

BAYSHORE FIRE PROTECTION & RESCUE SERVICE DISTRICT
MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING
March 11, 2025

Meeting called to order at 7:07 p.m. by Chairman Mere

Invocation – Chairman Mere

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

Others Present: Some Public

Public Input Agenda Items – None

Minutes – Review and acceptance of the February 11, 2025 Board Meeting minutes – Motion made by Commissioner Griffin to accept the minutes. Commissioner Cook seconded the motion. With no further discussion offered, vote is called and with all in favor, motion passed. Chairman Mere calls for Acceptance of February 2025 Financials.

Financial Reports – Review and Acceptance of the Financials for February 2025 - Motion made by Commissioner Cook to accept the financials. Commissioner Griffin 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 Marshal Report.

Fire Marshal Report – Chief Underwood states the report reflects 5 inspections for the month. He adds he also has had several meetings with the Terrawalk Community for the fire main and sprinkler system; it's a pretty good-sized clubhouse they're putting in there for that community, things are starting to ramp up and there are several other commercial projects that are in the works. Commissioner Mere asks where Terrawalk is. Chief explains it is the first in the Lee County portion of Babcock. It's going to have a large clubhouse with a pool and a large commercial kitchen as it is going to have a restaurant. Fully sprinklered. Chairman Mere calls for Administrative Report.

Administrative Report (attached) – Chief Underwood reads the Administrative Report into the record. He adds we brought on 4 new volunteers who began Saturday; and he is also teaching a bit more at the academy with investigative classes to help out where Chief Ross has retired. The class is about $\frac{3}{4}$ completed. He will have more time with these students and hopes to pick up more from there once that is over. He's trying to get us back to where we were with volunteers. Commissioner Mere asks how many we have now. Chief states he has them split right now with some

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being support that can come in and drive the tender, about 10 of those, while others are regular volunteers, of which there's about 7. Total, about 15 or so and he plans to add a few more. Commissioner Mere asks if we utilize them like we used to, now that we're fully staffed. Chief Underwood states, absolutely, if they are fully certified and they come in, they go on rescue calls and if they're on the engine, they are put on nozzles to pull hose and run tools; no different than paid guys. He adds, especially on days we are down to three when someone's on vacation, they can fill in and keep the rescue up, vs. downing it for the day when we do not have that option. They help fill that void. Captain Lemieux states he had one run rescue today. Commissioner Mere asks how were we able to utilize the UTV for the fair. Chief states it worked out well, and Lt. Underwood's Ranger was there for the fire cart and EMS had theirs also. Commissioner Cook asks where we were located. Chief states we were pushed back in front of the steer barn this year; behind the port-a-johns. We were kind of out of sight, and our number of public interactions was not as high. He did verbalize his disapproval of the change because we have been by the office for years, but it was better than being under the blooming trees dropping all the allergens; consequently, our public interactions were less, so we spent more time on the rangers, going out and doing fire checks, and trying to interact with the public that way. There's discussion on why the call numbers are down and Chief attributes a lot to the County and how they are proactive to keep trip hazards down with carpets over wires and general safety precautions. A lot more eyes looking for those things with the county employees; as well as us being positioned out of sight. Commissioner Cook states he heard there was more Sheriff's deputy presence on site. Chief agrees, they did have heavier presence, particularly on Fridays and Saturday nights, they bring in a lot more. He says most often the second Saturday night the riffraff comes in, and they're not looking to spend money, they're looking to make trouble; and I worked that night and it was pretty interesting, but no major fights broke out and they got rid of the riffraff pretty quickly and kept a safe environment, and that's the goal. We all keep a high profile during those times and overall, it turned out good. We will, in the future, be looking to see if we can't return to our usual area, see if we can get the power and utilities we need. Commissioner Cook states, he feels we should be seen. Chief agrees wholeheartedly. He states because they removed the old Expo Hall, the utilities were removed and no longer available. Chief adds that we were in front of the cul-de-sac in front of the barns so we were also dodging golf carts during judging. Chairman Mere asks if there are any other questions for the Administrative Report. Commissioner Cook states he knows they're talking about eliminating property tax, how does that work? How do we get our money? Chief states that remains to be determined. He explained Senator Martin who has the area south of the river is the one who filed the bill which would authorize the study for the elimination of property taxes and have a report by October; and then it would go back to the legislators to review. That study would provide options to answer that question. He believes the objective is to get that by October so they can review it and bring it up in the legislative sessions in 2026 so it could be on the November 2026 ballot. In order to remove property taxes, it has to go before the voters. Chief anticipates the bill for the study will probably pass. He states there are probably 30 bills that could affect us that he is watching, and several

