

Murrells Inlet – Garden City Fire District
Board of Directors Meeting
Minutes of September 23, 2019

Board Members Present: Kay Benton, Pat Walsh, Steven Sellers, Gene Connell, Elizabeth Ward.

Others Present: Chief Knight, Assistant Chief Haney.

Gene Connell called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. A quorum was present and the press had been notified.

Minutes: Elizabeth Ward moved to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Pat Walsh and the motion carried.

Financials: Kay Benton stated the adjustments had not been made to the budget as approved at the last meeting. Ms. Benton moved to approve the financials. Elizabeth Ward seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Chief's Report: Preparing for hurricanes is becoming an annual thing for us. Chief Knight thanked the Assistant Chief and officers for their work while he was out of town. Chief Knight gave an overview of the 2020 budget; everything represented is what we think we will need to operate the District in 2020. Gene Connell asked if hurricane expenses needed to be added to the annual budget. Kay Benton would like to see referendum expense added to the 2020 budget.

Kay Benton reported that Smith Sapp had returned a quote of \$2,500 to prepare a budget projection. Elizabeth Ward said she thought we could use historical data to produce a budget and perhaps hire them to work on a cash flow or projection after the budget is done. Gene Connell reminded all that the financials needed to be submitted to the counties by November.

Chief Knight asked Captain Zimpleman to go over a proposal to implement inspection fees. The proposed inspection fees would only affect for-profit commercial businesses. The fee would include the initial inspection and the first re-inspection. An initial income of \$60,000 and the salary for a part time fire inspector is included in the budget. Gene Connell would like to have the proposed fees be on the agenda for the next three meetings to hear public comment. Pat Walsh asked if anyone charges for repeated false fire alarms. Chief Knight gave a brief history of the impact fees and suggested we look at the impact fees as well. We have charged the same amount in fees since 1985. Steven Sellers made the motion to consider passing a resolution adopting an inspection fee schedule on December 16th after three public hearings, with an effective date of January 1, 2020. Elizabeth Ward seconded the motion, and the motion carried. Elizabeth Ward made the motion to review the options available with increasing impact fees and getting public comment on those in the same manner as the

inspection fees. Steven Sellers seconded the motion and the motion carried. Captain Zimpleman will have additional information available at the next meeting.

Steven Sellers asked Chief Knight if he had heard from the Volunteer Coordinator. Chief Knight stated he had not heard from her in several months. Mr. Sellers said he wanted to keep up with the Fire Corps and did not want to see the program end.

Assistant Chief's Report: The Assistant Chief reviewed the apparatus exception report. He also reported that staffing is short by twelve positions. Not included in that figure are two paramedics who have accepted offers of employment, and one part time paramedic who is considering the move to full time. We have two candidates scheduled for testing this week.

He pointed out on the budget that the item capital - bunker gear has been merged into bunker gear expense at the suggestion of the auditors. Also discussed was the need to include loan proceeds as income on the budget to reflect how they are reported on the audited financial statements.

Budgeted salaries were discussed in regard to how they compare to the salary adjustments expected at Horry County this year. Captain Berube reported that he has several applicants who cannot come to MIGCFD due to the low salary.

Steven Sellers asked about the truck Service 76: when was the last time it ran a call, and does it cost too much to continue to operate? Chief Knight said it has not been used as a first out truck so we could expect to get many more years from it.

Chairman's Report: Gene Connell has spoken to the Chief about bringing the rest of the 29576 zip code into the District. He has also spoken to the legislators in our area and they seem to be on board with that. Steven Sellers would like to see the coverage area expanded to the South. Kay Benton made the motion to allow Chief to negotiate with the Horry County Fire Chief and bring back information. Pat Walsh seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Gene Connell has spoken to a bond attorney, Jeremy Cook, with the Sinkler Boyd law firm who can come to the next meeting to give a "Bond 101" presentation on how a bond would help pay for fire equipment versus using operating monies. Steven Sellers asked about a quote from the Pope Flynn firm. Mr. Connell said the quote was much higher than the Sinkler Boyd offer. Pat Walsh asked if Sinkler Boyd specialized in Special Purpose Districts. Gene Connell stated this attorney only does bond work. Kay Benton made the motion invite Mr. Cook to the next board meeting to give a bond presentation. The motion was seconded by Pat Walsh, and the motion carried.

Gene Connell spoke with the Legislative Delegation. He asked Mr. Sellers if he would prefer them come to a meeting in October or November. Mr. Sellers asked if we had answers prepared for them. Ms. Benton stated George Oldroyd had answered their questions. Mr.

Walsh and Mr. Sellers both said the Delegation were not satisfied with the answers they had been given. Mr. Sellers stated he had not seen the answers and would like a copy of them.

Old Business: Steven Sellers asked about the Horry County EMS contract. Mr. Connell will re-contact the attorney for Horry County. Mr. Sellers also asked about updating the Georgetown County contract. He would like to review it at the next meeting.

New Business: None.

Public Comment: Joseph Kelley asked Chief Knight if he would explain what an impact fee is. He also asked about adding a fee when homes are purchased in the District. Chief Knight that a tax like that would need to come from the State Legislature.

The next regular meeting will be held October 28th at 6:00 p.m. A budget workshop will also be held on October 28th, and will begin at 5:00 p.m.

Kay Benton made the motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Elizabeth Ward and the motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 8:16 p.m.

Approved on Oct 28, 2019


