

**Pace Fire Rescue District**  
**Regular Meeting**  
**February 26, 2024**

**1. Meeting Called to Order**

- a. Call to Order at approximately 6:30 p.m. Quorum present.

**2. Pledge of Allegiance**

**3. Moment of Silence**

**4. Public Forum**

- a. Mike Bellamy from the Florida Professional Firefighters came in to support the Union. Mr. Bellamy came to speak to the Board for two reasons.

1. He was here to give an update on the Union Registration. As of last night, he was notified by PERC the Union was recognized as a Collective Bargaining Agent. The next step will be to complete the form(s), which includes a complete Departmental Organization Chart with positions, titles, job descriptions, salary, etc. Once completed a formal notice will be sent out.
2. It has been brought to his attention there might be some interference with the Union's business. He was told a member(s) can't communicate with a Board member and this is not true. Treasurer Bob Jankowski asked Mr. Bellamy, "isn't this true". Mr. Bellamy stated, "it is not true, it is a myth." Mr. Bellamy stated any member has a right to talk to a Board member up until the "Impasse process" begins. During this period, you can't speak to a member of the Board. Secretary Daniel Mills asked to have clarification on this once again. Mr. Bellamy explained it once again. Chief Whitfield stated, "he didn't see it adversarial, but does see it going that way." Chief Whitfield told Mr. Bellamy he would sit down with him and talk about it. Vice-Chairman Nick Gradia asked, "what the timeline with the process was." Mr. Bellamy explained the process. The process can take 4-6 months and the contract would be a 3-year contract.
3. In closing, Mr. Bellamy stated, "He would be happy to come back and help the Union fill out the contract and establish a Collective Bargaining Agreement.

**5. Minutes from the previous meeting**

- a. Motion to approve 1<sup>st</sup> made by Treasurer Bob Jankowski and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Secretary Daniel Mills.
- b. Motion passed.

**6. Financial Report (Written report attached)**

- a. Motion to approve 1<sup>st</sup> made by Secretary Daniel Mills and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Brandon Beecher.
- b. Motion passed.

**7. Chief's Report (Written report attached)**

- a. Motion to approve 1<sup>st</sup> made by Treasurer Bob Jankowski and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Vice-Chairman Nick Gradia.
- b. Motion passed.

**8. Engine 21 Motor Damage**

- a. Chief Whitfield informed the board the Engine was in service with a new Cummins L-9 motor. The motor has a five-year warranty.

**9. Rescue 21 Referb Project Update**

- a. Chief Whitfield had to do a "Change Order" due to needing additional parts. These needed parts were discovered when running the fire pump.
- b. Vice-Chairman Nick Gradia asked Chief Whitfield about the timeline for the additional work. Chief Whitfield said, "the work should be completed by May".

**10. Station 4 Project Update**

- a. Chief Whitfield reported to the board that the soil samples had been taken as well as the survey. The architects are working on completing the "electrical" part of the plans for this project. Once the electrical engineers are complete the next step will be the bidding process. The bid will go on for 30 days once it has been advertised. Chief Whitfield will be sending the board a copy of the blueprints. The blueprints will be the same layout as Station 3. DOT has approved the circular drive. As of now, the project is 97% complete.

**11. L.O.S.T Apparatus Purchase Update**

- a. Chief Whitfield stated the Engine/Squad is in the bay getting set up with equipment. We haven't received any paperwork on the Engine; therefore, we do not have insurance on it. Once we receive the paperwork and get the insurance, training will begin. Chief Whitfield will submit to the county for \$300,000.

## **12. District Charter Update by Florida Legislators**

- a. Discussion was held on this, neither Senator Broxson nor Representative Andrade are willing to budge on increasing the amount or amending it. We will need to have a “rate study” completed but we are exempt from having the rate study done for this year. We are working on the pricing for this study. They did agree on adding a short amendment clarifying that we do not need an assessment study this year. A question that was asked was whether we would have to pay a “roll back” and Chief Whitfield wasn’t sure, but he would find out.
- b. Chief Whitfield met with the Property Appraiser, and they have agreed to continue to add the non-ad valorem assessments to the TRIM notices. They will need to hire an additional staff member for the extra work this may cause their department. We will have to incur the costs of this staff, and by “we” it will be all three fire departments.
- c. Chief Whitfield would like to go ahead and have an assessment study, but he needs approval from the board. Chief Whitfield believes the study would cost between \$30,000 to \$35,000. A Motion to have the study done was 1<sup>st</sup> made by Secretary Daniel Mills and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Vice-Chairman Nick Gradia.
- d. Motion passed.

## **13. Health Department**

- a. Chief Whitfield stated we have entered an agreement with the Health Department, a Point of Distribution “POD”. If there was an epidemic and it affected our district, the agreement will allow the department to distribute the medication to our employees and their families at no cost to the department.

## **14. Meetings**

- a. Chief Whitfield asked the Board if we could have a policy that would address meeting dates that fall on a holiday. He would like for it to say, “If a meeting falls on a holiday that is observed by the department, it would automatically be scheduled for the following Monday.
- b. Motion to approve the policy was 1<sup>st</sup> made by Secretary Daniel Mills and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Vice-Chairman Nick Gradia.
- c. Motion passed.

## **15. Ethics Training**

- a. Chief Whitfield informed the Board that the Ethics Training is now available online. It is a 4-hour class with a certificate. The department will pay for everyone’s training.

**16. Additions/Deletions**

- a. Vice-Chairman Nick Gradia would like to see the department adopt a policy for a process where an employee can appeal severe disciplinary actions such as termination, suspensions, etc. The policy should also mention once this grievance is filed the employee/ex-employee will have a chance to come before the Board for them to review. The policy is basically an Appeal Process policy. He would like to see this policy by the next meeting.
- b. Vice-Chairman Nick Gradia also stated, “the Union members have to work with the Fire Chief, and the Fire Chief has to be open to the Union members” for this to work. The Union can come to the Board as a whole.

**17. Motion to Adjourn**

- a. There being no further business a Motion to Adjourn was 1<sup>st</sup> made by Treasurer Bob Jankowski and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Secretary Daniel Mills. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:00 p.m.

Approved this 18<sup>th</sup> day of March 2024.



Dean Anderson, Chairman