



---

**DISTRICT MEETING MINUTES**

**August 21, 2023**

Members of the public who wish to comment on matters before the District Board may do so in person at 1 East Drive, Key Largo, Florida or online. Members of the public who virtually participate in the meeting must mute themselves until called upon to speak. Virtual Meeting Link: <https://zoom.us/j/92901339730>; Password: 33037.

**1. AGENDA**

**1a. *Call to Order***

Chairman Allen called to order the District Meeting at 6:10 PM.

**1b. *Pledge of Allegiance***

Commissioner Conklin led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**1c. *Roll Call***

Carol Greco called the roll. The following commissioners were present: Tony Allen, Frank Conklin, Kenny Edge and George Mirabella. There was a quorum.

Also present in person or via Zoom were Commissioner Powers, Carol Greco, Roget Bryan, Jennifer Johnson, Scott Robinson, David Garrido, and Don Bock.

**2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA & MINUTES**

**2a. *Approval of August 21, 2023 Meeting Agenda***

Commissioner Conklin made a ***motion to approve the modified*** August 21, 2023 District Meeting Agenda. Commissioner Mirabella second, and the Board unanimously passed the motion.

**2b. *Approval of the July 24, 2023 District Meeting/Budget Workshop Meeting Minutes***

Commissioner Edge made a ***motion to approve the corrected*** July 24, 2023 District Meeting/Budget Workshop Meeting Minutes. Commissioner Conklin second, and the Board unanimously passed the motion.

**3. PUBLIC COMMENT**

None



**4. CHAIRMAN REPORT**

None

**5. SECRETARY REPORT**

None

**6. OLD BUSINESS**

**DISCUSSION:   *Second Floor Addition for Station 24 [Conklin]***

Discussions were had regarding the second floor addition to the building including design building concept and potentially taking the addition in a different direction from the previous attempt. Commissioner Conklin provided a brief history of the building from its inception in 1995; and communication with the original architectural company to determine an interest in doing drawing for the second floor addition. In 1994 fire rescue worked with county to approve the building of the structure built here. At that time there was not a need for dorms; however in 1998 dorms would be needed. Commissioner Conklin contacted the architect who did north station (which was so popular they did 2 stations south) and advised they would be willing to come to the next meeting, walk through and give a perspective on a second floor build out.

Roget Bryan provided a recap from of the previous RFP; previous design build; comprehensive drawings, architectural renderings/surveys with the intention of eliciting bidders, which approach was unsuccessful. A revised RFP is being drafted. We can utilize old drawings (for concept) to eliminate divergence; adding on to structure; encompass living quarters. This must be bid out as part of the procurement process. We will go in the direction the Board suggests.

Currently we do not have fully engineered drawings. We are not building a town hall building, but a fire station which needs to include all requirements. Commissioner Conklin spoke with William Horn of Key West who builds fire stations throughout Monroe County, who's insight may help with the decision. Do we go off for design; another design build or hybrid? Do we tie it in with the existing building? Can we put out for bid with an expedited response time? If no one bids; do we have to repeat to process to get bids; however, the revised RFP is crafted for response. If, no bids are submitted, we will have to come to you to make a decision on how you wish to move forward.

We have opined that half drawn concept drawings are not going to work. Contractors want to knock job out. Most contractors have engineers inhouse. We have put \$35k with drawings no one will bid on. Chairman Allen commented that contactors generally have an inclusive package to build.



