

# WEST MANATEE FIRE & RESCUE DISTRICT COMMISSION BUDGET WORKSHOP

*Minutes of April 16, 2024  
Administration Building*

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

Chief Rigney welcomed everyone and stated that the personal income growth rate came in at 7.43% and explained that this is an average of the past five years. Chief Rigney then gave the floor to Finance Clerk (FC) Larson.

FC Larson went through the mid-year budget review, stating most revenue and expenses are right on target. FC Larson noted that Budgeted Use of Unassigned Reserves and Capital Expenses will be amended since we will not be purchasing fire engines until FY26/27. FC Larson stated we are also anticipating a budget amendment for Legal Services, Contract Services, and Medical Expenses. FC Larson went on to explain the commercial and residential comparisons. When using McDonald's as the parameter for the commercial rate comparison, the chart showed WMFR is sitting above North River, but below Cedar Hammock, Southern Manatee, Englewood, and East Manatee. The residential rate chart shows WMFR below most including Southern Manatee, Fort Myers Beach, Cedar Hammock, and East Manatee, but above Englewood and North River. Chief Rigney noted that North River is going out to the voters to assess ad valorem. FC Larson then gave the floor back to Chief Rigney.

Chief Rigney began his presentation on Operating Expenses stating that we are currently in union negotiations so we cannot get detailed at this time however, personnel service is expected to increase by about \$1.3 million. Chief Rigney then moved on to Maintenance and Repair noting that the budget for Building, Vehicle, and USAR Maintenance will increase while Protective Gear Maintenance will substantially decrease as it was raised last year to purchase dual cert gear and new hire gear. Chief Rigney noted the increase to the training budget to fund medic school for new hires. Chief Rigney then stated the Contract Services will increase due to the new financial software and noted that Legal Services is likely to go up due to the current litigation. Chairman Warner asked if we should be doubling our Legal Services budget due to the litigation. Chief Rigney does not want to make that decision until he has more information from legal counsel.

Chief Rigney moved on to explaining Capital Outlay items including structural fire gear for captains and below, a zodiac, outfitting three high water vehicles, replacement of five video laryngoscopes, and refrigerator replacement.

Chief Rigney began speaking about the Assigned Fund Balance first noting that this number will change. Chief Rigney stated contingency will remain the same and vehicle replacement funds will be set aside for the two new engines. Chief Rigney stated leave liability was increased due to multiple employees nearing their retirement mark. Chief Rigney spoke on Restricted Funds from impact fees. Chief Rigney specified that those funds could be put towards a POD – Point of Distribution – on the WMFR Administrative Building Property.

Chief Rigney went on to Vehicle Capital reviewing the current fleet for replacement timelines. He stated the District does try to spread the lifetime out as much as possible. Chief Rigney noted he is researching the possibility of getting boat motors from FWC that are 5-years old.

Chief Rigney went through the Revenue tab stating that it reflects a 7.4% increase. With that and the additional income from TPLEs that Granicus recognized, the revenue from assessments would be \$11,357,113.50 and total revenue is estimated at \$12,119,386.

Chief Rigney moved on to Revenue Changes and spoke on the fund balance increasing which is good due to the engine purchases coming up soon. The fund balance is projected to be \$6,269,644 which is about 50% of operating budget which is recommended considering the barrier island being a part of the District.

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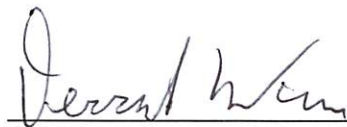
Lastly, Chief Rigney went into the Rate Options tab which compares different rate increase options. He stated his recommendation is a 7.4% assessment rate increase and explained that it equates to roughly a \$30 difference for the average sized home in our District.

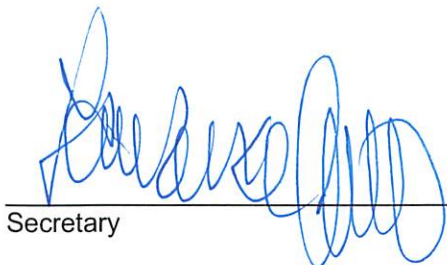
Chairman Warner spoke on the possibility of a debilitating hurricane and asked Chief Rigney how we will manage that. Chief Rigney stated we will continue to reach out to Sanibel to follow their recovery. Chief Rigney reiterated the 50% contingency fund. Chief Rigney also stated that some funds could possibly be reallocated if needed and gave the new engine purchase as an example. He also spoke on partnerships with other agencies, relationships with Region 6, and resiliency grants since two of our stations are in flood zones. Jennis asked if the TPLE increase is from the units that Granicus caught. FM Kwiatkowski stated his team found 2,800 TPLEs and Granicus was able to bring that number to roughly 4,600. FM Kwiatkowski stated April and May are booked solid with TPLE inspections.

Chief Rigney reminded the Board that the Workshop is also included on the Agenda in New Business and his preference is to hold the rate direction until the regular meeting. Commissioner Bishop stated that their efforts are increasing and suggested the Board should consider higher stipends. Chief Rigney stated the max allowed is \$500 per month and it can be worked into the budget but must go through a process. The commissioners agreed with Commissioner Bishop that efforts have increased. Commissioner Bishop asked if there was a line item on commissioner stipends in salary studies to which Chief Rigney said no, but he would get the other District's information. Chief Rigney stated he believes that most neighboring districts are at the max. Chairman Warner asked to add this to the next meeting.

Chief Rigney stated that a Shade Meeting needs to be scheduled regarding the litigation. Tuesday afternoon is ideal for all at 1 p.m.

Chairman Warner adjourned the meeting at 5:53 p.m.

  
Chairman

  
Secretary



