

BAYSHORE FIRE PROTECTION & RESCUE SERVICE DISTRICT  
MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING  
January 10, 2017

**Meeting called to order** at 7:02 p.m. by Vice-Chairman Griffin

**Invocation – MOS**

Commissioner Ducrou – Present  
Commissioner Hansen – Excused  
Commissioner Cook – Absent  
Commissioner Griffin – Present  
Commission Mere - Present  
Chief Larry Nisbet - Present  
Office Manager - Theresa Sharp - Present  
Attorney Ian Mann – Present

**Others Present:** Some public

**Minutes** – Review and Acceptance of the minutes of the December 13, 2016 Board of Commissioners meeting. Motion made by Commissioner Mere to accept the minutes. Commissioner Ducrou seconded the motion. Vice-Chairman Griffin calls for questions or comments. With no questions or discussion and none opposed, motion carries.

**Financial Report** - Review & Acceptance of the December 2016 financials. Commissioner Mere moves to accept the December 2016 financials. Commissioner Ducrou seconded the motion. Vice-Chairman Griffin calls for questions or comments. With no questions or discussion, and none opposed, motion carries.

**Fire Marshal and Administrative Reports** (attached) – Chief Nisbet reads Fire Marshal's report into the record. He then reads the Administration Report into the record. He adds recognition of Captain Underwood being awarded the Lee County Fire Investigator of the Year through the Arson Task Force. He asks for any questions. Hearing no questions offered Vice-Chairman Griffin calls for Petitions/Public Input.

**Petitions before the Board/Public Input** –None

**Union Petitions** - None

**Old Business** –

- None

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**New Business –**

- **2017 SAFER Grant** – Chief Nisbet states the 2017 SAFER Guidance documents came out the week of December 26. As he reviewed it, he notes changes to the categories in the hiring aspect. He continues, they have taken out the categories of retention and rehire and they've moved everything into hire. They have also closed the scope of it. What they are working on is going back to the original scope of the grant when it first came out; to add additional personnel to increase capabilities. He admits he was a little taken aback by that because that was not the conversation we had just prior to the holidays. Right after the first of the year I contacted the International Association of Firefighters in Washington D.C. and they told me to refer to a particular page and look at the waiver section. The waiver section deals with supplanting, which is the term they are using to identify the preventing of layoffs with additional funding. As of right now, he continues, our grant that we are currently under, our performance period will end roughly sometime in the middle of September. We will probably have enough funds left over from changes in personnel and such adjustments in costs throughout the year, that we will probably have enough for an additional quarter on top of that that could take us to the end of the year. Not knowing what our July numbers are, and where we will be sitting in funding, I plan on looking to the Board to apply again for those 6 positions again in this budget year. But I want you to be aware that there will be some additional hoops to jump through. It's going to be more difficult and, of course as always, there are no guarantees. All the indications are that we will see at least what we saw last year in an increase but I would say our area, according to everything I'm looking at, is seeing a value increase between 10 and 14 percent. That's looking at the Zillos and all the other things that are out there. There could be some difficult things to look at toward the end of the year, but right now I'm optimistic dealing with SAFER because we're not the only ones in this position of not yet being able to walk on our own. Detroit, and some of the other departments are and those are the reasons that was put on. Ron Benedict at the IAFF told me to just let them walk through it. I've discussed it with the DVP, he's aware of it, and we're going to look at it hard throughout the year, and I've discussed it with downtown also, so we will do what we do. I'm five for six on SAFER Grants, so we'll go six for seven if we need to. He offers any questions. Commissioner Ducrou asks for Chief's thoughts if we don't get it, instead of going a quarter with everybody, will we be able to sustain...Chief responds I think we will be able to sustain 3 for sure. With what we've gotten over the last couple years, we're pretty close to that. We'll have to look at making some budget adjustments and stuff, and the DVP and I have discussed it. We discussed it last year when we renewed the health insurance; health insurance cost is one of the things we'll have to look at. That's going to be a little bit of help; but with the new dollars coming in, we'll see what the new administration does with

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health insurance; see if that helps out. There are a lot of variables out there, but I think, realistically, with what we've got here, carrying us through to the end of the year, I feel pretty comfortable saying that we'll at least save three. My goal is all six. Commissioner Ducrou expresses his agreement. Chief continues, I will keep you updated as time goes on, but in the new SAFER grant, there's a match. There's matching funds that we have to come up with. The grant now is for three years. They'll pay 75% for the first year, 75% for the second year, on the third year, they'll pay 35%. He continues, now I actually did the math at what that equates to with what we're sitting at right now with dollars, and our total exposure on that with the entire grant with the match would be about \$402,000. That's for all six positions. The scary one on that one is the third year. That's where we have to come up with about \$200,000 on our end; however, and this is the thing I'm working on with the IAFF, we can apply for a waiver on that also. We just have to demonstrate the financials and I have to provide them with budgets and other stuff. Commissioner Ducrou states, you think you can carry three, so technically, it's not, basically, it's doable right now based on what you just told me. Chief Nisbet states, well it will be when I see the numbers for sure, but it will be close, I mean right now, if I had to do it today, and we had to make all the adjustments and stuff, probably, we'd have a little bit of impact in our reserves, to maintain those three right now, but I don't think we will after we see what the summer numbers look like. I've got the Ouija board out, I'm trying to figure it out; and it's difficult because I have to look at the potential with Babcock Village and all that stuff too, and having to look at this in the short term and look at that in the long term, and not run too hard over here but not slow down over here, my head's spinning a little bit. Commissioner Ducrou states that Babcock's impact is all capital right now, it's not operational. Chief Nisbet states but eventually it will be. Commissioner Ducrou state and eventually I'll be 80, probably. You and your projects, just be realistic about things. Chief Nisbet responds, I am being realistic, the thing about it is, I've given them the information of what we need to maintain that class 2 rating out there. That's the only information about what infrastructure and what equipment we'll require. I made it very clear to them that the fire station out there could not be in the very first part of Phase I; it's got to be at the end of Phase I because we have to have tax dollars to staff it. Commissioner Ducrou asks, have they given you projected annual tax revenues? Chief Nisbet responds, they're supposed to be getting that to me. The first part of Phase I, what they are predicting in Phase I, if it goes to fruition as they're doing it, is half the ball fields, one of the stadiums, the movie theater, something else, and three of the hotels. Commissioner Griffin asks, and that's projected to be done in 19? Chief confirms, fall of 2019. I would say probably spring of 2020. Commissioner Griffin states so we wouldn't get funds until...Chief Nisbet states we would get the impact fees, and the Impact Fee Fund owes the General Fund a little over \$212,000. Once that money gets repaid to the General Fund that will help increase the Reserve line item also. He concludes, trust me, I can not wait until the day when I can say we don't need this anymore. I was hoping we'd be at least at three by now, but projects

