

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

December 10, 2013

Minutes

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

Absent: Hillary Anderson

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

Present: Dawn Stuntz

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

Review of the minutes:

Minutes for the regular meeting of November 12, 2013, were presented. Mike Buckingham asked that a revision be made to the minutes regarding his illustration of the total personnel cost as being \$110,677.95 average per employee as it included the salary and benefits package. Jack Wilson asked that the minutes also include that no vote was taken regarding the Government Services Group study and the issue was tabled. Rick Moore made a motion to approve the minutes. Jack Wilson seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Review of the financial report:

The financial report for the month ended November 30, 2013, were presented. Kathryn Wagner stated that report is in line for the two months of the new fiscal year. Cash in the checking account at the end of November was \$1.5 million and should be at its lowest point as ad valorem funds are now being received. Accounts receivables are low and prepaid expenses have been adjusted. Jack Wilson made a motion to approve the report. Rick Moore seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Old Business:

1. Revenue generation options

Chief Sasser stated that at the previous month's meeting, discussion was held regarding the approximate budget shortfall for the next fiscal year. He stated that it is anticipated the District will realize \$653,000 less in receivables. He explained that this amount is based on assumptions of increasing insurance premiums and property values. Previous fiscal years' audited records were reviewed as unassigned funds have been utilized in the past to balance the budget.

Kathryn Wagner stated the fiscal year 2012-13 records are currently being audited and no adjustments will need to be made. Comparing that audit to the projected reserve balance that was presented in May revealed a discrepancy in the projected reserve balance due to non-cash depreciation and non-cash accruals. This resulted in the unassigned reserves being understated. Approximately \$677,000 in unassigned funds is projected at this time to be available at the end of the current fiscal year and will be able to offset any shortfall of the 2014-15 fiscal year.

She gave a summary of how information was determined for the projected 2014-15 budget. An inflation factor was included and a medical insurance adjustment was substantially due to the Affordable Care Act having a negative effect on the premiums. Some expenses, such as wages and office expense, will be able to hold. She anticipates a millage rate of 1.15 would be needed to balance the budget. A property tax revenue increase was assumed at 1.5%. She stated that the total expected expenditures are estimated to be \$5,955,000, and does not include any inflation for the Beach Safety Division as its expenses are offset by its income.

Mike Buckingham asked if the reserves would cover most of the budget. Kathryn Wagner stated that the revenue generated along with making up the difference of the \$653,000 deficit with reserves would cover the anticipated budget. The reserves at the end of the 2014-15 fiscal year would be around \$20,000.

Tommy Green stated that this information would not force the Board into making a hurried decision to be on the March ballot or have another special referendum. The Board could consider posing it to the taxpayers in the November 2014 election.

Further discussion on the proposed remaining reserves of \$20,000, the timing of going before the tax payers for an increase in revenue, and the services the District provides was held.

Rick Moore asked that Chief Sasser bring before the Commission areas of service where cuts or reductions could be made.

Jack Wilson stated that given the very odd geography of our district we ought to be doing EMS and we should be getting paid for it. This would make a huge difference with this budget and what we ask our taxpayers to pay, and they already pay for it but they don't get it. There needs to be a creative answer to this but it is not us keep beating our budget up, keep trying to cut costs, or going to our taxpayers and asking them to pay more. Let's get the pot right for what our citizens are already paying for.

Jack Wilson proposes that we are here and we are capable. If the County can respond and meet their obligations then why should we show up too? If the County can't respond they should let us know and we will go. The should ask us to go. We should keep track of how many calls they ask us to go on, on their behalf, and we should get paid for it.

Chief Sasser stated that the Board could make the decision on what calls to respond to and the District will follow the proper procedures to make this happen.

Mike Buckingham asked if we have the ability to tell them to call us if they can't make it in time. Chief Sasser stated yes.

Jack Wilson stated that this has been around for a very long time and we have done almost everything really, really well. We have built capability, built a response, built a confidence in our taxpayers. We have done everything except get paid for it.

