

**DESTIN FIRE CONTROL DISTRICT**  
Regular meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners  
**Main Station**  
848 Airport Road  
Destin, Florida 32541

April 12, 2016

**Minutes**

Commissioners present: Tommy Green, Rick Moore, Jack Wilson, Bob Wagner,  
and Mike Buckingham

Staff present: Chief Kevin Sasser and Division Chiefs Joe D'Agostino,  
Ron Gerdeman and Kathryn Wagner

Present: Dawn Stuntz

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Chairman Tommy Green.

**Public Comments:**

Patty DeFrenza of Destin stated she had come to the meeting because it was brought to her attention that Commissioner Buckingham had posted false accusations about her and other citizens on social media creating character assassinations. She stated she would like a retraction and a public apology from Mike Buckingham.

Patty DeFrenza stated she had contacted the Director of the Florida Ethics Division; chapter 112 part 3 of the Statue stated for someone who holds a public office and public trust an offense is an attempt to dishonor. Patty DeFrenza stated she does not have any relationship with the social media pages that he posted and is certainly not the administrator nor does she know who is which she has said multiple times. She stated to focus on her affects any credibility and prevents her from ever running for public office therefore is a violation of Florida Public Ethics. She further stated there were multiple residual effects of that post; one person was actually ambushed at a restaurant, there has been identity theft, there have been character assassinations on multiple Destin websites because of this.

Patty DeFrenza stated Mike Buckingham publicly called Rob Koenig a bad apple and he is an active firefighter. As a result of public humiliation of an active firefighter Patty DeFrenza asked Chairman Green to ask Mike Buckingham to step down as Employee Relations Commissioner and temporarily assign Mr. Wilson until Ethics reviews this. She stated you cannot publicly humiliate a firefighter and have any kind of amicable relationship with the firefighters after that.

**Review of minutes:**

The minutes for the regular meeting of March 8, 2016 were presented. Bob Wagner made a motion to approve the minutes. Jack Wilson seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**Review of the Financial Report:**

Kathryn Wagner presented the financial report for the month ended March 31, 2016. She stated we were halfway through the fiscal year and the balance sheet reflected a strong cash position as we have collected the majority of the ad valorem taxes for the current fiscal year. Accounts receivables were high at approximately \$200,000 due to the first 2 billings from the TDC for

Beach Safety. She further stated as of today accounts receivable were down to \$64,000 with 1 more TDC billing of \$61,000.

Kathryn Wagner stated liabilities and equities are in line and have been adjusted according to monthly activity. She reviewed the Revenue over Expenditures report and stated we are at 95% collection of ad valorem taxes and continue to see revenue from impact fees, plan review fees and Beach Safety. She stated the month was very quiet for expenditures with 57% remaining.

Jack Wilson asked if we should be concerned with \$500,000 of ad valorem taxes to be collected since all the tax dates have passed. Kathryn Wagner stated no and said at this time last year we were at 95% and will continue to receive small payments for the next 3 months.

Jack Wilson asked if the Okaloosa County Beach was just a timing difference. Kathryn Wagner stated yes the invoice goes out after financial statements are reviewed.

Jack Wilson asked if there were timing differences with expenditures since there were 57% remaining. He stated at this pace we would be 14% under budget. Kathryn Wagner stated yes there are timing differences such as Beach Safety which occurs during the summer months.

Jack Wilson stated everywhere he looked is coming in under budget; for example personnel services is 9% under budget. He asked if it would be 18% under budget by the end of the year. Kathryn Wagner stated it should not double but depending on negotiations some of that money may be taken from personnel services and go into training. She further stated because of not receiving the SAFER grant we have not hired employees that were budgeted which will result in a positive in that category.

Bob Wagner made a motion to approve the financial statements for March 31, 2016. Mike Buckingham seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Old Business:**

#### **1. Planning Project**

Chief Sasser stated he had met with Richard Harp, who had asked quite a few questions regarding the District and requested some documents. Chief Sasser stated Mr. Harp would meet with his ISP group and coordinate a meeting with our group.

#### **2. Response services at the west-end of District**

Mike Buckingham stated he had reached out to Mark Smith of Ten-8 to work on some pricing for smaller fire trucks for the west-end. He stated the community seems to be asking for faster service, quicker service, better response and what we are trying to do to is see what we could do to put something on the west-end of town.

Mike Buckingham stated he had spoken to Sheriff Ashley and they have offered to allow us to go back over to the bay and put a fire truck over in the west-end. He had asked a partner of his to get a price on building out a bunk room because he didn't think it was fair to reach out to other contractors at this time to work up prices knowing that his partner was not going to be doing this job because of his position, but give us a good number to give us an idea of where we need to be. He stated the Sheriff's Department made it clear they would love to see us over there and in return maybe allow an outpost for the Sheriff's Department in Station 10.