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haven't taken off like we were lead to believe for two years. That was almost two years ago. Trust me, I've been on this every week, when are they going to turn dirt, when are they going to turn dirt, when are they going to turn dirt. Commissioner Mere asks if anything is happening over here on the Pritchett Project. Chief Nisbet responds, they're waiting on a second builder right now. Captain Underwood confirms, he spoke with the engineer who said right now they are waiting on a second builder to close on lots; he said right now they have one national builder in there and they are looking to have a closing on a second national builder and then they would start turning dirt so they have two big builders going full bore at the same time. Commissioner Ducrou says, yeah, I'll believe it when I see them start moving dirt. They've been talking about it for years. Chief Nisbet states right now the Impact Fee Fund owes the General Fund about \$240,000 and actually our big impact fee generator is when those hotels go through, a hotel is a good impact fee generator. Commissioner Ducrou states, the problem is, they open the hotel, you're not going to have the revenue for a year to a year and a half or so, depending on when they CO us, but they are going to have terrible fire protection until you get that money. You're going to have a new station with trucks and nobody there. That's a bad scenario. Chief Nisbet agrees, it is, and when I get to that scenario and that's coming to fruition, I'll address that scenario. I don't think I've let you down yet... Commissioner Ducrou agrees, but I mean, feasibly I don't see a way around that scenario. You'd have to do a SAFER for twelve not six. Chief agrees, and that might be the time at that point, where we don't have to worry about the SAFER for the retention at that point, because here's the thing, that's already down to 2019, that's a different application period, that's what it is, at that point, we might apply for new positions; just for that station for three years. They'll cover those costs, depending on what the parameter is; but right now what it is, they'll cover 75% for the first year, 75% for the second year, and by the third year, and we'll definitely have collected enough of that revenue, that's an option on that also. The DVP and I at the table can talk about part timer temporarily to help out at that station. We've already had discussions with Alva about doing joint staffing on that station and sharing that station back and forth for resources to respond to Alva North River Road area. Commissioner Ducrou states, because they're so flushed with cash. Chief Nisbet states, but here's the thing, if I put an Engineer and a Captain up there or an Engineer and a Lieutenant, they put 2 firefighters up there, there's a 4 person company, and we give them a station on the North side of the river and cut their response times and lower their ISO ratings. Commissioner Ducrou asks who gives them a station on the north side of the river. Chief states, if we co-staff a station up there, Babcock North Olga, then we can go down N. River Road and we can provide that as closest unit. Commissioner Ducrou asks if we would then be consolidating our resources with Alva. Chief Nisbet states it wouldn't exactly be consolidating, Commissioner Ducrou asks Chief if he's so scared of that word. Chief Nisbet states, the current bill, yes. Chief concludes, I just wanted to let the Board know our obligations with the grant and I'll provide the Chair with a letter to

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that effect. I'll keep you updated as time goes on. I'm working with the IAFF, Ron Benedict, and we're working on it, and he seems pretty optimistic we'll be able to work something out. Commissioner Ducrou asks when the award period is. Chief Nisbet responds it won't be until summertime. Commissioner Ducrou asks, they don't list it on there? Captain Underwood replies he believes it starts in mid-July. Chief Nisbet states it coincides with our performance period here, we've just got to make sure they don't award us before we expend all our funds. We've actually run into that before, and they held off on issuing us our award because they want us to use all the money that's out there. Commissioner Ducrou agrees. Chief continues, they just won't push it out more than 180 days. So that won't be a problem. Vice-Chairman Griffin calls for any further discussion on the SAFER and hearing none, moves to the Consolidation Bill.

- **Consolidation Bill** – Chief Nisbet begins, everyone is aware, and asks if everyone received the e-mails he sent regarding the consolidation bill. He continues, we've had a lot of discussion over this for the last week or two, and I'll turn it over to Commissioner Mere here in a minute so he can talk about the Forum last night and the direction a lot of the boards are going, but I have some real concerns about the language in this bill. He continues, primarily in the areas with how it goes about the vote and how a district can be in and out; how this could end up being checker boarded that the municipalities are included, Cape Coral has already passed a referendum that they are not going to give up their home rule. We have information that City of Fort Myers is going to follow suit. My question is with this bill that is being proposed, this new district will take effect 10 days after approval, however, we have seat elections in 2018, so what happens to our board, does it dissolve, or where does it go to, do we do a budget that year, there's a lot of... the bill is very terribly written. It is a mess. I will tell you, as the president of Lee County Fire Chiefs, our Chiefs, we've had a discussion at the meeting and we've all said that we're not against consolidation, but we're against the way that this bill is written and we're leaving it up to the direction of our Boards. He concludes, I'm going to turn it over to Commissioner Mere so you can talk about the Commissioner Forum last night, which again, I appreciate all of you, I'll explain that later; Commissioner Ducrou has been to some of those, and he'll (referring back to Commissioner Mere) tell you what some of the other boards are doing. Commissioner Mere begins; it was an interesting meeting last night. He states, as Chief was saying, there are a lot of contradictions in that bill. We kind of picked through a bit of it last night and it was very rushed written, and all the other Departments that were there, nobody likes the idea of consolidation because it is not going to be in our best interest. Basically, they're trying to figure out who's pushing it because we believe what it's coming down to is the money situation, we know it, and it's just a matter of who's trying to get the power and money involved with it. Brian Juntikka and he has actually updated some of the numbers since the 11 version that was e-mailed out so this is the most current one that he finished up these reports this summer, and what it would cost some of the other districts, most of them are not going to jump into

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it. Prime example, he continues, would be Sanibel. If we were to consolidate county-wide our millage rate would be 2.78, something like that. Chief adds, and that's with everybody going in. Commissioner Mere agreed; countywide, that millage rate. Well, it would cost the residents of Sanibel a little over eight million dollars, additional fire; that would go to the County Fund to be put through with everybody else. So, he continues, pull their eight million dollars out of it because Sanibel says "Hell no, we're not paying more money for it." Then Captiva is right behind it with another two and a half million. And now all of a sudden the numbers are so far off it just doesn't make sense to do it. The way everything is structured off it, County-wide, nobody wants to consolidate at this time. Chief Nisbet adds, even 1826 has taken a no stance on this, they don't want any part of it. Commissioner Mere continues, what we had recommended is, there is a local legislative meeting on the 19<sup>th</sup>, so if any of us would like to go to it, if nobody wants to go, I will go, I don't mind, but what we had recommended to the other districts, is to put together a letter that their board has discussed it, whether they are for it or against it. I talked to Chief a little bit on the way home, about drafting something we could sign and hand to them and basically saying that Bayshore Fire & Rescue, as representative of "X" amount of individuals living in our population don't feel that it is in our best interest to consolidate. And draft it up and hand it to them at that particular meeting as more of a public showing of where we're standing. Besides recommending sending a letter like that to the legislators in the meantime. Chief Nisbet states some of the Districts have already passed resolutions at their meetings. Commissioner Mere continues, one of the biggest problems that they had; let's say for instance, that Pine Island says yes we want to go in, and Estero says yes, we want to go in, and Lehigh says yes we want to go in, and nobody else goes in, now you have a consolidated district spread all over Lee County. Chief Nisbet adds, and the other departments can't get in for another five years. Commissioner Mere adds to Chief's comment, if they don't go in now. Commissioner Ducrou states, but that's based upon the first draft of the way the bill is written. Chief Nisbet agrees, stating, that is correct. Commissioner Ducrou asks so why can't we meet with Caldwell and find out where this is coming from and amend it, or do all the districts just feel like consolidation is not good? Chief Nisbet states, right now, we saw 100% no last night; of all the elected boards that were there. Commissioner Ducrou disproves that opinion. Chief Nisbet agrees. Commissioner Mere states they're doing it off research too. When they go to Palm Beach County, and Sarasota County, who have done it, their cost of fire has gone up significantly and their service has not. Commissioner Ducrou disagrees; I would think their level of service is standard across the board no matter where you live in the county. That's an argument I'll take all day. If you think we're going to provide the same level of service as Iona McGregor, you're crazy. Commissioner Mere states, if you look at what it costs them to do it, and here's the other problem that I have with it, if you take and make ourselves a Lee County Fire Department, the money is not going to come out this way because they're not going to feel the level of service needs to be any higher out here. Where is the

