

**Upper Captiva Fire & Rescue District**

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*servicing the community with pride*

**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

**REGULAR MEETING**

**16 September 2017**

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Zeke McDonald, Tom Jenkins, AJ LaVallie, Bill Fry, and Chief Bob Kinniry.

COMMISSIONERS NOT PRESENT/EXCUSED: Steve Sward (no phone service)

ISLANDERS PRESENT: Val Horstman, Chris Horstman, Georgia Murphy, Mark Justice, Barbara Miklavic, Joe Miklavic. Karen Sirabian, Barry Bundrum, "Fuzzy" Jeffers, Kerry Williams, Ella Jeffries, Sherman Cottrell, Duncan Rosen, Rick Fox, Eric Peterson, and Terri Griner.

1) CALL TO ORDER: Chairman McDonald called the meeting to order at 10:04 AM.

2) MINUTES: Review of the minutes of the 18 August Regular Meeting were tabled until the October Regular meeting, without objection.

3) TREASURER'S REPORT:

- Balance Sheet: The end of August balance is not currently available, after electrical outages caused by September flooding and Hurricane IRMA, but we do have a 15 September balance sheet:
  - The Ad Valorem checking account had a 15 September ending accrued balance of \$5,851.76
  - The Ad Valorem Money Market Account had a 15 September ending accrued balance of \$369,604.96
  - The Friend's account had a 15 September ending balance of \$15,301.74 (no change)
  - The Impact Fee account had a 15 September ending balance of \$2,218.38 (no change)
  - Fry stated that there were no unexpected outstanding liabilities other than the usual transfers of expenses between the General Fund and Special Assessment Fund. We spend about \$35,000 every 2 weeks and, based on that, we estimate that we will end the year with about \$340,000 in the two operational accounts.
- Consolidated Income and Expense Report: The report wasn't available this month due to previous area flooding, Hurricane IRMA, and loss of electricity for extended periods.
- **LaVallie moved** to accept the Treasurer's Report, Jenkins **seconded**, **all voted aye**.

#### 4) CHIEF'S REPORT:

- Calls Last Month: Computers are down so no update this month
- Equipment:
  - E191 Engine/Pumper:
    - Our engine is now back on the island and we got the loaner from San Carlos Park off the island before IRMA arrived
    - The loaner was taken to South Trail to where CAPT McMullen will detail it and determine what repairs if any need to be made before its return to San Carlos Park
  - There is no status on the FEMA grant for the redundant/back-up high volume/high pressure pump so, in the meantime, we still have the pump on the Engine and the 750gpm pump (that was used during the Sol Vista fire)
- Public Question: What distance will the pump push water to? CAPT McMullen stated probably up to 1000' is the maximum to draft. Is the District allowed to borrow money? No, not without a voter approved referendum but we do have a \$500,000 Line of Credit that has to be paid off each year. Can we borrow money from the County? No, we would use the Line of Credit and pay it off as Tax Collections are received instead. Can we put a power-takeoff on one of the tractors to pump water, since those are workhorses? CAPT McMullen said that, with our certified firefighters, the pumps MUST be firefighting-certified (that may cost twice as much), to not violate law and OSHA rules. Was every pump on all of the fireboats fire-certified? Yes, all ISO-accredited fire districts use fire-certified equipment. Why can't we call everyone a volunteer then? McDonald stated that every official firefighter volunteer has to be a Florida Firefighter I, requiring 206 hours of certification training. McDonald reminded everyone that Florida laws have dramatically changed since the District started, as well as the transition from two Chiefs in 2014, to 3-4 part-time, certified mainland firefighters on each shift now.
- The Board accepted the Chief's Report

5) Fry proposed tabling all topics before the reports to the Public on the Sol Vista fire and Hurricane IRMA to respond to public questions and concerns. Board agreed without objection.

