

BONITA SPRINGS FIRE CONTROL AND RESCUE DISTRICT
BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS
Minutes – September 12, 2023
Regular Board Meeting

Fire Commissioners Present:

Steve Lohan - Chairman
James Murphy – Vice Chairman
Jeffery Maturo – Secretary/Treasurer
Tommy Hugo – Commissioner

Absent:

Steven Slachta

Administrative Staff Present:

Greg DeWitt – Chief
Jason Brod – Assistant Chief
Eric Madden – Deputy Chief
Andrew Schmidt – Deputy Chief
Lisa Gendron - Admin-Finance Director
Anna-Marie Waller – Admin Coordinator

Chairman Lohan called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

Chaplain Chitwood led a moment of silence for fallen firefighters and their families, and the Pledge of Allegiance followed.

The meeting recessed to convene the Tentative Budget hearing at 5:01. The hearing was to adopt the tentative millage and budget for 2022-2023. Commissioner Maturo read the agenda for the hearing. Commissioner Murphy motioned to approve the tentative millage rate of 1.9466. Commissioner Hugo seconded the motion. **The motion passed 4-0.** Commissioner Hugo motioned to approve the tentative General Fund budget of \$44,431,670.43 and the tentative Impact Fee budget of \$200,000.00 for fiscal year 2023-2024. Commissioner Maturo seconded the motion. **The motion passed 4-0.**

The Tentative Budget hearing adjourned, and the regular meeting reconvened at 5:04 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment on agenda items.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Maturo motioned to approve the August 14, 2023, Regular Meeting Minutes. Commissioner Murphy seconded the motion. **The motion passed 4-0.**

Commissioner Hugo motioned to approve the August 29, 2023 Budget Workshop Minutes. Commissioner Maturo seconded the motion. **The motion passed 4-0.**

APPROVAL OF FINANCIALS

Commissioner Maturo motioned to approve the August 2023 Financials. Commissioner Hugo seconded the motion. **The motion passed 4-0.**

Commissioner Murphy motioned to approve the budgeted and unbudgeted P.O.s. Commissioner Hugo seconded the motion. **The motion passed 4-0.**

COMMISSIONERS' BUSINESS

Commissioner Murphy took a moment to comment on how fantastic the 9-11 Memorial Service was. He said the speaker was phenomenal. The other commissioners all agreed.

Commissioner Maturo wanted to know what would happen if the District lost all the Chiefs. Chief DeWitt explained that the Board would appoint a Chief, and then the Chief would choose the Assistant and Deputy Chiefs.

Commissioner Maturo also wanted to know if the District was ready for the dry season. Chief DeWitt assured him that the District was ready.

Commissioner Lohan addressed the social media posts regarding purchasing the property on Bonita Beach for Station 27. He did not appreciate the crude and untrue comments that were posted. He reiterated that the purchase was to protect the people on Bonita Beach and get Station 27 up and running as soon as possible. The District is doing what is best with the taxpayers' money, so we will do whatever is necessary for the betterment of the District.

DISPOSALS

Commissioner Maturo motioned to approve the August disposals. Commissioner Hugo seconded the motion. **The motion passed 4-0.**

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business to discuss.

NEW BUSINESS

Commissioner Murphy motioned to approve the Resolution for the Firefighters' Retirement System. Commissioner Maturo seconded the motion. **The motion passed 4-0.**

Commissioner Maturo motioned to approve the Resolution for the General Employees' Retirement System. Commissioner Hugo seconded the motion. **The motion passed 4-0.**

CHIEFS' REPORTS

Chief Greg DeWitt

Chief DeWitt gave the Chief's Report:

- Chief DeWitt commented on the 9-11 Memorial Service. He said everyone did a great job and that it was well attended. Chief DeWitt also said next year will be even better. He thanked the staff for stepping up and helping out.
- The Chief remarked that everything was going well at Station 27.
- Chief DeWitt informed the Board that Hurricane Ian damaged the fuel system and dock at Station 27. Justin McBride, the General Manager of WCIND (West Coast Inland Navigation), was able to get funding to pay for the repairs to the fuel system (\$34,847.00) and the docks (\$35,051.00) because we are the only station in Lee County that has its own dock. So, they have paid for all the dock and fuel system repairs. Thank you to WCIND.

- The Chief reminded the Commissioners about the upcoming “Business After Hours” Chamber event.
- Chief DeWitt reminded the Commissioners that the Final Budget hearing is Friday, September 22, 2023, at 5:01 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT

David Coleman commented that there is no grudge against the Fire Department. He said that the City was unrealistic in what they were requiring the restaurant to do to rebuild the restaurant. He assured the Board that there was no hate from the owners.

Debbie Aple also stated that she loved having the firefighters so close by. She felt the owners got a raw deal and that it was nothing against the Fire Department.

Alex Grant commented on how well done the 9-11 Memorial Service was. He specifically liked the speaker. He also spoke about the PFAS and wondered how much was in our water supply.

Ruth Bode was the last speaker to comment on the Station 27 situation. She said she was grateful to have the fire department on Bonita Beach.

Commissioner Murphy motioned to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 5:38 p.m.