

BAYSHORE FIRE PROTECTION & RESCUE SERVICE DISTRICT  
MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING  
September 17, 2013

**Meeting called to order** at 7:26 p.m. by Chairman Ducrou

**Pledge of Allegiance**

**Invocation** – Commissioner Hansen

Commissioner Ducrou – Present

Commissioner Hansen – Excused

Commissioner Cook – Present

Commissioner Griffin – Present

Commissioner Klos – Excused

Chief Larry Nisbet - Present

Office Manager - Theresa Sharp - Present

Attorney Ian Mann - Absent

**Others Present:** Some Public

**Minutes** – Review and Acceptance of the minutes of the August 13, 2013 Board of Commissioners meeting. Motion made by Commissioner Griffin to accept the minutes. Commissioner Cook seconded the motion. Chairman Ducrou calls for questions or comments. With no questions or discussion and none opposed, motion carries.

**Financial Report:** Review & Acceptance of the August financials. Commissioner Cook motioned acceptance of the August financials. Commissioner Griffin seconded the motion. Chairman Ducrou calls for questions or comments. With no questions or discussion, and none opposed, motion carries.

**Admin/Ops/Fire Marshal's-Report** (attached) –Chief Nisbet reads the Fire Marshall and Administrative Reports into the record. Chairman Ducrou calls for questions or comments. Commissioner Griffin asks who the meeting is with (pertaining to the road issues in district). Chief Nisbet responds it is with emergency management and is in regard to the current road evaluation criteria. The new Public Safety director has agreed to hear input and review our concerns about the evaluation and the types of emergency vehicles requiring access. He states it will be a long-term fix, but it has been a long-term problem, so it won't be resolved overnight. Chairman Ducrou calls for questions or comments and hearing none, calls for Petitions.

**Petitions before the Board** – None

**Union Petitions/Discussions** – None

**Old Business** –

- **Assessment Fees** – Chief Nisbet has provided the Board with an overview of the assessment fees proposals for us to have a study done to see if an assessment fee methodology would be beneficial for both the District and to the citizens, and that it would help stabilize our income source and our funding source in either transitioning

BAYSHORE FIRE PROTECTION & RESCUE SERVICE DISTRICT  
MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING

September 17, 2013

into a blended system of Ad Valorem and assessment fee or just going straight into just a straight assessment fee and abandoning Ad Valorem. He continues that he and about six other fire chiefs attended two presentations, one from Governmental Services Group, and one from Burton and Associates. He continues, last week he and the other fire chiefs that were looking at this, worked together since they were going to be looking at the same evaluation criteria. They find that both programs were promising and appear to be very cost effective to both the residents and the District. They did feel stronger toward the Governmental Services Group as they already have local experience and their methodologies have already stood the test of challenges at the Supreme Court level, and they provided over 70 references from fire districts or fire agencies that they have either done assessment studies for or that are currently under assessment systems. Chief takes the opportunity to point out Jeff Rackley who is in the audience as Camille asked him to be here in case the Board or Public had questions. He continues that as discussed in the last meeting, a study has to be done in order for this to go any further, and as per the Board instruction, Chief did acquire 2 bids. The Governmental Services Group bid at \$17,500 and Burton and Associates bid was \$25,399, but there were some additional costs with regard to the implementation of the system, that GSG actually included in theirs. Both agencies have offered that if more than one agency selects them for the study, they will discount the offer 10%. He continues that North Fort Myers Board approved the use of GSG in their meeting last night, to begin October 1<sup>st</sup>. He offers that the Board present any questions they might have to Jeff, and asks them to approve the commencement of the study.

Commissioner Cook asks why it can't be one big study for all the departments and they split it. Chief responds that the study has to be specific to the District based on what the agencies current capabilities are, what we provide and service levels, and the economic difficulties vary from District to District. North Fort Myers and Lehigh Acres, for example are different in size and structure from us, with more stations and different services, plus our assessment methodology if we would look at this, would be the same as using an assessment system, but our methodologies would vary. Jeff offers that each District differs in response protocol, property composition, as well as services provided, such as EMS beyond first responder. These factors have drastic impact on the approach to splitting the budget for those services, like EMS. He continues that while they are all fairly similar, they are also different, like Lehigh has a lot of vacant lots, which they wanted to look at, so they will work individually with each Department to determine what their needs are and what they need addressed. Chief states that there will be some things that will also be identical. Commissioner Cook states a lot of stuff. Chief Nisbet continues like where the Property Appraiser is setting up the Interlocal Agreements and the setting up the Referendum for local voter approval, all that would be alike. Commissioner Ducrou points out another difference being areas like North that have a lot more commercial than we do so they would set theirs up with different weight on the commercial than ours would. He states it is really about our composition and how we split it out. Basically, you need a service, and how are we going to cut the pie; North would cut it differently than we would. Commissioner Griffin asks how large the staffing is with GSG since they would be doing multiple Districts and already have some, being under the obvious time constraints, how is that going to work with getting all of us handled, is that going to be a problem? Jeff

