

Murrells Inlet - Garden City Fire District
Board of Directors Meeting
October 24, 2022

Attendance: Gene Connell, Kay Benton, Beth Ward, Alison Burns (by phone), John Magann (by phone).

Also Attending: Chief John Haney, Deputy Chief Jeff Kosto.

Minutes: Kay Benton made the motion to accept the minutes of the September meeting as written. The motion was seconded by Alison Burns and the motion carried.

Financials: Beth Ward stated the board has just received a fourth quarter budget review and asked if the board would be reviewing for a discussion next meeting. Chief Haney confirmed this. Ms. Ward made the motion to accept the September financials as presented. The motion was seconded by John Magann and the motion carried.

Chief's Report: Station 77 sustained damaged during Hurricane Ian. The insurance adjusters came out quickly, visited each station and assessed damages at Station 77 to be approximately \$150,000. We have already received a check for \$100,000 to begin repairing and replacing equipment. Deputy Chief Kosto is preparing a request for proposal. Chief Haney said he expected the station to be offline for two to three months. Horry County elections has been notified and voting will be moved to Seaside Elementary. Open House was held during National Fire Prevention Week for the first time in two years. We are making a presentation on November 1st to Georgetown County to request Accommodations Tax money for strengthening our Georgetown County water response. We are asking for approximately \$200,000.

We have lost a number of personnel recently to Grand Strand Hospital. We believe the Paramedic Specialist position can have PORS eligibility with the addition of outside firefighting measures, including hydrant tagging and rehabilitation on the fire ground. This change has increased the number of applications coming in. We have a lack of funding for advertisement but are putting our ads out to learning institutions in South Carolina and stakeholders in West Virginia and Ohio.

Chief Haney asked if the board has considered the meeting schedule for November and December with the addition of meetings for the presentation of the consultant's report. The consensus was to move the November 28th meeting to November 14th, and the December 19th meeting to December 12th. John Magann believes the meeting can be held at the Murrells Inlet Community Center with no cost to the department.

Chairman's Report: Chairman Connell announced that it was confirmed today that Horry County would give the department \$317,657.20 from ARP Funds for a new ambulance if we pay the additional 20% of the purchase price.

First Reading of the 2023 Budget: Chief Haney reviewed the rough draft of the 2023 Budget. We are still waiting on tax revenue figures from Georgetown County. The State Health Plan will see an 18% increase this year - the first significant increase since the department joined the plan in 2016. Salaries include a 4% raise, plus up to 2% for longevity or merit. The administrative salaries include a receptionist for headquarters. At this time, the volunteer staffed receptionist position is vacant 70% of the time, with Ms. Barbara shouldering

many of those duties. We really need somebody up there full time to answer calls, take payments, have some first aid training, giving Ms. Barbara time back in her office. It would help with the workload to shift light administrative tasks to a full-time receptionist. Six of the paramedic positions have been adjusted to paramedic specialist positions and an additional two specialist positions were added. This will be enough to staff one ambulance.

Lt. Bemis briefed the board on the market for buying a chassis for the new ambulance, saying he thinks it may be March before one could be available.

Beth Ward would like to look at the debt schedule. She stated the consultant report should give some guidance.

Kay Benton made the motion to approve the first reading of the 2023 budget with adjustments in comments noted. Beth Ward seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Old Business: None.

New Business: None.

Public Comment: Larry Hopkins asked if there were any plans to move Station 77 or if it would be possible to move the kitchen and office upstairs. Chief Haney said he didn't believe there is enough height over the bay for that. Mr. Hopkins also asked who was in charge of the big boat. Chief Haney said that the Water Rescue Coordinator is Battalion Chief Moore. Mr. Hopkins then asked if a person was required to have a boat Captain's License. Chief Haney stated that is a requirement. Chief Haney also stated that Battalion Chief Edbrooke heads up the Boat Rescue.

Gene Connell said to tell all the people out there that you talk to that we will get the report and have a closed meeting, but we won't be changing it. Whatever it is, we will be presenting it. This is a public entity, whatever is written is what they are going to get, there is no conspiracy, no secret meeting to make changes.

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

The next regular meeting and the second reading of the budget will be held November 14, 2022, at 6:00 p.m. The December meeting will be held on December 12, 2022, at 6:00 p.m.

Approved



11/14, 2022