



**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
February 13, 2007**

MINUTES FROM JANUARY 9, 2007 REGULAR BOARD MEETING

Commissioner Schweers opened the meeting at 6:00 p.m.
Silent Prayer
Pledge of Allegiance

ROLL CALL

Commissioner Akins, Commissioner Levy, Commissioner Schweers, Commissioner Sassano and Commissioner Morris were present.

NEW EMPLOYEE INTRODUCTION

Deputy Chief Patrick introduced the full-time Maintenance Technician Lawrence (Larry) Falcone to the board.

STAFF PRESENTATION

Finance Director April White provided a general breakdown of the various responsibilities of the Finance Director and the two Finance Specialists, Jean Strobel and Maria Ramos.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS

No public comment.

ITEMS TO BE PULLED FOR DISCUSSION

No items were pulled for discussion.

Commissioner Schweers noted that there was an error in the previously approved minutes for November 14, 2006 in which it stated that Commissioner Morris had opened the meeting as opposed to Commissioner Schweers. Commissioner Schweers asked for a motion to reflect that he opened the meeting at 6:01 p.m. *Commissioner Akins made a motion to amend the November 14, 2006 board meeting minutes to indicate Commissioner Schweers opened the meeting at 6:01 p.m. Commissioner Sassano seconded, all were in favor, motion carried.*

CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner Levy made a motion to approve Consent Agenda items 1-5 as presented. Commissioner Morris seconded, all were in favor, motion carried.

ADMINISTRATIVE AGENDA

1. **APPROVE AN EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (EAP) FOR ESTERO FIRE RESCUE PERSONNEL.** Chief Lindsey provided a brief explanation and stated that the current policies of Estero Fire Rescue provide an EAP for personnel, in which we are not in compliance. *Commissioner Sassano made a motion to approve Administrative Agenda Item 1. Commissioner Levy seconded.* Commissioner Morris questioned if the pricing would remain the same or escalate

yearly. Chief Lindsey deferred the question to Mr. Bob Rhine of Edison Insurance who stated that the rates are guaranteed for two years after that some type of potential increase. Chief Lindsey stated that this is not a budgeted item but it will come out of the salary budget. Commissioner Levy requested that this item appear under the medical portion of the budget. Commissioner Akins stressed the need to bring this towards an effective date to coincide with the beginning of the fiscal year, October 1. Mr. Rhine stated that this should not be an issue as this is currently something Edison Insurance is working on with regard to the medical plan for Estero Fire Rescue. *After much discussion, Commissioner Schweers called for a vote, all were in favor, motion carried.*

Commissioner Schweers moved to Administrative Agenda Item 3 at this time.

3. **AUTHORIZE THE PURCHASE OF PHASE TWO OF THE DATA/TELEPHONIC COMMUNICATION SYSTEM AT A COST NOT TO EXCEED \$52,900.000; AUTHORIZING THE FIRE CHIEF TO APPROVE ALL DOCUMENTS NECESSARY TO CONSUMMATE SAID TRANSACTION.** Chief Lindsey provided a brief explanation and called upon Information Technology Administrator LuAnn Delo to further explain and answer questions from the board. Ms. Delo stated the benefits of the system would provide security and reliability and asked the commissioners for any questions. Commissioner Levy questioned what information we need to secure that we are not currently securing. Ms. Delo firmly stated medical information for number one. Commissioner Sassano inquired as to the cost of moving the phone system from the existing administration modular to the new administration building. David Janssen, Systems Engineer with Embarq provided information and estimates the cost to be under \$5,000 to move the system. It was also discussed that the new administration building will be pre-wired for the system and that Ms. Delo is working closely with Embarq in an effort to provide what is needed to best meet the needs of Estero Fire Rescue to serve the community. Commissioner Akins addressed the issue of cost and the original cost to be around \$90,000, which was presented at the November 2005 board meeting, to do all of the stations as well as the administration building and noted that this amount is under the projected total at that time. *Commissioner Sassano made a motion to approve Administrative Agenda Item 3 as presented. Commissioner Akins seconded, all were in favor, motion carried.*

Commissioner Schweers moved to Administrative Agenda Item 2 at this time.

2. **AUTHORIZE THE PURCHASE TO REPLACE THREE LIFEPAK 12 MONITORS AND UPDATE TWO ADDITIONAL LIFEPAK 12 MONITORS AT A COST OF \$51,974.21.** Chief Lindsey provided a brief explanation and informed the board that the cost had changed. Chief Lindsey also stated that Administrative Agenda Item 2 works in conjunction with Walk-on Item 2, freeing up some dollars which provides funds to purchase and update the Lifepak monitors. Battalion Chief Krajic provided an explanation as to the details of the equipment and the requirements by Florida statute. Battalion Chief Krajic also noted that the cost of the equipment had increased and that the new cost is \$52,799.00. Commissioner Akins inquired as to replacement of this equipment or similar equipment in the future and if a replacement program would be in place. Chief Lindsey stated that this equipment is included as part of the equipment replacement program which is being developed. Commissioner Akins inquired as to the specific line item of the budget. Chief Lindsey stated that this is under the ad valorem capital outlay line item. *Commissioner Morris made a motion to approve Administrative Agenda Item 2 as presented. Commissioner Sassano seconded. Commissioner Akins noted that the motion should reflect the change in price. Commissioner Morris made a motion to approve Administrative Agenda Item 2 amending the cost to \$52,799.00. Commissioner Sassano seconded, all were in favor, motion carried.*

WALK-ON ITEMS

1. **APPOINT ONE MEMBER TO SERVE THE REMAINING TERM ON THE ESTERO FIRE RESCUE RETIREMENT PLAN AND PENSION TRUST BOARD.** Commissioner Schweers introduced Mr. Bob Brice, who stated that he is willing to fill the vacant position which was held by Mr. Carr. Commissioner Levy inquired as to background checks and whether or not they are required. Chief Lindsey stated that background checks are not required but the trustee has to file with the state and since they are dealing with fiduciary funds they have to go through much like the commissioners. *Commissioner Levy made a motion to appoint Bob Brice to serve the remaining term on the Estero Fire Rescue Retirement Plan and Pension Trust Board. Commissioner Akins seconded, all were in favor, motion carried.*
2. **ACCEPT THE GRANT AWARD FROM FEMA/DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY IN THE AMOUNT OF \$57,808 AND APPROVE RELATED BUDGET AMENDMENT FOR TOTAL PROJECT COST OF \$64,231.** Chief Lindsey provided a brief explanation and that board approval to accept is necessary and to establish a line item. *Commissioner Sassano made a motion to accept Walk-On Item 2 as presented. Commissioner Morris seconded, all were in favor, motion carried.*

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No public comments were made.

COMMISSIONER ITEMS

- ✓ Commissioner Schweers stated that the board must reschedule the date, time and location for the Financial Plan Workshop which involves review of a draft and comments from the board and the public. Commissioner Schweers recommended February 13, 2007 at 5:00 p.m. in Room 102B at Estero Community Park with the regular board to be held at its regular time of 6:00 p.m. at Estero Community Park. *Commissioner Sassano made a motion to hold the Financial Plan Workshop on Tuesday, February 13, 2007 at 5:00 p.m. in Room 102B at Estero Community Park with the regular board meeting at 6:00 p.m. at Estero Community Park. Commissioner Levy seconded, all were in favor, motion carried.*
- ✓ Commissioner Schweers provided information to the board regarding his continuing efforts into the traffic signal concerns and that he is unable to discuss further at this time. Commissioner Levy stated that he is aware of the cost of a traffic signal and does not wish for this to become an expenditure of Estero Fire Rescue, as it is quite costly.

FIRE CHIEF'S REPORT

- 2007 Planning Meeting with the Deputy Chiefs was held on January 4; working diligently to accomplish some of these goals during the year
- December monthly report with a YTD total over 3,000 total calls for the first time in history
- Estero Design Review Committee (EDRC) letter regarding the signage at station 3 and the new administration building. Chief Lindsey recommended that we reply stating that we will not remove or change the sign at station 3, as the design for the sign was previously approved by the EDRC, and it is consistent with all of our stations. *There was a consensus among the board to not remove or change the sign at station 3 and that Chief Lindsey reply accordingly; that the district will continue with the existing signage as approved by the EDRC.*
- Media coverage continues to make derogatory comments regarding the fire departments in our area. Chief Lindsey stated that there are issues that go unnoticed and some of these issues need to be brought out into the open and identified. Chief Lindsey noted one issue which we are currently dealing with at Estero Fire Rescue reflects the attitude of some of the issues we have been dealing with on the county and county managers and the sensitivity and approach to the fire districts in this county. One of those issues, when we're talking about consolidation, looking at saving money, and what is the best for the taxpayers, etc., there has not been any real efforts,

either on the county level, and quite frankly it's the opposite at the county level of fire prevention. Chief Lindsey addressed the vacant land out east that is now being developed and occupied, Ultimate Ski Lake, which is located precisely 11 miles from our fire station 4, Stoneybrook to the entrance to this community. In reality EFR cannot respond efficiently and effectively 11 miles to a home and expect any type of rescue efforts or extinguishment, in most situations when a fire expands rapidly, we become a defensive operation, meaning we put water on whatever ash is left of that particular structure. One would envision that someone that has such animosity against a fire district and the efforts to keep up with the growth, would have such foresight to be able to look at the prevention aspects, in putting sprinkler systems and things of that nature into these structures to help us reduce the amount of fire protection that is needed. It doesn't mean that you would eliminate fire protection, but you would reduce it and be able to strategically place stations, apparatus and personnel in a much more efficient and effective way as what the certain newspaper and county manager have elaborated as being fragmented, among other terms. With that, we are going to take the county to battle, over the fact that there is a house that has been erected out at that location, Ultimate Ski Lake. We will notify them that they have not followed current codes and requirements for sprinkler systems for structures in this particular area; we are going to continue to pursue that. Chief Lindsey encouraged the board, as we begin to move forward, to think more proactively in establishing ordinances in Estero and get more involved at the county level to start educating them and taking a stance on some of these issues, in the fact, that here we are trying to be proactive and reducing some of these costs by implementing fire prevention and protection systems that are on the market at a very reasonable rate at this point. In addition to that, there has been a lot of discussion about the redundancy of equipment. Chief Lindsey noted that we have been ranked as 4th in the nation, and sometimes it's good to be ranked high, but in this particular situation, we're ranked 4th in the nation as far as the most congested roadways in the country. And with that again, we need to take into consideration as there wasn't enough foresight by the county to help us by putting infrastructure in place to be able to respond and access various areas, including our neighboring districts. Therefore, what happens is, and has been illustrated with our dealing with the traffic light in front of our Coconut Point Station 2, our response time is down and trying to weave through traffic increases our potential not only involving one of our vehicles and personnel, but it also increases the risk for our citizens that are out there. So in fact, we continuously get chastised by the county manager and local newspaper, in particular one reporter with a negative attitude towards the fire districts. I would challenge them and ask them in return, when they are challenging us on all these issues, to look in the mirror for a change and to realize what they have not done in order to assist us and help us increase efficiency and effectiveness in our district, and not just us but the whole county; to address these two issues of lack of infrastructure for access and lack of support in implementing fire prevention measures. Chief Lindsey asked the board to assist us with this battle, as the elected officials, in addressing at a higher level with other elected officials on some of these issues, so that we can focus and concentrate not always on the reactive to the attacks. We are attempting, very diligently, to address some of the things of functional consolidation and working with our neighbor, but in the same aspect when we continually get attacked by these things it really poses a negative atmosphere and really does not settle well whenever some of the things we are trying to do, the county goes around the back door and undermines the things that we are actively trying to make better in this community. Commissioner Schweers brought up the Commissioners Forum, and that he would like to see a representative from this board go forward to these other commissioners, in an attempt to address the attack we are under. After discussion, Commissioner Schweers asked for a volunteer among the commissioners to serve in a more active role in working with neighboring commissioners. Commissioner Schweers nominated Commissioner Akins to fill in this capacity on the Commissioner's Forum. Discussion was held regarding how to get more commissioners involved from other counties and what needs to take place at these meetings to make a united stand, including the possibility of the board of Estero Fire Rescue hosting a forum meeting. Chief Lindsey requested that the board or a board member

get more involved with the Commission Forum and other fire district commissioners. *After further discussion, Commissioner Schweers asked Commissioner Akins to fill this role, all were in favor.*

- Chief Lindsey noted that efforts are being made to provide automatic aid among counties which allows for the closest unit to respond; whether it is San Carlos, Bonita or Estero.

Commissioner Akins made a motion to adjourn, Commissioner Sassano seconded, all were in favor, motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 7:39 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gayle M. Sassano, Secretary