BAYSHORE FIRE PROTECTION & RESCUE SERVICE DISTRICT  
MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING

September 17, 2013

responds they have about 50 employees total, with offices in Tallahassee, Orlando, a small office in Miami, and some satellite people here and there. He assures it won't be a problem at all, they have about 8 people in Tallahassee alone that work only on assessment programs, and after September 15, once they certify all the tax rolls to the county Tax Collectors, from September until after the first of the year is really their slow time. He continues they have completed some studies in as little as 30 days, while some, for political reasons may carry on 6 or 8 months, or even as much as a year. So he assures they have the staff to work on this and dedicated data analysts to look at the call data, and property data, and project managers, and their Sr. Vice President who is also very involved in all these projects. Commissioner Cook states that they already have the format, and all they do is have to plug numbers into it, because, a fire department is a fire department, right? Commissioner Ducrou states the formula would have to be tweaked on the income side as far as how you want to assess what you need to assess to get to the number that we need to establish what we need to have a functional fire department. Its really almost going backwards, you know what you need every year, and you've got to go backwards to try and fulfill it. Commissioner Ducrou asks if the study provides the rate schedules and such. Jeff responds that it does, and they can run unlimited rate scenarios based upon the amount we need to bring in, and for example, some communities will say they want to bring in a \$50 single family residential rate, they can back into it that way and the other rates are all going to be proportional based upon the call incident data to each of the property categories. There are a number of different things to take into account and they will work closely with the staff in going through all the line items in the budget, going through every call they run... Commissioner Ducrou asks what the calls they run have to do with it. Jeff states the basic methodology is based upon a historic demand for services, where they run calls to, so majority of our calls would be to residential properties, so they would pay the highest percentage of the budget, and normally, they are also going to have the highest percentage of units to split that cost amongst. He continues that there are also different things they can look at in terms of weighting the calls, for instance if the residential calls are shorter in duration, has less personnel, or both; or if some other category of calls are longer or more personnel, that type of thing, brush fires is a big thing that we often look at. So there's a number of things they look at and use those calls to whatever property categories are best for the District to split the budget. Then, he continues, they look at the property data side which is the property appraiser's information to determine the number of billing units in each category, whether it's dwelling units, square footage, for land acreage, and some times even per parcel charge. So there's a number of different variables they can look at and they can look at all of them in order to come up with the best results and most sound, legally-defensible, study for the District. Commissioner Ducrou asks if they will do a draft first, or do they just do a final presentation. Jeff responds they will have a presentation and present the rates, they'll have a draft report, and then they will go through everything before they get to a final report. He says it will be a very interactive process back and forth, with Chief on every aspect of the operations, budget, the property, everything. Commissioner Cook asks if we want to have an assessment, then we have to do this study. Chief Nisbet confirms we have to have an independent validated study done. He adds that there is no way he could do this, and in speaking with Camille, and also

