

WEST MANATEE FIRE & RESCUE DISTRICT COMMISSION BUDGET WORKSHOP

*Minutes of April 20, 2021
Administration Building and via Zoom*

The workshop began at 4:30 p.m. with the following members present: Larry Jennis, Robert Bennett, David Bishop and Al Robinson. George Harris via Zoom

Chief Rigney welcomed everyone and stated that this is the time of year again to set the assessment rate for the next budget year. He stated that we have met with the bargaining unit and have come to a tentative agreement on a contract. This agreement will next be sent to the bargaining members to vote on over the next few months. Assuming they vote in favor of this contract, it will then be brought before the board for final approval. As a non-ad-valorem department, we are only able to raise our rates based on the Personal Income Growth. Last year that personal income growth was calculated at 5.46% and the district chose to raise the rates for residential & commercial by 2.6%. The majority of the fire districts in Manatee County raised their rates by 5.46%. This year the max we are able to raise our rates are 5.64%, which I hear many of the other fire districts are seeking.

Chief Rigney stated that the benefit of having these workshops is that we can have an informal discussion to look at a snapshot of where we are and what the needs are for the future. Putting this workshop together has been a group effort and as always, he wanted to thank staff who helped prepare this. He stated that Andrea would start with the first three tabs, and then he would be handling the others.

Chief Rigney stated that the goal of this workshop is to get direction from the board as to what Assessment Rate Resolution should be brought to the May 18th meeting. He stated that to cover the contract that has been tentatively agreed upon, we would need to increase the assessment by a minimum of 4% for the next three years.

Administrative Assistant Berggren started with a review of the mid-year budget variance. She stated that all income and expenses are on target for mid-year. Berggren then went over a review of rates between various district's similar as the ones that have been presented in the past few years. The slides were showing a commercial building and then a residential home with the difference in assessment rates.

Chief Rigney started a review of our upcoming budget projections for the next two years and reviewed the operating expenses.

Chief Rigney next reviewed the capital outlay. He stated that the station alerting is listed again, and it is the 3rd year we have had to budget for it. Manatee County stated this should be completed this next fiscal year. Also, \$40K has been put in for the administration building gate/fencing/security. Commissioner Robinson asked if we could justify \$40K for this. Chairman Jennis stated there is a lot of footage. Chief Rigney stated that the gate is largest expense. The conduit has been run to it. We would be looking for just a chain-link fence and gate to keep expenses down. Commissioner Harris stated he would be in favor of spending more for something nicer, maybe along the front. Chief Rigney stated we can get quotes for different styles. Commissioner Bishop stated that we need to check our deed to make sure we don't have any restrictions to comply with.

Chief Rigney reviewed the vehicle capital and stated that there would be a station vehicle for 2023/2024 budget year and the next engine is planned for 2024/2025 budget year, with hopes to push out further if possible. Commissioner Robinson stated airplanes are typically 25-years old why don't we look at our engines the same way? Chief Rigney stated 10-year replacement is standard. Commissioner Harris stated some departments do 8-year replacement. It depends on the drivers and their styles. Chief Rigney stated that we have usually done 10-years, the last one we had was in service for about 15-years. Commissioner Jennis stated the engines are on a rigorous maintenance schedule and preventive maintenance. Commissioner Bennett stated saltwater intrusion eats away at the engines a lot quicker.

Chief Rigney next reviewed the revenue changes. These are taken from the audit reports. The total projected fund balance for the 2020/2021 year is \$4,900,222.

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Chief Rigney proceeded to review rate assessment information and stated his recommendation is to increase the assessment by 4%. Commissioner Robinson stated we if we hadn't built the new building, we wouldn't be needing to increase anyone's rates for 7 years.

Commissioner Bennett stated we have already dropped in areas of expenses.

Commissioner Harris asked where would that put our reserves if we did the 4% increase? Chief Rigney stated the 4% would fund everything with the exception of capital. The capital outlay would be coming out of the unassigned reserves. Chief Rigney stated that the reserves are dropping because of the new building. Commissioner Harris stated it is important to note that is what we had planned all along and that we are right where we need to be.

Commissioner Bishop stated his opinion on it since we are choosing to run races with adjacent district's then we really don't have a choice. We are running a horse race.

Chairman Jennis directed Chief Rigney to bring a resolution for a 4% increase.



Chairman Jennis adjourned the meeting at 5:20 p.m.


Chairman


Secretary

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

*Minutes of April 20, 2021
Administration Building and via Zoom*

SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS: Promotions of Captain Paul Hopkins; 1st Class Firefighter/Paramedic Frank Agresta; 3rd Class Firefighter Ashton Jasinski and Maxwell Pollock

The meeting was called to order at 6:14 p.m. with the following members present: Larry Jennis, Robert Bennett, David Bishop and Al Robinson. George Harris via Zoom. The Pledge of Allegiance was followed by a moment of silence and the oath.

CHANGES TO AGENDA: None

PUBLIC COMMENTS: None

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

COMMUNICATIONS: None

CARRIED FROM CONSENT AGENDA: None

OLD BUSINESS:

A. *Administration Building:* Chief Rigney reported that things are moving along quickly. The drywall is up; everything is painted; duct work being installed; construction trailer has been removed; asphalt starting on Friday. The generator now has a July delivery date and there is a delay for the shower insert. We are looking at a possible May 14th date. Commissioner Bishop stated he is okay on the extended date but wanted to know if this is changing the general conditions and any additional charges. Chief Rigney stated there are not.


NEW BUSINESS: None

CHIEF'S REPORT: Chief Rigney stated he will be leaving this Sunday for the National Fire Academy and will be returning on May 7th. During this time Deputy Chief Johnson will be in charge.

COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS: Commissioner Bennett stated that the recent Manatee County Fire Commissioner's Association Meeting was held. There are mainly all new members. They are looking at changes to the by-laws. He has put us down to host the October 4, 2021 meeting at 6:30 p.m. Commissioner Robinson stated that the action taken at the last meeting to spend \$100,000 on new radios when it was said there was nothing wrong with the current ones. He stated he was recently in North Carolina and passed numerous volunteer fire departments. These departments budgets are probably half of that per year. We have a fiduciary responsibility, and he stated he does not think we are carrying it out.

NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, May 18, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. at Administration building.

ADJOURNMENT: Chairman Jennis adjourned the meeting at 6:20 p.m.



Chairman



Secretary

