

BAYSHORE FIRE PROTECTION & RESCUE SERVICE DISTRICT  
MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING  
November 14, 2023

**Meeting called to order** at 7:03 p.m. by Chairman Mere

**Pledge of Allegiance**

**Invocation** – Commissioner Hansen

Commissioner Griffin – Present  
Commissioner Ducrou – Absent  
Commissioner Hansen – Present  
Commissioner Cook – Present  
Commission Mere – Present  
Chief Doug Underwood – Present  
Office Manager – Present  
Attorney Ian Mann – Absent

**Others Present:** Some Staff

**Public Input Agenda Items** – None

**Minutes** – Review and acceptance of the October 10, 2023 Board Meeting minutes – Motion made by Commissioner Hansen to accept the minutes. Commissioner Griffin seconded the motion. With no further discussion offered Chairman Mere calls for Review of Financial Reports.

**Financial Reports** – Review and Acceptance of the Financials for October 2023 - Motion made by Commissioner Cook to accept the financials. Commissioner Hansen seconded the motion. Chairman Mere calls for any discussion. Hearing none, he calls for vote and with all in favor, motion passed. With no further discussion offered Chairman Mere calls for Fire Marshals report.

**Fire Marshal Report** – Chief Underwood states he doesn't have one but they are working at Echo, Love's Travel Plaza and the campground and those take some time, but we're working on those. Chairman Mere calls for the Administrative Report.

**Administrative Report** (attached) – Chief Underwood reads the Administrative Report into the record. Commissioner Griffin asks if the new Duke Farms is trying to create a new fire district. Chief Underwood states not a Fire District; more of a Community Development District. Chief describes it in more detail but assures it will not affect us in any way. Chairman Mere calls for any questions. Hearing none, he calls for Union Petitions.

**Union Petitions** – NONE Hearing None, Chairman Mere calls for Old Business

**Old Business** – NONE with no Old Business Chairman Mere calls for New Business.

BAYSHORE FIRE PROTECTION & RESCUE SERVICE DISTRICT  
MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING  
November 14, 2023

**New Business –**

- **Election of Officers** – Commissioner Griffin moves to leave the seats the same and after everyone is polled whether they wish a position or change in positions Commissioner Cook seconds the motion and all are in agreement.
- **Budget Amendment FY 2022/2023** – Office Manager states first four pages are where we are at as of fiscal year end. Behind that is the proposed amendment. She states we received unanticipated revenues of \$250,890.17 in the form of donations, impact fees (reimbursements to General Fund), interest and hurricane lan reimbursements. Balancing the budget we have a total of \$284,609.76 adding to the reserves unassigned. (The difference is what we underspent in expenses.) Chief states the additional carry forward will help when we lose the benefit of the grant revenues next year. Commissioner Cook asks if that's this next year. Chief affirms next fiscal year. Commissioner Mere asks three guys are coming off the grant next year. Chief confirms three is correct. Commissioner Mere asks what the percentage share is. Chief states it was 100% for three years on this one. Chief states he intends to attempt a sustainment for those guys while we get the Babcock roofs going up. Then we can write one to hopefully cover the staffing we will need over there while we wait for the revenues. Commissioner Cook moves to adopt Resolution 2023-06. Seconded by Commissioner Hansen. All in favor motion passed.
- **Fair** – Chief Underwood states Lee County chose to terminate the contract with the current Fair Board and did not reach an agreement for a new contract so Lee County has reached out to the vendor Ride Hoppers and some other volunteers who had worked with the Fair in the past and know the system very well, to assist the County with running it. (Chief explains they wanted a six-year contract at zero dollars; as in the past they never paid the county rent or anything, they were just to maintain the facility.) So it will probably work a little different this year. They will still be required to have a fire watch, but they may bring in Ambulances and Medics for the medical side of it, that all remains to be seen. This brings Chief to the Inspection Fees as we are now getting a lot of inspections for special use permits. The Fair Board used to handle all of that and the insurance and such and then reach out to us if they needed a fire watch. Now they are requiring a special use permit which we have to fill out a 1-page form, review the application looking at plans for pyro or other hazards, and do an inspection. We have a \$100 fee for special events inspections which we never charged the Fair Board in the past for those. There will be some, such as two weddings he will only have to fill out the paper for, maybe 500 people, he won't charge as there won't be any manpower required, however for events like the gun show, and the craft fair that will be much larger events where he will have to check out the layout for means of egress and do inspections, he asks the Board if they want to charge for those when we have not in the past. The Board agrees if there's special work going into it we will charge, that is not unreasonable, and if there's pyro involved, we will charge the additional fee. Chief adds we will be increasing our hourly rates for personnel out there as well to cover the increased cost.

BAYSHORE FIRE PROTECTION & RESCUE SERVICE DISTRICT  
MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING  
November 14, 2023

