

Pine Hill Fire District #1
Workshop Meeting Minutes
March 6, 2025

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER: Meeting was called to order by Commissioner Hagarty at 5:34 P.M. Commissioner Hagarty led the salute to the flag and read a statement regarding the Open Public Meetings Act.

ROLL CALL: Commissioner Waddington – absent, Commissioner Wakeley – absent, Commissioner Hagarty – present, Commissioner Harris – present, Commissioner Briggs – present.

OTHER OFFICIALS PRESENT: Chief Hunter, Battalion Chief Pizzo, Captain Duvall, Business Administrator Lower

OPEN THE FLOOR TO THE PUBLIC: Commissioner Hagarty asked for a motion to open the floor to the public. A motion to open the floor to the public was made by Commissioner Harris and seconded by Commissioner Briggs. All were in favor. Motion passed.

- There was no public participation.

CLOSE FLOOR TO THE PUBLIC: Commissioner Hagarty asked for a motion to close the floor to the public if there were no other questions. There were none. A motion to close the floor to the public was made by Commissioner Harris and seconded by Commissioner Briggs. All were in favor. Motion passed.

WORKSHOP: Commissioner Hagarty thanked Chief Hunter, Battalion Chief Pizzo, and Captain Duvall for putting together the workshop meeting agenda. Commissioner Hagarty said it helps to keep us organized and he finds the workshop meetings to be extremely useful and beneficial. He said the workshop meetings are worthy of taking time to have good discussions. He also said we rely on the chiefs to queue up subject matters they think are pertinent to discuss.

The first topic on the agenda was Resolution 25-22 for a closed session. After a brief discussion between Commissioners Hagarty and Harris and Battalion Chief Pizzo, it was decided the closed session would take place during the regular meeting.

The second topic on the agenda was biweekly pay. Battalion Chief Pizzo said personal conversations he had with the Commissioners suggested they would be in favor of biweekly pay. Battalion Chief Pizzo said they had biweekly pay in the past but changed to semi-monthly pay due to money and issues with Chief Dukes. He said the whole department is suffering from not having biweekly pay. Battalion Chief Pizzo said that with less pay periods, the staff has a higher hourly rate which gives them a higher overtime rate. He said it would cut overtime costs if we

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went to biweekly pay. He said the annual pay for the career staff would be the same, but the hourly rate would decrease. He also said that when someone retires and has sellback time, going to biweekly pay would reduce the number of days they can use. Battalion Chief Pizzo said this change would be advantageous for the Board. Chief Hunter said the pay schedule does not only affect the career guys, but everyone who gets stipends and pay.

Commissioner Harris said that he spoke to Commissioner Waddington about it. Commissioner Waddington said it would save more money to not have biweekly pay, and that biweekly pay would also put more of a workload on Business Administrator Lower. Commissioner Harris said he spoke to Business Administrator Lower and she said she was in favor of biweekly pay.

Chief Hunter said that he will make sure that what happened with Chief Dukes will never happen again.

Commissioner Harris said he does think we should vote on it tonight, but that he is in favor of biweekly pay. Chief Hunter said we need to vote tonight.

Commissioner Hagarty asked for Business Administrator Lower's opinion. She said that she is in favor of biweekly pay because it provides a more consistent schedule knowing the pay will fall exactly every two weeks. She also said it would not be adding much of a workload for her.

Commissioner Briggs said she has absolutely no problem with switching to biweekly pay. Commissioner Hagarty said that he is also in favor of it and is surprised the issue has gone on this long. Battalion Chief Pizzo said that there will never be a Bill Dukes situation again. Commissioner Hagarty said that even though Commissioners Waddington and Wakeley are absent, the present Commissioners could still vote on it. Battalion Chief Pizzo said that we cannot keep going months with tabling issues. Commissioner Harris said he did not want to vote on it tonight. Chief Hunter said then he would walk out of the workshop meeting and return for the regular meeting. Commissioner Hagarty said to let them continue discussing. Commissioner Harris said that if Commissioners Waddington and Wakeley were present, they might not have voted on anything tonight, anyway. Chief Hunter said then it was a waste of his time to be here. Commissioner Harris said that Chief Hunter is the Fire Chief so it is not a waste of his time. Commissioner Hagarty asked everyone to stay on topic. Commissioner Hagarty said that we want to discuss this, and it helps to put all the facts on the table. Battalion Chief Pizzo said if you do not want to vote, then just abstain. Commissioner Harris said Chief Hunter is welcome to leave at any time, but do not threaten him by saying he is going to leave the meeting. Commissioner Hagarty said to stick to the agenda and make it a productive meeting, then figure out what decisions can be made.

