



Sanibel Fire & Rescue District Commission Meeting Minutes

DATE: Wednesday, November 13, 2024 @ 9:00 AM

ATTENDEES: Jerry Muench (Chairman)
Bruce Cochrane (Vice Chairman)
Richard McCurry (Secretary Treasurer)

Kevin Barbot (Fire Chief)
John DiMaria (Deputy Chief) – *present via Microsoft Teams*
Chris Jackson (Assistant Chief)
Larry Williams (Fire Marshal)
Greta Fulkerson (Administrative Assistant)

Ed Zarick (DVP)
Mike Martin (Captain)
John Reitenbach (Captain)

Tiffany Repecki (The Island Reporter) – *present via Microsoft Teams*

The meeting was called to order by Commissioner Muench. Commissioner Muench led the Pledge of Allegiance.

1. Minutes of the Previous Meetings

The minutes of the September meeting were reviewed. A motion was made by Commissioner Cochrane to accept the minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner McCurry. There was no discussion. The motion was approved unanimously.

The minutes of the final budget hearing were reviewed. A motion was made by Commissioner McCurry to accept the minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Cochrane. There was no discussion. The motion was approved unanimously.

2. Fire Marshal's Report

Fire Marshal Williams explained that in September, prior to the most recent two hurricanes, 58 plans had been reviewed, 163 inspections had been carried out, and almost every building in Mariner Pointe had been finalized, including Shell Island Beach Club and Sunset South. He highlighted that while in Sundial West almost every building had been done, the first floors had since been torn out again, so he was also having to review plans for a second time, but Sanibel Moorings had escaped the surge water, which had come up to their doors but not inside, leaving them complete in terms of penetration tests, but still needing to build out their first floors.

Fire Marshal Williams explained that in October, there had been 42 plans reviewed and 107 inspections, and that he was working with CHR regarding their desire to build the old apartments behind 7/11, as their initial plan for twelve buildings was too ambitious and wouldn't fit in the space. He confirmed that he had been to a lot of propane tanks, as they were being changed out all over the island by a new company, Blossman Gas, and had recently been to a conference in Melbourne, where he had worked with First Due and the commission to exactly pinpoint buried propane tanks through their app, which he would be setting up with Captain Martin. Fire Marshal Williams thanked Chief Barbot and Assistant Chief Jackson for carrying out a number of inspections on his behalf in the previous week and noted that while the number of plans being reviewed had slowed down, this was relative, as previously it had been closer to 70 per year.

3. Assistant Chief's Report

I) Apparatus Maintenance

Assistant Chief Jackson explained that the alternator had needed replacing in the brush truck, which Chief Barbot had managed to source online for around \$2,950 plus installation, so it was back up and running, and that Engine 172 was going into the shop for its service, as it was approaching the end of its five-year warranty. Chief Barbot presented pictures of the new brush truck, with Assistant Chief Jackson clarifying that there were still around 30 to 45 days of work remaining, so a final inspection would be scheduled for mid-December, allowing for any tweaks or adjustments. He highlighted that there were plans for the new brush truck to be displayed at the Florida Fire and EMS Conference in Orlando, running from January 6 to January 10, at which time it would have all of the Sanibel Fire graphics and would demonstrate that they were getting back on their feet and that they would take ownership and bring it back to the station from the conference. Assistant Chief Jackson identified that while the fuel of choice had always been diesel due to the low-end torque, idling caused

issues with the emissions system, such as Engine 172 was currently suffering from, so the new truck was gas, similar to the old support truck. He added that Warrior Brush Trucks had confirmed a shift from diesel to gas trucks in general due to the emissions.

