

**Murrells Inlet – Garden City Fire District
Board of Directors Meeting
January 25, 2021**

Called to order at 6:00 p.m., this meeting was held by video conference due to the continuing COVID-19 pandemic.

Members in attendance: Gene Connell, Kay Benton, Alison Burns, Beth Ward, Pat Walsh.

Also in attendance: Chief Haney, Assistant Chief Kosto.

Minutes: Kay Benton reviewed the minutes and made the motion to accept the minutes as written. Beth Ward seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Financials: Beth Ward reviewed the financial statements: additional tax revenue was received from Horry County over last year and Georgetown County tax revenue is a little behind. Chief Haney had no additional items for review. Kay Benton made the motion to accept the financials as presented. Alison Burns seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Firemen's Fund Bank Account: Chief Haney stated that in the past, we had a bank account for donations received. We have not utilized the funds until the end of 2020. We need to have an account to hold these funds separately. Kay Benton made the motion to open an account, of the board's choosing, to house these funds separately and determine the signers. Beth Ward made the motion for the Administrative Assistant to review interest rates of the local banks and return the information to the board by email prior to the next meeting. Kay Benton seconded the motion and the motion carried. It was agreed to include the new account to be set up requiring two signatures, and the same signers as the other bank accounts.

Chairman's Report: Chairman Connell has received two complaints regarding the fire inspection fees. Chief Haney gave an overview of the fire inspection fees. The fee schedule was approved on December 16, 2019, and enacted on January 1, 2020. The annual inspection fee is a tiered rate, dependent upon the occupancy size of the building: up to 999 square feet \$75; 1,000 – 2,499 square feet \$100; 2,500 – 9,999 square feet \$150; 10,000 – 49,999 square feet \$200; 50,000 and above \$300. If a re-inspection is required, there is no charge, however, if a third inspection is required, a \$100 fee will be charged. Fire Marshal Zimpleman added the fee was implemented because, as a special purpose district, MIGCFD has no "teeth" to enforce the building code. Horry County and Myrtle Beach have the same fee structure. Kay Benton pointed out that there has been a ten-month reprieve from inspections and fees. Chief Haney said copies of the inspection fee schedule and resolution have been posted on the website and that at the time of inspection, a sheet that explains the inspection fee schedule is given to the occupant.

A homeowner complained to Chairman Connell regarding a narrow road which may cause a potential delay in fire suppression. Chief Haney said the district is aware of the hazard and have mitigated the situation for the past several years. Division Chief Brown will be conducting training in the area so all new personnel are familiar with the area.

The Chairman has also received multiple phone calls asking if the district will be involved with COVID-19 vaccinations. Chief Haney said we have completed preliminary paperwork to become a vaccination site and are more than willing to become a vaccination site, however, there will be a cost involved for not only additional personnel to give the vaccinations, but also for the paperwork involved. Beth Ward said it is a monumental task and she could help with a budget. Kay Benton said she thought vaccinations should be left to facilities that have the manpower to handle it and Tideland's Health is central in our district. Chief Haney said we would be glad to help where we could, but we do have staffing and financial constraints.

Chairman Connell has spoken to the Legislature regarding using impact fees for other uses including recurring costs and was told that it was on the legislative agenda. He has also asked the Legislature to consider amending the special purpose district statute to allow all special purpose district fire marshals the ability to issue tickets for building code violations.

Chief's Report: The third quarter accounting oversight is in process. It has been delayed due to staffing issues at Smith Sapp. We are currently looking to move our motor vehicle accident billing from Innovapad to Fire Recovery. Collections are expected to increase as well as we will also have the ability to bill the insurance for structure fire calls. The fees are paid by the insurance and is not passed on to the homeowner. The billing rate will be 22% versus 25%, and the reporting process looks more efficient. Kay Benton asked if the new company was not aware that the fee was available for structure fires? Chief Haney said he did not remember that being mentioned. He would like to move forward at this time on the MVA side.

We recently hired two paramedics. With our current staffing numbers, that will put us six down. Chief Haney would like to offer to help our EMTs get their paramedic training. If we could do a contract of employment to serve two years after completing their training, he believes this would help get good, qualified people in the door.

Old Business: None.

New Business: The Chairman reminded that we are down one board member and asked the other board members to think about who they might recommend.

Public Comment: None.

Next meeting February 22, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.

Kay Benton made the motion to adjourn. Alison Burns seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Approved on 2/22, 2021

