

NORTH FORT MYERS FIRE CONTROL AND RESCUE  
SERVICE DISTRICT  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

February 24, 2014

Chairman Leroy Nottingham called the North Fort Myers Fire Control and Rescue Service District Board of Commissioners to order at 5:05 p.m.

**Present were:**

Commissioners: Leroy Nottingham      Danny Ballard  
                         Michael Gatewood      Tom Mere  
                         Robert Hoke

Chief Chris Noble

Asst. Chief John Meredith      Asst. Chief David Rice

Office Manager Monique Brooks

**Absent:**              Fire Marshal Jones      Union Representative Hagie

**Invocation:**      Chief Noble

**Pledge of Allegiance:** Commissioner Gatewood

**Minutes:**    **Commissioner Ballard made a motion to accept January 27, 2014, minutes, with a correction made. Seconded by Commissioner Hoke.** Commissioner Ballard noted that under the Chiefs section – he asked if the department was going to be giving out our own Phoenix Awards, and that the response that Chief Noble gave was – Yes, and then we would get back to the Board with the details. **The motion was put to vote, and approved by the Board. All were in favor. The vote was unanimous. (1)**

**Treasurer's Report:** The January treasurers report was presented. At this time, we are 34% through the budget year, have received 90% of revenues (including cash brought forward) and have spent 40% of expenditures (less reserves). Commissioner Mere asked if we were

only 34% through the year, then why were the expenditures at 40%? Monique responded that these numbers will not always be equal to each other, and the expenditures could possibly be a little higher due to the Barrett Road expenditures. Commissioner Ballard asked if we have received our Impact Fee money for the addition at Barrett Road? Monique responded yes, we received that last budget year. There were no other questions. (2)

### **Chief's Report:**

By Chief Noble-

- Weekly reports and monthly run sheet is attached
- Barrett Road is almost 100% complete – they are installing the hood system and working on hooking up the generator
- Agreement with Lee County EMS is being worked on, in regards to the response to Alpha/Omega calls
- Our annual audit was conducted last week, in 3 days.

### **Training:**

Report is attached. Emphasis is currently on Response to Terrorism. There were no questions.

**Fire Prevention:** Report is attached. There were no questions.

**Public Education:** Report is attached. There were no questions.

**Union:** It was mentioned that the nomination for DVP for our District will be held this Thursday, February 27<sup>th</sup>.

## Old Business:

### Fire Fee Assessment –

Chief Noble stated that we have had a 40% loss in revenues, since 2007. He feels that the fire fee assessment offers a solution to this loss of revenue. The median house price in North Fort Myers is \$86,000. He handed out a scenario which shows two columns. One is 95% and the other is 90%, which represents the percentage of the proposed amount of the fire fee of \$239.00. Chief Noble feels that going with 90%, which is assessing a fee of \$215.00 per dwelling unit would be sufficient. He noted that some of our taxpayers are the biggest users of our service and pay very little. Chief Noble feels that the fire fee is a safe way to budget, because relying on ad-valorem is a gamble. He feels that we are trying to show people that we are trying to maintain our current level of service.

Commissioner Nottingham asked:

- what was the highest amount of tax paid in North Fort Myers? Chief Noble said he has no idea
- under this plan, would we have to build new houses in order to see an increase in revenues? Chief Noble responded no
- if we determined this is not enough revenue to operate, then what would we do? Chief Noble responded that we would either raise the rate, or we could go back to using ad-valorem
- how would we notify the citizens that we are assessing a fire fee? Jeff of GSG said we will probably still use the TRIM notice process. Commissioner Mere asked how we would handle the non-collections? Camille of GSG said the tax collector will still handle this process
- asked if we have spoken to the Civic Association yet? Chief Noble said we were waiting to hear from the Board before we began to educate the public.

Commissioner Hoke asked:

- Isn't this an across the board for all houses? Chief Noble said yes.

Commissioner Mere asked:

- If today's budget is 5.1 Million, and the fire fee will bring in 7.1 Million, then that would give us a 12 Million Dollar Budget?

Chief Noble stated NO, it is one or the other, you do not combine the budgets. The citizens will not pay ad-valorem taxes and a fire fee.

- Noted that property owners that rent out their properties are going to have to pass on the cost to their renters, by raising the rent, which could lead to people vacating these properties. Chief Noble added that property owners are already paying taxes, therefore, you have to factor in what you are already paying, and figure out the difference. The difference for the most part will be minimal.

Commissioner Ballard noted that he has been pushing for the implementation of a fire fee since 2007.

**Commissioner Ballard made a motion to pursue the fire fee assessment, using the rate of \$215.00 per residential dwelling unit. Commissioner Hoke seconded. The motion was put to vote, and the vote was 4-1 (Commissioner Mere voted No). Motion was approved by the Board. (3)**

Chief Noble stated we had spoke with the Elections Office today, and we have to have our resolution presented to them, with in 120 days of the election.

**Commissioner Ballard made a motion to place our referendum for the fire fee assessment, on the ballot in the Primary Election, which takes place in August. Commissioner Gatewood seconded. The motion was put to vote, and it was approved, unanimously.**

Camille of GSG said she will provide us with information on how to market the fee within the guidelines that are allowed. The Board thanked Camille and Jeff of GSG, for their work.

**New Business:**

NONE

**Commissioner Items:**

**Ballard – Commissioner Ballard made a motion to move the March 17, 2014 commission meeting, to March 24, 2014. Seconded by Commissioner Gatewood. The motion was put to vote, all were in favor, and the decision was unanimous.**

**Public Input: None**

**Community Goodwill & Thank You:**

None

**Commissioner Ballard made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Gatewood. All were in favor and it was approved by the Board, unanimously.**

Meeting adjourned at 5:57 p.m.

**Supportive Documents:**

1. January minutes
2. January Treasurers Report
3. Rate sheet from GSG