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demand for it? It's still going to be in Bonita and Estero where your population is higher. It would help us out on a payroll situation, but it's not going to help us out getting better equipment or anything else because they're going to put the funds where they feel it's needed. Commissioner Ducrou asks if he feels we would be in the same boat with the SAFER? Commissioner Mere answers, I'm not going to disagree with that, but I think things are going to change once Babcock actually takes place. Commissioner Ducrou states, here's the problem I have with that theory. Estero used to be the poorest district in the county, besides Alva and probably us at the time. Estero would have probably loved to have been in consolidation back then, but now that they've got money, no, where in the same boat. People are starting to look and say hey, there are 2 projects; we might have money, so we don't want to do it. What is actually good for the employees and the people who actually live here? And I have been a proponent for consolidation structurally, since I got on this board. We have one school district; we have one Sheriff's Department. The fact that we have so many fire departments is absurd. Nobody else does this in the state. But we think it's the best way to do it. Because all these boards like us, our fire department is better, we're different, we're special, nobody can provide the service that we can. It's a hot button issue with me; I get really irritated about it. Commissioner Mere states, and that's ok, for you to have your opinion about it is no problem at all, but do I think if I had a group of seven county commissioners that took care of Bayshore, this area, we would have better services out here, as opposed to having a county, having one guy that comes out here and doesn't give a \_\_\_\_\_; absolutely. And that's the problem we have; we take a fire commissioner and we have one big board, and initially we would have 19 commissioner on that board, that would go over well, but, Chief Nisbet states, if you consolidate that down smaller, which would eventually happen, they're not going to care, they don't put the emphasis in those particular areas, the smaller districts, that you're going to put into it when you have a smaller department and you have a group of people that live in that district and take care of it... Commissioner Ducrou states, there won't be a smaller district, there'll one district. Commissioner Mere states, but the needs of the community out here are not going to be met the same way. Commissioner Ducrou asks, does the Sheriff's Department come out here when we get a call out here? Do they provide the same level of service as in North Fort Myers? They do, he adds. Chief Nisbet states they don't have as many deputies out here. Commissioner Ducrou states, do they have as many people out here as on MLK, no... Commissioner Mere states, do I think they patrol this area the same as they do in other areas, absolutely not. Do I think that we have the same, if we call them, you're right, they are going to come no matter how it is, when they get here, but I've had issues out here, I know what it takes for them to come out here. I know what kind of service we get out here. Lee County wise too, and I have no issues with the Sheriff's Department. But I think that consolidation is not necessarily the better thing, because number one, I don't think it's going to save us any money, and even off the reports from other communities, it's not. Commissioner Ducrou states, I don't think it

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will either. So that theory is out of it, so what is our benefit to consolidate? Commissioner Ducrou states, consolidation, in the past, when the union has studied this, and previous consolidation efforts have been undertaken but kyboshed by the fire chiefs, the level of service came up, it was standardized, your equipment that the employees were dealing with was better and standardized, your methods were standardized across the county, so they could go to any district or any location and have similar equipment or things to be laid out, operationally, it just worked better. Chief Nisbet states, Commissioner Ducrou, I agree with you because I was involved when we had some of those discussions, if I sat here and said that I didn't think consolidation wasn't going to benefit us, absolutely, personnel wise, I can't argue that fact. We'd be able to maintain at least 3, maybe 4; other than that, we'd probably have a single piece of equipment out here, maybe two if we're lucky. For example Lee County EMS, all the ambulances are in the core, very few are out here even though we have higher priority, and more critical calls out here, and the current EMS just went critical just last week with only two ambulances available in the county. So I can argue that fact also. But here's the thing with this one; what if we say we'll go with this, and our voters, and we're the only one...and you're the Chairman and you're the only one that sits on the board, the way that it's written, or, we do this and the cities pull out because they have home rule authority, and they can actually tell them to stick it, and oh, that's right, we have the village of Estero and the City of Bonita Springs that can do the exact same thing; and start their own services, and why wouldn't they? I'm just saying, the demographics from when we looked at it 20 years ago, have significantly changed. They have significantly changed in the political aspect. Commissioner Ducrou states it's always going to be changing. Chief Nisbet states the Fire Chiefs, you can ask him, we're hands off on this. Commissioner Ducrou expresses his doubt. Chief Nisbet continues we are not going to discuss this; we're just letting you know where it is. We had a meeting the other day and said if this moved forward, we're going to work with Caldwell as long as our boards direct us to, to create a better bill; that discussion was already had. However, Caldwell thinks the Fire Chiefs are the ones holding this thing back and that we are dictating our will to you the commissioners, and for lack of a better term, that you are our puppets, which couldn't be anything further from the truth. I have a lot of respect for Leroy Nottingham, he's been in the fire service 54 years... Commissioner Mere states, the questions that were asked, by the commissioners that were there... Commissioner Ducrou states Leroy didn't want any part of consolidation when I approached him about Bayshore and North Fort Myers, because Leroy is in that position, they're special, they do things different, fire is different in North than it is in Bayshore, so they have different tactics, I'm telling you, and you know that's true, and all these boards and their little fictums run around with their little badges and certs and they're special, and it drives me nuts; it's not in the best interest of the community, and why do we have so much equipment in the bays? We've got two of everything because if something breaks, we've got to rely on ourselves. Now, if you're a part of something bigger, you wouldn't

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need two of everything. You might have five or six spares around the county, to be used collectively, but you don't need two of everything. How much have we had to spend in capital because we need two of everything? Those are just costs. And like Alva, is in the same boat that we are, they don't have multiple stations so they need multiple equipment to back them up when something breaks or is out of service; it's just not the most efficient, effective way. It's just not. I don't believe this bill is the best way to go, but every time consolidation comes up, it's well, I'm not against it, but not this one. But nobody ever goes to try and fix it, to try and tweak it, to try and make it better. Chief Nisbet states, I think from what we saw last night, it's going to be a hot button issue on the 19<sup>th</sup>. None of the boards are in there. And when you get to Florida Chapters 189 and 191, there is some protection in here for Special Districts and dissolving them, everybody thinks the legislature can come in here and just dissolve them, and they can do that through a special act, but a current special district has to be found that it's a duplication of service, that they're duplicating a service that somebody else is providing, that they're not maintaining taxpayers money properly, or they've done something illegal or immoral. So even if this gets through legislation, I don't think it's going to get through rules. I don't think it's going to get through the rule committee. And here's the thing; if this community is so adamant about consolidating, and all these communities are so adamant about consolidating, where are they? Why aren't they in here banging on our doors, why aren't they here filing petitions, where are they? Commissioner Ducrou states, I don't think they are, I honestly don't, and you know why? Because the boards do their meetings in these public get to gathers and do the same thing. I saw things when I went around t citizens in the district when I was concerned about it, and you know, we fight fire different than anywhere else. They like to see Bayshore on the Fire trucks. You know, it's a community fire department. So, they get bent the same way boards do. It's just a smokescreen. Commissioner Mere states, I've never seen business in general, let alone government, that's gotten bigger and gotten better. If you can show me a government that's gotten bigger and better at the same time, ultimately, and I know what you're getting at when it comes to sharing equipment and that too, it's a matter of, sometimes that works out too, where there's equipment that can be pulled from other resources, and sometimes they cut that down so much that when you need it, it's not there, so you're still stuck in the same thing. And who's going to take priority? If Bayshore has a piece of equipment out and the city has a piece of equipment out, who's going to take priority because they've only got one extra? Commissioner Ducrou states, no, because the city has multiple stations and Bayshore only has one station. Commissioner Mere states, but technically, there is, just a bunch of stations so everybody has the same amount of stations. Commissioner Ducrou states, I'm not going to play the whole... Commissioner Mere states, I can appreciate where you're coming from, but I can't agree that it's in the best interest of our community. Commissioner Ducrou states, if we for some reason, created the best way to do this, how come we're the only county in the state of Florida to do it like this? Chief Nisbet states, we are not the only