#### Agenda Item 8A: Sol Vista Fire After Action Review

- Chief submitted the fire incident report at the last meeting, along with the summarized timeline of responding units and that approved & signed report is on our website
- Chief summarized what went right:
  - No loss of life, no injuries for either civilians or firefighters
  - Initial Response to the scene occurred in 5 minutes; there have been questions about placement of firefighting equipment. The military tanker truck attempted to get behind the fire by approaching from the beach but the tide was still too high. The primary structure was already fully involved
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> Alarm was immediately called in to Lee Control, which activated mutual response and the North Strike Team

- No other exposed structures were involved until about 1-1/3 hours after first response, just as mutual aid response units were arriving
- There was no access behind the house (on Sol Vista) due to high heat/flames, with propane tanks off-gassing and exploding
- LCSO and Captiva FD arrived on the Captiva fireboat and began house searches and moved short-term renter family next door and later to the Station, away from the scene
- Chief summarized what went wrong (SNAFUs):
  - A phone call directly to the Station was dropped and the phone went into “reset” mode:
    - The phone detail was downloaded from Sprint that showed no completed calls before or after the incident
    - Public asked whether the Station has a landline and LaVallie said Yes but reminded everyone that the best number to call is always 911. Is there a difference between dialing 911 on a cell phone or a landline? Yes, there may be a delay if a cell phone but the GPS-chips in newer smartphones are supposed to direct the Enhanced 911 call to the closest County 911 Dispatcher.
    - Do we say Upper Captiva, North Captiva, or North Captiva Island ... will the 911 dispatcher know where we are? Yes, they recognize all of those names for our island. The 911 system is not perfect but it is always better than calling the Station since it alerts the whole County that there is a fire on the island.
    - Didn't the new Special Assessment pay for 4 full-time firefighters every day? Costs would potentially be double for 4 full-time firefighters with full benefits, requiring 12-16 full-time union employees working 1 shift on/2 shifts off, like every other fire district in the area. Instead, we have 40+ highly qualified firefighters that work 2-3 shifts each month without benefits. And if we had those 12-16 full-time employees, we would not be able to maintain our ALS capability that, even during season, don't generate enough calls or different types of call for paramedics to maintain their proficiency and certification.
    - Then those part-time firefighters have no connection to the island? Yes, they have jobs out here, in addition to their full-time jobs on the mainland.
    - Then they don't know about our island or how to get around to every house? Yes, they do. We have had the same crew on-island for the last 3 years, so they have been driving around on the island and understand the problems with the island, the age of our equipment, and know they are on their own during the first 1-2 hours until assistance arrives from the mainland.
    - As a homeowner, I am concerned that 40+ part-time firefighters can't possibly stay on top of everything that goes on out here. Isn't that a risk? Again, the same team has been out here for almost 3 years now and they are very familiar with the island. There are financial limits to what can be done since we are at maximum millage rate and an allowable annual increase in the fire services special assessment is limited to about \$4500/year, that we haven't done. That \$4500 won't increase the number of firefighters.

- How can you run out of propane? Don't you have a checklist? There is a checklist of daily duties that each shift performs, verifying that the equipment is operational, including life/safety checks on our medical equipment. Chief stated that he accepted the blame on running out of propane; he said he was more concerned about islander notification, getting islanders off the island, closing down the Station, and protecting our equipment, including our two boats.
- How would you fight a fire if the generator isn't running? All of the fire equipment tanks were flushed and refilled with SHC well water the day after the fire as part of reset. During a fire, we draft water from the canals, the SHC pond, the Sound, or even the Gulf if we have to ... we don't use SHC well water until we flush, clean, and then refill the systems after the fire is under control.
- Public then shifted to Hurricane IRMA topic without the Chief completing his presentation, and then later returned to the fire discussion
- Fry stated that we still don't know all of the facts about the fire, what went well, what went wrong, and where things need to be improved. Instead, we have spent over 40 minutes discussing the emotions about the fire. We can continue to do that but, until we can get off the emotion and focus on facts, we won't solve anything. Until we can get into the facts, we can't determine what are the equipment, people, training, or SOP/checklist shortfalls that need to be addressed. Fry believes that we need to do a detailed After Action Review.
- Public stated that there is no identification of culpability and the Chief should resign immediately. McDonald stated that he doesn't view the Sol Vista fire or IRMA as a failure. McDonald asked if anyone believes that we can go to the "Chief Tree" and pick a new chief?
- Then returned to the IRMA discussion