BAYSHORE FIRE PROTECTION & RESCUE SERVICE DISTRICT  
MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING

September 17, 2013

Commissioner Manning has had some experience with them, and in speaking with St. Lucie, and some of the other fire districts that have used this company, he has gotten nothing but positive feedback on them. The big difference between the 2 groups we looked at, he continues, is the other group looks at a ready to respond model, which that portion is fine, but they actually tie the protection units to a value attached to the structure. For every \$5,000 in value attached to that structure, which to Chief, gets into a grey area and crosses a threshold, to him that's an Ad Valorem, that's what we are doing now. We are looking at diversifying an income based on classifying a house as a house, an acre is an acre. By looking at that and providing the highest level of service that we can provide to the community and being able to maintain the ISO rating that we are currently under, because if we lose our SAFER funded firefighters, we will lose ½ of our full time staff. If we lose ½ of our full time staff, that ISO rating we worked so hard to get to 3/5 will probably go to a 9/10 and the average impact to a homeowner within the district will be anywhere between \$1,500 to \$2,500. He feels we need to at least look at this to see if this is going to be a benefit to both the District and the people within the District, and then at that point we would go on. He does not believe we will be able to have this in place for the next budget year, unless we get the study done in the next 30-60 days, like Jeff said and we get it in quick, we might be able to make that, and call for a special election. If we choose to do this after the study is completed, we would probably want to place it on the Primary Election for the voters to vote on it, and then we could have it in place for the 2015 Budget Year. We have to have our Resolution in place by 120 days prior to that election, which if we want to have it on the primary, we would have to have it there by April 26, and if we want the property appraiser to place it on the TRIM notice, we have to have it to him by July 1. Jeff agrees, that timing is sensitive and deadlines vary by Property Appraiser but sometime in July would be about right, but he adds, it could be done for this next year, they could get the study done, but the concerns he would have would be the Public Education and the cost for special election, and having a fair voter turnout, and issues like that. Should the Board decide to do, he feels that it could possibly get done, he just doesn't know if you want to rush it that much. Chief Nisbet agrees, he wants to make sure that we don't have any holes in this, that it is appropriate for what we want to do, that it achieves what we want to do, he wants to get us off the Federal Welfare of the SAFER Grants for our firefighters, Commissioner Cook states we have to get them off that, and, Chief continues, he wants to be sure that when an engine company pulls up, there's 4 guys that climb off that truck, that if we go rescue somebody or put a fire out, instead of standing outside waiting for our neighbors to get there until we get enough people on scene, to initiate a fire attack; and God help us if we have a busy brushfire season. Pulling up with 2 people on two trucks is a bad day; he says he's been there. Commissioner Cook states that the only thing he doesn't like, as Chief says, he wants to do it the correct way, he wishes we had more than three here to make this decision, it is a pretty important decision. Commissioner Ducrou states he feels it is an easy decision. Commissioner Cook agrees, it is easy, but it is \$17,000 we are talking about spending. Commissioner Ducrou states unless we go to something like this, our District will not survive 5 years, he feels it is either this or nothing. Commissioner Cook feels we are not in a rush here, we've already said we can't get it done for next budget year. Commissioner Ducrou agrees we can't get it by then, but the decision aspect of it, you

BAYSHORE FIRE PROTECTION & RESCUE SERVICE DISTRICT  
MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING

September 17, 2013

have to go with what you have, we have 3, it is enough. Commissioner Griffin agrees that it's a shame we have to spend the money, but it is true, we have got to do something, we have got to find different avenues to generate revenue. Commissioner Cook says he just prefers to make decisions like this with 5 instead of 3. Commissioner Ducrou agrees, it is better, he entertains a motion for the \$17,500 be allocated to fund the study with Governmental Services Group to perform the research and assist with the program. Commissioner Griffin motions to proceed with the Assessment Study with Governmental Services Group to perform. Commissioner Cook seconded the motion. With no further discussion and none opposed, motion carries. Commissioner Cook asks if we are going to get the 10% off since North approved using them last night. Jeff states that if Camille will pass that information on, she is their Sr. Vice President, so it will be done. With no further discussion offered, Chairman Ducrou calls for any other old business. Chief offers that the gentleman who purchased the engine is supposed to have someone picking it up Friday. The check is supposed to be on its way. We are including some old gated Wyes we will never use that will be going to Argentina with the truck to help them out down there. With no other old business, Chairman Ducrou calls for New Business.

**New Business –**

- **Authorization to utilize Line of Credit** – Chief Nisbet requests authorization to begin utilizing the line of credit to bridge us until we begin to receive sufficient Ad Valorem revenue. Commissioner Cook motions the use of the Line of Credit. Commissioner Griffin seconded the motion. With no discussion offered and none opposed, motion carried.

**Public Input** – None, however Chief Nisbet introduces Greg Makepeace who is with the North Fort Myers Civic Assn. who is a big supporter of both Districts. Chief wanted to be sure to introduce him since he was here. The Board thanks him for attending and for his support. Mr. Makepeace wanted the Board to know that they consider Bayshore Fire District up to 31 in there area of interest for support and offers his group's assistance wherever the District might find their activity helpful. They are non political and nonpartisan.

Chairman Ducrou calls for motion to adjourn.

**Motion to Adjourn** – Motion to adjourn made by Commissioner Cook and seconded by Commissioner Griffin. With none opposed, meeting adjourned 7:57pm.