Chief Sasser would like the opportunity to discuss with the Safety Director and County Administrator and let them know the Boards thoughts and possible direction the Board is looking to take the fire department.

Further discussion on having a referendum in March or November was held and the effect it will have on reserves if the Commission waits until November. Kathryn stated that at the last Board of Commissioners meeting the Commission was told that the Supervisor of Elections office provided a time frame to have the whole verbiage of the referendum to them, which was by Friday, December 13th, if we wanted to have this in March. The problem now is this is not an agenda item tonight.

Public comment from Bob Wagner, Mr. Wilson was on right track with EMS having them pay for it now because \$20,000 is not going to cut it. You need to do something now.

Claude Newland asked about percentages used to determine estimated budget. He agreed that the District needed to go to the County and asked if Chief Sasser should go alone or if the Commission should go with him. Mr. Newland asked does 1.15 restore the \$650,000 reserve. Kathryn Wagner stated no. There would be no reserve built in for unassigned reserve. Chief Sasser stated that if property values continue to increase that over time the additional revenue could be put aside to help rebuild the reserve. If the referendum passed and we were able to institute it in time for the 14/15 year then the reserve of \$650,000 would remain at the end of the year.

Rodney Syfrett stated the soonest we could get a referendum would be November.

Rick Moore asked the cost to do a special referendum. Kathryn Wagner stated this past one was just over \$8,000.

Further discussion regarding what the millage rate should be was held.

Jack Wilson asked if there was any flexibility with the Supervisor of Election. Kathryn Wagner stated she would check with them the following day.

Tommy Green asked what it would cost to get on the ballot in March. Kathryn Wagner stated the cost would be \$6,000 to \$6,500 as we would split the cost with the City and then pay for additional advertising and additional precinct costs.

2. GSG Study

Chief Sasser stated that he spoke with GSG regarding the cost of the new study. The cost was firm and will remain at \$19,500.

3. Interlocal Agreement with the City of Destin

Chief Sasser stated that we are still working on loose ends. The City Manager plans to present this agreement to the City Council this Monday.

Motion to approve Interlocal Agreement for Beach Safety and Lifeguard Services with the City of Destin was made by Mike Buckingham. Rick Moore seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Chief Reports:

1. Beach Safety update

Joe D'Agostino stated that winter work is being done.

2. Training report

Chief Sasser stated that each shift received 28 hours of training in November.

3. Inspection report

Ron Gerdeman presented the November inspection report. He stated a lot of big projects which are not moving.

4. Paramedic report

Phil Metz stated that November's call volume was the busiest November ever.

5. Overtime report

Chief Sasser presented the November overtime report which reflected \$11,693.63 paid in wages primarily due to illness.

Rick Moore stated that we are at \$11,693 on a \$15,000 budget and asked what do we do now. Chief Sasser stated now comp time is earned. Rick Moore stated maybe we need to look at manning.

New Business:

1. Re-Appoint Trustees to Destin Firefighters' Retirement Trust Fund

Chief Sasser asked the Commissioner to re-appoint Bob Hensley to the Destin Firefighters' Retirement Trust Fund. Bob has been on the board for 4 years now and has a ton of experience for this position. Chief Sasser stated that Bob Hensley has expressed interest in still remaining on the Board.

Motion made by Mike Buckingham to re-appoint Bob Hensley to the Destin Firefighters' Retirement Trust Fund. Rick Moore seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Approval of regular meeting dates and times for 2014

Chief Sasser proposed the same meeting schedule of the second Tuesday of each month at 5:30 pm at 848 Airport Road.

Mike Buckingham made a motion to keep the Commission meeting the same date, time, location. Rick Moore seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Public Comments:

The floor was opened for public comments.

Claude Newland, 4033 Indian Trail, asked if the Board has an annual calendar it follows as guidance. He stated that missing the deadline for the City Ballot in March is huge.

Next Meeting:

Tommy Green stated that the next regular meeting of the Commissioners would be on January 14, 2014 at 5:30pm.

Adjournment:

With no further business to be addressed, the meeting adjourned at 6:47 p.m.