

**Pace Fire Rescue District
Regular Meeting
January 27, 2025**

1. Meeting Called to Order

Present: Chairman Nick Gradia, Secretary Daniel Mills, Commissioner Lynn Garrett, and Commissioner Jeremy Johnston.

Chairman Nick Gradia called the meeting to order at approximately 5:03 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, Chief Whitfield announced the promotion of Firefighter Joshua Anderson to Lieutenant as of February 9, 2025.

5. Minutes from the previous meeting

- a. Commissioner Jeremy Johnston wanted to discuss in the last meeting it was said that only one firefighter had left the department last year. Commissioner Johnston wanted clarification since he had heard there had been more. Chief Whitfield said the one that had left said he left because he was tired of hearing the griping all day and several had left and return to the district including Mr. Adcox with others reapplying. Union President Andrew Adcox informed the Board that the report Robert McClelland had presented reported 60 firefighters had left the department within the last ten years. The correct number was 67 firefighters. A lengthy discussion was held on the reasons why and how we could solve this problem.
- b. A Motion to Approve Meeting Minutes was 1st made by Commissioner Garrett and 2nd by Commissioner Johnston.
- c. Motion passed, unanimously.

6. Financial Report (Written report attached)

a. Chairman Gradia asked how the money was doing as far as receiving the new taxes. Chief Whitfield and Accountant Rachel Connell explained how and when we will get this funding compared to last year. Commissioner Johnston asked if the Board could receive the Financial Report earlier, so they have more time to go over it. Chief Whitfield stated they get emailed to them on Thursday before the meeting.

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

7. Chief's Report (Written report attached)

- a. Motion to approve the Chief's Report was 1st made by Secretary Mills and 2nd by Commissioner Johnston.
- b. Motion passed, unanimously.

8. Board Vacancy

- a. Chairman Gradia discussed the "open position" on the Board. He stated we only had one applicant, which was Felix Hernandez. Mr. Hernandez is a firefighter at Navarre Beach Fire Department and used to work in the Pace Fire Rescue District. Chairman Gradia asked Mr. Hernandez if he was involved in any other committees, boards, etc and Mr. Hernandez said no. Mr. Hernandez was asked if he had any ill feelings towards Pace Fire Rescue District that would reflect on his decisions, and he said no.
- b. A Motion to Approve Pointing Felix Hernandez to Commissioner on the Board was 1st made by Secretary Mills and 2nd by Commissioner Garrett.

9. Board Organization

- a. Chief Whitfield informed Chairman Gradia the Board would need to elect Commissioners to the Vice-Chairman, Secretary, Treasure positions. Commissioner Garrett nominated Daniel Mills to Vice-Chairman with Commissioner Johnston 2nd the nomination. Nomination was accepted by Daniel Mills. Commissioner Garrett nominated Commissioner Johnston to Secretary and Vice-Chairman Mills 2nd the nomination. The nomination was accepted by Jeremy Johnston. Vice-Chairman Mills nomination Felix Hernandez to Treasure and Commissioner Johnston 2nd the nomination. The nomination was accepted by Felix Hernandez.
- b. The members of the Pace Fire Rescue District Board are:
 - Chairman – Nick Gradia
 - Vice-Chairman – Daniel Mills
 - Secretary – Jeremy Johnston
 - Treasurer – Felix Hernandez
 - Commissioner – Lynn Garrett

10. Station 4 Construction Update

- a. Chief Whitfield turned it over the Derek Pratt who has been overseeing the project. Mr. Pratt reported the weather had slowed construction down a little but when everything dries out, they will get back to bricking and working on the front roof. The only days we're behind is the weather. Secretary Johnston asked when the project's completion date. Chief Whitfield stated if everything stays on track it should be at the end of July, if not a penalty will kick in. Mr. Pratt stated

hopefully within the next two weeks the roof will go on and we'll start rolling. Chairman Gradia asked about overtime manning Station 4 and Chief Whitfield stated not at this time because of how the weather has been. Chairman Gradia asked if there was a place for them to run out of and Chief Whitfield stated, "they had been running out of Station 2 because 4's area drops down to Tunnel Road, the way it's set up right now". Vice-Chairman Mills asked when the crew would be back, Chief Whitfield said probably towards the end of next week we'll open it back up. Secretary Johnston asked when the project's completion date. Chief Whitfield stated if everything stays on track it should be at the end of July. Chairman Gradia asked is there a bathroom at 2? Chief Whitfield said no, none of them have bathrooms. Chairman Gradia said, "I guess Station 1 is close enough if they needed to they could come back."