Mike Buckingham stated he would bring that idea to the Board and had spoken to Chief Sasser and thought that might not be a bad idea. He stated while in Wisconsin receiving Engine 9 he had gone into depth finding a smaller truck that would be able to go down some of the longer driveways in Destin, while using the Ladder truck to pump through the smaller truck if needed. He stated the preliminary estimate for a rescue truck and remodeling would be around \$250,000.

Rick Moore asked how the truck and station would be manned. Mike Buckingham stated he wanted to bring the cost estimate to the Board and Chief Sasser would be able to take care of the manning, however he does not have a problem, if we need more manpower, going back to the public to ask for what we need if the public wants more services on the west-end.

Rick Moore asked if he was talking about a referendum. Mike Buckingham stated yes.

Jack Wilson asked if this had incremental capacity, if it could be done with impact fees. Tommy Green stated yes. Jack Wilson stated it has been a struggle to figure out what to use impact fees for. Rick Moore stated the issue would be maintaining it. Jack Wilson stated the Board needed to take hard look at what this would do from a manning standpoint.

Tommy Green stated this should be a high priority for the District because of response times on the west-end of the District and would not like to do it overnight but make it a part of the five year plan.

Bob Wagner stated including it into the five year would give the public more information.

Rick Moore asked how much money is in impact fees. Chief Sasser stated a little over \$900,000 and Mr. Wilson was correct this would be an expansion of services.

Mike Buckingham stated maybe sometime in the future we can purchase 2 smaller vehicles to put 1 on the east-end in order to get into some of the tighter condominium locations.

Tommy Green stated he would like to see the District take the right steps.

## 2. Public Records Policy

Chief Sasser stated after implementing the public records policy it seems we are able to handle the requests. He stated he would like to keep an eye on it but not necessarily fill the position at this time.

Jack Wilson asked how many requests are pending. Kathryn Wagner stated zero.

## 3. Proposed Dates for 2016 Budget Workshops

Kathryn Wagner stated we are proposing incorporating the budgeting process into the regular commissioner meetings this year instead of having special budget meetings. She stated they would be added to the agenda July 12, 2016 and August 9, 2016 with an additional meeting August 23, 2016 if needed. The Tentative Budget Hearing September 13, 2016 and the Final Budget Hearing September 21, 2016 are required for the TRIM process. She further stated all meetings have been reviewed against the School Board, the City of Destin and the Okaloosa County Board of Commissioners. While these meetings do not have to be voted on the September 13<sup>th</sup> meeting needs to be set by June since it is advertised through the TRIM process.

Jack Wilson stated he would not be available for the August 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting.

**Chief Reports:**

1. Beach Safety report

Joe D'Agostino stated they have been on the beach a little over a month and with Easter coming early attendance was up 30,000 and an average of 1 rescue a day.

Rick Moore asked if the rescues were happening in a particular zone. Joe D'Agostino stated no, all across the board from Capt. Dave's to Holiday Isle with 1 in the State Park.

2. Training report

Chief Sasser stated facilities training took place in Hurlburt again along with some Pre Plans/Company Surveys and SCBA Air Consumption totaling 21 hours of training for the month.

3. Inspection report

Ron Gerdeman stated nothing to report but would answer any questions.

Rick Moore asked what was going into the old Winn Dixie building. Ron Gerdeman stated he did not know. Rick Moore asked if they were doing work in there. Mike Buckingham stated the façade fell down.

4. Response Change report

Chief Sasser stated response times were 86% with the County at 67% and zone 1 remains the hot zone. He further stated by adding another station it would assist in improving response times.

Rick Moore asked how many calls come from Harbor Walk. Chief Sasser stated he would have to pull up the address and count the calls, but quite a few.

Jack Wilson asked if there was an issue responding to the accident on Highway 98 in front of the Destin Log building. Chief Sasser stated none that he is aware of.

Jack Wilson stated he had received a call from an individual that was one of the first guys at the car to try and open the door while his companion called 911 and it took 18 minutes for our truck to get there. He stated his answer to him was we do not leave until we are dispatched. Jack Wilson asked when we are looking at 8 minute response times how are we measuring that; when we are dispatched by the County. Chief Sasser stated yes, not when the 911 call originally comes in, although there are time requirements there, but when we are dispatched.

5. Overtime report

Chief Sasser stated it was a quiet month with 1 24 hour incident, a couple of 1 hour and 2 9 hours.

**New Business:**

1. Resolution 16-03- Declare Beach Safety UTV Obsolete

Chief Sasser stated these are 2 vehicles that we have had for quite some time and require quite a bit of maintenance to use. He recommended the Board declare them obsolete and either sell or donate them.