- **Inspection Fees** – Covered above
- **Consolidation** – Chief acknowledges the Board's awareness of the state legislators push to consolidate and there are conversations amongst the ranks of many local departments to include Tice, Shores, North, Alva and Bayshore, so Chief requests permission from the Board to start having more formal conversations with those districts to see if consolidation would be feasible in our area, what it would look like, start doing our own internal study, and see where the Boards are after we have a few meetings, and see if we want to move forward from there. He feels it is better to be proactive if the legislators are looking at it in an involuntary aspect, to look at it from a voluntary aspect from our position. He states some of the Boards have already discussed it in their board meetings and are ok with having that conversation, and for us bring it back in a few months to see where we are at before spending some money having an outside firm do the study. He asks permission to have conversations with outside Chiefs to see what they come up with as to what a consolidation might look like in our area, be it all five or only a couple. Shores has discussed it with their attorney Richard Pringle who has worked with many districts and who agrees it is something we should discuss. Chief speaks of Millage disparity and effects of county wide donating districts vs similar millage rates and also how there have been some consolidation difficulties that are still not worked out on past consolidations. He states if done right, it could work. Commissioner Cook states it is inevitable. Commissioner Griffin states Bonita started this like 15 years ago and financially... Chief agrees, it would have been much simpler 20 years ago but there are so many differences in employee contracts, department types, coastal and brushlands, so many differences, he does not say he is for or against, but states it would not be the huge cost-saving mechanism now that legislators may think it would be. For instance 17 Fire Chiefs; well Chief Underwood wears 10 different hats... Commissioner Mere states he agrees we need to find out more information, because if this were to go to a vote, we would need to have some form of public information thing for the people in our district, so that we know going into this and can knowledgeably discuss it... Chief Underwood states that the Fire Chiefs have already discussed that they need to gather the information so that when it comes to the vote, the voters are educated and can make informed decisions. That's how we all came about in the first place. The voters wanted their money to stay in their own area for fire suppression. They didn't want all their tax dollars to go to far-off reaches of the county, they wanted it to stay in District. If you read Brian Jennica's report it lays out exactly the history of the fire districts in Lee County, why it all started, the way it started. We've quadrupled in size since then, the County and the Districts are a lot bigger. We have a different demographics and population, so let the voters look at it and if that's what they still want, then that's their will. If they don't, then we'll look at consolidation. It would still be an Independent Special District of some form, the County has no desire to have a fire district that's run by the County. He concludes, it could benefit some; our guys would probably benefit by bringing their pay up to what they make down south, but he doesn't see it saving any money. It wouldn't cost the tax payers at Bayshore any money because we're already at the state cap, only 0.25 mills off. Other districts have done this, like North

BAYSHORE FIRE PROTECTION & RESCUE SERVICE DISTRICT  
MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING  
November 14, 2023

Collier, they said they were going to do X, Y, & Z and you were going to have all these cost savings, none of them came to fruition. They also went for assessments, they've maxed their millage out, they were supposed to build 5 stations by 2020, none of that happened. They are now just one larger, broke district. But they're reeling in a lot of different dynamics with that consolidation. Again, he states he's not saying it's not possible, but there's a lot of work, and studies are going to have to be done to see how this would all play out. There was also a district in north Florida that consolidated many years ago, and OPAGA did a report on that and said "this is what you shouldn't do"; and that's what prompted statute 198.0075 which says you need to study and have a plan in place before you enact this. That was a forced consolidation and it was a nightmare and a big failure. That's why OPAGA got involved. The state wanted to know why it failed, and they asked OPAGA to do an audit and find out why it failed so badly, and that's what prompted statute 198.0075. Don't just consolidate and figure it out later. Chairman Mere directs Chief to get more information.

- **50/50 Grant** – Chief covered in Admin Report
- **Statewide Emergency Management Mutual Aid Agreement** – Chief calls the Board's attention to the Agreement in the back of the packet. This is something that we will be required to agree to should we wish to get reimbursed for state missions or even locals that become state of emergency beyond our region. Chairman Mere feels we should have our attorney review it and does prefer a Resolution and asks it be brought to next meeting. We do not have a copy of any prior agreement. Chairman Mere calls for any New Business.
- Office Manager requests authorization to move excess funds from Impact Fund to General Fund as partial reimbursement for 2012 Pumper in the amount of \$24,240.70 and leaving the Impact Fund with the predetermined \$1339. Taking the balance the Impact Fund owes the General Fund down to \$68,521. Commissioner Hansen moves to approve the transfer. Commissioner Griffin seconded the motion and with all in favor, motion passed. Chairman Mere calls for Chief Items.

**Chief Items –**

- Chief Underwood states there have been security issues on more than one occasion around the station as well as in District, where there have been thefts; last Friday we had an arson fire that also involved theft, right down the road on Bayshore Rd. He has requested a quote for security cameras. The quote just came in yesterday and he needs to research more but figures it about \$6500 to do eight cameras. 4K cameras with 8 megapixel, high-quality, commercial grade; and he would like to re-fence the south side. He would like to get a survey so we know exactly where to put it and where all our property lines are. He figures between the cameras and the fence he can lump everything into the capital improvement budget which is \$10,000. Commissioner Mere asks who he has contacted. He responds Reliable Land Surveying. Commissioner Mere suggests he contact Ron Starnes as he and his dad have surveyed most of North Fort

BAYSHORE FIRE PROTECTION & RESCUE SERVICE DISTRICT  
MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING  
November 14, 2023

Myers from way back when. Chief agrees as the neighbor when he bought that house had a hard time. He states because there's a post, we know where the back of his is, but not at the front side. Commissioner Hansen and Commissioner Mere agree they are extremely accurate. Commissioner Mere asks if Chief has looked into buying the cameras and installing them himself. Chief states he has not as he is unfamiliar with exactly how to do them. Commissioner Mere agrees we should secure the station. There is discussion as to how much fencing and whether or not there is a gate and how to go about securing it. Regardless it is agreed it is a good idea and Chief will bring some options and information.

- Chief states the 5 Bugles have expressed an interest in reinstating the Fire Commissioner Forums. We'd like to have at least a commissioner attend each meeting so they can communicate with each other and bounce ideas around. He states he will know more about that plan tomorrow and will let the Board know where that goes. Chairman Mere calls for any other Chief's items and hearing none, calls for Commissioner Items.

**Commissioner Items** – With no Commissioner Items offered Chairman Mere calls for Public Input.

**Public Input – None** - Chairman Mere calls for Motion to adjourn.

**Adjournment** – Commissioner Cook moves to adjourn and motion is seconded by Commissioner Hansen and with none opposed, meeting is adjourned 8:03p.m.