

**Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the  
Board of Fire Commissioners  
Cedar Hammock Fire Control District  
April 20, 2023**

**CALL TO ORDER**

The regular meeting was called to order by Chairman Getman at 6:00 p.m. The following commissioners were present: Richard G. Findlay, Ronald D. Getman, Samuel A. Reasoner, Marnie E. Matarese, and John H. Stevens.

**INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chief Bradshaw led the invocation, which was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

**QUORUM**

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

**CONSENT AGENDA**

Chairman Getman 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 Reasoner seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously (5-0).**

**SPECIAL BUSINESS**

Chief Bradshaw announced the hiring of Office Administrator II Betsy Taintor. Administration Support Manager McCaughan administered the Oath of Office.

Chief Bradshaw announced the promotion of Zach Hill to First Class Firefighter.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were three public comments from the following: Jeff Hoyle, Terrie Hoyle, and Dan Brunner. Each was given two (2) minutes to speak. All comments were in regard to New Business – Indemnification.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**2021-2022 Financial Audit**

Auditors Randy Dillingham and Bo Slemmons reviewed the 2021-2022 Financial Audit report, which is a clean, unmodified opinion. There were no material weaknesses or significant deficiencies identified.

**ACTION: Commissioner Matarese moved to approve the 2021-2022 Financial Audit as presented. Vice Chairman Findlay seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously (5-0).**

## **Trailer Estates Critical Timeline**

Chief Bradshaw informed the Board there were to be two public hearings on May 18, 2023, to approve the Draft Budget and the Proposed Non-Ad Valorem Assessments along with a Preliminary Assessment Role. It is imperative that we have a quorum at this meeting.

## **Performance Audit Update**

Chief Bradshaw reviewed the recommendations as published in the Independent Special Fire Control District Performance Review for the Cedar Hammock Fire Control District. There are 21 recommendations listed on pages 9-11.

## **Pending Litigation**

Chief Bradshaw reviewed the Court imposed deadlines outlined in the letter drafted by the attorney appointed by the insurance carrier. He confirmed the Motion to Dismiss is still pending.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **2023-2024 Budget – Draft 1**

Chief Bradshaw reviewed the proposed budget for fiscal year 2023-2024, which reflect the Florida Personal Income Growth over the last five years at 6.7%

### **Contract Negotiations**

Chief Bradshaw informed that the first meeting for contract negotiations was held April 4, 2023, and all went well. The next meetings will be held May 3 and May 30, 2023.

### **Legislative Update**

The exhibit is for informational purposes and reflects the Legislative Session Update – Week 6. It contains some bills that may affect the District. This information is provided by the Florida Association of Special Districts.

### **Indemnification**

District Counsel Maggie Mooney reviewed Resolution 2019-01, which outlines support and legal defense of protected parties. She provided a brief history of indemnification under Florida Law.

She introduced Rob Robinson, the attorney representing Commissioner John Stevens. Commissioner Stevens provided Form 8B Memorandum of Voting Conflict for County, Municipal, and Other Local Public Officers.

Attorney Rob Robinson gave a brief history of the ethics complaints against Commissioner Stevens. At present, Attorney Robinson is having discussions with the Attorney General Advocate. In the event Commissioner Stevens were to accept a settlement with the Ethics Commission, it would include an admission of a violation of Chapter 112. If Commissioner Stevens admits to a violation, then the Board of Fire Commissioners of the District may have a claim for reimbursement of attorney fees. Attorney Robinson requested the Board of Fire Commissioners to waive any reimbursement claims in order to encourage a settlement and the cessation of further expenditure of attorney fees.

Public comments were made by Jeff Hoyle, Terrie Hoyle, and Dan Brunner.

Discussion ensued among the commissioners.

Commissioner Reasoner was concerned about setting a precedent in allowing fees to be waived if there was an admission of a violation. He referred to Section 4 in Resolution 2019-01, which states that failure to follow legal counsel's advise is to be construed as acting in bad faith.

Vice Chairman Findlay said that it was coincident that these complaints were filed prior to the election. He said that the person who opposed Commissioner Reasoner was going to fire Chief Hoyle if he won. He accused Chief Hoyle of getting mad, filing complaints, and spending attorney fees. He said that he did not believe that Commissioner Stevens acted maliciously.

Commissioner Stevens said that he had always had the best interest of the District in what he did.

Commissioner Matarese said that she did not think Commissioner Stevens was an unintelligent man and he had to have known what he was doing was wrong.

Chairman Getman said to Commissioner Stevens, "When your heart is in the right place, you do a great job."

Chairman Getman passed the gavel to Vice Chairman Findlay so that he could make a motion.

**ACTION: Commissioner Getman moved to cease paying attorney fees effective this meeting. If Commissioner Stevens decided not to settle and was found to have no violation, then attorney fees would be paid. If Commissioner Stevens decided to settle and submitted his resignation, then all attorney fees would be paid as of this meeting. Commissioner Matarese seconded the motion. The motion passed (3-1). Commissioner Stevens recused himself from voting. Vice Chairman Findlay opposed.**

### **CHIEF'S REPORT**

Chief Bradshaw reviewed the departmental reports.

### **COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS**

Commissioner Stevens said he was aware Counsel Joshi had been asked to come to the meeting but had a family emergency. He asked Commissioner Reasoner who had given him the authority to invite Counsel Joshi. He told him there was a policy in place for the Chairman to invite counsel. Commissioner Reasoner said he would go through proper channels.

Commissioner Stevens said, "Resignation is not an option."

Vice Chairman Findlay encouraged everyone to go through their chain of command and try to work out difficulties or disagreements. He said we wasted \$100,000 on what he called "trivial."

Commissioner Matarese said that a person living through this would not call it trivial.

### **NEXT MEETING DATE**

The next meeting date is May 18, 2023.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**ACTION: Commissioner Reasoner moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:32 pm. Chairman Getman seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously (5-0).**

Respectfully Submitted,

APPROVED 05/18/2023

Chairman Ronald D. Getman