

March 17, 2016

The Board of Commissioners of the North River Fire District met in regular session on Thursday, March 17, 2016, at 6:00 P.M. in the Resource Center of Station Two.

Present:	Paul Pitcher	Chairman
	Robert Bell	Vice-Chairman
	Amy Willis	Commissioner
	Michael Browning	Commissioner
	Scott Smith	Commissioner
	James Alderman	Commissioner
	Michael S. Rampino	Fire Chief
Absent:	Donald Olmstead	Commissioner

Chairman Pitcher opened the meeting.

Chairman Pitcher inquired if there was any public wishing to make comment; as no public was present or wishing to comment, Chairman Pitcher proceeded with the meeting.

The minutes of the previous meeting held February 18, 2016 were approved on motion by Commissioner Browning, seconded by Commissioner Alderman and carried by a vote of 6-0.

As Cori Rigney, the Chaplain appointee's arrival was delayed; Chairman Pitcher proceeded with the next agenda item.

Chief Rampino indicated that Mary Egan, who is an administrative support staff for the district as well as a 20-year resident of the district, is being brought to the Board as a nominee to be the Citizen Trustee for the North River Firefighters Pension Plan. She would fill the seat through November 2017. Commissioner Alderman motioned to approve Mrs. Egan as the Citizen Trustee for the North River Firefighters Pension Plan through November 2017, seconded by Commissioner Willis and carried by a vote of 6-0.

Ms. Cori Rigney and her family arrived. Chief Rampino indicated that Captain Jeff Dirling would introduce her. He gave a brief introduction to the Board. Cori will begin her Chaplaincy on March 30, 2016, when she hopes to begin meeting staff members at our stations. Cori indicated she was very excited for the opportunity to get to know everyone. Chief indicated that it is expected she will be able to take classes and fulfill many of the roles outlined in the Chaplain job description.

Chief indicated that the Administrative Pension Plan had been mandated by the IRS to have the plan restated. CS&L, the same company that does our

financial audit, was able to assist the District in completing the mandate to keep the plan qualified. Commissioner Smith motioned to approve the North River Fire District Money Purchase Plan for Administrative Staff and Resolution 2016-01,

**A RESOLUTION OF THE NORTH RIVER FIRE DISTRICT BOARD OF
FIRE COMMISSIONERS, ADOPTING AMENDMENTS TO THE
PENSION PLAN FOR ADMINISTRATIVE EMPLOYEES**

seconded by Commissioner Bell and carried by a vote of 6-0.

Chief Rampino indicated that the Board needed to establish a Public Hearing date for proposed fire assessment rates. Commissioner Browning motioned to advertise and establish April 21, 2016, the regularly scheduled meeting date, as a public hearing regarding proposed fire assessment rates, seconded by Commissioner Willis and carried by a vote of 6-0.

Chief Rampino indicated the Fire Commissioners' By-laws, formerly known as Commissioner Rules & Regulations, were distributed at the last meeting. Commissioners were asked to review the document so that it could be discussed and updated.

Commissioner Smith indicated he felt Section 3 required a revision to correctly reflect the number of days when elected officers assume their duties at the November meeting following an election. It was indicated that possibly the timing of the November Commission meeting should be changed.

It was also pointed out that Section 5 might possibly require updating to better reflect State Statute and the indication of the honorarium for Treasurer. The language in Section 7 needs to be reworked to correctly reflect excused and non-excused absences. Chief Rampino to provide new language.

Chairman Pitcher inquired about Section 6, Item 7 regarding "charges for emergency services". Chief indicated that this type of billing has been tried in the past and has failed in its implementation. Commissioner Alderman indicated that this had been tried about 20 years ago and had not succeeded. Chairman Pitcher questioned Section 8 and how it is being applied to our Commission situation. It was indicated that the Chair can vote, but not motion. He also felt that it was not necessary to alter Section 16. In Section 6, Item 2, it was felt that the Fire Chief did not need to be included in a yearly appointment, as he is under contract for a stipulated amount of years.

A revised document will be brought to the Board after review by the attorney.

Chief Rampino has completed 2 years of employment as of March 10, 2016, and as such, he was scheduled for a yearly evaluation. Several Commissioners

indicated that they felt that firefighter input should be sought. As it had not been done this year, it would be advised for next year. Commissioners felt that they could only comment on their own interactions with the Chief and not Chief's interactions with employees. It was, however, stated that future evaluations should include firefighter input and starting this process in October or November of the preceding year would offer plenty of time for this process. Commissioners inquired if all employees are evaluated. Chief indicated that evaluations are done by the hierarchy of command.

Chief Rampino commented that he hoped that should Commissioners have any issues they would address them with him as they arose. Commissioner Willis indicated that she felt if there had been problems the Commission would have heard from employees.

Commissioner Alderman indicated that Chief Rampino had a "buy-in from the guys" which makes for a more effective leader. He felt this was a good litmus test of a good leader. Commissioner Smith commented that he felt morale was higher than in the past.

Chairman Pitcher commented that he felt Chief allows supervisors to do what needs to be done; that he had clarified deficiencies from previous years; equipment has improved with 3 new trucks and moving forward with other equipment improvements; standards for advancement are set forth; training is available as needed and long-term goals are set.

Commissioners inquired about what salary increases had been received. Chief advised that administrative staff had received a 5% increase and CBA members had increased according to their place in the step plan as well as holiday pay being added this year. Chief feels that salaries lag behind other Manatee Co. fire departments and he'd like to see our salaries get within 5% of the other departments, budget permitting. Chief Rampino advised he would send the Board a copy of the Manatee Co. Fire Chiefs' salary survey.

Commissioner Bell motioned to increase the Fire Chief's salary by 5% effective March 10, 2016, seconded by Commissioner Alderman and carried by a vote of 6-0.

Financial Services Manager, Vicky Polston, reported that approximately \$600,000 in tax assessments is yet to be received. Impact Fund fees of \$18,830 for February were recently received. Funds are available in the Impact Fee Fund to meet the April loan payment. Commissioner Willis motioned to approve the Financial Report for February 2016, seconded by Commissioner Browning and carried by a vote of 6-0.

In his Administrative Report, Chief Rampino indicated that the district would look to hire a replacement for the Administrative Assistant position in

approximately 6 to 8 months so that training can take place before Jeanne Johnson's retirement.

Commissioner Browning indicated that the Manatee County Fire Commissioners' Association will meet again at Cedar Hammock Fire Rescue on April 4, 2016. He also commented on the St. Patrick's Day shirts that the crews were wearing. Commissioner Willis welcomed Chaplain Cori Rigney.

Commissioner Bell motioned to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Browning and carried by a vote of 6-0.

PAUL J. PITCHER
CHAIRMAN

ATTEST:

SECRETARY
MICHAEL P. BROWNING