Mike Buckingham asked what they are worth. Chief Sasser estimated \$1500.

Bob Wagner made a motion to adopt resolution 16-03. Rick Moore seconded.

Mike Buckingham asked if it would be best to leave it up to Chief Sasser to decide if there was a district somewhere around our area that could use those vehicles that we could donate to; would that be better for us

Bob Wagner stated we should try to sell them first then look into donating.

Rick Moore stated we could not get a minimum bid then possibly donate them.

Tommy Green stated the option to donate them is in the resolution, but it does not state a minimum bid. Rick Moore stated he would like to set a minimum bid.

Bob Wagner amended his motion to set a minimum bid of \$1000. Mike Buckingham stated if we cannot get the minimum bid then he would like to see another fire department get it. Rick Moore seconded.

Jack Wilson stated he has problem with donating to other districts because our taxpayers have paid for this and we should sell the vehicles. He stated we are not in the donation business. Mike Buckingham stated Jack Wilson had a point.

The motion passed unanimously.

## 2. Investment of Funds

Kathryn Wagner stated a Request for Proposals went out for CDs with 1 bid coming back. She stated Trustmark provided 7 options of investment and it was her recommendation we do not invest in CDs, since there was only one option that garners a better return than the short term bond fund and that would be locked down for 5 years. She further stated if the funds needed to be accessed before 5 years there would be 1% penalty. Kathryn Wagner stated the difference between investing the funds into CDs for 5 years and the short term bond fund would be \$2,000 so she did not recommend investing in CDs.

Jack Wilson stated he strongly agreed with her recommendation.

Tommy Green stated we needed to access the money without a penalty.

Bob Wagner made a motion to invest in the government trust fund. Rick Moore seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

## 3. Purchase of Equipment for Fire Truck

Chief Sasser stated a Request for Proposals went out for equipment for the new fire truck with 1 coming back. He stated it is under the budgeted amount not including a cutter/spreader. He stated if the Board awards the bid from Ten-8 that they allow us to purchase this piece of equipment from an authorized dealer. Kathryn Wagner stated it was number 69 on the bid.

Jack Wilson asked if the total cost would be this bid plus the cost of the cutter/spreader. Chief Sasser stated yes, but the bid would also be minus the cost listed for that equipment.

Jack Wilson asked if the \$59,000 included the item or not. Chief Sasser stated yes.

Tommy Green stated he thought the total budget was \$67,000 but he understood this bid to be just for equipment and not installation.

Mike Buckingham asked the cost of installation. Chief Sasser it would not come close to capping out the budget.

Rick Moore asked if we had an estimate. Chief Sasser stated \$2,000.

Mike Buckingham made a motion to accept the bid. Jack Wilson seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**Next meeting:**

Tommy Green reminded the Board that the next regular meeting will be May 10, 2016 at 5:30 p.m.

Mike Buckingham stated he would like the meetings videotaped since some of the guys work two or three jobs and don't have time to come in here and listen to what we have to say. He thinks if the guys could go at a later date and be able to watch what we are saying here they might think a little bit different of what is going on verses what they are hearing. He stated there are still a couple of guys out there that are still having a hard time believing they have traded their 20 and out for their pay, they still believe we owe them the money.

Mike Buckingham stated he would like to see some estimated costs to have the meetings videotaped and add this to the agenda for the next meeting.

Chief Sasser stated he had done some research and to utilize the same software, the same company and purchase a few cameras would cost around \$1,500.

Tommy Green asked if that was a onetime cost. Chief Sasser stated yes.

Jack Wilson asked if we knew what the City uses to tape their meetings. He further asked what happens to the City Council chambers on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of every month. He suggested meeting over there and use their equipment.

Mike Buckingham stated a Blues and BBQ fundraiser benefitting charities chosen by Destin Fire and the Sheriff's Office will take place May 20, 2016 4pm-9pm.

Mike Landis stated the department is also participating in Relay for Life that day.

Mike Buckingham stated the issue with Rob Koenig was an issue between them and they have taken care of it and are happy with the outcome. He stated for the record they have taken care of it and does not think the Public should be involved.

John Harvey stated filming the meeting would not allow comments to be deleted from the minutes.

Mike Buckingham stated they cannot be taken out of the recordings now.

John Harvey stated they can and they are. He stated in the November meeting some of his remarks were taken out of the minutes.

Tommy Green stated the minutes are not done verbatim.

Mike Buckingham stated they are on the recordings; they may not be in the minutes.

John Harvey stated the minutes are the legal document.

Mike Buckingham stated he would like the videos so there will be no guessing.

John Harvey agreed.

