

**WEST MANATEE FIRE & RESCUE DISTRICT COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING**

*Minutes of September 10, 2024  
Administration Building*

Special Presentations: New employee oath/swear in – Matthew Joseph; Unit Citation for Hurricane Debby to August 4<sup>th</sup> personnel; Phoenix Awards; Civilian Service Award – Steve Gulash.

The meeting was called to order at 6:31 p.m. with the following members present: Billy Burke, Larry Jennis, David Bishop, Robert Bennett, and Derrick Warner. The Pledge of Allegiance was followed by a moment of silence.

**2<sup>nd</sup> PUBLIC HEARING 2024-2025 BUDGET:** AA Wright verified that public notice was advertised in The Bradenton Herald on Sunday, September 1, 2024, and read the resolution summary. A resolution of the West Manatee Fire & Rescue District of Manatee County, Florida, adopting a final budget for fiscal year 2024-2025, and providing for an effective date. Chairman Warner opened the public hearing for public comments; there were none. Commissioner Jennis motioned to close the public hearing. Seconded by Commissioner Bennett. There was no Board deliberation. Commissioner Bennett motioned to adopt the 2024-2025 Budget as presented. Seconded by Commissioner Burke. A roll call vote was taken. Commissioner Bishop – Yes, Commissioner Burke – Yes, Commissioner Bennett – Yes, Commissioner Jennis – Yes, Chairman Warner – Yes. Motion passed 5-0.

**PUBLIC HEARING 2024 FIRE ASSESSMENT CERTIFICATION:** Administrative Assistant (AA) Wright verified that public notice was advertised in The Bradenton Herald on September 1, 2024, and read the resolution summary. A Resolution of the West Mantee Fire and Rescue District of Manatee County, Florida, certifying the 2024 Fire Assessment. Chairman Warner opened the public hearing for public comments; there were none. Commissioner Jennis motioned to close the public hearing; seconded by Commissioner Bennett. Commissioner Jennis motioned to adopt the 2024 Fire Assessment Certification as presented; seconded by Commissioner Bennett. A roll call vote was taken. Commissioner Bishop – Yes, Commissioner Burke – Yes, Commissioner Bennett – Yes, Commissioner Jennis – Yes, Chairman Warner – Yes. Motion passed 5-0.

**CHANGES TO AGENDA:** None

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:** None

**CONSENT AGENDA:** Commissioner Jennis motioned to approve the Consent Agenda as presented; seconded by Commissioner Bennett; motion passed unanimously.

**COMMUNICATIONS:** None

**CARRIED FROM CONSENT AGENDA:** None

**OLD BUSINESS:** None

**NEW BUSINESS:**

- A. Chief Rigney Contract: Commissioner Jennis explained that he wanted to amend Chief Rigney's employment contract to align with the other fire chiefs in the area rather than the Board having to approve bonuses each year. Commissioner Jennis stated that the draft includes a term extension until September 30, 2029, a base salary increase to \$170,000, and a 5% increase each year. Commissioner Jennis motioned to amend Chief Rigney's employment contract as presented. Seconded by Commissioner Bennett. Commissioner Bishop said he agreed with the base salary increase and favored time extension, however he thinks that raises don't need to be locked in at 5% per year, but rather the Board should be able to decide on the increase each year. Commissioner Jennis said he thinks this contract shows commitment and continuity with Chief Rigney and the management of the District. Commissioner Bennett asked if this contract is one that could be amended again. Commissioner Bishop confirmed that it can be opened at any time if both parties agree to do so. Commissioner Bishop expressed his concerns about guaranteeing raises but reiterated that he is not against the contract and believes Chief Rigney is well worth it. Commissioner Bennett explained that

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he was concerned about the budget when the amended contract was sent to the Board. Commissioner Bennett stated he met with Chief Rigney to review budget projections for the coming years and exclaimed that the contract amendment would be sustainable for the District. A roll call vote was taken. Commissioner Bishop – Yes, Commissioner Burke – Yes, Commissioner Bennett – Yes, Commissioner Jennis – Yes, Chairman Warner – Yes. Motion passed 5-0.

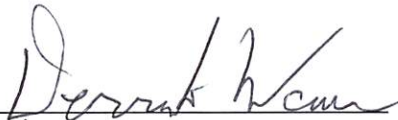
**CHIEF'S REPORT:** Chief Rigney thanked the Board for amending his employment contract. Chief Rigney spoke on the 9/11 Memorial occurring the next morning at Rossi Park at 9am and stated that fallen firefighter Brian Reed is also recognized at this event. Chief Rigney then informed the Board that the Congressional Awards Ceremony that Retired Chief Cleveland and Chairman Warner will be recognized at has been rescheduled to October 24<sup>th</sup> at 5:30pm at the Manatee Technical College. Chief Rigney thanked the Board for the opportunity to present such amazing awards at the meeting highlighting that Civilian Service Awards are very rare and special to the community.

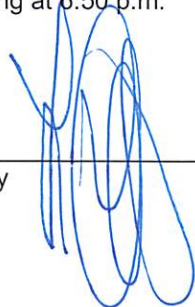
**OTHER REPORTS:** None

**COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS:** Commissioner Bishop appreciated the special presentations and reflecting on personal experiences with different outcomes, expressed gratitude for our personnel's efforts in every incident. Commissioner Burke agreed and told the Board about a personal incident that occurred in which he needed lifting assistance for his mother who had fallen. He praised Lt. Stump, FF/Medic Lease, and FF Elliott for their quick response and said he was pleased with Chief Rigney's contract and that he sets the standard for fire chiefs in the state. Commissioner Bennett asked the timeframe of the 10 lives recognized with Phoenix Awards to which Training Chief Tuttle answered with 1 year. Commissioner Bennett stated that number is remarkable and shows that early CPR is key then commended the District for their diligence in educating the public. Commissioner Jennis stated that the night's award presentations were inspiring and moving. Chairman Warner was very impressed with the awards and recounted his recent 13-year anniversary of being resuscitated and stated that WMFR sets the bar very high.

**NEXT MEETING:** Tuesday, October 15, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. at the Administration building.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Chairman Warner adjourned the meeting at 6:50 p.m.

  
Chairman

  
Secretary

