **Fire Chief Remarks** [Information/Discussion]

Chief Wirth thanked everyone for their hard work and he is looking forward to 2024.

11. **Attorney Report** [Information/Discussion] - *none*

12. **Commissioners Remarks** [Information]

Commissioner Fleming thanked everyone for a good meeting and appreciates Mr. Erickson coming to the meeting.

Commissioner Liszak expressed she hopes the teams in the stations understand the board's decisions on equipment and that she is hopeful the District can secure the new property and work with the shrimping industry.

Commissioner Wood thanked everyone for their participation and dialogue to help the Board come to a decision.

Commissioner Knickle expressed that the decision to not buy the engine was difficult and he appreciated the staff's input.

Commissioner Bennett shared that the hardest part of his position is spending taxpayer money and the Board puts a lot of thought and consideration into their decisions.

13. **Adjournment** 12:16pm