

REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING
ALVA FIRE CONTROL & RESCUE SERVICE DISTRICT
2660 STYLES ROAD, ALVA, FLORIDA 33920
DATE: NOVEMBER 13, 2023

Call to Order

Chairman Crittenden convened the regular monthly meeting of the Alva Fire Control & Rescue Service District at 6:35 PM, November 13, 2023. There were sufficient Board members present to establish a quorum.

Commissioners in Attendance

Adam Crittenden
Henry Grant Fichter
Richard “Dick” Spence
Darren Watkins
Paul F. Meloy, Jr.

Also in Attendance

Jean P. Etcheverry, Chief
Sunny Sipes, Administrative Specialist
District Firefighters
Pastor Paul Cords
FMSFD Chief Bobby Rewis

Pledge of Allegiance / Moment of Silence / Prayer

Prayer Performed by Pastor Paul Cords

Presentation of Awards & Acknowledgments

Chief Etcheverry thanked the Alva Fire District Volunteers for their contribution of the Station exercise and gym equipment. He also thanked District Fire Fighter, James Barritt, for his time in exploring and collecting bids for the suggested equipment. Chief recognized District Engineer, Travis Wright, and other Firefighters for their time in handing out candy on Halloween to District children as well as visiting a local young man at his birthday party. Etcheverry thanked Volunteers for helping the District get the Forestry generator returned and Sunny Sipes for getting the District lectern designed and ordered. He also wished District Firefighter, Chris Avila, “Happy Birthday”.

Commissioner Crittenden thanked C-Shift for their help in staging the lighted engine during a motorcycle memorial ride.

Approval of the October 09, 2023 Regular Monthly Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Fichter moved to approve the minutes of the October 09, 2023, regular monthly meeting. Commissioner Spence seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous and the motion passed.

Approval of the Financial Data from October 2023

Administrative Specialist, Sunny Sipes, detailed District income and expenditures.

Commissioner Watkins moved to approve the financial data from October 2023. Commissioner Fichter seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous and the motion passed.

Public Input on Business

None

Pastor Cords prayed over new incoming Chief, Jean Etcheverry.

New Business

➤ Chief's Report

Chief Etcheverry reported the following:

- ✓ Stated during the previous month: Total calls-59, 80% were medical, 20% were fire or public assistance.
- ✓ Informed the Board that District Firefighters held an event at the Alva School for Fire Prevention Week.
- ✓ District Firefighters will be at Trailwinds next Tuesday for community education.
- ✓ Firefighters will attend the Alva School Fall Festival on Thursday from 4-7 PM.
- ✓ The Alva Fire District Annual Toy Drive will begin next week.
- ✓ Chief Etcheverry joined Chief Rewis, from FMSFD, for the annual inspection of the Alva School.
- ✓ Administration is now beginning the review of all local commercial building plans in an effort to structure the District's inspection program. The goal is to begin the implementation of this process in January 2024.
- ✓ Informed the Board that the incoming Cascade System will require additional Station bay wiring and electrical modifications. He is awaiting the electricians proposal.
- ✓ Volunteer Chris will aid the District in getting the old station generator back to the Division of Forestry.
- ✓ Inquired with the Board as to their approval of allowing himself to meet with surrounding Fire Chief's in order to discuss the possibility of future economic studies on the topic of forced fire district mergers.
- ✓ Chief Rewis informed the Board of a Legislative Bill that has been proposed to merge the Fort Myers Beach, Bonita and Iona Fire Districts. He stated that his Board has agreed to discussions with surrounding fire districts in order to get a "jump start" on securing information as to the effects of said mergers. He stated that if a merger was proposed, he would prefer that it be with the surrounding five fire districts rather than Lee County as a whole.
- ✓ Commissioner Fichter inquired if this topic is related to the November 30th scheduled meeting? He also inquired on Chief Rewis' opinion as to motives and what data needed to be collected?
- ✓ Rewis stated, "yes" to the meeting topic and was only aware of their comments as to the number of Chief's delegated within Lee County. He was not exactly sure of the necessary data collection topics but reminded the Board of the previously failed merger in Greater Naples. He stated that the goal for this evening was to be sure that all Board members supported the topic of joint discussions and collection of data from surrounding Districts.
- ✓ Commissioner Crittenden inquired on the expense liability?
- ✓ Rewis stated that the District's will be responsible for the study costs.
- ✓ Commissioner Fichter voiced that local Chief's should encourage their staff to reach out to Legislators in order to relay their opinions in regards to the merger topic.
- ✓ All Commissioners unanimously agreed to talks and proceedings with surrounding Districts in order to study the effects of a potential merger on operational costs and service response.

