

**TICE FIRE DISTRICT
9351 WORKMEN WAY
FORT MYERS, FLORIDA 33905
REGULAR BOARD MEETING**

March 12, 2026

1. Call to Order: Chairperson Cannamela brought the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. at the Tice Fire and Rescue District Station One located at 9351 Workmen Way, Fort Myers, Florida 33905.

Verification of Quorum:

Commissioners present:	Tim Barrett	Present
	James Burgess	Present
	T.J. Cannamela	Present
	Carolyn Miller	Present
	Ted Pickering	Present
	Chief Runk	Present
	Rena Smart	Present
	Attorney Pringle	Present

2. The meeting began with the Pledge of Allegiance, and a moment of silence and Chaplain Crump said a prayer for the meeting.

3. Adopt Agenda:

Commissioner Pickering made a motion to adopt the agenda, seconded by Commissioner Barrett. Vote: Unanimously for.

4. Recognitions:

*Mr. and Mrs. Hutto and the Buckingham Community Association addressed the Board and thanked the District for putting out the brush fire on Staley Road with the quick response, containing it and no damage to any houses. The Buckingham Community Association stated they are here to support the District in any way.

*Michael Wooley had 20 years of service on 01/05/2026 and received a plaque.

*Chad Gnagey had 25 years of service on 03/08/2026 and received a plaque.

*John Finn had 20 years of service on 03/26/2026 and received a plaque.

*Rusty Crook had 25 years of service on 01/04/2026 and received a plaque.

Chief Runk stated there was cake next door for the families.

5. Financial Report

Rena Smart gave the financial report for February 2026. The District opened the three new CDS at Synovus Bank with the help of Chairperson Cannamela. She stated the District received \$250,399.16 in ad Valorem taxes, \$75 in miscellaneous revenues (including fire inspections and CPR classes), \$16,104.60 in interest income, which includes our new CDs, \$779.71 in impact fee interest, \$7,771.70 in the 2025-2026

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first quarter impact fee revenue, \$17 in other gov't revenue (LIBOR class action suit payout), and \$5,180 in proceeds from insurance (Brashear worker's comp). The total income for the month of February 2026 was \$280,327.17.

Rena stated the bills were normal for the month of February except for the quarterly building and vehicle payment to Egis Insurance for \$14,164, the quarterly worker's comp payment to PGIT for \$16,238, and the Engine 211 lease payment to Santander Bank for \$30,986.24. The total expenses for the month of February 2026 were \$448,744.32.

She stated that at the end of February 2026, the ending balance in the Synovus checking account was \$48,166.34, which earns 3.5 percent in interest and earned \$269.20 in interest. In the Synovus impact fee account, the ending balance was \$294,416.32, which earned 3.5 percent in interest and earned \$779.71 in interest. The ending balance in the Synovus money market account was \$1,594,043.34, which earned 3.5 percent in interest and earned \$9,143.31 in interest. The Synovus three-month CD ending in account #1936 opened in January, and the balance in the Synovus CD was \$1,004,737, which earns 3.75 in interest and earned \$2,886.03 in interest. The new Synovus three-month CD ending in account #7472 opened in February, and the balance was \$1,001,300.78, which earns 3.65 percent in interest and earned \$1,300.78 in interest. The new Synovus six-month CD ending in account #8046 opened in February, and the balance was \$1,001,282.95, which earns 3.60 percent in interest and earned \$1,282.95 in interest. The new Synovus 12-month CD ending in account #7160 opened in February, and the balance was \$1,001,222.33, which earns 3.43 percent in interest and earned \$1,222.33 in interest. Rena informed the Board that the District had total funds at the end of February 2026 of \$5,945,169.06, compared to February 2025, \$5,332,224.02, and compared to February 2024, \$4,485,801.80.

Rena asked if there were any questions, and Commissioner Miller asked what the worker's comp for two months in a row was for, and Rena replied for the worker's comp reimbursement for Captain Brashear's medical leave. The Board reviewed the bills, and Commissioner Cannamela and Commissioner Burgess signed the checks.

6. Chief's Report

Chief Runk gave the Chief's report for the month of February 2026:

*During the month of February, the District responded to 295 calls for service. He went over the calls; three structure fires, one vehicle fire, six brush fires, 142 EMS calls, and a variety of other calls.

*The District hosted a Fire Investigation: Origin and Cause class.

*We conducted a new hire physical agility test and conducted interviews to create a hiring list.

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*Chief Runk attended a meeting in Ocala with Matheny Fire & Emergency in regards to purchasing a demo fire truck in the future.

*FASD annual conference is June 7-11, 2026. If any Board members are interested in attending, please let Ms. Smart or I know ASAP, so that we can make the arrangements before rooms are sold out.

*Lee County Elections: Seats 1, 3, and 5 are up for re-election for the 2026-2030 term. Chief Runk stated Attorney Pringle will bring the resolution next month to add the seats listed to the ballot. He also requested copies of the Commissioners' driver's licenses for the purpose of the bank signature cards.

7. Attorney's Report

Attorney Pringle stated Chairperson Cannamela and himself has been working on the employee handbook for the non-bargaining employees and expect to have in form to review probably at the April Board meeting. He stated he was bringing a resolution next month for the election seats 1, 3, and 5. He also has the first amendment with the revisions for Chief Runk's contract to hand out and will discuss under "Old Business". He has been working on the MOU with the Lee County Sheriff's Office for the drone station, and he made some changes and will discuss under "New Business."

8. Union Report

- a) District 8
 - b) District 26
- No Union report.

