

**Murrells Inlet – Garden City Fire District  
Board of Directors Meeting  
December 12, 2022**

**Members in attendance:** Gene Connell, Pat Walsh, Kay Benton, John Magann, Beth Ward.

**Also in attendance:** Chief Haney, Deputy Chief Kosto.

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 p.m.

**Third Reading of the 2023 Budget:** Beth Ward stated she had compared expenses line item by line item and compared them to prior years. She recommended the board approve the 2023 budget as submitted. John Magann seconded the motion and the motion carried.

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

**Financials:** Beth Ward pointed out that on the balance sheet, in cash and cash equivalents, we have \$2,054,544.02 in impact fees, and in long term debt we have two balloon payments due next year, in the amount of \$1,135,699.07. We have more than enough in our impact fee account to make the balloon payments early. If paid off now, the department would save about \$70,700 on interest compared to what has accrued now, and almost that much more interest saved by the time we came to the payment due date. Ms. Ward made the recommendation to make the two payments early. John Magann made the motion to make the two balloon payments by December 31<sup>st</sup>, in the amount of \$1,135,699.07. Kay Benton seconded the motion and the motion carried.

**Chief's Report:** Chief Haney distributed a compensation study proposal from the McGrath Consulting Group. Beth Ward would like to have the work put out for bid. Chief Haney said the administration would make the request for bids. Chief Haney said this year was another record-breaking year and he wanted to thank the men and women of the Murrells Inlet – Garden City Fire District for their outstanding efforts in keeping our community protected.

**Chairman's Report:** Chairman Connell announced that the judge's decision in the lawsuit brought by Swell's Cottages was in the department's favor. The Cottages have 30 days to appeal the decision. Horry County has agreed to give the department a substantial amount of money for a new ambulance, grant documents have been returned to the county, and we are line to get that next year.

Chief Haney added that Battalion Chief Moore headed up a group that made a proposal to Georgetown County's Accommodations Tax Committee. It looks like the department will be awarded approximately \$144,000 which will provide equipment and training, allowing MIGCFD to provide beach patrols and staffing for the fire boat. This will be a great benefit to the community.

**Old Business:** None.

**New Business:** Pat Walsh asked about long-range plans or scheduling workshops to discuss a referendum. The chairman said the first step would be the release of the consultant's report to the public, probably in January.

**Public Comment:** Steven Sellers said that he is not satisfied with the way the executive sessions are being held and has spoken to the Board of Ethics in Columbia. Mr. Sellers states his belief is that the consultant's report is being kept from the public. Chief Haney replied that the study, not the final report, was being reviewed with the employees. Chairman Connell stated that the public would have access to the report once the report was signed by the consultants.

Chairman Connell said the public would get a written report, signed by the consultant – the first time in 50 years, no one has done this before. Mr. Connell asked Mr. Sellers if he knew of anyone else doing this before. Mr. Sellers stated the fire department has been doing good since now.

Kim Mocarski said she agreed with Mr. Sellers and would like to know if the consultant's report was ready or not. The Chairman stated that when the final report is provided to the board by the consulting firm it would be made available to the public. Pat Walsh stated that the board members themselves had not yet received a final report.

The next regular meeting will be held Monday, January 23<sup>rd</sup> at 6:00 p.m. at Headquarters.

**Adjourn:** John Magann made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Beth Ward and the motion carried.

Approved on 1-23, 2023

