

**Matlacha/Pine Island Fire Control District
Minutes for Regular Commissioners Board Meeting
February 22, 2023**

Call to Order: Commissioner Player called the meeting to order at 5:00p.m.

Invocation: Commissioner DeLacey led everyone in the invocation.

Pledge of Allegiance: Commissioner Player led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call: Commissioner Player, Cammick, Hernandez, Price and DeLacey were present. Chief Mickuleit, Assistant Chief Davis, Assistant Chief Allen, Administrative Assistant Miles, Accountant Renee Lynch and Attorney Sarah Spector were present.

Ila Valcarcel, Kenneth Honc, Gordon Short, John Pine, Maureen Burges, Leo Amos, Kathy Wineburger, Amy, and Brad, among other unnamed members of the public.

Setting of Agenda: No changes to the agenda as presented. **Commissioner Cammick moved to approve the agenda as presented. Motion seconded by Commissioner Hernandez. Motion passed unanimously.**

Approval of Minutes:

1. January 23, 2023, Workshop Meeting Minutes **Commissioner Price moved to accept the minutes as presented. Motion seconded by Commissioner DeLacey. Motion passed unanimously.**
2. January 25, 2023, Regular Meeting Minutes **Commissioner Cammick moved to accept the minutes as presented. Motion seconded by Commissioner Price. Motion passed unanimously.**

Treasurer's Report: 1/21/23 – 2/17/23 Presented by **Commissioner Cammick. Commissioner Hernandez moved to accept the Treasurers Report as presented. Motion seconded by Commissioner DeLacey. Motion passed unanimously.**

Leo Amos had a question about the financial impact that the hurricane had on the District. Renee answered that she will cover that in her report next. Ila Valcarcel had a question about the insurance proceeds. Those proceeds are from damages sustained from the storm.

Cash Disbursements: 1/21/23 – 2/17/23 Presented by Commissioner Cammick. **Commissioner DeLacey moved to accept the cash disbursements as presented. Motion seconded by Commissioner Cammick. Motion passed unanimously.**

Ila Valcarcel asked about the large amount paid to Waste Pro for dumpster rental. Chief explained that a dumpster was rented shortly after the storm to keep up with all the different agencies housed at Station 1. This dumpster has since been removed and this was the last invoice related to it.

Accountants Compilation Report: Accountant Renee Lynch presented the month end report for January 31, 2023, **Commissioner Cammick moved to accept Accountants Compilation Reports. Motion seconded by Commissioner Hernandez. Motion passed unanimously.** Leo Amos asked what kind of financial impact the hurricane had on the District. Renee responded that to date, there have been approximately \$500,000 spent related to Hurricane Ian. Some of which has been reimbursed by insurance and the remaining are expenses coverable by FEMA. Leo additionally asked why the District held so much in reserves if everything was being covered by insurance and FEMA? Maureen Burgess asked about how much we have received from insurance. Chief explained that insurance has actually paid us up front for all of the damages claimed, over \$1 million total.

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Commissioners' Expenses: None.

Guest Speakers: None.

Public Comment:

Leo Amos: Asked the Board what statute they were using to determine that the board members are even authorized to give themselves insurance? He does not see that anywhere in the statutes related to fire districts.

Kenneth Honc: Believes that board members would be considered personnel and therefore have every right to the District's health insurance.

Ila Valcarcel: Shares her opinion that the board positions should be voluntary. She stated that when she ran for the Board, her intent was never to benefit personally from the position.

Gordon Short: Believes that spending the District's money on health insurance for the Board is a nefarious use of public funds. As well as a conflict of interest, since the Board would be essentially choosing their own health insurance. Additionally, he commented that he feels the District currently has absurd cash flows and encourages a reduction in the future.

Maureen Burgess: Feels that this decision has a major budgetary effect and feels that it should be something that the public gets to vote on.

John Pine: Strongly disagrees with providing the board members with health insurance. He feels that there are much more important things that the money can be spent on.

Amy: Disagrees with board member health insurance.

Kathy Wineburger: Disagrees with board member health insurance.

Brad: Believes that the budget is outrageous and that the board approving health insurance for themselves is greedy.

Jenny Olsen: Chief Mickuleit received an email prior to tonight's meeting from Mrs. Olsen and asked Commissioner Player to read it aloud. Mrs. Olsen is in favor of providing the Board with health insurance, she believes that it would encourage more interest in the board.

Firefighters: None.

Union: None.