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The third topic on the agenda was overtime. Battalion Chief Pizzo said the overall request is to have control of \$17,500 of overtime. He said that since 2022, they have had \$40,000 in the budget to use for overtime. He said this year it was ripped away from them without a plan. He said that is not the right thing to do as overtime is a substantial part of the operation. He said that most companies have control of their overtime, for example Pine Hill Police Department has used over \$100,000 in overtime. He said they want to have \$17,500 to cover five firefighters' overtime. Battalion Chief Pizzo said that the operation has been successful, and they are asking to keep running a successful operation. He mentioned that no one is retiring this year, so the money in the budget for overtime/sick time buyback will not be used.

Commissioner Hagarty said that there is \$30,000 allotted in the budget for overtime/sick time buyback and \$10,000 allotted in the budget for overtime. He clarified that the chiefs want control of \$17,500 of the allotted \$40,000.

Battalion Chief Pizzo said that according to the contract, no one can retire this year because no one provided notice in September 2024. Battalion Chief Pizzo said that overtime is not being abused. He said Commissioner Waddington gets to see the timecards and approves them twice a month. He said there is an overtime slip for every second of overtime.

Chief Hunter recommended putting the line item on the chief's budget. Commissioner Hagarty said that makes sense. Battalion Chief Pizzo said he sent the Commissioners a break down of how overtime was used last year. He said they spent somewhere in the \$16,000 range on overtime, and this year it should be around the same amount. He said any money leftover will go back to the Board and will not be floated to cover other line items.

Commissioner Hagarty clarified that the chiefs are looking for \$17,500 to be put into the overtime line item. Battalion Chief Pizzo confirmed and said they want to have control over the \$17,500. There was a lengthy discussion, which ended with Commissioner Hagarty saying that as long as Chief Hunter sent the commissioners an email, Chief Hunter was granted permission to use the overtime budget as he sees fit.

The fourth item on the agenda was the fill-in firefighter line item. Battalion Chief Pizzo said the fill-in firefighter line item should not be included in the Chief's budget because they don't really have control over it. Battalion Chief Pizzo requested one of two things: an increase in the line item of at least \$10,000 or the line item being transferred to the administrative side. There was a discussion. Battalion Chief Pizzo said he did not expect an answer on this right now.

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The next topic on the agenda was policy. Battalion Chief Pizzo said their request was to come up with a procedure to come up with policies. He said that in his experience, the chief was always involved in coming up with new policies. He also said that it is in their union contract that they have a right to negotiate any policy that is put out. Commissioner Harris asked which policies they were referring to. Chief Hunter said the Political Activity and the Examination of Public Record policies. Battalion Chief Pizzo said that there was no disagreement that there needs to be a policy, but the Commission might miss things that the chiefs could correct. Chief Hunter said that there are already policies created for a lot of these topics and that the Commission has policies they probably don't even know about. Battalion Chief Pizzo said that he believes the Political Activity policy already existed. Commissioner Harris asked him to print it out for them. Chief Hunter said he could do that, and that he has policies on a thumb drive. He said a lot of the career firefighters don't know that the new policies exist.

Commissioner Hagarty said that we need to find what policies we do have in whatever their current state is. He said policies should have two paths: an existing policy that needs to be modified and a policy that doesn't exist, where everyone agrees there should be a policy. Chief Hunter said when they create a policy, eventually they will be put on the Fire District's website but they are also put in a book in the firehouse so people can look at them at any time. He said once a month, they have the duty crews go through the policies. Commissioner Hagarty asked if part of the onboarding process is to have them read the policies. Battalion Chief Pizzo said yes.

Battalion Chief Pizzo said the first step should be to go through the thumb drive and see what policies are on it. Commissioner Hagarty agreed and said we should find out when it was last updated. Battalion Chief Pizzo said that throwing policies at them without having a conversation is a morale killer.