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county, Pinellas County... Commissioner Ducrou states, this may districts? We're the only one. Chief Nisbet states, no we're not, Pinellas County has the same amount of Districts that we do. Pinellas does, and there's another, there's 96 fire districts in the state of Florida. But Pinellas County, the suburb of Tampa, and St. Pete, I take that back, they have 17 fire districts. Including the islands and all that. And they do a lot of the same things that we do, the play book, the collective, they do a lot of the same things that we do. Commissioner Mere states, and I'll be honest, I would love to see all the departments come together and buy collectively and all that. Chief Nisbet states, we already do, we already do piggybacking and collective purchasing, last time that Iona and Estero each bought trucks, they bought three trucks together. We already do that. We just don't get out and brag about it and talk about it. Not the last time, but the timebefore when we bought gear, we piggybacked off the St. Pete contract and paid only about \$1500 a set for gear. Commissioner Ducrou asks, and how did that come about? That came about because the last study that was put out there listed all the things that would be better if we consolidated so all the fire chiefs that are out there started cherry picking from it, and you know that happened. Chief agrees, and says, and I'm saying, look at the county, and I'm just being the devil's advocate, we have 7 Districts in Lee County that have ISO class 2. Another 4 on top of that are ISO class 3, all but the rest of them in the county are class 4s or better, the one 9 is Alva and that's only because they don't have any pipes. That's the only reason they aren't, everybody else is a class 4 or better. Top 2% in the country. There's only twelve hundred some fire departments in the country that have ISO class 2s. And we do that collectively in all these aspects and we have local control over that. Where is that a bad thing? Where is that not doing what needs to be done? And here's the thing, if I have a truck break down tomorrow, I call Estero or I call North Fort Myers and say hey, I need to borrow a truck. And they send me a truck to borrow because we have the same insurance company so if I have to share a truck, we can do that. We're doing everything a consolidated system says to do but we're maintaining local control. And this is where you can say my hot button is, I'm tired of the NewsPress, certain political officials, and other people that want to sit there and bash the fire districts and act like we're doing something wrong. We're not doing anything wrong, if anything, we're more frugal with the money here than any County official or state official or even federal official, because if we're not, they're going to be on me....but again, the chiefs get blamed, the chiefs are not the ones doing this, and we're always fighting, the chiefs are wanting to protect their people, the chiefs want to do whatever; you know what, I'm proud of what I've done here the last 9 years, I'm damn proud of what I've done here the last 9 years. And yeah, you know what; I don't think anyone can do it better and bigger. Yeah, I wouldn't have to worry about my personnel and stuff, that's one thing that weighs on me, constantly; but still, you've got a better system than when I first came here. Commissioner Mere states, my only concern is that once they turn it into one group then when does our budget start bleeding into our county budget and all of a sudden fire protection doesn't have near the

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amount that it should. And it can happen. Commissioner Griffin agrees; it can happen. I look at the whole consolidation issue and I think it's been since I got in the fire service it was the early eighties, it's all about the money. That's what it all boils down to is the money, what's it worth. But getting everybody's money and getting it to work like it does now, seems like a big issue.

Commissioner Mere states, if we could consolidate and save money as a Lee County resident, I would be all for it, but I don't see it happening. Chief Nisbet states, the other thing too, the one thing that concerns me about this bill, there's no provision in there for emergency medical services. None whatsoever. So some of the other districts that have ALS transport or ALS responder service, that's completely out, they have to go through all the other processes. The other departments and I'm speaking as a whole, the assessments, Cape Coral and Lehigh Acres, their assessments would cease immediately and they wouldn't be able to collect on those. The other thing too is our debt, we would be considered a service delivery area, Bayshore area, we have to maintain our debt. Now my question is who over sees that debt, who maintains that debt, and how am I able to tax to pay for that debt? It's not identified in there; it says the rate hasn't been set. And I think Brian Juntikka was very reserved in his amount, because I don't think all 19 agencies would go in, I think it would have to be 3.75 for a majority of the places, to make sure you could maintain a level because if you think about it, what our SAFER grant provides \$400,000 a year, you're going to have to pull \$400,000 from someplace else to cover those positions. And you know as well as I do, what's the first thing that's going to happen, "let's negotiate a new contract". There are a lot of things that are not covered in this bill, and my concern is, his answer is this, number one, look at mosquito control; ok, mosquito control's mission is pretty singular; mosquitoes come out, we spray, we do it by trucks or we do it by airplane. If it's this kind of mosquito we spray this, if it's that kind of mosquito, we spray that. Fire service delivery, EMS service delivery, is a little bit different; it's a bit more dynamic. It would be like me saying hey I'm going to go run a brush truck out to a crash scene. Unless it's in the woods, it's not a crash truck; it's a specialized vehicle. If you want to compare our conglomerate if a fire district, compare it to a school board, which would actually be a more accurate comparison of what it would look like with a separate administrative facility. Plus, the other thing, nobody in this bill loses their job. So all these other chiefs will either be the district chief of Bayshore, because I'm sure not going to be the Fire Chief of the whole district, the whole thing, and then, how does that work? What do I oversee? How does that play out? Some of these things just don't even make sense. Again, what do I do about a board, who do I, because the Chairman of the previous boards report to the new board in 10 days, but we'll elect a Bayshore Board, but we won't have an election of officers until November to figure out who the new chairman is gonna be and then the chairman will go and sit the new office and the rest of you are fired. You don't have anything else to do. There's no comparison of what this would do. A lot of the tax payers think that they pay for 19 fire chiefs. A lot of taxpayers think they pay for 19, I'm just using an example, fire