#### Agenda Item 8B: Hurricane IRMA

- How can you close the fire station when it is the only concrete shelter on the island? McDonald stated that the station is NOT a County-approved hurricane shelter, it wasn't constructed to that standard when it was built due to cost constraints 20+ years ago, and it isn't a concrete structure. The stucco downstairs is over a wood frame, not concrete block. Even though many people sheltered at the Station during Charley, that was viewed as a mistake afterwards and only happened when it was thought it was a Category 1 storm headed to Tampa and now, especially if the island had experienced a 10'-12' storm surge, as predicted.
- Public comment was that it was inexcusable to run out of propane immediately after the hurricane passed. Fry agreed that it was inexcusable and told Chief last Tuesday that there are at least 3 items that should have been on a checklist and apparently aren't, along with possibly other items 1) once the Governor declared a state of emergency, the checklist should have said to "check the propane in the tank" and order, if needed 2) after the decision was made to close the Station after the mandatory evacuation order, the checklist should say "turn off or disconnect the generator" 3) once the evacuation was over and the Station was reopened, it should say "turn on the generator" start reordering propane, based on expected usage. Again, we need to focus on facts and

corrective actions, rather than emotion, if we want to get better at our emergency services

- Chief stated that the first thing he did when he returned to the island was order propane. The barge delivered it to Useppa, rather than Upper Captiva and Jeffers said that he didn't "deliver it to the wrong island". It was delivered to Useppa because Chief didn't call him directly to ensure the propane would be delivered as ordered but Useppa did. Jeffers then said that the propane would be on the barge Monday.
- Again, the lack of propane affected only the Station, not the island's residents. The generator runs the Station lights and a/c, as well as the kitchen. No generator makes life miserable for the firefighters but didn't impact the ability of the Station to respond to a fire or medical emergency. The truck tanks are full of water and were flushed and filled after the Sol Vista fire. Water is drafted from locations other than the well houses and our generator doesn't supply power to any well house (CORRECTION AFTER MEETING: The generator provides power to the stations sewage lift station and a line could have been run across the road to the closest well house to supply water to both the station and some of the SHC townhouses, if the generator were in operation).
- Fox stated that Chief met with him in his office on Tuesday and told him that a mandatory evacuation would be ordered on Wednesday. Door knocks on every door on the island happened on Wednesday and Thursday. Fry stated that Island Girl had notified Chief Tuesday that their last boat would be 5:30PM Wednesday and that would be the last boat for islanders that relied upon Island Girl, including SHC staff, to leave the island. UCCA sent an email to their "all island" address list at 4PM Tuesday that stated that NCIC planned to continue their scheduled service through at least Thursday. And private charters, including Boats and Fun, were still providing service, depending on weather, until even later. Friday morning at 0900 became the effective date and time for the County-ordered mandatory evacuation of the barrier islands. So Wednesday at 5:30PM WAS the day and time, if you relied upon Island Girl. Fox said that he lost the day of work since they couldn't work on Thursday but Fry again said that, regardless of what he was told Tuesday morning by Chief, he received an email on Tuesday afternoon around 4PM, after the information became clearer, drafted by Chief, McDonald, and Sirabian for the UCCA email list
- McDonald stated that everyone needs to recognize that we were among the luckiest people in Florida when a hurricane with 12' storm surge was forecast to hit us directly and it didn't. Fox said "What happens when we aren't lucky next time?" and Fry said that is why we need to work on getting better with facts and improvements, not emotions.
- Sirabian stated that communications need to be improved and checklists need to be improved.
- Murphy stated that she and Fox conferenced Tuesday evening and made the decision to send every SHC employee off the island, before they could secure members' homes, based on the Chief's meeting with Fox. McMullen reminded everyone that we all have access to the same media reports and the same Lee EOC website, that once winds are above 40MPH all emergency vehicles are grounded, and that Pine Island FCD also closed

and evacuated their stations, based on the same order that included Upper Captiva. McMullen also reminded everyone of their own responsibilities with living on a barrier island. The UCFRD knocked on every door, got next of kin notification information for residents that weren't going to evacuate, put shutters on the fire station windows, lifted equipment off the station bay floor, and secured fire district property. Yes, they forgot to check the propane and the generator before they left.

