

**Pace Fire Rescue District
Regular Meeting
February 24, 2025**

1. Meeting Called to Order

Present: Chairman Nick Gradia, Vice-Chairman Daniel Mills, and
Secretary Jeremy Johnston
Excused Absent: Treasurer Felix Hernandez
Unexcused Absent: Commissioner Lynn Garrett

Chairman Nick Gradia called the meeting to order at approximately 5:05 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

a. Chairman Nick Gradia led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Moment of Silence

a. Chairman Nick Gradia led in the opening prayer.

4. Public Forum

a. The Board acknowledges the public, no one was in attendance.

5. Minutes from the previous meeting

- a. Secretary Jeremy Johnston wanted to discuss the letter they all received from the attorney concerning the Union. He said, "he wished it could've been resolved sooner". Chairman Gradia suggested that Secretary Johnston meet with Chief Whitfield to get a better understanding of the situation. Secretary Johnston asked Chief Whitfield "when was the issue going to be resolved"? Chief Whitfield said, "an adjustment will be made by the next paycheck. He had sent all the figures to the attorney, and he could not talk about it while it's under litigation."
- b. A Motion to Approve Meeting Minutes was 1st made by Vice-Chairman Mills and 2nd by Secretary Johnston.
- c. Motion passed, unanimously.

6. Financial Report (Written report attached)

- a. Chairman Gradia asked how the new tax was doing as far as receiving the new revenue. Accountant Rachel Connell stated we had received 84% of the taxes as of January 2025. Chairman Gradia asked if we had looked at the churches to see how much would come from them. Mrs. Connell stated some of the church's could own more property than just the church itself. Deputy Chief Wadkins stated he had taken a look at the three larger churches, and they hadn't paid their taxes yet. Chairman Gradia asked if we could have a breakdown of the projected revenue from the churches and Chief Whitfield said he would speak to Mr. Jones

about the possibility of producing a report of this nature. Secretary Johnston asked what happens if they don't pay the fire tax and Chief Whitfield said, "he believed there would be a lien on their property". Chairman Gradia spoke about how we needed to be prepared for the future as far as trying to get the law changed, modified, etc. Chief Whitfield said he had already set up two meetings to discuss this.

- b. The Motion to Approve the Financial Report was 1st made Vice-Chairman Mills and 2nd by Secretary Johnston.
- c. Motion passed, unanimously.

7. Chief's Report (Written report attached)

- a. The Chief's Report was acknowledged.
- b. Informational purposes only, no action needed.

8. Station 4 Construction Update

- a. Derek Pratt addressed the Board on the status of Station 4. Mr. Pratt stated the roof was on, all the brick is up, and the windows will be installed next week. Secretary Johnston asked if Station 4 was being manned. Chief Whitfield said, "with the new hires we will have enough to pull from the shift if no one signs up for Station 4". They will need to work out of Station 2 until Station 4 is ready. Mr. Pratt said it would probably be two to three more weeks before the building could be used. Lieutenant Murphy mentioned he had been questioned by a citizen whether Station 4 was going to help Allentown. Chairman Gradia suggested to tell the public if they have any questions, they should attend one of our meetings. Chief Whitfield has been having discussions with Chief Baker on coverage and the cost to them for this coverage if we make more and more calls to that area. Chief Whitfield also mentioned that EMS will have access to Station 4 to use as their post.
- b. Informational purposes only, no action needed.

9. Station 4 Construction Loan Update

- a. Chief Whitfield informed the Board that Dan Stewart, Esq. will be handling the contract with the bank for the loan on Station 4. Mr. Stewart has been given the Resolution, Note and Loan Agreement. Once Mr. Stewart reviews it, it will be presented to the Board for approval. Chief Whitfield has a meeting to discuss the loan with Synovus Bank.
- b. Informational purposes only, no action needed.

10. Rescue 21 Refurb Project Update

- a. Chief Whitfield informed the Board that the final inspection is scheduled for the week of March 17th. Chief Whitfield has three of the guys interested in going to Forsythe, Georgia for the final inspection. We should be getting the truck two to three weeks after the final inspection. At that time, it will be sent to Defuniak Springs to get detailed.
- b. Information purposes only, no action needed.

11. DR409a Adjustments

- a. Chief Whitfield reported that the adjustments were being made because years ago the properties were not classified correctly. With the adjustments being made this year to the district, hopefully next year it will go smoothly.
- b. Information purposes only, no action needed.

12. LifePack 15

- a. Chief Whitfield reported two of our LifePack 15's were purchased in 2013. According to the manufacturer, they are no longer eligible for coverage under extended warranty programs. The department has applied for a State of Florida Grant to help fund the replacement of these two monitors as well as an additional one for Station 4. We currently have a spare which is kept in the Battalion Chief's vehicle if needed.
- b. Information purposes only, no action needed.

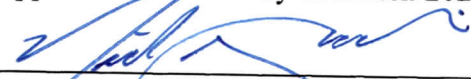
13. Addition/Deletions

- a. Chairman Gradia would like to establish a timeline for our public meetings. We need to post our meetings having a Public Forum. At our meeting we should provide a sign-in sheet for their name, address, contact information and topic they would like to speak on. Their topic should only be 3 minutes long.
- b. Vice-Chairman Mills asked if we had anymore information on a new Engine. Chief Whitfield said he had requested specs from E1 and Appleton but hasn't received anything yet. Vice-Chairman asked if we would be able to pre-pay the financing and Chief Whitfield said he hadn't heard.
- c. Vice-Chairman Mills asked everyone to be looking around for more property for other stations. Secretary Johnston asked what the footprint would be, and Chief Whitfield said at least 2 acres. They discussed using Station 2 location but Chief Whitfield said it would need to be torn down and rebuilt He also pointed out Station 2 was one of the smaller properties and he would have to check on the contract.
- d. Secretary Johnston asked for an update on the hiring of an HR person. Secretary Johnston asked when an HR person would be hired and Chief Whitfield this year. Chairman Gradia said it was approved in this year's budget.

14. Motion to Adjourn

- a. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 5:43 p.m.
- b. Motion to Adjourn was 1st made by Secretary Johnston and 2nd by Vice-Chairman Mills.
- c. Motion passed, unanimously.

Approved this 17th day of March 2025.



Nick Gradja, Chairman