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inspectors, whatever is in that area; you know, that's specific to that area. And for some reason, Boca Grande is not in here. I don't understand that either. He cut Boca Grande out; the Airport is not in it. And Lee County EMS is not in it. Commissioner Ducrou states the airport is not because it is not a taxing district. Everything is paid through landing fees. You can have it, I'm ok with that. Chief Nisbet continues, and the City of Fort Myers, I mean, I can't imagine giving up their home rule. Cape Coral sent a pretty solid message last night. Commissioner Griffin states, that's one of the big issues, just like you were saying, these higher taxing districts are definitely out, how is anyone going to benefit? Chief states, my biggest fear is that us, Pine Island, and let's just say Estero, just for argument, would be the ones that would go, you have a board of three people, and, how's that going to work out that we're going to be a county wide fire district when none of our borders touch and then nobody around us can get in for five years. Commissioner Mere states, then we'll have to hire a new chief to take care of the whole thing, so we've just increased our payroll. Commissioner Griffin states, well, and that's one thing, and the money, the tax money, how would that be distributed? Because ultimately, any district, that's what we'd be looking at, mainly here, if we're looking to get the funds. Commissioner Mere states, it would go into a center coffer and then it would get distributed. And they're not adding any more to it. Commissioner Griffin states, well, that's what I'm saying, with those three districts, I don't have the numbers, but you'd have to figure out with them together, and then divide that up. Is that going to put the districts in better shape or worse shape? Commissioner Mere states, it depends on who sticks around and who leaves. Commissioner Griffin states, that's what I'm saying, who's going to be in and who's going to be out. How do you know, it's a gamble. Commissioner Mere states, and the ones that have the money like your Estero, and your southern stations, they're not going to go in it; they're not going to give up that money. Sanibel is not going to give up that money. Commissioner Ducrou states, no, but we're talking about the same thing, because our projected revenues for three years from now. Commissioner Mere states possibly. Commissioner Ducrou states, we're no different than them, don't think we are. Chief Nisbet states, shouldn't I be looking at that stuff down the road? Shouldn't I be planning for that down the road? Commissioner Ducrou states, sure, we've been looking at that stuff down the road for a while. We're still laying guys off. You know, you came up with an idea yourself that regional consolidation would be the best way to go. You know, you, North, Shores, maybe Alva; to try and group areas, but nothing ever went with it, so you have something here... Chief Nisbet states, nothing ever went with it because North Fort Myers asked to stop and backed out of it until they got their millage rate adjusted and stuff like that. And Chief Rice and I have had a couple discussions since then about wanting to go in, and then this all came up and discuss that, because we wanted to come back to both boards and give you what we found as a swat analysis which would be the positives and negatives. So it does go on even though I may not report it every meeting, it is going on as directed. And actually, that is right, but here's the thing, the difference between this and that

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is the board of Bayshore approaches the board of North Fort Myers and those boards collectively agree that they want to consolidate services and work together and become one fire district like they did in Collier County. And they do that through their legislative authority and then the voters here at that point get to vote, after everything is already identified as to what it's going to be. Tax rates and stuff like that. This does not do that. That's the difference. And yes, it does go on. Yes we have talked about regional, yes, the fire chiefs still talk about regional, but here's the thing, down south, you're not just dealing with the Bonita Springs Fire District and the Estero Fire District anymore and the San Carlos Fire District, they have two players in there that deal with the Village of Estero and the Village of Bonita. Because Bonita is very adamant that they want Bonita Springs Fire Control District protecting the City of Bonita. Village of Estero is very (undiscernible) they want the Village of Estero and the Village of Bonita to maintain there boundaries. The Town of Fort Myers Beach is very adamant they want to maintain Fort Myers Beach and stuff along those lines. They are part of their identities. So just because the Fire Districts want to do something doesn't mean the municipalities may not even still identify their own districts down the road after that and go home rule and start their own fire department. Because that's a very potential reality. Commissioner Ducrou says, ok. Commissioner Mere states, I would like to propose that us as a board, and one thing that I recommended to them, when you draft a letter up, that we draft a letter up to take on the 19<sup>th</sup>, and sign each member sign it and put whether we are for it or against it; and then as a board, do we want to collectively say yes we are for it or against it. Unfortunately it's a little tough because there're only three of us here tonight. But I feel, I am against it, I'm against the consolidation and I would hope our board is against it; and I would like to be able to present something to Caldwell that Bayshore Fire and Rescue is not interested in consolidation at this time. But we would need to have Theresa draft something up for us to sign if we agree to do so. Commissioner Ducrou asks why the boards are taking such a position on it before it's... trying to get it amended or tweak it or make it... Commissioner Mere states we're trying to squash it before it gets more... Chief Nisbet states a lot of them are not even interested; not at all; adamantly against it. Even our neighbors are adamantly against it. Commissioner Griffin asks neighbors? Chief Nisbet states, Shores; Lehigh... Commissioner Ducrou says, Lehigh's got money now. Commissioner Griffin states, since I first heard about this a few months ago, my question was where did Caldwell come up with this, he didn't just pop it out of his head... somebody had to provoke this to get this ball rolling. Commissioner Mere states, he hasn't admitted, he hasn't said who's pushing it. Chief Nisbet states he's discussed it before in the past, but never this much fervor. Commissioner Griffin states, he's got better things to do that deal with restructuring the whole districts... Commissioner Mere states there's a lot of rumors as to why he's doing it, but there's... Chief Nisbet states, and I haven't been able to verify this or not, but there are some difficulties taking place in Collier County with their consolidation down there. The North Collier Agency is looking at a potential legal challenge because of disparity in millage

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rates between the Big Corkscrew service delivery area and the old North Naples delivery area because currently that service delivery area pays about 1 mil and the Big Corkscrew Island area pays about 3.5 mils and they're now under one banner. And the service delivery area they're saying we're under one banner, we should be paying one rate. And speaking with one of the chiefs down there, they're pretty convinced that they're going to lose it, that they're going to have to blend the rates. And they think that's going to cause another aspect of wanting to re-segregate the districts again at that point. One of the chiefs down there told me that this actually may be because of something that's going on in Collier on a co-sponsor of the representative down there in an attempt to get some things taken care of down there, putting everything under one and then here as one; something like that, but I don't know. Right now I've just been funneling gumballs the last two weeks just trying to address this as my role in the fire chiefs association and stuff. But I was, actually a little taken back with the sentiment last night in that meeting was pretty adamant that the commissioners, and these were commissioners speaking; I was the only fire chief that spoke just giving them an overview of the information that we had found and how we provide some information to the boards so that you could see it that was provided to us; and they were very; some of the boards were very educated, some of them were not, but they were pretty adamant no's. I have to tell you right now, Sanibel is going to fight this thing tooth and nail, along with Captiva. Actually I think the only agencies that would not fight it would be places like us and Alva, if we didn't do anything like that. I think everybody else in the county's against it, cities are adamantly against this. Cities have no interest in it. Lehigh, I was actually surprised, they're pretty adamantly against it because even some of their commissioners who are having difficulty with the assessment now that it's in place, they're even now saying "you know what, we're taking a second look at this, and this isn't exactly a bad thing", because guess what; with that new millage rate that's in this study, to meet that same revenue amount, it's more than the assessment. So, it's going to be interesting to see how that legislative delegation addresses it. I just think there's not an interest and you know, as far as the model, and I agree with Commissioner Ducrou when he said there's not too many places in the state that do it this way, and here's the thing, back in the day when you had the Dade Counties and you had these large areas, counties had to do something for protection and that's how those models got built. But if you go to the northeast end of the country up around New England and those areas, the cities, and Long Island, they look like here. They look like fire districts, the only difference is they're towns and they're doing the same thing with collective buying; there's nothing wrong with this model, yeah, there's some benefit to both sides, absolutely; one of the benefits we have right here, right now, is if we have a brushfire breakout in Lehigh Acres, every department can send a truck to help and still keep their areas covered. You can easily do that. You know one thing that happened down in Collier County now that they've consolidated; I can't even get a strike team out of Collier County for a brush fire because they won't send their resources anymore

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because everything is now under one banner; and some of its ridiculous. There're arguments either way. Commissioner Mere states, to me, one of the things I feel my job on this board is, is to provide the best service for the best price for our constituents and I don't think that consolidation is going to do that. And I think that's where a lot of your other boards feel the same way. If it's going to cost them more, they're not going to do it. Sanibel is a prime example of that because their millage rate's only 1.5 or 1.2, something like that. Like I said, I'd like to draft something up or have something drafted up that we sign, but I don't know if you guys are for or against that. Commissioner Ducrou states, I don't feel comfortable about signing anything right now.

