UIFD Board Meeting Minutes 06/03/2025 10;00 AM

Members Present: Annie Hyder, Peter Bennet, Brendt Rustin, and Kathy Dreher. Chief Marc and Tabitha Mascarelli present.

Excused Absence: Bill Kerr and George Preckwinkle, and no Island representation present

The group discusses solutions for the challenging secretarial role in nonprofit boards, with Brendt sharing his experience with OnBoard software that Jim Jarvis vetted, which helps with task assignment and organization. Annie expresses interest in first evaluating the free AI companion transcription tool through Zoom before considering an investment in OnBoard or other alternatives.

10:11 AM

The group continues discussion implementing AI transcription tools to assist with board meeting documentation, with Annie strongly supporting the idea due to the challenges of maintaining continuity between meetings and the historically difficult nature of the secretary role. While the group agrees to evaluate the AI companion tool through Zoom first, they note that Bill Kerr, who was considered for the secretary position, is not present to accept the role.

The discussion reveals that minutes from their February 4th meeting are missing and will be adopted at next meeting, since Bill was not present on 2/4, further emphasizing their need for a reliable documentation solution.

10:17 AM

The meeting continues with Annie welcoming new board members Brendt and Kathy.

10:36 AM

Treasurers Report: Kathy presents the treasurer's report, showing an operating account balance of $434,007 and highlighting significant insurance cost increases, with workers' compensation and building insurance each rising to approximately $42,000 annually, leading to a total budget increase of $36,491. Peter guides the discussion on financial planning, noting that the current balance of $481,000 needs to cover operations for nine months until the next county payment in January, which appears manageable with the monthly expenses of around $50,000. Kathy discusses other account balances, Capital and Fund Raiser. Peter mentions reminder of keeping 99K reserves in Capitol account. Peter discusses past practices of budgetary concerns and recommendations for treasurer to consider.

10:44 AM

The Fire Board meeting covers several key topics and decisions. Marc Mascarelli discusses implementing the ZoomAI transcription tool to assist with meeting minutes, and the board agrees to evaluate it. The board approves the 2025-2026 budget (Hyder motion, Rustin 2nd, all in favor) with a $36,491 increase primarily due to insurance costs, including workers' compensation and building insurance. They also approve proceeding with a $15,000 marine electronics upgrade for the fireboat (Hyder motion, Bennet 2nd, all in favor), partially funded by a WCIND grant and a donation from the Wells family. The board discusses an ongoing dispute with their previous workers' compensation insurance provider over a $53,642 audit bill, which they plan to challenge legally.

Marc provides an update on his work schedule, currently averaging 11.5 days per month on-island instead of the contracted 15 days and discusses his off island meetings and running island errands, supplies, etc. Marc highlighted the competent crew he has taken on with no gaps in island coverage. The board will review an amended contract at the next meeting scheduled for August 4th at 10 AM. Annie mentions how Marc is available in Ft Myers to respond to island in a major emergency or any time if needed. Marc's employment contract needs to be amended to reflect his reduced schedule of 10 shifts per month while maintaining his current compensation including the $15,000 health insurance allowance that hasn't been paid since October 2024. The $5000 Chief bonus remains in budget for annual Board review. The board scheduled their next meeting for August 4th at 10am to discuss hurricane season preparedness and review Marc's amended contract.

Next Steps

Annie: Contact Derek Rooney regarding FMIT insurance compliance and billing issues1

Marc: Reach out to Max regarding FMIT regulatory compliance2

Marc: Contact Trish regarding architectural review for new building3

Marc: Send updated employment contract to Annie4

Kathy: Set up accounting orientation meeting with Brendt and John5( Marc will assist in Zoom Link)

Marc: Order marine electronics using Wells family donation and grant funds6

11:15 AM

 Chiefs Report: Marc reports that the station renovation is complete, paid for and well-received, with a successful community breakfast event. Marc reports the fire station will do more events like this in future and a Public Relations section in budget has been appropriated with $1500 dollars to include items like this, t-shirts, kid swag for visitors, etc. Marc reduced department fuel budget to accommodate increase in propane cost increase and PR budget. Marc discusses swag gifts given for Justin McBride and Max Miller for excessive help given to Useppa FD. Marc discusses worker compensation rep visit went well with crew impressed with our setup. Marc discusses positivity with ongoing fire inspections of public places on island with Club. Marc gives status of new department vehicle still scheduled for September 2025 and final payment due. Marc discusses recent fire boat class paid for by WCIND, which himself and 4 firefighters from Useppa participated in. Marc talks of future fundraiser needs of new engines on fire boat. Current full service was recently performed on fire boat, mechanic stated one of the engines showed significant wear due to age. Could last another couple years , or could fail tomorrow. Received one quote of 50K (Gasparilla Inn Marina Boca Grande) which included government pricing of twin 225 outboard motors including all rigging and labor. Marc will apply for WCIND 50/50 grant by March 12 2026 to receive half $ of new motor cost and install back to department.

11:51 AM

The board meeting covered several key topics:

Budget approval for 2025-2026 fiscal year with a $36,000 increase mainly due to insurance costs

Fire station renovation completion and community breakfast event

Proposed Quonset hut replacement project (on hold Marc getting more quotes)

Fire boat updates including:

Marine electronics upgrade approval using Wells family donation and grant

Potential motor replacement needs

Workers compensation insurance dispute regarding a $53,000 audit bill

Chief's contract discussion regarding work schedule and compensation

Fire inspection updates for island facilities

Fire department staffing and operations status

Treasurer's report on various accounts and financial standing

Discussion of future fundraising initiatives

Here are some action items:

Annie: Contact Derek Rooney regarding FMIT workers comp audit bill and legal support1

Marc: Send updated employment contract to Annie for board review2

Marc: Order marine electronics for the boat using Wells family donation and grant funds3

Marc: Investigate if Architectural Review Committee still exists for shed project4

Kathy: Set up accounting orientation meeting with John, Peter and Brent5

11:55 AM

Meeting Adjourned