

**WEST MANATEE FIRE & RESCUE DISTRICT COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING**

*Minutes of February 21, 2023
Administration Building*

The meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m. with the following members present: Larry Jennis, Robert Bennett, Billy Burke and Derrick Warner. The Pledge of Allegiance was followed by a moment of silence and the oath.

CHANGES TO AGENDA: None

PUBLIC COMMENTS: None

CONSENT AGENDA: Commissioner Warner motioned to approve consent agenda as presented; seconded by Commissioner Jennis; motion passed unanimously.

COMMUNICATIONS: None

CARRIED FROM CONSENT AGENDA: None

OLD BUSINESS:

- A. Short Term Vacation Rentals: Fire Marshal Kwiatkowski gave an update on recent meetings and articles regarding short term vacation rentals. Of those, he spoke to vacation rental owners and property managers at Holmes Beach City Hall and met with the VP of Advocacy and Member Programs with the Realty Association of Sarasota/Manatee. The January 24th edition of Fireside Chats in the AMI Sun and an article titled "Vacation Rentals and Your Responsibility" in the February edition of Florida Fire Service Magazine have both been published with key information for consumers on this topic. In anticipation of the extra inspections, Fire Marshal Kwiatkowski stated that Staff is requesting permission to advertise for an Inspector and Administrative position. Commissioner Warner explained that he attended the Holmes Beach meeting and saw strong support from the audience. Chairman Bennett mentioned the interactions he saw where realtors were concerned about the jump in percentage, however, most are in favor and agree that this is the right thing to do, and we are obligated to do so by statute. Commissioner Warner motioned to approve Staff to advertise the Inspector and Administrative positions; seconded by Commissioner Burke; motion passed unanimously.
- B. Banking and Investments: Commissioner Burke provided an update on the interest the District has earned on the funds that were approved in the last meeting. The funds have earned \$20,000 which is 4.6% in the FL Class account versus .0285% in the Hancock Whitney account. Commissioner Burke then went on to speak about the Retirement Committee regarding the District's 457, Roth IRA, and 401A plans and the committee involvement in the decision to move forward with a new provider. After meeting with representatives from Edward Jones and Nationwide, the Committees recommendation is to move forward with Edward Jones. This decision was made based on Edward Jones' lower and more transparent fees as well as more user-friendly tools that will benefit the District's personnel and give them more control. Edward Jones also offers consulting services for WMFR employees with no extra fees. Commissioner Burke motioned to approve Staff to enter a contract with Edward Jones for the District's 457, Roth, and 401A plans; seconded by Commissioner Jennis; motion passed unanimously. Discussion followed where the Board agreed that this will be a great tool for Rookies all the way to Chiefs. Deputy Chief Johnson thanked Commissioner Burke for being a part of the committee and thanked the Board for their support. Deputy Chief Johnson also reiterated the Banking portion stating that historically and looking ahead, we projected to earn \$10,000 for the whole year with Hancock Whitney yet have already made \$20,000 in interest with FL Class in just the short time since we transferred funds.
- C. Hurricane Ian Property Damage: Chairman Bennett gave an update on the status of the Districts' meetings and claims with FEMA. He mentioned that 2 site inspections have been completed and roof damages are over 25% which means we are eligible for replacement to current code or above that. Chairman Bennett stated we are working with them as well as the state to get as much reimbursement as we can from Hurricane Ian damages and deployments. This could take months or years to receive.

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NEW BUSINESS:

- A. Strategic Plan: Chairman Bennett stated that our current Strategic Plan ends this year, so we are looking forward to the next one. He is seeking Board member involvement and a committee for this matter. Chairman Bennett suggested Commissioner Bishop given his tenure on the Board. This will be place on Old Business since Commissioner Bishop was not present to accept. Commissioner Jennis volunteered to be on this committee if Commissioner Bishop does not accept.
- B. Administrative Building Property: Chairman Bennett stated this was placed in New Business by Commissioner Bishop's recommendation during the last meeting. The current building cannot be expanded in any way. If and when administrative staff outgrows the current space, the District will need to consider building in the parking lot area. Chairman Bennett sidelined this matter until the March Board meeting.
- C. Pension Board Appointment: Deputy Chief Johnson stated that in the last Pension Board meeting, the Board re-elected the at large member, Scott Ricci. Deputy Chief Johnson stated that Staff recommends that the WMFR Board of Commissioners ratify this re-election. Commissioner Jennis motioned to approve the re-election of Scott Ricci to the West Manatee Fire & Rescue District Firefighters' Retirement Pension Board; seconded by Commissioner Warner; motion passed unanimously.

CHIEF'S REPORT: Deputy Chief Johnson and Fire Kwiatkowski thanked the Board for their participation in recent committees.

OTHER REPORTS: Administrative Assistant Wright reminded the board that 2022 Form 1s (Financial Disclosures) are due by July 1st and will still be submitted on paper this year. The form should be mailed to each commissioner or AA Wright can print them out. They can deliver them to the Manatee County Supervisor of Elections or WMFR can submit them.

COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS: Commissioner Warner stated he is happy with what the Board is doing and looks forward to improving more practices in the future. Chairman Bennett thanked the staff for their work regarding all the Old Business topics.

NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, March 21, 2023, at 6:00 p.m. at Administration building.

ADJOURNMENT: Chairman Bennett adjourned the meeting at 6:22 p.m.



Chairman



Secretary