- b. Information purposes only, no action needed.

11. New Apparatus (Engine)

- a. Chief Whitfield reported that we will be paying off the Engine at Station 3 in March. Chief Whitfield has received a quote from Ten-8 for another Pierce Ascendant Engine. Ten-8 Fire & Safety gave us an option for pre-payment where there would be a discount on the apparatus. The district could save even more money if we changed from a Cummins motor to a PACAR motor. A discussion was held on the motor as to what is the difference between the two motors. Chief Whitfield said the PACAR company is out of Mississippi. Vice-Chairman Mills said we would need to look at how long it would take to get parts for the PACAR motor and if they are the only ones that can work on their motor. We would need to look at the warranties on the motors. Chief Whitfield said the warranty is the same. Chief Whitfield will be looking into those concerns. Secretary Johnston asked if the Engine would be equipped, and Chief Whitfield said, "no, we would have to buy the hoses; etc". Chief Whitfield said, "he would rather keep Pierce so the fleet would all be the same." Chairman Gradia asked to have a proposal by March to be able to decide which motor would be used. Chief Whitfield said, "they have offered to have him come tour their facility". Vice-Chairman Mills asked if we signed a contract to go with the pre-payment offer would there be a penalty if we pulled out. Chief Whitfield said he believes there would be a penalty.
- b. Information purposes only, no action needed.

12. Apparatus Refurb Project Update

- a. Chief Whitfield reported the refurb project was taking longer than he originally reported. When Chief Whitfield was told it would be six months, he had been misquoted as to the length of time. The completion date now is the end of February. Chief Whitfield spoke to the President of Ten-8 Fire & Safety to discuss the issue, and he said, "he would look into the matter and get back with Chief Whitfield". Vice-Chairman Mills asked if it was written in the contract, and Chief Whitfield said it was not in the contract. Secretary Johnston asked, "how long had it been?" Chief Whitfield said, "it had been a year".
- b. Information purposes only, no action needed.

13. Fire Station 1 Bay Door

- a. Chief Whitfield reported due to the age of the bay door, in front of Ladder 21, it needed to be replaced. Chief Whitfield received a quote from our vendor, Dually Doors, for door repairs and maintenance, but they recommended the door to be replaced. The money for this cost has been included in this year's budget. Chief Whitfield said he will be working on adding the cost of replacing all the doors in next year's budget.
- b. A Motion to Approve Replacement of the Bay Door was 1st made by Commissioner Garrett and 2nd by Treasurer Hernandez.
- c. Motion passed, unanimously.

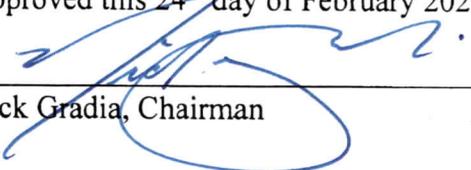
14. Addition/Deletions

- a. Commissioner Garrett asked Chief Whitfield about a letter they received from an attorney, could he give them an update. Chief Whitfield said the attorney was working with it, they're still having discussions with their attorney. Chairman Gradia asked if they were working with the Union's attorney and Chief Whitfield said yes. Union President Andrew Adcox stated, "the District Attorney asked for a two-week extension, the deadline was January 20th, they asked for another two-week extension, we agreed because of the holidays. We should know something by February 3rd is the deadline now. Chairman Gradia explained since the attorneys from both parties were handling this subject, we should not be discussing the circumstance as a Board any further. The District Attorneys will be addressing it and by the next meeting hopefully we'll be fixing it. Chairman Gradia hasn't spoke to the District Attorney, but he would probably advise not to have communication at this point. Some new board members didn't receive a copy because at the time it went to all current board members. Chief Whitfield will be adding all of the new board members to the email list.

15. Motion to Adjourn

- a. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 5:53 p.m.
- b. Motion to Adjourn was 1st made by Vice-Chairman Mills and 2nd by Commissioner Garrett.
- c. Motion passed, unanimously.

Approved this 24th day of February 2025.



Nick Gradia, Chairman