II) Station 172

Chief Barbot presented pictures of the building's current state. Assistant Chief Jackson confirmed that the bay and first floors had been poured and completed, walls were up to the first-floor roof, and all the underground work was done, with wiring, etc., to start once concreting was finished. He stated that tie beams were being poured today, with three more layers of blocks to go in next week, steel beams expected to be delivered and installed the week of December 9th, a corrugated metal roof to go on top, followed by a solid pour for the second floor. Assistant Chief Jackson explained that the generator would be secured on-site sometime next week, although it wouldn't be installed until the concrete pad was finalized, but that this addressed previous concerns regarding potential delays. It was noted that the completion date was expected to be around July or August 2025 and that residents felt it set a good standard of resiliency for the island.

Assistant Chief Jackson highlighted that they were re-evaluating the two-car garage, as it had been subject to 18 to 24 inches of storm surge in the last few storms, and were getting pricing around updating the doors, window, etc., as well as fixing the roofing, but were considering what the best option would be since lawn equipment wouldn't be needed and the training props could be moved between stations as needed. Chief Barbot added that it was also in an area prone to flooding and advised that overall construction was around \$150,000 over budget as a result of change orders, which they had brought down to \$95,000 through value construction, and that removing the garage could save anywhere between \$45,000 and \$65,000, putting them only \$35,000 over budget, which he felt could be found through ongoing value engineering in the build. He explained that ongoing issues included the planned ductwork needing to be redesigned due to the building's height restrictions and consequent space constraints, but agreed they were pushing back on a lot of things where appropriate, such as issues that should have been identified earlier in the process.

There was a brief discussion around the garage building, its past, current, and potential uses, as well as likely costs to repair or remove it. The Board suggested the matter go on December's meeting agenda for a final decision.

An update was requested on the boat docks. Chief Barbot explained that all the electrical panels were in the process of being raised and that only one bid had been received so far, which was above the amount where it could be approved outright without going through the full process, so they were having to wait on two more bids. He emphasized that the docks were still usable, and they expected to be able to patch things up sufficiently to get the boat back in once the electrician gave the all-clear.

4. Deputy Chief's Report

I) Training

On behalf of Deputy Chief DiMaria, Chief Barbot explained that personnel training had included incident command, engineering, apparatus placement, water supply, hose management, water mapping, windows, initiated searches, victim retrieval, tactical base decision-making, with crews to do firefighter survival drills and skill sets. Skill sets included mayday operations, window and ladder bails, radio communications, and the responsibilities of each person in the District and red-team operations. He noted that calcium chloride was

being introduced into medical training, that there was a whole blood program being initiated throughout the County, that Dr. Abo would be covering hazmat medical emergencies, and that medical scenarios would be done with crews at the end of the month. Chief Barbot stated that CPR class scheduling was ongoing, that Deputy Chief DiMaria had carried out an electric vehicle educational class for Sanibel PD, and that training hours had increased due to hydrant maintenance last month, which was positive.

II) Call Volumes

Chief Barbot identified that call volume in September 2023 had been 65, compared to 158 this year, and in October 2023 had been 60, compared to 159 this year.

III) Community Engagement

Chief Barbot noted that a group of homeschooled kids had visited the station and that Deputy Chief DiMaria and Captain Martin had completed the Brotherhood Ride 2024, 630 miles, with ten honor stops to meet friends and families of fallen heroes. Captain Martin explained that it was his third time doing the ride, and Deputy Chief DiMaria's first time, although likely not his last. Chief Barbot highlighted Firefighters Schelm and Basora for stepping in to shelter a Sanibel schoolteacher at the 50th Anniversary for the City of Sanibel when it began to rain during his performance, praising them for demonstrating the commitment to put others first and expressing gratitude on behalf of the District for their initiative and representation of their values.

IV) Shout-Outs

Chief Barbot highlighted a number of individuals and their work, including Deputy Chief DiMaria's crew education skills, with drills that went above and beyond, keeping everyone on their toes and appreciated by crews, Assistant Chief Jackson's dedication and professionalism, particularly to apparatus and station maintenance, and the focus on carrying out repairs in-house and reducing costs wherever possible, Fire Marshal Williams' work in the fire prevention office, as well as the shout-out from the Chief State Fire Marshal, JoAnne Rice, for all the work Fire Marshal Williams was doing on Sanibel, and Administrative Assistant Fulkerson's organization and coordination of the Pink Out event, with assistance from Fire Marshal Williams and B Shift. He concluded with a general thanks to all the District's staff, recognizing that it was their wholehearted efforts that enabled them to get things done at the pace they were.