Commissioner Mere states, well you could sign something saying that you are for consolidation, that's fine too, but as a board I think we need to make a stand one way or the other. Commissioner Griffin states, I don't know whether, there're good points and bad points, and honestly, right now, I'm on the fence. To me everything's too... there's nothing granite saying it's going to be...what's what. Everything is so wishy-washy. That's my feelings on it. Right now; the whole...who knows if it's going to be better or not and it's a gamble.

Chief Nisbet states, that's my concern on this Commissioners, there's not been a cost/benefit analysis done on this. The DMG study was done 20 years ago, there were flaws in that study and stuff, there has not been a cost savings analysis on this, and here's the thing, anybody can do whatever they want with numbers, I can make numbers look like, Commissioner Ducrou can make numbers look like, Commissioner Mere can make numbers look a certain way; but there's truly not been an independent evaluation of a third party to come in here and evaluate which system would be better. And this bill is being developed based upon a perception in the newspaper a long time ago. That's just the way I feel about it, I just think it is, I mean 20 years ago, I was right there, I actually made the motion in the union meeting about were we going to support consolidation or what we were going to do, and it was contentious then in that meeting with some of the districts. And that was at the union membership. Commissioner Griffin states that back then the problem was the City was pretty much the biggest department around and they were definitely against consolidation. We at South Trail, and Iona was right there along with it too. Commissioner Ducrou states the fire chiefs were telling guys if you support this or you vote for this then we're not going to be able to give you a raise because you're going to have to go out to another district that's making less than you, so, They may not be vocal in these meetings right now, but if you think that I'm going to think or believe that fire chiefs aren't spinning this, I just don't. Chief Nisbet states, I can tell you whole heartedly, they're not. I can tell you 100% unequivocally, we're not. I can tell you 110% that we've already discussed it, if we have to get behind this and help re-craft it, if it makes it out of a legislative delegation, we will. We are not against this. But we're also not saying we're for it either. This is a board decision. Commissioner Ducrou asks well, if you're not against it, but you're not for it, why are boards taking action before we try and understand it or see if it can be amended to make sense.

Chief says, I don't know. Commissioner Mere states, when this paperwork

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went out from Caldwell and it went to all the other boards, they all started discussing it. You've only got two or three boards that haven't discussed this already because it went out before their December meetings came up; and so the questions they were asking were questions directly of how this thing was written. And the way it's written, they're saying no. Completely no, if you want to come back later with something new, that would be something to look at. But what I think it really comes down to is a lot of these...; granted, some of these boards don't want to lose their control, I can see that... Chief Nisbet states, it was very evident last night. Commissioner Mere continues, but, the board members themselves were the ones asking the questions. There were some chiefs there, but nobody was saying anything, and I can tell you, what Larry did was strictly, explain what conversation he had with Brian and where it's at. We had Danny, the commissioner from N. Ft. Myers, his statement was off base. Because basically Danny's statement was "well if it's not on the legislation board like yesterday", he said "as of 4:00 today it's not even on the agenda and if it's not on the agenda by tomorrow at 5:00, it's not going to go anywhere." Commissioner Mere continues, well, that's not a true statement, they wouldn't be having a local legislation on the 19<sup>th</sup> after the fact, and it could still be put on to the main legislation up until March. There were little things, but for the most part, the questions were all asked strictly by the commissioners and it was concerns with consolidation and nobody in that meeting there was for it; and we had every district... Chief Nisbet states, every district except for Bonita Springs was represented. Bonita Springs was at their meeting. Commissioner Mere adds, and Alva wasn't there, but there were none of them for it, so; and Cape Coral wasn't there, but we already know their stance. Chief Nisbet states, but when I found out about this bill was when Nicole Valdes from WINK news called me up and asked me if I had a comment on it. I asked her about what, and she responded Caldwell's press release on consolidating the fire districts. I told her I don't know anything about it, so I called Matt and said hey what's going on with this bill, where's it coming from and all that, and that's how I got a copy of the bill. It's been a conversation, and I asked him why he wants to do this and he said he thinks it's time to let the voters decide. But, after I read the bill, the question is very vague, there's not a pre-established millage rate, and here's the thing, you have to have a voted millage rate, when you form this up, you have to set a rate, even with current state statutes if this district got adopted in 2018 and went into form ten days later, they are not going to have any funds to do anything until the next year; because they're not going to be collecting anything until the next fiscal year. Then the current districts that are there are dissolved so what happens in that space? That's not identified here. Honestly I am surprised at how sloppy it is. I'll be honest, that's the one thing that, part of me thinks that it was written to fail. The chief's viewpoint is we're providing our boards with the information. But I will tell you that our five bugle meeting, and I was surprised when we talked about consolidation, about getting behind it and going with consolidation, and some of the chiefs that actually discussed it, I was surprised, but, it's not the fire chiefs of 20 years ago; if we were we'd still

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be single resource and everything today. Not working together, not training together, and all that other stuff together, that we do. Commissioner Griffin states, so if this bill passes, say this bill passes, then it has to be voted on by the general public, correct? Chief acknowledges and adds each district would be a separate service delivery area vote, so Bayshore citizens would vote to dissolve the Bayshore Fire District and fold into the Lee County Fire District. If they vote for it, we go into the new district. We could be the only one. Commissioner Griffin states, so basically it's up to everyone that is a taxpayer in this district. It's not up to us whether we do it or not. Chief Nisbet confirms that to be correct. Chief continues if we vote no, things stay as is, and it's 5 years before we can have another vote to go into the county-wide fire district. At least the way the bill is written now. Commissioner Griffin states, right, but I'm looking at this whole thing passing and all that but it's still up to the voters in all of Lee County to decide whether they're in or not. Commissioner Mere states that also at some point we are going to need to try and educate them to understand what they're truly voting for. Commissioner Griffin states, well that's true... Chief Nisbet states, and I think that education should be truly balanced; it should be fair, if it gets to that point, it should be fair; it should talk about the positives currently and the negatives with the current system and the positives and negatives of the other system. Commissioner Griffin states, I would say a majority of the public out there think that every district around here is one big fire department; they think we're all one big unit. Most people don't even know that we're separate districts. Chief Nisbet states, in certain areas I would agree with you, but some areas I would not. Commissioner Ducrou disagrees stating, there's been too many votes for millage increases where the districts have had their names out there; they know what district they're in. Chief Nisbet continues, and that's the thing, you go back to that night of the assessment inquisition where we stood out there and talked to everybody about the assessment, the one thing that stood out most that night was even though the people were not excited about the assessment, we got beat up there a little bit, the one thing was they beat up the assessment but they didn't beat us up. They felt that we provide a great service, they knew we were working hard, they knew that we were doing everything that we could, how many people did we have who said just raise the millage rate? We had people say "just take the millage rate up to 4, 5, or 6 mils; and we couldn't do that, but people are pretty aware of where they are; but I will agree with you, in certain areas, people don't know. Commissioner Griffin agrees that they probably know they're in a certain taxing district, but they think it's all one fire department, everybody gets paid from the same... Chief Nisbet agrees stating, you're right there, because everybody thinks they pay for 19 chiefs. Chief Nisbet states, but here's the thing, they're still going to pay for 19 chiefs. The only difference is there's only going to be one fire chief and so many assistant chiefs and so many division chiefs and so many battalion chiefs and so many training chiefs and so many logistics chiefs. Commissioner Ducrou states well they did that last time in the study because they were going to get them through attrition when they retired out. Chief Nisbet states in this bill, nobody