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have to do with property taxes and homestead exemption increases, such as adding \$100,000 exemption applicable to all authorities including schools and libraries, and one that would restrict our ability to pass taxes that exceed our rollback rate by 102%; which last year we were over our rollback rate by 110% at our permitted 3.5 cap. There are variations to that bill, so it all depends on which bills go forward. Commissioner Griffin asks what Chief knows about the medical marijuana legislation. Chief responds, he knows the Fire Chiefs are opposing it, because we are in a safety sensitive position, and when it comes to work comp, and the federal level, and law enforcement is already excluded, they're not allowed to use it, and they're looking to include public safety in general into that; it would exempt any public employee from being discriminated against if they're qualified, and he doesn't feel the Fire Chiefs or anyone are completely against it, but they feel there should be limits so you could determine, just as there is with alcohol. He states if you're on duty and have an accident, and we send you for a test, right now it's positive or negative. That puts the district on the hook for liability for lawsuits. There are states that have limits and they can do a hair sample and can tell how many hours ago you had. So, it provides a guideline so as a Chief I don't have to make a determination as to whether an individual is intoxicated or impaired. So, if I suspect that, we can request a test and you're either in the parameters or not. We would like to see parameters and testing procedures so we know exactly what that level of impairment is. It protects the fire departments, any public safety in general, obviously, driving apparatus, it would be no different than being impaired from alcohol. Chairman Mere asks if there's anything else, and Hearing None, He calls for Union Petitions.

Union Petitions – Chief states District 28 has now been established. Captain Swindle has approached Chief to begin setting up dates for negotiations, with the idea to take the current contract that we have and change language to District 28 and removing phrases like firefighter and engineer and have the same exact contract side by side with the end dates to match the current contract; so, all negotiations and contracts would coincide. Commissioner Griffin asks if firefighters and engineers will be in district 28. Chief states firefighters and engineers (and Lieutenants, which we do not currently have) are in district 13 and Captains will be in district 28. There's a brief conversation as to how and when the contract was written the way it was and how we will have Lt. in the future when we open another station, leaving the Capt. in charge over the whole district and the Lt. in charge of the station. Chairman Mere calls any further questions and hearing none, calls for Old Business

Old Business –

Commissioner Mere asks the status of MW Horticulture. Chief states, the attorney that called several months ago has called again recently for an update on the balance and Chief advised him it was unchanged as we are not charging interest and no payments have been made. He has also had another individual call to inquire if they decided to lease the property would they be able to get a certificate of occupancy. He deferred that question to our attorney and the county. He does know

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the county's lien has been satisfied through their own agreement, so, we're next. No one has called to negotiate, just law firms inquiring for potential buyers. With no further Old business, Chairman Mere calls for New Business.

New Business – None. Chairman Mere calls for Chief Items

Chief Items – Chief states he will be in Tennessee next week on vacation. He may be in Friday, and then the following week he will be in Tallahassee for Legislative Session. Also, we returned B-133 to Forestry. He requests permission to surplus or donate the tank and pump from it. He prefers to donate them to a rural volunteer department that is willing to do the rebuild and could make use of it. Possibly Moore Haven or Belle Glade where the truck is probably going. Commissioner Griffin asks what it would probably go for. Chief has no clue, but the pump does need a rebuild and may even end up being a replacement like our last one did with the volute being cracked or falling apart like we had in the past. Rebuilding can get pretty expensive. He really doubts it has much value at all. Commissioner Mere asks if the tank is in good shape. Chief says it is. Commissioner Mere states if we can help another neighboring department out with those, he wouldn't mind seeing them donated, like we were helped with our last brush truck. He wishes we had just left everything on the truck and donated it before we took all the time to take that stuff off. There's discussion as to how bad the plumbing is on that truck due to the galvanized pipes and us having rebuilt it back when Larry first started. Our water just eats that stuff up. Commissioner Cook moves to donate the tank and pump. Commissioner Griffin seconded the motion and with all in favor, motion passed. Commissioner Mere does request an update as to where it goes. Chief agrees. Chairman Mere calls for Commissioner Items.

Commissioner Items – Commissioner Cook asks about the container. Chief states it will be delivered tomorrow. We're going to get the rest of the stuff cleaned out for it to be positioned and Commissioner Mere is going to bring his front-end loader and position it on blocks for us. Hearing no further 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 Griffin and with none opposed, meeting is adjourned 7:40 p.m.