Old Business:

1. **Station 2 land acquisition:** BOCC approved the rezoning and the plan is to close next week.
2. **Annexation Update:** Attorney Sarah Spector gave a brief update, given the recent termination of the city manager they are going to have to meet again with the interim city manager and will get back to us once they have met.
3. **Hurricane Restoration Update:** Assistant Chief Allen explained to the board that administration is working with a different branch of FEMA on a community disaster loan. FEMA is currently performing a review of prior and future year's financials and will determine what the district qualifies for. This loan can only be used for operating expenses and historically has been forgiven. Assistant Chief Allen also updated on the repair status of Station 1 and 3. Ila Valcarcel asked if Commissioner Hernandez has been able to help with any of FEMA since appointed. Commissioner Hernandez explained that he is apart of the urban search and rescue branch of FEMA, not the public assistance side. Gordon Short asked why the district was pursuing the CDL loan when there is still plenty of money in reserves. Chief Mickuleit explained that the funds would only be pulled from if they were necessary, and it just gives the district an additional avenue if needed.

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4. Board Member Health Insurance: Commissioner Player opens the discussion. Attorney Sarah Spector presents to the board, a memo discussing the legal authority provided in the statutes allowing the board to opt in for health insurance.

Commissioner DeLacey explains her point of view. She feels that this board is our community's front line and voice for local and state government. If the community wants someone in the position that will work their hardest on behalf of the community, it is only fair to compensate them.

Commissioner Price feels that trying to attract future board members by compensating them sends the wrong message. There is a reason that only one other fire district in the county offers insurance to their board members. This has always been a volunteer position and should stay that way.

Commissioner Cammick begins by stating that he believes that it is fair to offer health insurance to the commissioners. However, per the statute, the district does not have to pay 100% of the cost and maybe it should be considered to pay only a small percentage, so that we are able to offer it.

Commissioner Hernandez feels that with everything the community has gone through in the past 6 months, right now is not the time to consider this. There are concerns with current and future tax revenues and this is not something that is necessary at the moment.

Commissioner Player agreed with Commissioner Hernandez, this is not the time to be considering this. Maybe in a few years once everyone has had the opportunity to bounce back, we can consider it again.

Commissioner DeLacey pointed out the over the years there have been quite a few board members who have resigned midterm and maybe if they were receiving something for their efforts they would have stayed.

Ila Valcarcel pointed out that the increase in expense that this decision would make could in turn cause the milage to increase, which she is very much against.

Commissioner DeLacey brought up Upper Captiva Fire District, who recently had a mass exodus, related to the Commissioners voted in. Having more people interested in the future positions would only help keep out those that could cause problems.

John Pine feels that there are so many other things that the district should be focusing funds on.

Commissioner Cammick moved to approve the purchasing of health insurance for commissioners. Motion seconded by Commissioner Hernandez. Roll call vote was taken.

Price: no

DeLacey: yes

Player: no

Hernandez: no

Cammick: no

Chief's Report:

- Crews responded to a structure fire recently. Thankfully the occupants were alerted by a smoke detector and were able to get out safely.
- We have also had a couple brush fires in the last month as well.

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- The county is performing an impact fee study to determine if impact fees need to be increased for new construction in the county.
- A new website is currently being designed. We found a company that specializes in special districts and is very reasonably priced.
Brad asked about call volume and why it couldn't be found on the website. Chief showed him where it can be found. Additionally, he asked if it was possible to get email reminders of the board meetings, since that information was readily available. Chief also explained that all the meeting dates through September 2023 were posted on our website and we can look into an email list.
- We participated in Valentine's Day with the elementary school and day care.
- Bunker gear is in the process of being ordered and a check is coming from the Gary Sinise foundation to cover \$150,000 of it.
- Dr. Abo held an in-service last week that went well.
- We have begun ride time for our paramedic certified employees. They are getting the opportunity to ride with EMS for additional experience.
- Assistant Chief Davis gave a report on calls for the month of January.

Public Comment: Kathy Wineburger thanked the staff and board for all that they do for our community!

Good of the District: Ila Valcarcel mentioned that she has been working with the debris removal companies to get the mulch delivered to local farms on the island instead of it all being taken off island. Commissioner Player mentioned that the Playhouse will have their next show (The Miracle Worker) will be the second and third weekend in March. Commissioner DeLacey mentioned that the Get Perked coffee trailer has offered to provide food and drink to the personnel on a fire scene if needed.

Adjournment:

**Commissioner DeLacey moved to adjourn. Motion seconded by Commissioner Cammick.
Motion passed unanimously.
Meeting adjourned.**

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah Miles
District Administrative Assistant

Board Secretary