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loses their job. All contracts are maintained and all personnel negotiated and all that other stuff. Commissioner Griffin states, so then it boils down basically to the money; bundling all the money into one group, so then it's going to come down to the tax districts, such as like you said, Sanibel, Captiva, all that taxes are going to go sky high... Chief Nisbet states, and here's the other thing that concerns me too; it talks about debt in here; and it says that each service delivery area would be responsible for their debt until that debt is cleared. Now for us, it's a truck payment, and that's actually purchased off impact fees, so I don't think that's an argument anyway, but we have an unfunded liability with the FRS which we don't fund right now, because I don't feel that it's our problem, it's FRS's problem, but what about that debt. So now, our millage rate would be 2.711, but we're going to have to do the 3.75 in your area because we're going to have to cover your debt and we have to build up those funds for the debt. We have districts that because they have 19 and 20 year old kids working for them that have a 175 plan that have a 20 million dollar 175 debt or a potential liability. Now in the bill it says that all debt has to be disposed; what about that debt, is that debt included in there? That's one question I haven't gotten an answer for yet. How about Estero's debt on their station constructions that they did in the past? There's a lot of variables in here that it's just bad, and of course how do you address that, I know Cape Coral didn't want to jump in because of bond ratings and they didn't want to give up a bunch of their assets either. And you know City of Fort Myers, they're pretty proud of having their fire department. Commissioner Griffin responds, it's always been that way. Plus, with the transition of a new chief right now, I don't see them doing anything right now. Commissioner Griffin states, personally, myself, I think there's a lot of unanswered questions. Whether it's going to be a good thing or a bad thing, there's so much, I don't know where to go with it at this point other than, like you say, stuff that's in there, definitely, until it's down in there correctly, the bill, to me, it's not going to be a good thing. Commissioner Ducrou confirms the next meeting is on the 19<sup>th</sup>? Commissioner Mere confirms and states it's a legislative delegation. Chief Nisbet states that's the one where all the local government agencies talk about their legislative priorities; that's where Representative Caldwell is going to introduce this bill for local delegation support. Commissioner Ducrou states, so it's not a discussion just on the bill? Chief Nisbet says no, it's on everything and all that stuff. Here's the thing too, it's a local bill. You know as well as I do, local bills tend not to get too much resistance in Tallahassee. I think that's one of the things that concerns me, and that's one of the things that concerns the fire chiefs on the language in her because it being a local bill it has the potential to be fast-tracked; I still think it's going to get hung up in rules, but, it's a referendum. Commissioner Ducrou states, I think if we can't address the issues or be willing to amend it to something that's workable then you have a position on trying to kill it and I'm sure the FPF would do everything they can to try and kill it at Tallahassee. Chief Nisbet states, and that's the thing about it is, I know that even 1826 when I talked to JP about it; of course 1826, let's be realistic; they've, we've always discussed it, I'm not speaking out of turn, because JP

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and I have talked, we've always looked at a consolidation it would make life a lot easier for them, they have 24 districts, they have to negotiate 24 contracts, so if they're able to negotiate one contract, that would make life a lot easier for them and of course increased staffing in certain areas and maintain; you know they look out for the firefighter aspect and all that other stuff, but even JP and Bill Simpson and some of the people at 1826 even have concerns with some of the language in this bill; the way that it's put together and stuff. What their concerned with is that it wouldn't get too much of a look and get through, or get tied because, and I'll give you an example, the reason why Lehigh Acres has an assessment is because Matt Caldwell tied that language to the 633 Fire Marshall's language. It wasn't going anywhere and they tied it on to a fire marshal's bill to get it through to get the vote. So Matt Caldwell knows how to get bills through. He has no problem knowing how to do that. Commissioner Ducrou states well the people in Lehigh still had to vote for that. Chief Nisbet agrees, they had to vote on that but it came into the assessment on the EMS delivery service model. Commissioner Ducrou agrees, but states, but this board isn't going to vote this language up or down; and it pass. Caldwell may have gotten the language to where the voters could vote on it, but everybody in Lehigh had to vote on it. Chief Nisbet agrees, stating but that was one of the benefits that they were able to include EMS language in the assessment; that's what I'm saying on that assessment language; it got through. Vice Chairman Griffin asks so where are we looking to go with this? Chief Nisbet states, I know Commissioner Mere was discussing a letter and stuff, that's what a lot of the other districts are doing, I know the Commissioners Forum is something that hasn't really done much in a long time, it's starting to get some life in it again; especially now. Several board actions that are taken, I don't know if you guys are to do anything, or do nothing, it's your call. I'm just telling you what I feel my concerns are on this; this bill, the way that it's written I don't think is beneficial to anybody, I don't think it's the right way to go, period. I think it's putting the cart before the horse. Let's put it this way, if you want to answer this question once and for all, this is just my opinion, then contact Tallahassee, have them fund a study, they just gave a million dollars to fund cancer presumption, let's fund a study in Lee County and determine if the Fire Districts are a feasible, if they're economical, if the service delivery is adequate for the area that they're providing compared to a consolidated model, and what those would cost if there would be any savings or not, and I think Commissioner Ducrou and I are saying look, there's no savings, I mean the best thing you're going to do is get a standardization of service but that standardization of service may not be better service and I think that standardization of service could be less of a service. Then let's do it and then based upon that, give the voter an opportunity to make an informed decision. My concern for you as the board members looking at this, is if this goes to vote, where are you as a district going to sit on this based upon this language as it is written today, would you be for it or against it telling the voters whatever it is, here's the thing, you can't really go out and campaign for or against because you're elected officials you can't do that because of election laws. But

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here's the thing, wouldn't you want them to make an informed decision? I mean we want to make sure they make an informed decision on our budget, right? You want to make sure they have the information, and of course, again, how many people show up to these meetings? Commissioner Mere states they don't show up because they are not concerned with what us as a board is doing. Commissioner Griffin states, looking at this as it's not necessarily whether we are for or against consolidation; it's this bill. That's the way I'm seeing it. This bill is poorly written, there're a lot of gaps, there's a lot of open spaces, and what-ifs. Commissioner Mere states, I think right now we need to either say yes or no because it's not up for discussion, and hey we kind of like it, but let's tweak it. That's not the plan because the legislation... (everybody talks at once again so conversation is indiscernible). Commissioner Griffin states ok, so everybody that against it signs a letter, so that's going to stop this bill, you're saying. Commissioner Mere states, not necessarily, but on a local level, when it goes to the commissioners I think it will put a voice to it to say yes or no. Chief Nisbet states, here's the thing Commissioner Griffin, and I'm speaking from what I got last night at the Commissioner's Forum; you're the governing board of the Bayshore Fire Protection & Rescue Service District, you are elected, either unopposed or whatever it is, you are, this is your piece of the pie, you are the elected official, you represent the community, you represent the people here in this body. This takes that away from you. This doesn't allow you to do this. Here's the thing; the constituents should come to you and say, hey, we want you to look at consolidating the services; we want you to look at all the other things. It doesn't do that. So, what do you do? Babysit the Chief; you do a good job of that by the way. But your job as an elected official is to represent your community, and I think from last night, that's what a lot of the boards were saying, was, "that's our job, to determine what the level of that should be and if we want to do that". Some of them were more eloquently speaking than others and some were making better discussions than others; but it would almost be like Tallahassee telling Lee County Commissioner "hey we're gonna take over running all of Lee County because we're going to consolidate all the counties in the state into one", same thing. Commissioner Ducrou states I don't know why we have NFPA or IFSTA because we should be able to determine what suits our interest best. Why do we have a national agency that determines what's best for us. Chief Nisbet responds, because there's nothing that says we have to adopt those. NFPA consensus standards are consensus standards. If the district decides to adopt those standards, we make that determination. Commissioner Ducrou states, you know what I mean. Chief Nisbet states, I agree with you, and I'm not saying it's wrong and stuff, I'm saying this is the discussion that took place last night. Commissioner Ducrou states, and I agree with you, I'm sure every board felt like they wanted complete control and they do it differently. And it's been that way for 20 years. Commissioner Mere states I can't say they said this because they do it differently, but I think their feeling was we know what's best for our community, because we live in our community. We are here; we are the voice of our community. Do you feel that you have a voice down with

