

MINUTES FOR THE BOARD MEETING OF JULY 23, 2025
FOR THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF
THE ENGLEWOOD AREA FIRE CONTROL DISTRICT

Wednesday, July 23, 2025, 9:00 A.M.
Meeting held at
Englewood Fire Administration Office
516 Paul Morris Drive, Englewood, FL 34223

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 A.M. by Chairman, Ronald Davison. Those present were Mr. Loisel, Mr. Maley, Mr. Knauf, Lori Wellbaum and Chief Easton. Mr. Benedetti attended via phone.

CONSENT AGENDA FROM LAST MONTH'S MEETING

Mr. Davison asked if there were any questions, corrections, or additions to the consent agenda from the 06/25/2025 Board Meeting. Mr. Maley made a motion to accept the consent agenda and financial agenda from 06/25/2025, subject to audit. It was seconded by Mr. Knauf and the motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No Public Comment

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Chief Easton explained to the Board that he is still obtaining pricing for the replacement vessel for Fire Boat 72. He said the project is still ongoing and will have more details later.

Chief Easton provided an update to the Board regarding the mechanic position. He explained that the candidate is currently in the process of securing housing and that his spouse is onboarding with a local municipality for employment. Chief Easton emphasized that the candidate wants to be settled before the start of the school year.

Chief Easton explained that he is in discussions with the Fire Chief at Boca Grande Fire Department regarding the use of the EAFCD fleet mechanical services. Chief Blosser is very interested, and they have talked about pricing, including shop rates, after-hours rates, and costs for parts. They agree on these aspects, and Chief Easton will draft an interlocal agreement for review. Additionally, he mentioned that Boca Grande Fire wants to donate a pumper truck for reserve use.

Chief Easton provided an update to the Board regarding the transition of construction inspections from Sarasota and Charlotte Counties to the EAFCD. He explained that he reached out to the Director at Sarasota County and they explained they are waiting on Chief Rathbun to present it to the County Board of Commissioners which is scheduled August 27, 2025. Chief Easton said he will be present for the meeting. He also spoke about Charlotte County, and he is still waiting for software access for Kyle Brooks.

Chief Easton updated the Board about the Transient Property Lodging Establishment (TPLE) inspections. He went onto explain that the spoke with other fire departments at the recent FASD

Florida Association of Special Districts conference. Chief Easton learned about Granicus, which is a monitoring and compliance software that identifies TPLE properties plus, eliminates duplicate listings. He went on to explain it would also increase the department's efficiency for completing the required life safety inspections which would be more than enough revenue to cover the \$30,000 annual cost for the program. A small discussion ensued.

Mr. Benedetti made a motion to approve the purchase of the program. It was seconded by Mr. Maley and the motion passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

Jeff Brown from Ashley, Brown & Co., presented and reviewed the district financial audit to the Board. He confirmed it was a clean audit and the District is financially sound. A small discussion ensued.

Chief Easton presented the Board with Resolution 2025-1429, the Local Mitigation Strategy with Charlotte County; it's updated every 5 years. He explained that these agreements would make EFD eligible for local grants.

Chief Easton addressed the Board regarding the upcoming round of new hires. He outlined his plan to hire four new firefighters: one to replace a recently retired crew member and three additional members as specified in the staffing plan. Chief Easton stated that the new hires will begin in mid-September, which will allow for an increase of one line person per shift. Additionally, Engine 73 will be staffed with three crew members.

Chief Easton spoke to the Board about purchasing a new department vehicle for the mechanic plus, replacing the maintenance technician's truck. He explained that Chief Bennett has secured pricing from the Florida Sherriff Association for a new Ford F250 Pickup and a new Ford F450 Pickup which totals approximately \$150,000. A short discussion ensued. Mr. Loisell made a motion to approve the purchase of both vehicles. It was seconded by Mr. Knauf and opposed by Mr. Benedetti. The motion passed by majority.

Chief Easton spoke with the Board about the public hearing. He confirmed the date is Wednesday, September 10, 2025, at 5:01pm. Chief Easton also noted that he will not be attending the hearing due to a previous engagement.

Chief Easton addressed the Board about the Strategic Plan session scheduled for September 22nd through September 24th. He explained that he has organized a group of community members for the session but does need the participation of one (1) commissioner from the EAFCD Board and asked if any of the Board members were available. A short discussion ensued but a participant was not determined.

Chief Easton addressed the Board regarding a recent lease renewal from Crown Castle for the tower located on the Station 72 property. He shared that he received an offer of \$702,000 for perpetual easement purchase. He introduced a local parcel that he believes would be an ideal location, as it is only three blocks away from Fire Boat 72 and offers safer road access. Chief Easton will collaborate with Mr. Knauf to present an offer to the property owner, while Ms. Wellbaum will review the lease contract to verify its terms.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC:

No public comment.

DVP COMMENT :

No DVP comment.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

Mr. Knauf thanked Chief Easton for doing a great job.

Mr. Loisell asked a question about the legality of people living out of someone's garage. Chief Easton informed him that the fire department has no jurisdiction over such matters. He offered Mr. Loisell to speak with Fire Marshal Kyle Brooks for further information.

Mr. Benedetti had a question about the vacant land rate increase. Chief Easton explained that back in 2008, increases were suspended as it was deemed too high for the area therefore, no increases were implemented until the rates could catch up.

Mr. Benedetti spoke about Collier County's upgraded Next Gen 911 service which allows callers to send text and videos. He wondered if Sarasota was looking at upgrading their service. Chief Easton was aware they were looking but nothing confirmed. Chief Easton did note that Charlotte County dispatch upgraded to 911 Live which had similar features plus, allowed First Responders to hear the callers.

Mr. Benedetti asked the Chief if the 2024 Operating Report was ready yet. Chief Easton did confirm that it's nearly complete and should have a copy to members soon.

Mr. Maley asked Chief Easton and the Board about selecting the maximum rate increase. A short discussion ensued. Chief Easton also provided some history of the rates and confirmed that since 2011 the area has only experienced a \$130.00 increase over the last 15 years which is the equivalent to \$8.67 per year.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:40am.