Patty DeFrenza stated Mike Buckingham made it a Public issue when he publically posted on social media including her name. She stated she is astonished at Mr. Wilson's statement of an 18 minute response time with Crystal Beach and 98 accident where there were multiple trauma patients being that there was a fire station 2 blocks away. Patty DeFrenza asked if Mr. Wilson knew what the national standard for response time was.

Jack Wilson stated the individual told him that was how long the he thought it took. He stated someone knows when the call came in, someone knows when we were dispatched, someone knows when we were on scene, and these are things we can find out.

Patty DeFrenza stated the national average is 8 minutes and with a station 2 blocks away with multiple trauma patients. She stated it says Destin Fire Rescue; there are less than 25 structure fires a year and you want to put another Sheriff at Station 10 and another truck for less than 25 structure fires when there are thousands of EMS calls. Patty DeFrenza asked do you want to be laying in the street with them pulling up with an engine or do you want them pulling up with an ambulance putting you inside starting advanced life support and getting you to the hospital.

Jack Wilson stated he would like Okaloosa EMS to show up in under 8 minutes.

Patty DeFrenza asked why not put an EMS ambulance at station 10 with the sheriff with 2 paramedics and 2 at station 9 that gives you 4 which is what is required for the American Heart Association for advance life support. Jack Wilson stated she would have to talk to the County Commissioners.

Mike Buckingham stated we do not disagree with anything you are saying, but that is the County not us.

Patty DeFrenza stated you are asking to put the Sheriff over there. That is the County not Destin.

Mike Buckingham stated we are not going through the County we are going through the Sheriff's Department, it is different.

Jack Wilson stated this is why we are doing a strategic overview before we drive a financial plan. We are willing to reassess what the Commission is. Jack Wilson asked what does rescue mean anymore, what does fire mean, what does ALS mean, what is our role verses the county, how does beach fit in. He stated let's make sure we have that right before we go solving all the issues. As you heard tonight, let's not go buy another response vehicle until we know exactly what the Commission is trying to accomplish.

Patty DeFrenza stated you know you run thousands of EMS calls so life safety is a priority and fire and EMS so let's get people's lives saved, please.

Jack Wilson stated a large portion of his taxes go to the County so he looks to the County to please do your job, we are glad to help when you need us.

Patty DeFrenza asked can you exercise maybe putting a bay over there for the paramedics or maybe even letting them park their ambulance and the 2 paramedics with the Sheriff at 10 so all of us at the East-end have some immediate response.

Mike Buckingham stated he is working hard on that, not just in the west-end and the center of Destin, but at the east-end too. He stated he did not want to bring it all out tonight because he does not have an answer yet, but he is listening and is trying.

Mike Buckingham asked Patty DeFrenza to keep asking the County maybe they will do something for us. Patty DeFrenza stated she had written a letter to the new EMC Director; they still only have 1 paramedic and 1 EMT on board.

Patty DeFrenza asked to put on the next agenda to restore automatic response until you have this figured out and make the County put an ambulance at station 10. Mike Buckingham stated he could not make them do anything, but he is trying.

Jack Wilson stated he had been working with the Chief for 2 years now to go at the whole EMS issue with the County. He stated the reason the County has what they have in Destin is because of all the ALS we have done in the past and they did not have to put anything here. He stated they had pushed the Chief to back off and let the County ask us when they need help since it is their primary job. He stated the disconnect with our taxpayers is they want us to show up with ALS, but we can't have any money to do it. He stated all the money goes to the County.

Patty DeFrenza stated that is why she wants to take it away from the County and put it back in the Destin district. Jack Wilson stated we cannot take it away from the County.

Tommy Green stated a fire district in South Florida tried to take ambulances away from the county. He stated the county said no, so they sued the county, but the judge came back and ruled that the county does not have to let them do it. He further stated the county holds the power and they have to provide us with a certificate of need.

Patty DeFrenza asked how South Walton was able to get one. Mike Buckingham stated their county did not want to do ambulances.



Patty DeFrenza stated they took the vote to the public, it is called public relations. She further stated our referendum would have passed if there were proper public relations. Chief Sasser stated that is not how it went. Patty DeFrenza stated someone said the taxes were going up 3.75% and that was not what was going to occur.

Tommy Green stated it was just like the 18 minute response time, someone said it so everyone believed it.

Mike Buckingham stated that was why he wanted the meetings videoed because no one said taxes were going to 3.75 % and no one said it took 18 minutes what he said was he was told it was up to or may be 18 minutes; I said it was the ability to go up to 3.75%. He stated it needs to be videoed so the guys and the public know what we are talking about so there is no question.

**Adjournment:**

With no additional business to be discussed, the meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.