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the County Commissioners? After a reasonable pause, Chief states, it's not fair asking him that question because he actually probably does. Commissioner Ducrou states, I think anybody does if they attend meetings and gives input. Commissioner Mere states, hey I've met with my County Commissioner multiple times on issues that we had going, I've had walk-throughs and ride arounds with him and the end result was we are rural North Fort Myers. You moved out here; and they're 100% right. We moved out to a rural area but they also look at that and say your opinion is not as large of a concern to us as those people; because there are more of them there. Commissioner Ducrou states, I'm not seeing that crazy Bayshore, what was the name of that thing? Chief responds Concerned Citizens. Well they've sure got a lot of clout, there's like 3 nuts in the group. They've got a lot of clout. Chief Nisbet states that one of the things that concerns me about looking at some of this stuff and looking at the community and the protection level is, Commissioner Griffin, Commissioner Ducrou, you were on the board when EMS was looking at taking over Lehigh and Lehigh was going to lose their ambulances and Lee County was going to have to put transport units in Lehigh because of the budget issue, if you guys remember, the first unit they were going to pull was this one right here and move it into Lehigh. That's what concerns me in that type of a larger service and stuff like that. I fought that immediately, because we have a higher level of Delta and Echo and more critical calls than a majority of the areas, but because of the call volume in Lehigh they were going to get our unit. That's what concerns me. Here's the thing, if I have a Bayshore patch on my sleeve, or a Lee County patch on my sleeve, I'm toward the end of it, according to that bill, I don't lose my job, I'll do something, I'll clean toilets for Captain Swindle. Captain Swindle states, I just want a signature on the check. Chief agrees, I just can't tell you this makes any sense. And I think it's my job to tell you that. Whatever you guys decide to do. Commissioner Mere states, we can take a stance on the 19<sup>th</sup> or we can not. Chief Nisbet states that any of you can go speak on the 19<sup>th</sup>, you can speak as a citizen, or you can speak about your concerns, and Ian, correct me if I'm wrong, you just can't speak as a board... Attorney Mann states you can go to the meeting; you can identify yourself as "I am a Commissioner for the Bayshore Fire District, but I am not speaking on behalf of the District, this is my individual opinion." And whatever you want to say. Unless you as a board take an official position. Chief Nisbet states he feels that some of the Boards may have jumped the gun with resolutions, but he states "I think they have taken a stance that they should be involved with that decision. And speaking with Rita Greenberg in Collier County, that's what they had to do, that's how their stuff had to motion, two departments that wanted to do this. And that was their responsibility and that was their legislative authority, and that was their aspect and before they did it, they did a cost analysis and determined that it was in the best interest, but I will also tell you that I have also been told that they didn't save a dime. It increased their reserves a little bit, but that's about it. And they've added more positions. Commissioner Ducrou states, so they've enhanced the level of service. Chief Nisbet hesitates and Commissioner

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Ducrou states if you're putting on more positions, you're doing something with it. Chief responds, yeah, I guess you could say that because they've had to add some stations, they've had to do some other stuff; I guess you could say that because she said they had to add some positions. I guess, I don't know but they say they haven't saved anything. Areas where they had identified they were going to save money, that didn't materialize I guess is the best way for me to put it. Commissioner Mere asks, so do we want to make a stance as a board or not? If we don't, we don't. I look at it and say I can be proactive or reactive. I don't like to do reactive, but I'm one of five. Commissioner Ducrou states, I don't think we've been proactive, so, I say let's see what happens. Is he going to have any meetings? Caldwell, to answer questions the boards brought up? Chief responds, for here, or county-wide? Commissioner Ducrou responds, County-wide. Chief responds, I think Leroy was working on setting something up. The Forum had asked Leroy to generate some talking points and some questions. Commissioner Mere states, for the meeting, for the 19<sup>th</sup>. Chief states but I think he was going to release something prior to that, and then Matt's supposed to call me next week and discuss any of the fire chief's concerns, but we're taking a hand-off stance on this. Commissioner Ducrou states, no, but I sure would like to go through that before we cart limestone to pound sand, it there's things that can be, I don't even know if this form of bill can be amended to where people would get on board with it. But before you asks questions and get input back from the person who supposedly put it together. Chief Nisbet states, I think ultimately commissioners, what this gets down to it, I don't think this bill is going to catch much more traction if it gets through legislative delegation meeting and gets to rules it might, but I don't think it's going to get much traction past that. I honestly feel the only way that any consolidation is going to take place in here with the way the special districts were identified and through Chapter 189 and 191 is if the districts do it themselves. And here's the thing, you've got to have two people willing to do that. And I can tell you right now, I mean prior to some informal discussions with North; nobody on the other side of us wants to do it right now. Commissioner Ducrou states, no, but even if they change something as simple as; let's say they have this vote, but only districts that are connected to one another could actually be in this merger, so it's not three districts with no borders touching, you know, you do something where granted, if the public in Alva and Bayshore voted for it, because they have a similar border, it would work and would be approved. But otherwise it wouldn't. Chief Nisbet asks but what if you don't get any of the vote that way? What if Alva and Bayshore didn't vote yes? What if only Alva voted yes? And North voted yes. Commissioner Ducrou states, then it wouldn't be approved. But you simply change the language like that and it makes more sense already. At least in that aspect. Because even if the budget numbers work, if your districts aren't together it doesn't make much sense. Chief Nisbet states, well here's the other thing about it too, nobody realizes it, there is a Lee County Fire District. It was enabled in 1945 and it's never been sunset. Commissioner Ducrou states, that's Tice. Chief Nisbet states that it has no taxing authority though. It was

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designed so that the City of Fort Myers could contract with Lee County to provide fire protection service. There already is a Lee County Fire District. It just doesn't have taxing authority. Attorney Mann states, it has been annexed out. Chief Nisbet states, Commissioners my big thing was making sure you have and informed decision whatever it is, for you to take any action you wanted to take; my concern is that we could be in a tough spot with the current language the way that it is. I'm not a fan. I'm just making sure you've made an informed decision. We're good from here. We'll see. Hearing no further discussion offered Vice-Chairman Griffin calls for Commissioner Items.

**Commissioner Items** - With no Commissioner Items offered for discussion, Vice-Chairman Griffin calls for Public Input.

**Public Input** - Hearing none, Vice-Chairman Griffin calls for motion to adjourn.

**Adjournment** - Commissioner Mere moves to adjourn. Commissioner Ducrou seconded the motion, and with none opposed, meeting adjourned at 8:27p.m.