Commissioner Spence moved to accept Chief Etcheverry's Chief's Report. Commissioner Fichter seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous and the motion passed.

- Sunny Sipes presented the Board with the health care and life insurance renewal proposals, through Philip Financial Group, from United Healthcare, Transamerica and Humana.
 - ✓ She stated that the District is still eligible for its Grandfathered status with current coverage.
 - ✓ The comparables provided offered less coverage with a greater premium.
 - ✓ The Board was informed that they were proposing the Transamerica plan be increased to provide additional coverage like sleep studies as well as medical device and image/scanning benefits.
 - ✓ Plan proposed costs were discussed and budgeted funds for this line item is sufficient.

Commissioner Watkins made a motion to approve the health and life insurance proposals, through Philip Financial Group, with United Healthcare, Transamerica and Humana. This motion was seconded by Commissioner Meloy and unanimously approved (copy attached hereto).

Commissioner Watkins made a motion to approve the purchase of the Administrative Office Building's Liberty safe through Koons Locksmith. Crittenden reminded the Board that this item was approved during the FY 2022-23 Final Budget Hearing process. This motion was seconded by Commissioner Fichter and unanimously approved.

- Administration presented the job description for the Alva Fire District's Chief position.

Commissioner Spence made a motion to approve the job description for the Alva Fire District's Chief position. This motion was seconded by Commissioner Fichter and unanimously approved (copy attached hereto).

- Chief Etcheverry signed the Alva Fire District's Chief position job description and the original copy will be stored in his employment file.
- Discussion ensued on the need to provide Chief Etcheverry with a District Credit card, through TCM Bank / First Bank of Clewiston, in the amount of \$10,000 for District operational purposes.

Commissioner Fichter made a motion to approve providing Chief Jean P. Etcheverry with a District credit card, through TCM Bank / First Bank of Clewiston, with a credit limit of \$10,000. This motion was seconded by Commissioner Meloy and unanimously approved.

Commissioner Crittenden made a motion to close the District credit cards with \$5,000 limits, ending in #0941 & #2152, through TCM Bank / First Bank of Clewiston. This motion was seconded by Commissioner Fichter and unanimously approved.

- Chief Etcheverry presented the Board with a 500-gallon fuel tank proposal from Porterfield Oil. He also detailed additional land preparation costs related to implementing the use of said fuel tank.
 - ✓ Etcheverry stated that the costs to be incurred should be less than the original \$10,000 that was budgeted for this item.
 - ✓ Chief detailed the additional roadway required for this implementation which would also allow for the screened room to be utilized for training purposes.
 - ✓ Commissioners stated the importance of having a backup power option for the solar powered fuel tank.

Commissioner Spence made a motion to approve the purchase of the 500-gallon fuel tank, through Porterfield Oil, as well as land preparations and 6-7 loads of base rock in an amount not to exceed \$10,000. This motion was seconded by Commissioner Fichter and unanimously approved.