- Murphy stated "What if there had been a medical emergency before the evacuation and you didn't have power?" But there WAS power AFTER the mandatory evacuation, it ran out after the hurricane arrived (and before the firefighters returned on Tuesday morning).
- Fox asked why Chief didn't tell him that NCIC or other boat operators were still running after Island Girl's planned end of their scheduled service on Wednesday at 5:30PM and Fry stated that, since the NCIC and SHC meetings were separate, that information might not have been known when Fox and Chief met.
- Fry again stated that people in the audience are right that, if there aren't checklists and SOPs, that is a major problem. But we still don't know what we don't know ... only what we feel and we won't come to a resolution that people will like because we still aren't talking about how to gather facts and identify solutions. If we just focus on our feelings, we'll continue to focus on our emotions and the Chief. Fry stated that "Hope can't be our method and prayer can't be our plan". We have to have written plans, we need to complete a real after action review of the fire and IRMA, that the Chief needs to run that with his officers and duty personnel that were on duty during both events, and we need to focus on the facts and possible solutions. Some that we can do immediately and some that we may not be able to afford. Fry also said that the UCCA all-island email list WAS emailed information about Island Girl's last run and NCIC's intent to continue at least through Thursday. We are now almost 2 hours into the meeting and we still don't know what we don't know.
- Public asked do we have propane now? Answer is NO but it doesn't stop the Station from responding to a fire or medical emergency. 911 calls come in over the radios; McMullen has been monitoring the radio during this meeting. Water for the firetrucks during a fire comes from draft points, not the SHC well houses. Not having propane only affects the lights, the kitchen, the sewage, and the domestic water into the Station but doesn't stop the firefighters from responding. The small generators recharge the radio and cell phone batteries and runs the window a/c that is keeping this room cool. The firefighters purchase ice, water, and food with their own money from the mainland each morning for themselves, before they come on shift. The only ones suffering because of no propane for the generators are the Chief and the firefighters on duty, not islanders.
- McDonald reminded everyone that the generator was bought after Charley and more and more residents have their own generators. The Station doesn't need to be the community center or food source for islanders like after Charley. It is egregious that we don't have full power but it isn't an unlivable situation.
- Murphy asked what the reasonable time would be for the review, when will islanders be told what went right, what went wrong, and what is being done to fix things?

- Fry reminded the public about the really awful month that the island has experienced; the fire was on 11 August, the flooding on the island and on the mainland with 25"+ of rain over 4 days was in late August, and the IRMA-related activities occurred from 10 September ... and we are not yet fully recovered. Fry will put both AAR topics on the October agenda and they won't come off until all questions have been answered and potential solutions are identified. With our fires and hurricanes, we thankfully go years between the events and the people that worked these issues this month may not be with us for the next event (it was 4-1/2 years since the last major fire and 13 years since Charley). That is the reason for SOPs and checklists; people turnover means that institutional knowledge is fleeting with departures and arrivals of staff and islanders. Fry stated that "The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again in the same way and expecting a different result". We need to document and improve but that isn't going to happen today or even next week. It will take months to complete properly.
- Murphy stated that the Board should mandate that the Chief prepare and present details at the next meeting about both the fire and the hurricane, in greater detail than the SNAFUs list. And that those presentations should be made available to islanders. Fry stated that once a document is created, it gets posted to the website at least 7 days before a meeting. The documents for today's meeting were posted 3 days ago when we confirmed that we would have a quorum of returning commissioners in the room to actually hold the meeting.
- Sirabian asked the Chair to schedule a special meeting for an update within 2 weeks. She stated clearly that, as one of the few that stayed during the hurricane, she fully understood that there would be no emergency services for her until after the mandatory evacuation officially ended. They were on their own; no key to the fire station or the trucks was expected or received. Chief and McMullen made that abundantly clear and she understood her choice to stay. At no time did she expect anyone to come to save her or to go to the fire station door asking for food or water, during or after IRMA.
- Rosen said that he would like to see the report about the fire, he would like to see improved checklists for hurricanes, and that communications with owners and property managers needs to improve, either with a website or Twitter.
- Peterson said there were probably two things that was learned after Charley 1) that we are more vulnerable on this island than people realized and, 2) that the Station is important as a command and control center in the event of an emergency and everything needs to be ready to the maximum extent possible. LaVallie, Fry, and McDonald agreed with Peterson again that not having propane was completely inexcusable and it should not ever happen again.
- Fox asked, once the facts are gathered, whether there can be an agenda item at the next meeting for an evaluation of the chief. Fry stated that he created a written evaluation of the Chief in July and will forward what he provided the chief and that, on balance, what was written then is probably still accurate since the shortcomings were communication and management skills. Doing another evaluation in October would likely not be productive but the Public can always ask questions during the meetings, whether the topic is on the agenda or not.