9. Public Input on Consent & Business Agenda Items:

None.

10. Consent Agenda Items:

a. Approve prior meeting minutes:

Commissioner Miller stated there were two typo errors to be corrected on the top of page two of the February 2026 Board minutes. Commissioner Miller made a motion to approve the prior February 2026 Board meeting minutes, seconded by Commissioner Burgess. Vote: Unanimously for.

b. Approve District disbursements and required fiscal action:

Commissioner Miller made a motion to approve the consent agenda items for the month of March 2026 and approve District disbursements and required fiscal action, seconded by Commissioner Burgess. Vote: Unanimously for.

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11. Old Business Agenda Items

a. Fire Chief Contract

Attorney Pringle handed out the first amendment of Chief Runk's employment agreement to the Board with the new revisions. He went over all the revisions again with the Board that were made and discussed at the February 2026 Board meeting. The contract expires September 30, 2027. Commissioner Burgess made a motion to approve the amendment to Chief Runk's contract, seconded by Commissioner Barrett. Vote: Unanimously for.

12. New Business Agenda Items

a. District Manager Vacation Buyback

Chief Runk stated to the Board that the new handbook will have a cap of five hundred vacation hours for the District Manager and any administrative personnel, which is the same as the two bargaining units' contracts. Rena has 563 hours as of yesterday. He proposed to the Board to buy back one hundred vacation hours, which would make her whole and able to manage and maintain the vacation hours under five hundred hours. It will cost the District \$4,183 to purchase back those vacation hours. The Board discussed it. Commissioner Burgess made a motion to buy back one hundred hours from the District Manager at a cost of \$4,183, seconded by Commissioner Barrett. Vote: Unanimously for.

b. Fire Chief's Evaluation

Attorney Pringle read Section 5 of Chief Runk's employment agreement to the Board. The Board discussed it. The Board decided to do an informal evaluation of Chief Runk's one-year anniversary of becoming the Chief:

Commissioner Burgess: He stated he is doing a good job and does not see any complaints.

Commissioner Pickering: He stated he is doing an outstanding job with what he had dealt with him.

Commissioner Barrett: He stated fire departments are difficult to manage. He is doing a great job and let us know what the Board can do to help you.

Commissioner Miller: She stated she is not saying he is not doing a good job but was trained by previous management. She hopes in the future he will have fresh eyes and thought process on being more fiscally responsible.

Commissioner Cannamela: He stated he is doing a great job.

Rena stated she felt he was doing a fantastic job with all he has been dealing with the past month and has stayed very calm. Chief Runk thanked everyone. Attorney Pringle stated no action is required on this particular item under the employment agreement.

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c. MOU with LCSO

Chief Runk explained to the Board about the plans for LCSO wanting to put a DFR drone station at our District, and they would use it remotely from the control center. Attorney Pringle explained the proposal to the Board; LCSO would be responsible for installation, any maintenance and any wear and tear. Attorney Pringle stated there is no payment in the MOU from LCSO to the District for the drone station use, as questioned by the Board. He also explained the revisions he has added to the agreement to the Board. He explained there is a one-year term and annual renewal, and it is a nonexclusive license and not a lease. Attorney Pringle discussed it with the Board in detail, and all the language he changed. Attorney Pringle stated he would like to send the document back to LCSO with the revisions he made to make sure they check off on it and then bring it back for the Board to approve. Commissioner Burgess made a motion to continue the MOU to next month's Board meeting, seconded by Commissioner Miller. Vote: Unanimously for.

d. Equipment Purchase

Chief Runk made a presentation of the Drone purchase to the Board. He explained the quotes to the Board in detail:

	Hardware plus extras	
<i>Skydio Direct</i>	<i>\$42,570.00</i>	<i>\$95,532.34</i>
<i>Frontier Precision</i>	<i>\$39,748.00</i>	<i>\$53,070.00</i>
<i>Airbourne Response</i>	<i>\$42,805.60</i>	<i>\$51,701.09</i>

Airbourne Response includes an extra accessory.

Asking for authorization to purchase two drones and accessories not to exceed \$52,000, but after further discussion with the Board, Chief Runk changed to \$55,000.

*****\$50,000 of this purchase will be reimbursed by the grant*****

Chairperson Cannamela explained the drone software in detail to the Board. The Board discussed it. Commissioner Burgess made a motion to purchase the two drones plus extras not to exceed \$55,000, seconded by Commissioner Barrett. Vote: Unanimously for. Keith Campbell in the audience asked a question about whether the drones will be stationary, and the Board replied, either on an engine or launched in a field or both.

13. Public Input on Non-Agenda Items:

None.

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14. Commissioners Comments:

Commissioner Miller: She asked about the budget amendment, and Chief Runk replied he was waiting for the drone grant to put on the amendment.

She asked whether we sent a letter to the County Attorney yet to get the impact fee funds approved for the security at the station, and Chief Runk replied he was still waiting for pricing. She stated she was glad none of the employees were hurt at the fire in Cypress Woods.

Commissioner Barrett: He stated he brought out a special needs student and gave him a tour of the station, and the employees went out of their way to show him the station.

Commissioner Pickering: He stated things are starting to smooth out a little bit for management and the Board making it easier to negotiate.

Commissioner Burgess: He stated he has nothing to say.

Commissioner Cannamela: He stated everyone is doing a good job.

- a. **Adjournment:** Commissioner Burgess made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:31 p.m., seconded by Commissioner Pickering. Vote: Unanimously for.