- Chief Etcheverry presented the Board with a proposal to repair the 1993 Kenworth semi-tractor (T-600).
 - ✓ Stated that the repairs exceed \$21,000, there could be additional unseen necessary repairs, several needed parts are difficult to find and that the repair process could begin in approximately two weeks.
 - ✓ Etcheverry inquired with the Board, their thoughts on investing this amount into the older equipment?
 - ✓ He stated that he had inquired with the Division of Forestry on available comparable equipment through their department. They do have an older tractor, with a pump, but relayed the importance of having one of the District operators view this truck for reliability. The Board agreed.
 - ✓ Commissioner Meloy stated that the repair amount sounded excessive and the District should get a second opinion from Florida Spring & Axle.
 - ✓ Etcheverry asked the Board for a repair expenditure limit.
 - ✓ The Board agreed to allow Chief Etcheverry to research the available Forestry semi-tractor.

Commissioner Watkins made a motion to approve a repair expenditure for T-600 in an amount up to \$10,000. This motion was seconded by Commissioner Fichter and unanimously approved.

- Sunny Sipes reminded the Board of the outstanding debt that the Impact Funds account owes the General Fund for an engine payment made on its behalf many years prior. This amount totals \$49,980.09.
 - ✓ Sipes voiced that Chief Etcheverry felt as though it was time to remove this debt from the financials.

Commissioner Watkins made a motion to approve the transfer of funds, in the amount of \$49,980.09 from the Impact Funds account to the District's Assigned Future Engine Funds designation, in order to remove this liability from the District's financials. This motion was seconded by Commissioner Fichter and unanimously approved.

- Sunny Sipes informed the Board that the remaining held Impact Funds are only collecting approximately .40% in interest with First Bank. She stated that these funds could be transferred to the District's SBA Impact Funds Account and collect 5.50% interest.

Commissioner Spence made a motion to transfer \$80,000, from the District's First Bank Impact Funds account ending in #6111 to the SBA account #101181. This motion was seconded by Commissioner Fichter and unanimously approved.

Old Business

- Discussion ensued regarding Chief Etcheverry's Employment Contract.
 - ✓ Commissioner Fichter stated his approval of the proposed contract. However, he did want to discuss, with Mr. Pringle, the verbiage of allowing Mr. Etcheverry to return to line duty. He stated that he may not object to that if there is an open position should that situation arise. He encouraged other Board members to review the document and contact legal counsel with any questions or concerns.

- ✓ Commissioner Spence inquired on the vacant sick time excuse line item. Sipes stated that she will look at the current District Salaried Employee Policy.
- ✓ Commissioner Fichter agreed with the stated severance pay and asked Chief Etcheverry if he had any questions.
- ✓ Etcheverry clarified that the ability to return to line duty was stated in the contract due to the fact that Commissioner Fichter labeled the Chief's position as an "Interim" position during his original approval motion.
- ✓ Fichter stated that "interim" was designated in order to give the Board the ability to still advertise and interview for the Chief's position during his one year tenure. However, he will confirm the verbiage with legal counsel.

Union Report

District Firefighters Presented Report

- Stated that more information on DVP replacement will be presented at the December 11, 2023 Board Meeting.

Volunteer / Public Comments

None

Commissioner Comments

- Commissioner Meloy asked the Board to draft a letter to the Lee County School Board in regards to the Joel Boulevard school construction.
- Commissioner Fichter agreed that this letter needed to stress the fact that this school will double the District's population for 8-10 hours per day. He noted that assistance for additional equipment and/or personnel will be needed. He also felt that the District should ask to be included in all development progress and discussions.
- Discussions ensued on the building engineering.
- Commissioners asked Chief Etcheverry to provide a list of related concerns at the December Board meeting. He also complimented Chief Etcheverry on the preparation for his first Board meeting.
- Commissioner Watkins inquired if the District was going to repeat the Christmas Breakfast for employees, Commissioners and their families? All Commissioners stated their enjoyment of last year's celebration and agreed to repeat the breakfast again this holiday.

Reminders

- The December Board Meeting will be held Monday, December 11, 2023, at 6:30 PM.

Adjournment

Commissioner Fichter moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:59 PM. This was seconded by Commissioner Spence, and the vote was unanimous. Chairman Crittenden closed the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Sunny Sipes, Administrative Specialist

Minutes Distributed Electronically to Board Members