

**Murrells Inlet – Garden City Fire District
Board of Directors Meeting
December 14, 2020**

Board Members Present: Gene Connell, Pat Walsh, Kay Benton (by phone), Alison Burns, Beth Ward.

Others Present: Chief Haney, Assistant Chief Kosto.

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. A quorum was present.

Third Reading of the Budget: Beth Ward reviewed the most recent copy of the budget which is a balanced budget. Chief Haney distributed an updated copy and reviewed the changes made to the approved second reading: fuel expense was moved to the impact fee column secondary to its use on fire equipment; continuing education expense was adjusted; health insurance expense was reviewed and tightened based upon current staffing's health insurance coverage; supplies and equipment expense for Hazmat was adjusted; supplies and equipment expense for first responder/fire rescue was moved to the impact fee column secondary to its use on fire equipment; administrative salaries expense was adjusted for new Captain's position and Division Chief compression; firefighter salaries expense was adjusted for new Captain positions and Battalion Chief compression; capital expense – security cameras changed due to updated numbers; capital expense – medic unit remount was removed. The fire boat continues to be left off the budget and we are currently reaching out to a grant specialist with a fire boat manufacturer and beginning data collection for grant submission. Two hundred five thousand dollars was budgeted for extra overtime and ninety thousand dollars was budgeted for vacation buyback expense. Income numbers remain the same as the second reading. We are currently on track to have enough excess impact fees in 2020 to purchase the medic unit remount we originally budgeted for 2021. The Georgetown County Assessor's office has reported property tax assessments for the District which are \$81,000 more than the \$1,600,000 budgeted for 2021. Chief Haney would like to increase the budget by this amount and use the funds to move the part time Fire Inspector to a full-time position. After speaking with the Division Chief of Fire and Life Safety, Chief Haney states the workload is greater than one person can handle due to the construction in the area. This would give the Fire Marshal a weekend off without constantly being on call and would allow more efficient processing of plan reviews and code enforcement. Chief Haney reviewed the tax revenue receipts, showing the District's 2020 receipts are in line with prior year's collections and asked the board to approve adjusting the budgeted property tax revenue from Georgetown County to match the assessment of \$1,681,000.

Pat Walsh asked if the medic unit remount would be recorded in the impact fee column. Chief Haney said it should be recorded in the impact fee column, but the remount has been removed from the 2021 budget. Chief is hoping there will be enough excess impact fees in 2020 to put

toward the purchase of a remount. Mr. Walsh also asked about purchasing a fire boat. Chief Haney said we have enough impact fees now to purchase the remount outright, and that we have several projects pending. Battalion Chief Howerton is working on grant ideas, and maybe we could earmark any excess impact fees beyond a remount purchase toward a boat or equipment.

Chief Haney asked the board if, upon the approval of the 2021 budget, they would approve the purchase of the admin vehicle and the station pick-up truck. It takes 90-120 days to receive a vehicle after ordering, and another 30-45 days for upfitting. Ordering now would allow the vehicles to be ready for the spring season.

Beth Ward made the motion to approve the budget with the changes presented, subject to public comment. Alison Burns seconded the motion and the motion carried. No public comment was made regarding the 2021 budget.

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

Financials: The Chairman said the financials were reviewed during the reading of the budget and asked if there was anything further to discuss. Chief Haney may have some items related to the budget during the Chief's report.

