

MINUTES FOR THE BOARD MEETING OF AUGUST 26 2026
FOR THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF
THE ENGLEWOOD AREA FIRE CONTROL DISTRICT

Wednesday, August 26, 2026, 9:00 A.M.
Meeting held at
Englewood Fire Administration Office
579 S. Indiana Avenue, Englewood, FL 34223

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 A.M. by Chairman William Kimberlin. Those present were Mr. Maley, Mr. Godlewsky, Mr. Loisell, Chief Easton and Ms. Wellbaum. Mr. Knauf was absent.

CONSENT AGENDA FROM LAST MONTH'S MEETING

Mr. Kimberlin asked if there were any questions, corrections, or additions to the consent agenda of the 07/22/2016 Board Meeting. Mr. Maley made a motion to accept the consent agenda from 07/22/2026 subject to audit. It was seconded by Mr. Loisell and the motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No Public Comment

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Chief Easton reported to the Board that he received the contract for the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) grant to purchase the headquarters generator and will need to be signed by the Board. Chief Easton also noted that the grant administrator is requesting approval from the Florida Department of Emergency Management (FDEM) to utilize an expedited three-bid procurement process rather than a formal Request for Proposals (RFP). A small discussion ensued.

Chief Easton updated the Board on the Charlotte County one-cent sales tax, noting that there are no new operational developments. He reminded the Board that the 20-year extension of the sales tax will appear on the November ballot for voter approval. Chief Easton did confirm that he received the educational materials from the deputy county administrator for use during public outreach and presentation engagements.

Chief Easton updated the Board on the status of the Fire Marshal recruitment. He explained that he had adjusted the salary for the position plus expanded the outreach and it has generated more interest and applicant inquiries.

Chief Easton reported to the Board that there are no updates regarding the fire station financing at this time and the item was passed over without further discussion.

NEW BUSINESS

Chief Easton provided an update to the Board regarding the negotiations for this three-year contract renewal. Chief Easton and Mr. Kimberlin reach a tentative agreement, which includes salary increase of 5% in year one, 5% in year two, and 6% in year three. Additionally, the revised contract modifies the benefits, allowing Chief Easton to sell back up to two weeks of unused vacation time annually at the end of the year rather than carrying it forward or accruing a large payout upon contract expiration. A short discussion ensued. Mr. Loisell made a motion to approve the three-year contract renewal for Chief Easton. It was seconded by Mr. Maley and motion passed unanimously.

Chief Easton informed the Board that a potential site for the construction of a new Fire Station 72 has been identified, a 5-acre parcel located at the corner of Placida Road and Griggs Street. Chief Easton and Commissioner Kimberlin met with the property owner and conducted an initial site walk. Chief Easton has also spoken with Charlotte County Zoning to indicate that the property is suitable for fire station development. Therefore, to determine complete site feasibility, Chief Easton obtained a proposal from a local engineering firm to conduct an environmental and geological for \$8,200. A small discussion ensued. Mr. Godlewsky made a motion to approve environmental study and geological study for \$8200 with Creek Engineering. It was seconded by Mr. Maley and the motion passed unanimously.

Chief Easton presented to the Board a draft Ordinance 2026-02 Civil citation process, the ordinance establishes reinforcement procedure for life safety and fire code violations. Under the proposed ordinance, property or business owners found to be in non-compliance during an EFD inspection must rectify violations within a designated timeframe or face monetary civil citations. Chief Easton read the proposed draft ordinance in its entirety for the Board's consideration. A small discussion ensued. The Board agreed to table the item for further review and discussion at the October meeting.

Chief Easton presented to the Board a draft Resolution, noting the extensive work was completed by the interim Fire Marshal, Ken Bennett. He gave each Commissioner a copy along with the highlighted Exhibit A which is the proposed fee schedule pointing out the red text which is Ken's commentary to help break down and explain each section. Chief Easton explained that the current fee schedule is generic however, with the proposed resolution, it establishes specific fees for a broader range of inspections and temporary use permits, such as required tent inspections for community events. Chief Easton advised the Commissioners to review the provided materials, and the item could be open for further discussion and a vote at the October meeting.

Chief Easton reminded the Board of the recent transition of the District's medical insurance coverage to Public Risk Management (PRM). He went onto explain that under PRM Health Trust structure, each member of the organization holds a seat on the PRM Board of Directors. Therefore, the Board would need to designate the District's primary and alternate voting representatives to the PRM Board. A small discussion ensued. The Board authorized Chief Easton to be the primary voting delegate and Chief Bennett as the alternate.

Chief Easton reported to the Board that he received a certified letter from the City of North Port initiating formal annexation proceedings with Sarasota County for Winchester Ranches. Chief Easton noted that because the District currently provides fire protection services to the area, Florida Statutes grant the District the right to participate in annexation deliberations, provided a written response requesting a seat at the table is submitted within 60 days. Chief Easton confirmed he will submit the formal request to ensure District representation.

Chief Easton outlined concerns that the annexation creates an enclave, as surrounding areas (such as Esplanade/Myakka Pines Golf Course) remain within the District's jurisdiction. This structure would force District apparatus to travel through City of North Port territory to access District property. Chief Easton explained the financial and operational impact to the area. The development projects up to 10,000 rooftops, representing an estimated \$3 million in annual revenue and necessitating future capital infrastructure, including up to two fire stations. The Board expressed a strong support for defending the District's service territory and opposing unmitigated loss of district property and revenue. The Board authorized Chief Easton to submit the 60-day response letter securing the District's seat at the negotiation table and to engage an attorney for an initial legal consultation to evaluate potential remedies, costs, and strategic options.

Chief Easton presented the Board with a preliminary copy of the upcoming fiscal budget. He went onto explain his recommendation to proceed with the maximum rate increase of 9.1% for the Non-Ad Valorem Assessment. This would increase the budget from \$13.3 million to \$14.7 million. Chief Easton provided historical context, highlighting the district growth. He also went onto review budget categories such as, operational expenses, facility maintenance, and overtime expenses. A long discussion ensued. The Board will review the preliminary budget in preparation of the formal public hearing scheduled for next month.

CHIEF'S REPORT

Chief Easton reported that the District will participate in the annual 9/11 Memorial Ceremony scheduled for September 11 at 9:30 AM at the First Responder Memorial at the end of Dearborn Street. The department's involvement will include participation by the Honor Guard and the display of the American flag from the ladder truck. Chief Easton and guest speaker, Captain Darren, USN (Ret.), current ROTC instructor at Lemon Bay High School, will deliver remarks during the ceremony.

Chief Easton expressed his appreciation to Chaplain Scott Andrews and his church for donating the use of a residential property for the department's Peer Support Team and personnel. The facility, secured via key code, provides a dedicated space for members to decompress or rest following challenging shifts.

Chief Easton noted that department crews recently assisted with property preparations, including cleanup and the installation of smoke detectors. He formally extended public thanks to Chaplain Andrews for his ongoing support and praised the continued efforts and progress of the Peer Support Team.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC:

No public comment.

DVP COMMENT :

No DVP comment.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

Mr. Maley thanked Chaplain Scott Andrews for donating the property. He also thanked Ken Bennett for all his hard work preparing the new fee schedule and thanked Chief Easton for a wonderful job.

Mr. Kimberlin also thanked Chaplain Scott for donating the property. He also thanked Ken Bennett for stepping up to help the district. Mr. Kimberlin thanked Chief Easton for doing a great job.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:20 am.