- Sirabian stated that islanders and property managers should submit their written comments to the Chief, for him to include them in the after action review because they have different vantage points for both the fire and the hurricane. McDonald stated that Murphy, Fox, Rosen, Cottrell, Henderson, and Brillhart comments are welcome as property manager input, as well as any other islander's comments
- McDonald reminded the Public that everyone on the Board is volunteering to do the best that they can for the community, that the Chief has only been the Chief for less than 18 months, and that we have been discussing hiring a second full-time employee, potentially as the Assistant Chief.
- Miklavic says the Board is doing a stellar job but the Board needs to do a better job of managing the Chief. Your chief should be strong and tell you what he needs. He should be strong.
- Sirabian asked that the minutes reflect that our part-time staff spend a huge amount of time at their home stations before an event like IRMA and still come out. She asked McMullen how many hours he had worked before coming out and he said 48 straight hours and then reported for 30 hours here; CAPT Tyrell, our officer in charge today, worked 56 hours straight before the hurricane, worked 24 hours yesterday, and is here for his 24 hour shift on the island today. And Chief has been on-island for 106 hours since Monday morning.

BREAK: Board returned to tabled agenda items after the break

#### 6) COMMISSIONER REPORTS:

- A) Sward-Legal Representation: McDonald stated that Attorney Pringle will attend the 27 October 2017
- B) LaVallie-Community Committee Update: Tabled until the October meeting, when we select a new legal advisor, and determine a path forward

#### 7) OLD BUSINESS:

- A) Repair or Replace the Station Generator: Tabled until Chief provides further information about alternatives, costs, and whether building a wooden/tin-roofed shelter will protect the generator sufficiently
- B) Officer Chain of Command/Organization Chart: Tabled until Chief provides further detailed information about duty descriptions, what the 3 officers' additional duties will entail and how frequently those duties will need to be performed
- C) FY18 Proposed Budget:
  - Preliminary Budget Hearing: Now scheduled for Monday, 25 September at 5:01PM

- Final Budget Hearing: Now scheduled for Saturday, 30 September at 10AM, with the decisions at that point
  - Revenues: The final decision on next year's millage rate will be made at the 30 September Final Budget Hearing but, with the unknown clean-up costs and any after action review identified improvements, the Board leans toward the maximum millage rate of 3.75 mils
  - Pay & Benefits Proposals:
    - Fry again stated that the FY17 raise of \$5000 and \$1250 in retirement should be treated as a bonus for work that the Chief performed as Acting Chief from August 2015 – March 2016.
    - Fry stated, failing that, we need to reconsider the idea of a \$2000 raise in base salary for the Chief because, if that is approved next month, it shows how tone-deaf the Board and the Chief are on what we heard over the last 2-1/2 hours

#### 8) NEW BUSINESS:

##### A) Sol Vista Fire After Action Review (AAR): Covered earlier in the meeting

- Board requires Chief to create a more detailed and in-depth After Action Review (AAR), with a possible In-Process Review (IPR) at a special meeting in 2 weeks, and a desired final report to the Board on 27 October, with the potential for the Chief to present to the membership of SHC on 28 October and the membership of the UCCA on 29 October
- CAPT Tyrell Narrative of Fire: Details will be provided inside the Chief's planned in-process review for the Board and community, at the proposed Special Meeting during the first 2 weeks of October, and in the final Board and community presentations

##### B) IRMA After Action Review: Covered earlier in the meeting, with the Board requiring a detailed and in-depth after action review, with a proposed in-process review at a special meeting in 2 weeks, and a desired final report to the Board on 27 October, with the potential for the Chief to present to the membership of SHC on 28 October and the membership of the UCCA on 29 October

##### C) Resolution to Write-Off Construction in Progress (2017-091617(1)): The Balance Sheet still shows an asset for the work done on the proposed station addition/renovation that failed by referendum. Since all of the permits have expired and we don't have any current contracts, the asset needs to be written off. Read in its entirety by Chair, **LaVallie moved to adopt, seconded by Jenkins, all voted aye.**

#### 9) PUBLIC COMMENT: Public comments were made earlier in the meeting and all of the public departed at the Break

#### 10) NEXT DATES: Preliminary Budget Hearing on Monday, 25 September 2017 beginning at 5:01PM, the Final Budget Hearing on Saturday, 30 September 2017 beginning at 10:00AM, and a Special Meeting will be scheduled during the first two weeks of October, once availability for

an in-room quorum is verified. The next Regular Monthly Meeting is Friday, 27 October at 10AM.

11) ADJOURN – **Moved by Fry, seconded** by Jenkins; meeting adjourned at 3:25 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Bill Fry  
Secretary/Treasurer