

REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING
ALVA FIRE CONTROL & RESCUE SERVICE DISTRICT
2660 STYLES ROAD, ALVA, FLORIDA 33920
DATE: AUGUST 12, 2024

Call to Order

Chairman Crittenden convened the regular monthly meeting of the Alva Fire Control & Rescue Service District at 6:31 PM, August 12, 2024. 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, Finance Manager
1-District Firefighters
1-District Volunteer
Pastor Paul Cords
FMSFD Chief Bobby Rewis

Pledge of Allegiance / Moment of Silence / Prayer

Prayer Performed by Pastor Paul Cords

Presentation of Awards & Acknowledgments

None

Approval of the July 08, 2024 Regular Monthly Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Spence moved to approve the minutes of the, July 08, 2024, regular monthly meeting. Commissioner Fichter seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous and the motion passed.

Approval of the Financial Data from July 2024

Finance Manager, Sunny Sipes, detailed District income and expenditures (copy attached hereto).

Commissioner Watkins moved to approve the financial data from July 2024. Commissioner Fichter seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous and the motion passed.

Public Input on Business

None

New Business

➤ **Chief’s Report**

Chief Etcheverry reported the following:

- ✓ Congratulated Firefighter Chris Avila for completing his 12-month Probationary Period.
- ✓ Happy Birthday to Commissioner’s, Meloy, Crittenden, Firefighter’s Barritt, Young and Chief Etcheverry.
- ✓ Chief traveled to Alva Elementary School to meet the new Principle and inquired on needs. The District donated 2,000 pencils.
- ✓ New Alva retirement facility is coming along.
- ✓ Total 47 monthly calls; 32-medical and 15-fire.
- ✓ Air bag and suction testing coming-up on new equipment.

- ✓ Beginning the pre-incident fire plan for the Alva Senior Living facility.
- ✓ E-121 back in service.
- ✓ Graphics for R-121 should be completed shortly.
- ✓ Annual hose testing is scheduled.
- ✓ Mentioned thoughts of inquiring on the SAFER Grant during next fiscal year.
- ✓ ISO reduction discussion ensued.

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

- Finance Manager, Sunny Sipes, presented the Board with VFIS proposals for the Accident & Sickness policy renewal as well as the Member Assistance policy proposal for FY end 09/30/25.

Commissioner Crittenden made a motion to approve the VFIS proposals for the District's Accident & Sickness and Member Assistance policy renewals (copy attached hereto). This motion was seconded by Commissioner Fichter and unanimously approved.

- Finance Manager, Sunny Sipes, reviewed the Tentative Budget Worksheet for FY end 09/30/25 with Commissioners.
 - ✓ Compensated Balances line item added.
 - ✓ Discussed potential in assigning approximately \$117,000 to assigned funds equipment.
 - ✓ Chief Etcheverry discussed the addition of three firefighters providing 4-responding Firefighters per shift. Stated the importance of this response for ISO reduction as well as district growth. Stated that the District has responded with the current staffing for approximately 17-20 years.
 - ✓ Sipes stated that this staffing, taking place at November 1st, would place personnel costs at 72% of the expected ad valorem income.
 - ✓ Etcheverry informed the Board that this Tentative Budget reflects the potential payoff of E-121
 - ✓ Capital Outlay items were discussed in detail.
 - ✓ Future additional station and/or land purchase was discussed for increased responses and ISO rating reduction.
 - ✓ Chief Etcheverry mentioned the importance of having the equipment and staffing in place prior to this development.
 - ✓ Sipes' reminded the Board that the ISO rating reduction has been discussed by the Department for over 20-years.
 - ✓ Discussion to join FASD commenced.
- A call was made by Commissioner Fichter to inquire with Leasing II as to the payoff amount of E-121.
- Discussion ensued on a possible selection process for the Chief's position as well as the terms of Chief Etcheverry's Employment Agreement.
 - ✓ Commissioner Fichter stated that due to the upcoming expiration of the Chief's current contract, he would like the Board's permission to consult with legal counsel to "spearhead" this process. He would like to expedite this process and propose his results to the Board at the September meeting.
 - ✓ Commissioner Spence would like to go ahead and discuss the terms of said employment contract.
 - ✓ Discussion ensued on the proposed salary for the Chief's position.
 - ✓ Commissioner Spence voiced his thoughts of proposing a 2-year contract with a 5% salary increase per year plus any qualifying incentives.

