

**MINUTES FOR THE BOARD MEETING OF DECEMBER 18, 2024
FOR THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF
THE ENGLEWOOD AREA FIRE CONTROL DISTRICT**

Wednesday, December 18, 2024, 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 Vice Chairman, Mr. Loisell. Those present were: Mr. Benedetti, Mr. Kimberlin, Mr. Knauf, Lori Wellbaum, and Chief Easton. Mr. Davison was absent.

CONSENT AGENDA FROM LAST MONTHS MEETING

Mr. Loisell asked if there were any questions, corrections, or additions to the consent agenda from the 11/20/2024 Board Meeting. Mr. Benedetti made a motion to accept the consent agenda and financials from 11/20/2024 subject to audit. It was seconded by Mr. Knauf and the motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No Public Comment

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Chief Easton introduced Edward Kosakowski as the new Fire Inspector. He highlighted Ed's experience and the advantages he will bring to the department. Ed is the second Fire Inspector to the Community Risk Reduction Division.

Chief Easton did not have any updates for the Board regarding the fuel site with the Englewood Water District. He reiterated that analytics are being collected to determine tank sizes, land establishment, etc. Chief Easton will provide an update on the project at a later date.

Chief Easton updated the Board regarding Todd Dunn's department vehicle. He explained the vehicle had been purchased within budget from Elder Ford of Tampa and it's now in the process of having graphics applied.

Chief Easton spoke to the Board about the purchase of the vacant property at 521 S. Indiana Avenue. He explained that it's under contract for \$138,500 and is scheduled to close on December 23, 2024; in the interim, he is receiving quotes to clear the property. A brief discussion followed.

Chief Easton provided the Board with an update on the transition of construction inspections from Sarasota and Charlotte County to EAFCD. He explained that an Interlocal Agreement has been prepared for Sarasota and will soon be presented to their Board for approval and signing. Additionally, Chief Easton mentioned that as part of this transition, EAFCD will need to purchase the software license from Sarasota. Lastly, he noted that Charlotte County is currently reviewing the necessary procedures to transition funds, as well as addressing the properties with permits that have already been processed.

Chief Easton provided the Board with an update regarding the property located at 579 S. Indiana Avenue. He recently received communication from the tenants, Crews Bank, who have decided not to extend their lease and will be vacating the premises on January 15, 2025. As a result of this new development, the administration staff's move has been rescheduled to take place sometime in March or early April.

NEW BUSINESS

Chief Easton was pleased to inform the Board that the new Battalion Chief vehicle was officially placed into service yesterday. He noted that the old Battalion Chief vehicle, a 2018 Ford F-250, will be put into reserve and requested the Board approve the old reserve vehicle, a 2013 Chevy Tahoe, to be disposed of and sold on the government surplus site. Mr. Benedetti made a motion to approve the asset disposal. It was seconded by Mr. Maely and passed unanimously.

Chief Easton addressed the Board regarding the amendment to his contract. This amendment, which modifies his pension contributions, has been sent to Ms. Wellbaum for review. Once the review is complete, it will require signatures from both Chief Easton and Mr. Davison. A brief discussion followed.

Chief Easton was pleased to inform the Board that on December 16, 2024 (6) Lieutenants were promoted to Captain, he announced their names and Five (5) Firefighters were promoted to Engineers. Chief Easton went on to explain the responsibilities and duties of their new ranks. A brief discussion followed.

Chief Easton provided the Board with an update on the new ladder truck. He explained that it's nearing completion, and he's scheduled to travel to Sutphen for the final inspection and to discuss the pre-build for the new pumper. A brief discussion followed.

Chief Easton provided the Board with a copy of the Non-Bargaining Unit Member Handbook to review. He went on to explain that the handbook is the basic terms and conditions for the employment of the Administrative staff. He requested the Board address any changes or approve the handbook at the next Board meeting. A brief discussion followed.

Chief Easton addressed the Board regarding Anser Advisory, previously known as Government Services Group (GSG). He explained that the company is undergoing rebranding to become part of Accenture. While their professional services will remain the same, he wanted the staff to be aware of the new name, email addresses, and related changes.

Chief Easton addressed the Board regarding a recent update to the Travel and Per Diem rates. He explained that districts can now find the appropriate rates for travel expenses and reimbursements on the U.S. General Services Administration website. Chief Easton is in the process of preparing a new Travel and Per Diem policy manual that reflects these changes. Once it is complete, he will provide a copy to all members. A brief discussion followed.

The Chief updated the Board on the Sarasota and Charlotte County Hazard Mitigation Grant Program. He explained that he intends to apply for funding to replace fire stations; however, the program requires the District to provide a 25% match for any approved project. A long discussion ensued. Chief Easton will further investigate the funding options, bonds, and other related details to present to the Board for additional discussion and support.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC:

No public comment.

DVP COMMENT :

No DVP comment.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

Mr. Losiell expressed how pleased he was with the EFD presence at this year's holiday parade. He thanked Chief Easton for doing a great job and wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

Mr. Benedetti requested the January meeting be rescheduled from the 22nd to 29th. A brief discussion ensued, and the meeting was changed. He also welcomed Ed Kosakowski and wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

Mr. Knauf discussed the impact of Mr. Kimberlin's absence and how he is already missed.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:55am.