

**Murrells Inlet – Garden City Fire District
Board of Directors Meeting
February 27, 2023**

Members in attendance: Gene Connell, Pat Walsh, Beth Ward, Alison Burns, John Magann. Kay Benton attended by phone.

Also in attendance: Chief Haney, Assistant Chief Kosto.

The meeting was called to order at 6:10 p.m.

Life Membership: Chief Haney asked the board to recognize Tom Richards with a life membership. Tom was nominated for life membership by Deputy Chief Kosto who said Mr. Richards was truly a fireman's fireman who was dedicated to his family.

Request to Speak with Board: Lieutenant Marlin Fry requested to meet with the board regarding the District's PTO accrual practices outlined in the Employee Manual revised in 2014. The manual states that the accrual rate is based on length of employment. Lt. Fry asked the board when does the clock start? Is part-time employment included? Ms. Ward and Ms. Burns both stated the beginning of the paragraph was key to when time accrual should begin, which includes 106-hour, full-time employees. Beth Ward said she appreciated the matter being brought to the board's attention.

Minutes: Alison Burns made the motion to accept the January minutes as written. John Magann seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Financials: Beth Ward made the motion to accept the financials as presented. John Magann seconded the motion and the motion carried. Ms. Ward said, the important point for the newspaper for all of us, is that we operate on a no margin operation. What we bring in, we spend, and we have not had significant growth in that ability to spend in many years. As our community continues to grow, we will have to have support from that community to grow our service.

Chief's Report: Work on Station 77 has been underway with the flooring repair 5 weeks out. Everything should be back up and running in two months.

Chief Haney stated there had been a change to Horry County call response due to staffing and illness/injury. He has suspended the staffing of one of our Horry County medic units. As we have available staffing, both units will run. Both Midway Fire and Horry County Fire Rescue have been notified. Chairman Connell asked what would happen in a dire emergency. Chief Haney said paramedics at the engineer level, officer level, fire chief level, will run. That is the benefit of having paramedic officers.

We have paramedic specialists coming in. Chief Kosto said one is coming in for a second interview next week, one will be starting March 10th and two others starting the next week. Chief Haney said paramedic specialists will be working 24/72 shifts, which is pretty unique for our area, but he believes is the direction of the future. With the high calls, the amount of burnout, and work/life balance, a 24/72 schedule is statistically shown to be an improvement in an individual's well-being and a recruitment tool. Staffing one medic unit on our 24/48 schedule requires 6 personnel. On a 24/72 schedule, two additional personnel, a total of 8, are needed to staff the unit. We are exploring any and all options to get personnel in the door. At one time, we were competing with departments in our area but now we need to compete at the state level to attract employees.

We have a great organization, great teams, and great management, I believe the wages and compensation need to be adjusted to make sure we are a player to get the people we need.

Chairman's Report: The circuit court judge in the Swells Cottages case ruled in our favor. An appeal to the SC Court of Appeals was made Friday in the Swells Cottages case. The case could last two and a half years there. The rescue building property was given to Georgetown County. The County seems to be willing to give the property to the District.

Old Business: None.

New Business: None.

Executive Session: Beth Ward made the motion to recede into executive session. Alison Burns seconded the motion and the motion carried. No votes were taken during executive session.

Public Comment: None.

Next meeting is March 27, 2023, at 6:00 p.m.

Adjourn: John Magann made the motion to adjourn. Alison Burns seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Approved on 3/27, 2023
