

**Murrells Inlet – Garden City Fire District
Board of Directors Meeting
July 25, 2022**

Members in attendance: Gene Connell, Pat Walsh, Kay Benton, Alison Burns, John Magann.

Also in attendance: Chief Haney, Deputy Chief Kosto.

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

2021 Audit: Chairman Connell introduced the accountants from Smith Sapp, David DeKleva and Clare McLaurin, who presented the 2021 audited financial statements. Mr. DeKleva said the firm issued an unmodified opinion on the financial statements, also known as a clean opinion. Ms. McLaurin reviewed the report and noted a new line item, Deposits for Equipment Purchases, which contains items paid for in 2021 but not received until 2022. Mr. DeKleva noted the impact fees are designated as restricted for capital purposes.

Minutes: Kay Benton made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Pat Walsh seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Financials: Kay Benton noted the tax revenues are behind and the impact fees are over budget at this time.

Chief's Report: Chief Haney said attorney Mike Battle had reviewed the proposed Impact Fee Administration Manual and gave the board some suggestions which had been discussed and approved at a prior meeting. Chief Haney asked the board if they would like to revise the manual to include the approved verbiage or hire the attorney to revise the manual. John Magann made a motion to implement the wording as presented in the first two public hearings. Kay Benton seconded the motion and the motion carried. Chief Haney will prepare the revised manual for the board to sign at the next meeting.

Chief Haney reported the 25-foot SAFE boat has been delivered and B.C. Edbrooke is working on a punch list. Impact fees received, especially from Horry County, are greatly higher than budgeted due to The Lively project. Because of receipt of those impact fees being above what was forecasted, Chief Haney is gathering fresh quotes to present to the board for new extrication equipment. He anticipates the cost to be approximately \$159,000.

The members of the Horry Georgetown Chiefs Association have put together an updated Mutual Aid Agreement. This document will replace the agreement that was signed in the 1990's. He expects it to be in place in August.

Staffing-wise, we are down seven positions. Chief Haney reported that we are pulling information from local departments regarding salaries and hiring incentives. The City of Myrtle Beach Fire Department is putting out a \$4,000 relocation bonus to entice people to come. Due to staffing, Chief Haney stated there are times when the department has had to brown-out a truck. Since the beginning of the year, we have had to brown out Ladder 79 a total of 40 hours, and Truck 76 a total of 82.5 hours. We are trying to work through some of the staffing issues.

Chief Haney is looking at potentially hiring paramedics only. This would allow us to get our people off of medic units and onto fire trucks. John Magann asked about the pay scale. Chief Haney said \$47,500-48,000.

Chairman's Report: The Chairman is working with Horry County Council to expand our District. This would bring in more tax revenue which would help people get higher salaries. John Magann asked about the need for a station. Chairman Connell said Horry County may give a piece of land for a station in the new area. Chief Haney will work with Horry GIS to come up with proposed new boundary lines.

Chairman Connell has also been working on an application for ARPA funds from Horry County. The application is due July 29th. Mr. Connell has added both a new fire truck and a new ambulance to the request. Mr. Magann asked if there are any funds left in Georgetown County. Chief Haney said there are not.

Chief Haney said he had spoken to Georgetown County regarding the Rescue Building property. The County is looking to see if there are any restrictions on a transfer of the property.

The Chairman is working on something to give to the legislators at the end of the year regarding the ability to use impact fees for firefighter salaries.

Mr. Connell received two phone calls of praise this week: one was from a structure fire and the second was from a caller whose mother had a medical emergency.

Old Business: None.

New Business: None.

Public Comment: Steven Sellers said he didn't understand being seven people down and browning out a truck. He remarked that mandatory overtime is a major negative, but the department was short staffed during the Fourth of July. Mr. Sellers also complained that although an ambulance had been moved from Station 78 to Station 76 to help personnel, he feels it is not in the best interest of the community. Chief Haney said the decision to move the ambulance was made with the input of the Battalion Chiefs, Captains, and the personnel who are experiencing burn out. Since the move was made, runs are evenly distributed between the ambulances.

The next regular meeting will be held Monday, August 22nd at 6:00 p.m.

Adjourn: Kay Benton made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Alison Burns and the motion carried.

Approved on 9/26, 2022