V) Hurricanes Helene and Milton

Chief Barbot acknowledged that the amount of impact from Helene hadn't been expected, as it had been 250 miles off the coast, but thousands of sandbags had ended up being filled, Lee County Port Authority Fire had sent a high-water vehicle with a staff of two, and from 5:00pm they had started receiving calls for rescue from individuals. He highlighted the leadership of Captain Reitenbach and Lieutenant Grant, with around eighteen to twenty residents sleeping in the station by the end of the night, along with a number of dogs. Chief Barbot noted that Sanibel PD had ended up at the station around 1:00am and that there had been one structure fire at each end of the island as a result of the storm, both of which had been taken care of, and presented a video illustrating the amount of water that they had been dealing with.

Chief Barbot identified that there had been a strong partnership with Captiva during Hurricane Milton, and that while it had been a close thing, they had managed to keep the station from being flooded out, although some residents hadn't been as lucky, and praised the work of World Central Kitchen. He explained that, from crews coming in at around 5:30am, by noon they had managed to canvas the entire island to ensure electrical hazards had been dealt with and trees had been cleared from roads.

VI) Deployment

Chief Barbot presented a number of pictures from the deployment to the city of Perry and Taylor County to assist with relief efforts after Hurricane Helene, which they considered to be paying forward the assistance they had received from other districts following Hurricane Ian. He identified that they had been tapped to assist with 911 response and route emergency calls, which came with downtime that crew members selflessly used to clean up the homes of firefighters, a cemetery, and roads, as well as responding to hazmat calls, motor vehicle accidents, and structure fires. Chief Barbot emphasized the relationships being built up, stating that they had met up with a couple of mechanics who had helped Sanibel out after Ian and that he was still in touch and would discuss truck issues with one of them. He added that their crew, because they had full capabilities on the trucks, had been assigned Fire, Rescue, and EMS duties for the landing of Marine One, as part of the President's tour of affected areas. Chief Barbot confirmed that, while they had cut the deployment short due to Milton, they would continue to be available to the State whenever they had the assets and ability to do so.

The Board expressed their gratitude for the efforts and attitude of those deployed.

5. Chief's Report

I) Financial Report

Chief Barbot explained that the capital budget was hard to predict, but at the end of the last fiscal year they had been under budget for personnel services by 11% and for operating services by 33%, which was a good place to be considering the approximately \$1.6 million deficit they were working with going into the next year. He noted that, based on conversations with the Property Appraiser, they could be looking at an extended recovery time to get back to a pre-Ian state. Chief Barbot added that personnel services were a little bit out of whack as they had needed to pay for additional overtime that ended up being in the 2025 budget, and Milton, but stated that while there was an expenditure in the books, he had an initial meeting with FEMA regarding reimbursements for Helene and Milton. He confirmed that paperwork for the deployment to Taylor County had been submitted to the State and was now under review, with money paid to those staff on deployment, overtime coverage on Sanibel as a result, and equipment use also to be covered by the State. Chief Barbot advised that work had started on the annual audit and that the State Appropriation Funding Agreement was complete and signed, with a reimbursement request already submitted. He identified that the environmental study for Station 171 had been passed, and a funding agreement was awaited from the County for the \$9.2 million HUD grant, and the City was not waiting to receive that funding from the County before reimbursing expenses. Attempts to save time by not going through a procurement process had been shut down at all levels, so he had spoken to Laura Donaldson's office and the contract writer to get a Request For Proposal drafted.

II) District Update

Chief Barbot thanked the Board for giving him the opportunity to attend a Fire Chief Leadership Conference, also noting that Deputy Chief DiMaria and Captain Martin had attended a battalion chief boot camp in Tallahassee, and Fire Marshal Williams had attended a fire marshal conference, all of which had been very helpful in terms of both learning and networking.