Chief Hunter mentioned the Political Activity that was put in place. It mentioned utilization of District equipment and facility. He said District facility needed to be specified. He said there could have been a conversation about this policy before it was posted.

Commissioner Hagarty said that it makes sense to look through what we have. Chief Hunter said he would work on printing out the policies from the thumb drive and will make copies for the Commission. He said policies should be updated every four or five years.

Battalion Chief Pizzo said there is a need for a committee to make policies as the Board can only meet so often. Commissioner Hagarty said policies and procedures are important. Commissioner Briggs agreed and said it is important not to have multiples of the same policy. Commissioner Hagarty said that by the time formal action is taken, the policy has already been worked out. Battalion Chief Pizzo said yes. Chief Hunter said then it is just agreed upon at a meeting.

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Battalion Chief Pizzo said that they have a good system for their policies. He said that Chief Hunter revises every policy, then it goes to him for review, then goes to Captain Duvall, and finally goes back to the Chief and becomes a policy. There was a discussion on emailing the contents of the thumb drive instead of printing. Commissioner Harris asked for it to be printed so we can put the policies in a binder. Chief Hunter said he will do whatever the Board wants. There was an agreement to both email and print. It was agreed that there needs to be a process for creating policies.

The final topic on the agenda was the ladder truck. Commissioner Briggs met with Chief Hunter and Battalion Chief Pizzo to go over the pros and cons of a new ladder truck. She said Commissioner Waddington was looking at a refurbished truck. Commissioner Briggs said the price for a refurbished truck was close to the price of a brand-new truck. Commissioner Harris asked what the price was for a refurbished truck. Chief Hunter said the refurbished truck in Riverside was \$1.4 million. Commissioner Briggs said that refurbished trucks don't come with a warranty. Captain Duvall said our ladder truck has hydraulics while Riverside has a mid-mount ladder truck, which cost \$1.4 million to do a refurbishment. Captain Duvall said it would be \$2.2 million for a new ladder truck. Commissioner Harris asked what our ladder truck is currently worth. Chief Hunter said they would send an appraiser out. He said it takes up to four years to get a new truck. Commissioner Briggs said they would not expect payment until the fire department has the truck in their possession. She said there are a lot of different options to go over. There was a lengthy discussion. There was an agreement that this issue needs to be solved quickly, and they would reach out to Pearce to do a presentation on the firetrucks.

Chief Hunter said he got an answer of the firefighter cancer screenings from the local union. He said he was going on March 31st for his screening. He said career firefighters are covered but he has no new information on the volunteers. He said he is not sure if it is on the Commission to get the volunteers tested, but the union is taking care of getting career firefighters tested.

Battalion Chief Pizzo said that they have an invoice that is getting paid this month for Tactical Public Safety that is going to come out of their line item. He said that it was paid for by JIF and we already received the insurance check for it. He said that the invoice should technically be paid out of the administrative line or transferred back to operations. Commissioner Hagarty said he would look into it.

Battalion Chief Pizzo said one of the volunteer firefighters got a grant for gym equipment. He said they purchased \$14,000 worth of equipment and were reimbursed for half of it. Commissioner Hagarty said great work. Battalion Chief Pizzo said they need the District to pay for a quarter of it. Commissioner Hagarty asked what equipment they got. Battalion Chief Pizzo

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said they got a new stair climber, leg machines, and a crossover machine. He invited Commissioner Hagarty to come use the equipment. Commissioner Hagarty said great work on seeking out grants. Chief Hunter said they just got a Wawa grant. Commissioner Hagarty congratulated them. He said he is trying to keep track of all the grants we get throughout the year. Chief Hunter said Captain Duvall is keeping track of them. Commissioner Hagarty said it would be good to show a list of our accomplishments at the end of the year.

Chief Hunter explained the issue with the air compressor on the truck. He said he got a quote and could get it fixed within two days. He said he would pay for it out of his budget because they really need to get it fixed. He said they are going to address it.

ADJOURNMENT: Commissioner Hagarty asked if there were any other issues that needed to be addressed. There were none. A motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Harris and seconded by Commissioner Briggs. All were in favor. Motion passed.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:07 p.m.



Christopher Harris
Commission Secretary



Hannah Lower
Fire District Business Administrator