

WEST MANATEE FIRE & RESCUE DISTRICT COMMISSION BUDGET WORKSHOP

*Minutes of April 21, 2026
Administration Building*

The workshop began at 5:02 p.m. with the following members present: Larry Jennis, Robert Bennett, Dana Tindall, Billy Burke, and Derrick Warner.

Chief Rigney opened the workshop, noting the 2026 Personal Income Growth (PIG) rate is 8% and that the proposed budget is based on this figure. He recommended a 7.9% assessment increase and turned the presentation over to Finance Clerk (FC) Larson.

FC Larson reviewed the mid-year budget and reported that revenues and expenditures are generally on target. She noted that USAR Maintenance funds were used for USAR classes and that the General Training budget may require amendment to cover paramedic school costs for three personnel. She also advised that the Accounting Services line item is projected to exceed the budget. Outstanding capital purchases include a side-by-side, a thermal imaging camera, and refurbishments for FB136.

FC Larson presented commercial and residential assessment comparisons, showing that WMFR remains below neighboring districts in both categories, except for Englewood in residential rates.

Chief Rigney stated that, unlike prior years, the workshop would focus on a one-year outlook due to upcoming contract negotiations. He reviewed projected operating expenses, noting reduced overtime costs, stable training funds, decreased medical expenses, and the addition of a service animal line item.

Chief Rigney then reviewed capital outlay items, including \$425,000 for four prevention vehicles and station renovations.

Commissioner Burke inquired, and Deputy Chief Johnson briefly noted ongoing coordination with county public safety leadership regarding a potential regional initiative, including preliminary discussions on funding, training requirements, and next steps.

Chief Rigney began discussing the Assigned Fund Balance, noting that this number will change. Commissioner Warner asked why there are no funds earmarked for vehicles. Chief Rigney stated that funds have been allocated to the capital outlay section of the budget. Commissioner Warner specified a ladder truck; Rigney stated we would be looking at that more towards 2031.

Chief Rigney went on to Vehicle Capital to review the current fleet for replacement timelines. Chief Rigney noted that the Fire Marshal vehicle and three inspector vehicles will be replaced, with the plan to keep the Tahoe as an extra vehicle for conferences or when other staff vehicles are in the shop. Chief Rigney spoke again about the ladder truck replacement and inquired about lead times with DC Johnson, which are currently roughly 4 years.

Chief Rigney reviewed projected revenues, noting an 8% increase equating to approximately \$1 million. He also discussed historical revenue trends and confirmed all current debt has been paid.

Finally, Chief Rigney reviewed rate options, noting that an 8% increase would result in an approximate \$32 increase for an average residential property and \$70 for a typical commercial property. He reiterated his recommendation of a 7.9% assessment increase.

The board thanked staff for the detailed Budget Workshop. The Board advised Staff to bring back a 7.9% rate increase.

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Chairman Jennis adjourned the meeting at 5:37 p.m.


Chairman


Secretary

