

Republican Club of Southwest Florida

February 01, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Lions Club of Bonita Springs, FL

Meeting Called to Order: President Bill Ribble called the meeting to order at 5:58

Invocation: Secretary Larry Fiesel

Pledge of Allegiance: Vice-President Fred Forbes

Officers Present: President Bill Ribble, Vice-President Fred Forbes, Secretary Larry Fiesel, Treasurer Jim Sido, Director Joanne Ribble, Carolyn Forbes

Recognition of Elected Officials: Lee County Commissioner Ray Sandelli, Bonita Springs Deputy Mayor Fred Forbes, Estero Vice Mayor Joanne Ribble, Estero Council Members Larry Fiesel, Jim Ward

Recognition of Sponsor: Engel & Volkers - Jim and Ellen Hollars

Approval of January 04, 2024, Meeting Minutes: Motion to approve by Fran Mainella, Seconded by Ed Weil. Motion was unanimously approved.

Treasurer's Report: January 2024

Income

January 05, 2024	Square	Membership - Mainella, Sido, Lechelt	96.82
January 05, 2025	Dues	Cash - Membership - (incl. 35-George)	85.00
January 05, 2024	Dues	Various - 6 checks 2-\$100, 4-\$50 Fullick, Leonard, Lopez, Pritt, Ribble, Walls	400.00

Total **581.82**

Disbursements

January 08, 2024	Debit	Recurring Wix.com	12.00
January 08, 2024	#147	Lions Club of Bonita Springs	175.00
January 19, 2024	Debit	Miklas Social	385.00

Total **572.00**

Beginning Balance **1,682.40**

Income **581.82**

Disbursements **572.00**

Ending Balance **1,692.22**

Business Savings Account **467.49**

Approval of January 2024 Treasurers Report: Motion to approve by Nancy Sido, Seconded by Fran Mainella. Motion was unanimously approved.

Order of Business & Introduction of Guest Speaker: Fire Chief Greg Dewitt, Bonita Springs Fire Control and Rescue District



Greg DeWitt, a 30+ year veteran of the Bonita Springs Fire Control and Rescue District, began his career as a volunteer firefighter in December of 1988. He was hired in July of 1989 as a full-time Firefighter. Since that time he has advanced up through the ranks as Lieutenant, Acting Battalion Chief, Deputy Chief, Assistant Fire Chief, and is currently The Fire Chief. He was one of the founding members of the Bonita Springs Professional Firefighters Local 3444, where he served as Secretary/Treasurer for 6 years and Union President for 13 years.

Chief DeWitt has been awarded a Unit Citation for heroism on emergency scenes, as well as the District Employee of the Year-twice, Fire Crew of the Year-three times, Officer of the Year, and the Bonita Springs Fire District's most prestigious award: the Phoenix Award. He has also received the Distinguished Service Award from the State of Florida, Firefighter of the Year from the Optimist Club, and Commendation of Appreciation from the White House for his efforts after Hurricane Irma.

He holds a Bachelors in Fire Science, Associates in Fire Science, and Certified District Manager certification from The Florida State University. Chief DeWitt is trained up-to Technician Level in a variety of special operations emergencies, such as high/low angle rescue, trench rescue, vehicle/machinery rescue, confined space rescue, and hazardous materials technician. As one of the State's most highly trained emergency responders, he has taught Tech Search and Rescue classes throughout the United States to several fire departments, active Marines and Army divisions, The National Guard, and The U.S. Reserves.

- Started as volunteer in Bonita Springs

- Offered full-time position making \$4.00/hour
- 35-years service with Bonita Springs Fire Department
- Union President for 13-years
- Bonita Springs Fire Department is debt free - the only district in the state
- Bonita Springs Fire Department covers 72 square miles
- Currently have seven stations with plans for one additional
- Having conversations with Estero for joint fire station
- Bonita Springs is an all hazards fire department with a special operations unit
- Bonita does plan reviews and building inspections
- Bonita has a 26' water rescue boat, the only manned fire station in Collier and Lee Counties, allows a response time of approximately two minutes. Response time prior to having a manned station was 14-16 minutes. The water rescue boat cost Bonita \$250,000 with half of the cost paid for through grant funding.
- Received a recent grant for Mechanical CPR Device
- Each unit has two paramedics
- 65-70% of all Bonita Springs fire fighters are paramedics
- Department has 96 fire fighters, 32 on duty each day
- Three sets of rescue skin diving equipment on each truck

New Business: There was no new business

Introduction of candidates:

David Mulicka, Lee County Commissioner

Monica Schmucker, Lee County School Board

Bill Ribble, Lee County School Board

Next Meeting: March 07, 2024, Kevin Karnes, Lee County Clerk of Courts

Meeting Adjournment: Motion to adjourn by Fran Mainella, seconded by Nancy Sido, meeting was adjourned at 6:56 PM..