Chief Barbot explained that beach campfire permits had been on halt since Ian, but residents wanted to get back to normal, so he was proposing that these could now proceed until weekly evaluations of the island's

conditions deemed it to be 'dry' or there was a state-issued burn ban. The Board agreed that this seemed reasonable.

III) Collective Bargaining Agreement 2024-2027

Chief Barbot stated that the CBA had passed, with the process impacting both sides and identifying areas where improvements were needed in communication and collaboration, to ensure Union leadership and District management goals for the District were aligned, and mutual understanding and respect were restored. He emphasized that communication would be the immediate focus, along with commitment to the District and the community, and requested the Board to approve, finalize, and ratify the agreement as previously emailed to them. Commissioner McCurry noted that he hadn't received the email in time to read the document in full and would prefer to table the decision to the next meeting to do so, so would be against the motion for that reason despite having full faith in Chief Barbot. DVP Zarick clarified that the only significant change to the previous version was Article 15. A motion was made by Commissioner Muench to approve the Collective Bargaining Agreement 2024-2027 as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Cochrane. The motion passed 2 to 1, with Commissioner McCurry opposed.

IV) Staffing Updates

Chief Barbot highlighted staff anniversaries for the previous two months, including Engineer Nygaard at 23 years, Captain Reitenbach at 21 years, Engineer Zarick at 9 years, Engineer Shelby at 8 years, and Firefighter Felix at 5 years.

6. Business Agenda Items

I) Resolution 24-027 - Alerting Dispatch Technology for New Fire Station 172 Purchase Agreement

Chief Barbot explained that the expense had been anticipated and would be coming out of recouped insurance funding, covering speakers, alert lighting, and a countdown clock. Assistant Chief Jackson clarified that they had switched from Motorola to Honeywell as they had discovered very recently that the system Lee County had changed to was not as 'plug and play' as previously thought, and it was therefore much more efficient and cost-effective to use Honeywell from the start, rather than needing to fully redo the Motorola system when they upgraded. He noted that the speakers in bunk rooms would include red LED lights, and both the light intensity and tone volume would ramp up over about five seconds, alleviating some low-voltage lighting as well as meeting NFPA standards. Chief Barbot highlighted that the County's transition to the system meant a number of fire stations were having it installed retroactively, so there was a procurement for the entire County, expiring on November 30th, that they could piggyback on for the work. He concluded that the project would cost \$70,423.30, which was within procurement guidelines for the District.

Administrative Assistant Fulkerson read the resolution, requesting the Board authorize Chief Barbot to enter into a contract with US Digital Design Inc/Honeywell to purchase and install an alerting system for Station 172. A motion was made by Commissioner McCurry to approve Resolution 24-027 as read. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Cochrane. There was no discussion. The motion was approved unanimously.

II) Resolution 24-028 - Policy Approval

Chief Barbot explained that HUD required the District to comply with three policies:

(1) Anti-Discrimination/Civil Rights

(2) Use of Force

(3) Fair Housing

He noted that whilst they did not have a Use of Force policy as they were not a police department, HUD had confirmed they could piggyback the City of Sanibel's policy for the use of force with a resolution in agreement.

Administrative Assistant Fulkerson read the resolution, requesting the Board authorize the adoption and certification of compliance with policies as required by HUD. A motion was made by Commissioner Cochrane to approve Resolution 24-028 as read. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Muench. There was no discussion. The motion was approved unanimously.

7. Commissioner Items

There were no items to discuss.

8. Union Items

DVP Zarick confirmed that this had been covered in Agenda Item 5.III.

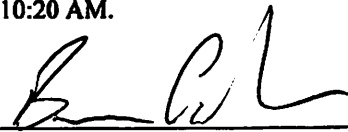
9. Public Input

There was no input to discuss.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:20 AM.



Commissioner Jerry Muench



Commissioner Bruce Cochrane



Commissioner Richard McCurry