

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

*Minutes of February 20, 2024  
Administration Building*

Special Presentations: William Thomas was recognized for his promotion to 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Firefighter Paramedic. William Bowen was recognized for 20 Years of Service.

The meeting was called to order at 6:12 p.m. with the following members present: Robert Bennett, Larry Jennis, David Bishop, Derrick Warner, and Billy Burke. The Pledge of Allegiance was followed by a moment of silence and the oath.

**CHANGES TO AGENDA:** None

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:** None

**CONSENT AGENDA:** Commissioner Bishop motioned to approve the Consent Agenda as presented; seconded by Commissioner Burke; motion passed unanimously.

**COMMUNICATIONS:** None

**CARRIED FROM CONSENT AGENDA:** None

**OLD BUSINESS:**

A. Transient Public Lodging Establishments (TPLE): Fire Marshal (FM) Kwiatkowski stated that 100 TPLE inspections have been completed since last meeting. FM Kwiatkowski also stated that he has a meeting scheduled with a large property management group to work on bulk inspections.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

A. 2023 Annual Report: Captain Bill summarized the annual report. Capt. Bill went into detail about the increasing call volumes, the types of incidents WMFR personnel faced in 2023, and explained the heat maps showing high response areas. Capt. Bill spoke on the benefits that came from the Training division highlighting Handtevy and Blake Hospital Trauma rounds. Capt. Bill then went over the Bureau of Fire & Life Safety's portion focusing on public education, their constant efforts that result in less fire alarm calls and increased compliance, and the safety of the community and WMFR personnel. Chief Rigney then requested approval of the report. Commissioner Burke motioned to approve the 2023 Annual Report; seconded by Commissioner Jennis; motion passed unanimously.

B. Banking and Investments: Commissioner Burke stated that his goal is to make more money with the money we currently have. Commissioner Burke referenced back to when \$2 million was moved from the Hancock Whitney account to FLClass in the beginning of 2023. Commissioner Bishop asked what money Commissioner Burke was referring to which he responded the cash account. Commissioner Burke continued stating \$279k was earned in that account. Commissioner Burke then stated that there is \$2.3 million currently in the Hancock Whitney account not gaining nearly as much money. Commissioner Burke explained that FLClass is rated AAAM but is not insured since it is a fund not a bank. Commissioner Burke motioned to allow the Chair or Vice Chair to work with the Fire Chief to move money in and out of FLClass; seconded by Commissioner Jennis. The Board then discussed. Commissioner Bishop expressed his weariness given that when you invest, you have the chance of losing money. Commissioner Bishop also suggested Certificates of Deposit as a safer option to make money. Chief Rigney clarified on the differing interest rates comparing the Hancock Whitney account versus the FLClass fund. Chief Rigney also expressed that FLClass is one of the few funds that is allowed to invest public monies and explained that the fund typically stays in line with where interest rates are. Commissioner Bishop stated he is not a fan of moving all cash to FLClass and questioned if this motion relinquishes fiduciary duties to one Board member when the Board is a governing body of five. Chief Rigney explained the reasoning behind having a Board Liaison for this is so Staff wouldn't have to wait until the monthly meeting to transfer money for day-to-day operations like payroll if all cash was moved to FLClass. Commissioner Jennis suggested the Board tables this conversation until next month's meeting which would give time to reach out to legal representation and the auditor to be sure this is not affecting the District's internal controls. Commissioner Bennett clarified on

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

*Minutes of February 20, 2024  
Administration Building*

the reasoning for the motion with Chief Rigney. Chief Rigney stated the ability to work with the Chair or Vice Chair would really be more beneficial in a sense of pulling money out of FL Class for day-to-day operations versus having to wait until each monthly meeting if all operating cash was in FL Class. Commissioner Jennis removed his second. Commissioner Burke then removed his motion.

**CHIEF'S REPORT:** Chief Rigney reminded the Board that there is a Shade Meeting on March 6<sup>th</sup> at 4 p.m. Chief Rigney stated the meeting will be regarding contract negotiations and is closed to the public. FM Kwiatkowski reminded the Board that the Board of Appeals Training will occur on February 29<sup>th</sup> at Cedar Hammock. FM Kwiatkowski invited the Board and said they will have mock scenarios. Chief Rigney then noted that FM Kwiatkowski is the Chair of the Manatee County Fire Marshal's Association and that he recognized that no one is familiar with the Board of Appeals process, so he came up with this mock event to educate on how the process works.


**OTHER REPORTS:** Administrative Assistant (AA) Wright reminded the Board that Form 1 Financial Disclosures will now be sent via email from the Electronic Financial Disclosure Management System and still due by July 1st. AA Wright also let the Board know that each member is now required to complete a 4-hour ethics course annually. AA Wright stated the Florida Association of Special Districts has created an online course that will fulfill the annual requirement.

**COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS:** Commissioner Bishop commended Capt. Bill on the Annual Report and the map included and thanked all Staff for their great job. Commissioner Burke thanked Capt. Bill for the Annual Report and expressed his pride in being a part of the Board. Commissioner Bennett stated that he attended the Manatee County Commissioners Association Meeting and remains the President of that committee. Chairman Warner mentioned recent events including two firefighter line of duty deaths which occurred during routine calls. Chairman Warner also presented Chief Rigney with a framed copy of his magazine article.

**NEXT MEETING:** Tuesday, March 19, at 6:00 p.m. at Administration building.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Chairman Warner adjourned the meeting at 6:59 p.m.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Chairman

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary



