

**Public Hearing and Regular Meeting Minutes of the  
Board of Commissioners  
Cedar Hammock Fire Control District  
July 16, 2026**

**CALL TO ORDER**

The regular meeting was called to order by Chairman Litschauer at 6:00 p.m. The following Commissioners were present: Steve Litschauer, Bill Espy, Marnie Matarese, John Stevens and Beth Byron-Reasoner (6:05).

**INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Pastor Pavkovich led the invocation, which was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

**QUORUM**

Chairman Litschauer confirmed a physically present quorum for the meeting. The meeting was properly advertised.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

Chairman Litschauer asked if there was any discussion of the minutes or the Treasurer's report. There was no discussion.

**ACTION: Commissioner Stevens moved to accept the Consent Agenda. Commissioner Matarese seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously (4-0).**

**SPECIAL BUSINESS**

Chief Falcone recognized the following people for their years of service.

Firefighter Trace Parcels-5 years of service.

The following people could not attend.

Office Administrator Shirley Laliberte- 1 year of service

Firefighter Zach Taylor- 5 years of service

Firefighter Conner Barauskis -5 years of service

Chief Falcone recognized the promotion of Firefighter Colton Wilson to the rank of 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Firefighter.

**RECESS REGULAR MEETING-**

Chairman Litschauer recessed the regular meeting at 6:05pm. Commissioner Byron-Reasoner arrived for the remainder of the meeting. At 6:06pm the Public Hearing was opened.

**PUBLIC HEARING / FINAL RESOLUTION 2026-03 OF THE BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS OF THE CEDAR HAMMOCK FIRE CONTROL DISTRICT OF MANATEE COUNTY, FLORIDA, TO IMPOSE NON-AD VALOREM ASSESSMENTS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026-2027, PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.**

Chairman Litschauer called the Public Hearing to order and requested verification of the Public Notice of the public hearing. Chief Falcone confirmed the meeting was properly advertised.

Chief Falcone presented Resolution 2026-03 of the Board of Fire Commissioner of The Cedar Hammock Fire Control District of Manatee County, Florida, to impose the Non-Ad Valorem assessments for fiscal year 2026-2027, providing for an effective date. The resolution includes an 8.0% increase to the Non-Ad Valorem rates according to the average growth rate in Florida personal income over the previous five years using the data provided by the Bureau of Economic Analysis.

Chairman Litschauer opened the Public Hearing for comments for the 2026-2027 Non-Ad Valorem Assessments. There were no comments.

Chairman Litschauer closed the public hearing for comments.

**ACTION: Commissioner Stevens moved to adopt Resolution 2026-03, Non-Ad Valorem Assessments for fiscal year 2026-2027 as presented. Commissioner Matarese seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously (5-0).**

**CLOSE PUBLIC HEARINGS-**

Chairman Litschauer adjourned the Public Hearing for the 2026-2027 Proposed Non-Ad Valorem Assessments at 06:19 pm.

**RESUME REGULAR MEETING**

Chairman Litschauer reconvened the regular meeting at 6:19pm.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were three public comments from Gayle Flynn, Luda Kelly, and Steven Carnes who expressed their concerns with short-term rentals (STR) in their neighborhood. The items they discuss involved fire safety inspections, maximum occupancy limits, noise complaints, trash collection, trespassing, vehicular parking/access, and increased traffic. They requested that the District inspect the properties for fire safety adherence.

District Council Mooney addressed the Board and explained the jurisdictional requirements of the District and that many of the items mentioned during the public comments did not fall under the District's authority. She explained some of the possibilities for a short-term rental registry program. She also explained that each fire district has a different set of concerns that need to be addressed.

District Council Mooney addressed the three residents and advised them to contact Manatee County for matters that fell outside the scope of Cedar Hammock.

Commissioner Matarese recommended that the residents also reach out to their elected officials.

Chief Falcone confirmed that the District is evaluating options to better identify these STR properties, but Manatee County currently does not have a process to do so. He continued that the District is inspecting STR properties at the property owner's request.