Chairman's Report: The chairman has had multiple phone conversations with Horry County Planning Department. A 229-home subdivision is being built on the edge of Surfside. The 230-million-dollar project should be complete in fourteen months. Another plan will be submitted soon for over 700 units behind the Seaside school. The Chairman contacted the owners of the area regarding a pie-shaped lot across from the school. He asked if the group would give the District the lot for a fire station. Kay Benton asked if the .6-acre lot would be adequate for a fire station. She would entertain the idea if the area given was sufficient for the proper equipment to service the areas. Ms. Benton said with that many houses in a concentrated area and Tupelo Bay already being there, it would be a challenge for us not to have something in that area for response time. Pat Walsh asked about the plans for a fifth station on the other side of the District, are we planning to drop that? Chairman Connell said he did not say we drop anything, just that they are making a potential offer to give us a free piece of land. Chief Haney said we still need a fifth station, and his press would still be for a fifth station. Mr. Walsh is concerned with the location: proximity to the District border, impact of the station on the school, sufficient road for the traffic. He says he is all for taking it, these are just things that need to be addressed. Larry Hopkins asked if there was a plan to build a road from 17 Business to 17 Bypass. Chairman Connell said he did not know. Pat Walsh made the motion that we are agreeable to accepting the piece of property, in exchange for a tax credit, for future use as a fire station. Beth Ward seconded the motion and the motion carried.

The Georgetown County Planning Department has informed the Chairman that there are plans to build a three-story condotel next to Captain Dick's Marina. Division Chief Zimpleman says no plans have been submitted yet. Chief Zimpleman described the triplex building being built north of the Home Depot. A letter was sent to the Legislative Delegation regarding using impact fees could be used for salaries due to the current economic situation.

Chief's Report: Chief Haney reviewed the One Percent Fund Form 201 which details the budgeted use of one percent funds for 2021. All members of the fire department have a vote in how the funds are used. Traditionally the funds are used for retirement. This year, the account has approximately \$62,000 of accrued funds, which we would like to use for updated fitness equipment for each of the stations. As board of trustees, the board of directors sign the form affirming the funds are being used in accordance with the guidelines. Chief Haney received a renewal for the SC Special Purpose District for \$1,850. He would like to leave that money in conference expense and use it to send career personnel to extrication and swift water trainings. Station 76 painting: after advertising in the local newspaper in accordance with the purchasing policy, bid opening was last Friday at 4:00 p.m. No bidders were in attendance, and the opening was recorded. Three bids were received: Xtreme Coatings, LLC \$35,000; Cartright & Son \$29,200; CPP Enterprises dba Renovia \$14,990. Chief Haney would like to award the contract to Renovia and use the remaining budgeted funds to have the gutters refurbished and refreshed. Alison Burns made the motion to accept the bid of Renovia for \$14,990. Beth Ward seconded the motion and the motion carried. Chief Haney read a letter from Representative Russell Fry with enclosed certificates for members of the department who had been presented with Lifesaver Awards. Those members were: Josh Bean, Eric Pennell, and Shayne Owens. Certificates were also announced for Battalion Chief Daniel Richards and Battalion Chief Brennan Moore. Chief Haney also announced annual awards usually presented at the Awards Banquet: Volunteer Firefighter of the Year – Dennis Brogna; Paramedic of the Year – Rob McMahon; Firefighter of the Year – Cassandra Miller. On behalf of the Board of Directors, Assistant Chief Kosto presented Chief Haney with an award in recognition of his exceptional leadership during the unprecedented COVID-19 crisis. Chief Haney thanked the board, and said we have a great team here. He thanked the everyone for their outstanding work ethic and overall positive attitude, saying "We have an excellent group and it's been my honor to work with these guys". Chief Haney thanked Firefighter David Hackman for his work with social media. He also thanked Battalion Chief Daniel Richards for being our new Fitness Coordinator, and Engineer Brad Bemis for his help working on fire grants. Chief Haney said the board has been great to work with, and he appreciate the support of his vision, as it mirrors the vision of the board for the District.

Old Business:

New Business: Kay Benton wished everyone a happy holiday. She thanked the staff for the wonderful job they do for everyone in our district. After a review of the meeting schedule for

2021, Pat Walsh made the motion to approve the meeting schedule. Beth Ward seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Kay Benton asked for the approval of officers for 2021: Gene Connell, Chairman; Pat Walsh, Vice Chairman; Beth Ward, Treasurer; Alison Burns, Secretary. Pat Walsh made the motion to approve officers as read. Kay Benton seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Public Comment: None.

The next regular meeting will be January 25, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.

Adjourn: Beth Ward made the motion to adjourn. Kay Benton seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Approved on 2/02, 2021