- ✓ Commissioner Meloy voiced his belief that if the Board did not find fault with Etcheverry, why is there discussion placing this position out for a selection process?
- ✓ Commissioner Spence voiced his concern with the timing of this process.
- ✓ Commissioner Fichter stated to Chief Etcheverry that this process is not personal, he feels he is prepared for a selection process, he wants to display fairness and that the Board is doing their due diligence for the community. He believes that this process will stop the grievance's and put some of the issues, the Board has dealt with over the last three years, "to bed".
- ✓ Commissioner Ficher inquired with Chief Bobby Rewis, of the FMSFD, as to the terms of his contract?
- ✓ Chief Rewis stated that he has a five year contract. If the Board chooses not to renew his contact at expiration, he would not receive the option to remain or reapply for this position.
- ✓ Commissioner Fichter thinks this process is a way to "clear the air" with things that are taking place within the District.
- ✓ Commissioner Watkins stated that the Chief's salary needs to be "bumped-up" to \$100,000.
- ✓ Commissioner Spence stated his disbelief in this type of increase.

Commissioner Watkins made a motion to approve Commissioner Fichter's discussions with legal counsel to develop a proposal for the Chief's position selection process as well as developing an advertisement noting salary and terms. This motion was seconded by Commissioner Spence and approved.

Commissioner Spence made a motion to approve the advertisement for the Chief's position to read 3-year contract with a 5% annual increase and a starting salary of \$87,675 plus incentives. This motion was seconded by Commissioner Fichter. Commissioner Meloy voted "yay" and Commissioner's Watkins and Crittenden voted, "nay".

Old Business

None

Union Report

None

Volunteer / Public Comments

James Barritt, Volunteer/Support Coordinator

- Stated that the Volunteer presence and numbers is increasing.

Commissioner Comments

- Commissioner Fichter stated that in his position he has tried to be neutral and has not used his personal relationships with others to influence his decision making. He is here to represent the tax payers and be sure that they are safe. He is making recommendations that he believes are best to serve this community. He reminded the other Board members that they too have an obligation to keep this position separate from personal relationships. He wants to see the Board come into a meeting with positive feedback and personal developments. He voiced to Chief Etcheverry that this process is not personal, he has done a good job and that he may be the best person for this position. His goal is to quail this "nonsense".
- Commissioner Meloy voiced his concern of the length of time the Board has spent on the Chief's review process, that over \$11,000 was spent on this process, the multiple calls that have been made to the attorney from Board members that has not been

discussed with the Board. He feels that the Board should be informed of the content of these discussions.

- Commissioner Watkins stated that he sent a records request for the cost of the three Firefighters that have been placed on paid administrative leave. The report displayed that total cost was near \$20,000 for the Firefighters on leave as well as related overtime for these positions understanding that some of these expenses were budgeted. He inquired as to how long this investigation will last? Chief Etcheverry responded that he is not aware. He asked about any additional communication with these employees or their representatives? Chief responded that all communication is via certified return receipt correspondence. Watkins inquired if Etcheverry had presented all of the employee evaluations to employees? Chief responded that he did provide feedback to four employees and decided that this process was not what he desired and wanted to develop a new process that generated positive feedback and discussion. Watkins wants to see this department back to full capacity.
- Commissioner Spence informed Watkins that the employee developments were created by the employees and not Chief Etcheverry. He is only following the advise of the District's Labor Attorney and the costs created are not his responsibility. He stated that the actual overtime for the Firefighters on leave is only around \$4,000.

Reminders

- The Tentative Budget Hearing for FY end 09/30/25 will be held on Monday, September 09th at 6:00 PM.
- The September Board Meeting will be held Monday, September 09, 2024, at 6:30 PM.

Adjournment

Commissioner Watkins moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:12 PM. This was seconded by Commissioner Meloy, and the vote was unanimous. Chairman Crittenden closed the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Sunny Sipes, Finance Manager / Administrative Specialist

Minutes Distributed Electronically to Board Members