## KEY LARGO FIRE RESCUE & EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DISTRICT

Seat 1: Tony Allen; Seat 2: Frank Conklin; Seat 3: Kenny Edge; Seat 4: George Mirabella; Seat 5: Danny Powers

Commissioner Mirabella inquired if we could retrieve the Red Rooster drawings? Is little Red Rooster non-responsive with any desire to update and finish project. Mr. Bryan continued the discussion providing oversimplification; let contractor tell us what they can do with red rooster renderings. Chairman Allen has intimated a desire to get the project out to bid; been working on this project for seven (7) years with three difference commissioners. Commissioner Conklin is right there needs to be complete drawings to bid or hybrid utilizing the current drawings or more time will be wasted. Commissioner Mirabella believe an engineer can expand on current drawings. Mr. Bryan commented that the builder should commission the plans. Commissioner Conklin suggest obtaining bids/designs from different people. Commissioner Powers is in agreement that this be put out to bid again and see what responses are received.

Sue Heim suggests the design build should encompass efficiency, ADA compliance consideration for the 1st floor; architect/design team should keep this in mind.

The Board is in agreement that this project has gone on for years and basically needs to be competed one way or another. Chairman Allen comments that this need to go to bid with a 30 day turnaround. If at that time there are no responses, then bid out for an engineer. put for bid 30 days; if no takers then bid for engineer.

Mr. Bryan has asked the Board to provide legal direction to move forward hybrid plan; mandatory pre-bid and walk through. Once the RFP hits demand star and goes live; make sure they get proposal of bid packet; work and drawings or get drawings done.

***DISCUSSION: MOTION/APPROVAL: Surplus of Vehicle With Significant "Diesel Engine Rear Main Seal Oil Leak" that will need to be repaired before it can be Used [Bock]***

Don Bock has reiterated that this matter has been before the board and that the vehicle should be sent to surplus. The Board directed the Clerk to complete the process.

***DISCUSSION: MOTION/APPROVAL: Approval for Station 24 Generator Issues [Mumper]***

Lt. Mumper did not provide good news on the generator issue. The excitor assembly (sp.) has been discontinued. GAW came with a proposal for approximately \$66,000 to rebuild; cheaper to purchase a new generator. If a second floor is built on the building, it will require a much larger unit. We would need to know what direction we will be going in regarding the second floor prior to purchasing a new generator. Commissioner Mirabella inquired if contact has been made with elevator companies to see if there is a need for a single or 3 phase motors; step up transformer capacity. Lt. Mumper continued to provide good news; Station 25's generator should be delivered in 3 weeks in lieu of 5. Chairman Allen Station 24's generator is anticipated to be less expensive as it is not inside. Commissioner Conklin commented that this is a pricey item. Should be doable to put as line item; start budgeting replacement of generators every 15 years. There will also be an installation cost; Lt. Mumper will get a quote from Wire Nuts.



Commissioner Mirabella made a ***motion to approve*** obtaining Generator bid replacement at Station 24. Commissioner Edge second, and the Board unanimously passed the motion.

**7. NEW BUSINESS**

**7a. MOTION/APPROVAL: Resolution No. 2023-001 A Resolution of the Key Largo Fire Rescue and Emergency Medical Services District, Florida, Amending the District's Budget for Fiscal Year 2022-2023; Providing for Severability; and Providing for an Effective Date [Johnson]**

Jennifer Johnson led the discussion by advising the Board that the budget is increasing \$71,000; taking \$19,000 and increasing legal to \$40,000 for a total of \$85,000. Then there is the District audit which we had to increase \$1,000 for operation. For the Fire Department, we are moving various line items to cover legal through the end of the year. Worker's compensation was over budget and needed an increase of \$5,300. Grant writing services increased to \$2,405; \$2,272 for background checks and drug testing at \$100. Propane gas \$61; education \$3,500. Kaplan is at \$1,500; fees under budget; therefore, decreased those \$10,000. Medical supplies/equipment is up \$500; insurance \$6,000 for the package policy.

Overall, we are increasing expenditures by \$144,620; however, pointed out that we came in under budget last year by \$649,089. Still adding an additional \$562,400.

Commissioner Mirabella made a ***motion to approve*** Resolution No. 2023-001. Commissioner Edge second, and the Board unanimously passed the motion.

**7b. DISCUSSION: Advise and Request District Consideration to Classify Employees as District Employees [Mumper/Conklin]**

Lt. Mumper lead a discussion regarding recent employee resignations as a result of pay, benefits, etc. The employees are seeking employment status as district employees. 17 employees took a unanimous poll seeking to be classified as district employees with the understanding this would not result in an immediate reclassification as many factors would need to be taken into consideration.

Commissioner Edge commented on how this would serve to improve the level of service; service would not change. Provide board more control over the department, level of service, managers of departments; allow district to save money. Potential savings in overtime expenditures while maintaining a high level of experienced individuals. Could stop attrition/retention.

Commissioner Power opines that in a roundabout way wouldn't you be slapping yourselves in the face; you are doing great community service. We are willing to work with guys.



## KEY LARGO FIRE RESCUE & EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DISTRICT

Seat 1: Tony Allen; Seat 2: Frank Conklin; Seat 3: Kenny Edge; Seat 4: George Mirabella; Seat 5: Danny Powers

Scott Robinson understands what they are asking for is ok. Looking back at the district's history, everything has been financially created. Basically, when you set up as discretionary, you have the option to dial things back, i.e. payroll. When you go into a defined benefit plan, you lose that option; it will no longer exist. Mr. Robinson asked J. Johnson, if at today's costs FRS is added for every employee, how long will it take to use \$2m? Ms. Johnson indicates that would be dependent upon how many employees would be added. By today's numbers; adding, moving employees then scaling perhaps the FRS plan, which is 32.67 by the employer, it would add an additional 1,044,155 per budget to bring them at 1.3717 millage or a 53.55 increase. So moving forward 4-5 years, we may be close to the millage cap and won't be able to dial it back. Then you will have to figure out how you will pay that benefit; could be a problem. The taxpayers were told there would not be an increase over the next 10 years.

Perhaps a fact finding committee look into the possibility. Commissioner Conklin commented that information would be needed regarding combined departments with employees. Hire someone from outside to determine what it would take to classify the employees, District Employees? What positions are needed? Would need to get that information before a decision could be made.

Scott Robinson interjected that perhaps someone could look into the percentage of employees who leave, including Islamorada, Monroe County, who have FRS. Would this really change, because they are not keeping people? They are not leaving because of FRS. Does not see a big change; however, might help with recruitment.

Chairman Allen provided there is no guarantee of employment; budget contingent on district approval. Potentially unionize; does not mean district needs to keep contract.

Scott Robinson is frustrate as the district as a hole is amazing to our organizations. When he looks at where we were and where we are. It blows me away people are not better understanding of this. The budget to be approved is going to give every employee a minimum of a 15-20% raise. That's what's on the table right now. Their healthcare provided; getting a 10% 401K, and on top of that they get their step plan.

Chairman Allen commented that whether it's a paid department or a district employee, I guess, would be determined by whatever the person you hires looks over everything, because if it comes back that keeping the EMS as a contractor/corporation and fire department as district employees, that's still not really a paid department; it's still independent. But for right now what my agenda says is district employees. I don't want someone to think that we're converting this department to a full pay full via EMS, unless that's the direction that's voted on, read upon, and discussed on. I don't to be the one in the headlines saying Commissioner Allen said we're making the department fully paid.

Commissioner Edge commented compare us to other fire departments that are fire. EMS, okay, that are about the same as us, and they seem to be able to do it. I mean, we're cheaper, but we're not that much cheaper, than other Fire and EMS Districts. Every time we talk about doing work



## KEY LARGO FIRE RESCUE & EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DISTRICT

Seat 1: Tony Allen; Seat 2: Frank Conklin; Seat 3: Kenny Edge; Seat 4: George Mirabella; Seat 5: Danny Powers

with corporations everybody freaks out and thinks that group that has managed to keep the budget down so low is going to start doing what the rest of the county does. Our people can operate just as well, if not better than the county. We proved it for 20 years. So I don't understand why everybody freaks out that if we're actually going to start providing benefits or identifying as district employees all of a sudden we are not going to know how to keep a budget.

Our responsibility up here to save taxpayers money. I suggest we hire outside counsel, somebody or somebody to look over everything. That's the decision we need to make. Do we want to investigate this, or do you not want to investigate? I would make a motion to investigate the finance and documentation that needs to be done

Commissioner Powers commented that we would need to look into this topic further; reevaluate personnel; start from scratch? Changing entire charter; destroy and rebuild to move in new times?

Jennifer Johnson will contact the Auditor BJM regarding this issue.

Commissioner Conklin made a ***motion to approve*** a feasibility study on the cost of reclassifying current employees to District Employees. Commissioner Mirabell second, and roll call vote was taken.

Chairman Allen:	Yes
Commissioner Conklin:	Yes
Commissioner Edge:	Yes
Commissioner Mirabella:	Yes
Commissioner Powers:	Yes

### ***7c. DISCUSSION: November 2023 Deadline to Apply for 3-Year SAFER Grant for 13 New Firefighter Positions [Bock]***

Chief Bock discussed applying for the 3-Year SAFER Grant for 13 New Firefighter Positions; and the department's five year plan.

Commissioner Mirabella commented 13 new employees; 5/5 per station; 4/engine; command officer and safety officer. We would be running as we do today.

Can we reapply for safer extension; no guarantee of employment retention.

Commissioner Powers commented that NFPA requires 5 at every station; 10 on scene in 10 minutes; have yet to see 5; how many citizens; square miles covered; will send breakdown to commissioners.

Look into applying for SAFER grant and bring back at the next meeting.



## KEY LARGO FIRE RESCUE & EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DISTRICT

Seat 1: Tony Allen; Seat 2: Frank Conklin; Seat 3: Kenny Edge; Seat 4: George Mirabella; Seat 5: Danny Powers

---

### 8. LEGAL REPORT

None

### 9. FINANCE REPORT

None

### 10. AMBULANCE CORPS REPORT

#### 10a. *July Statistics*

Scott Robinson advised there were 185 calls; tested 4 volunteers. We have a total of 1190 calls; 378 north of the 103 mile marker.

### 11. FIRE DEPARTMENT REPORT

#### 11a. *July Statistics*

Capt. Jones commented on a boat fire at the 113 with no injuries. Provided Miami-Dade and Tavernier with mutual aid. Continued preparation for ISO. Capt. Garrido has been preparing paperwork for training; Capt. Jones has been working on fire plans to be in compliance. a flyer has been posted at Miami-Dade for volunteers; state list; few applications on file; after budgetary process, bring in 5-10 people.

Commissioner Mirabella gave praise to the personnel for all their hard work.

### 12. COMMISSIONER ITEMS

DISCUSSION: Second Floor Addition for Station 24 [Conklin]

Commissioner Edge requested the record show that Chairman Allen is fiscally responsible for budget; that he be allowed to speak his opinions.

### 13. NEXT MEETING

**September 11, 2023 1st Public Hearing\***

**September 11, 2023 District Meeting\***

**September 25, 2023 Final Public Hearing\***

**September 25, 2023 District Meeting\***

**\*Need to Confirm County/School Board 1st Public Hearings**



## KEY LARGO FIRE RESCUE & EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DISTRICT

Seat 1: Tony Allen; Seat 2: Frank Conklin; Seat 3: Kenny Edge; Seat 4: George Mirabella; Seat 5: Danny Powers

---

*Need both meeting; unanimous vote needed 1*

### 14. ADJOURN

Commissioner Mirabella made a ***motion to adjourn*** the meeting at 7:45 PM. Commissioner Conklin second, and the Board unanimously passed the motion.

*Persons who wish to be heard shall send submit a  
Speaker Request Form to the Chairman or request to speak via Zoom.*