Commissioner Litschauer closed the public comments.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **Legislative Update**

Chief Falcone informed the Commissioners that staff is tracking and reacting to several changes in Florida law that went into effect on July 01, 2026. Chief Falcone highlighted significant changes to the Florida Retirement System (FRS) which has brought back the cost-of-living adjustment for our employees who were hired after July 2011. He explained the impact those changes will have on the District's financial obligations. He also reminded the Board that the District will be monitoring the outcome of the property tax referendum that will be on the November ballot.

### **Second Hearts Homes**

Chief Falcone informed the Board that the District received a letter from the legal representatives of Second Heart Homes informing the District that State Statutes had been updated which made the District's previous requirements no longer required and they planned to reopen their business in our jurisdiction.

### **Union Negotiations**

Chief Falcone informed the Board that the negotiations were progressing, and the next meeting was scheduled for Monday July 20, 2026.

### **Information Technology Enhancement**

Chief Falcone informed the Board that the District was assigned a project manager by the managed service provider and that the project had an expected September 30, 2026, completion date.

### **Impact Fee Study Update**

Chief Falcone explained to the Board that impact fee studies are now required by law. The District already had an impact fee study completed in 2015 and continues to recognize its methodology by resolution of the Board. Staff continue to obtain information on future studies and will continue to keep the Board updated.

### **Fiscal Year 2026-2027 Budget Draft 4**

Chief Falcone presented draft 4 of the fiscal year 2026/2027 budget. He explained the use of reserves for capital expenses. He explained that the current budget reflects the current millage rate of 1.3 mils and that the process for adjusting the millage has changed with recent legislative updates.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **TRT 644 Merger**

Chief Falcone informed the Board that the fire departments in the Manatee County that have technical rescue teams and/or capabilities have begun discussions to consolidate into one team. Currently the District has an interlocal agreement with Southern Manatee Fire Rescue. If the consolidation moves forward the District will need to work to dissolve that team.

Commissioner Byron-Reasoner asked about the technical rescue teams use in emergency response and Chief Falcone explained the local response as well as the potential to be used around that State during major incidents.

Commissioner Matarese asked about the equipment requirements. Chief Falcone explained the status of equipment around the County and how a consolidated team would evaluate the entire County for efficiency in equipment storage and response.

### **Fire Chief Evaluation**

Chairman Litschauer updated the Board on the timeline for Chief Falcone's evaluation. They discussed the process of the evaluation and the requirements set forth in the Chief's contract. Council Mooney addressed the Board and explained the requirements to amend the contract if updates were to be made. The Board discussed the items they would like to have included in the evaluation to be given to the Chief.

**ACTION: Commissioner Stevens moved to hold a special meeting at 4 p.m. on August 20, 2026, to approve an amendment to section 12 of Chief Falcone's contract and hold a workshop immediately following the special meeting for the purpose of completing the evaluation of the Chief. Commissioner Byron-Reasoner seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously (5-0).**

### **CHIEF'S REPORT**

Chief Falcone highlighted all the work that the Fire Prevention Bureau has been doing in the community and through their special programs.

Chief Falcone informed the Board that the District is supporting a table a luncheon to remember the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of 9/11. The luncheon is being held on September 2, 2026, and the 9/11 Memorial ceremony will be downtown on the morning of September 11, 2026.

### **COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS**

Commissioner Steven said he may reach out to the County Commissioner to discuss the short-term rentals. He also said that A-shift performed very well on the fire near his residence on July 4<sup>th</sup>.

Commissioner Matarese mentioned a public education event in her neighborhood and requested support from the district for a fire engine to attend an October 25<sup>th</sup> event.

Commissioner Litschauer complimented the crews for their good work. He mentioned that many of the public comments made by the residents at tonight's meeting should be directed to the County officials.

### **NEXT MEETING DATE**

August 20, 2026

## **ADJOURNMENT**

**Action: Commissioner Byron-Reasoner made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Stevens. The motion passed unanimously (5-0). The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 pm**

## **APPROVED**

**Chairman Steve Litschauer**

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Steve Litschauer", with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.