

Upper Captiva Fire & Rescue District
4511 Hodgepodge Lane
P.O. Box 322 Pineland, FL 33945



Serving the Community with Pride
Phone: 239-872-2263
Email: info@uppercaptivafire.org

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Friday, January 16, 2026

10:00 a.m.

Location: Fire Station

COMMISSIONERS & STAFF PRESENT:

In Room: Commissioners MJ Yafchak, Steve Holt, Van Hammond. Staff: Chief Jesse Cottrell, Assistant Chief Tom Tracy

Via Zoom: Duncan Rosen, Bill Fry

ISLANDERS/GUESTS PRESENT:

In Room:

Mike Filipczak
Dave Wilcox
Brad Witlmore
Jenn Parker
Sherman Cottrell
Sharon Hauss
Angie Burkherer
Dan Hrycyk
Lisa Walker
Andrew Anderson
Becky Rosenberger
Trevor Casey
Todd Cecchi
Nicole Rossi

Via Zoom:

Anne Linder
Brandon Graber
Chris Horstman
Daryl Damico
Ed Boze
Frank Sbarro
G. Preston
Jad Dieterle
Judy Balk
K. Downs
Kerry Williams
Kristi Riggle
Lisa Jarvis
Lisa Petruska
Sara Hammond

Note: Several people attended that are not listed above. Notify Commissioners if you attended the January meeting and would like to be noted in the final minutes posted to the department website.

MINUTES:

1) Call to Order:

Meeting called to order at 10:02am

2) Additions/Changes/Deletions to Agenda

Modify to defer New Business items 5A, 5B to February's meeting.

Add New Business item to review preliminary report regarding Jan 13 fire at 4491 Cutlass and allow extra time for public comment/Q&A.

3) Public Comment on Agenda Items

4) Review of Unapproved Minutes

December 19, 2025 Regular Board Meeting Minutes
(Minutes accepted by a vote of 5-0)

5) New Business

ADDED: 4491 Cutlass Fire. Preliminary report and public comment/Q&A

Chief Jesse gave a preliminary after action report of the events on Jan 13, 2026. Jesse stressed that his statements were preliminary. Final report will be provided at the February 20 meeting.

Public comments were numerous.

Questions/issues centered around the following:

- What caused the original fire? (Best information points to Golf Cart being charged under the house).
- What caused the re-ignite (Fire re-started in attic and quickly spread across entire structure)
 - Why was this not detected (Attic area was probed and a thermal imaging heat detector was used did not indicate any heat in space when original scene was secured at ~2:00)
 - Did opening windows to vent interior smoke damage a contributing factor?
- Why did the department staff leave the scene unattended between 2:00 - 6:30PM.
 - Smoldering fires should be monitored more closely.
 - Policies must be changed to ensure people are on-site for extended periods post fires
- What were the equipment issues and what impact that have on the response to the fire. (Crack in pump that disabled tanker truck reduced amount of portable water available to fight fire. Pump was less than 9 months old; manufacturer has agreed to replace it)
- People asked for a better timeline of events. Specifically, between 2:00 – 7:00 (this will be part of the final report available in February 20 meeting).
- More community involvement is required!
 - More CERT members, and better coordination during emergencies
 - Community groups to assist with door-to-door alerting nearby houses
 - Crowd control a major issue (keeping spectators away from scene)
- What preventive measures can residents take to avoid similar issues
 - Charging all carts maximum distance away from houses.

- Routine maintenance by qualified mechanics (maintain water level in lead acid batteries, check terminals, wiring, chargers).
- Check/replace electrical outlets that may have been damaged by flooding.
- No Lithium batteries (note: both August and now Jan 13 fires were caused by standard lead-acid batteries)
- Sprinkler heads above golf carts
- Fire suppression system in battery compartments
- Fire extinguishers near golf carts.
- How can the community assist the department staff during emergencies going forward.
- How can we address the water issue(s) to ensure increase the fire fighting capabilities on the island.

There were many other discussion points not included above summary. A full recording of the January 16 board meeting is available on the department's website. www.upercaptivafire.org

- ~~A. RESOLUTION No. 2026-02: ADOPTING BUDGET AMENDMENT #26-1: Fry~~
- ~~B. Chief short term disability pay agreement: Fry/Jesse~~
- C. Road Maintenance Tractor purchase: Hammond/Jesse
 - a. Board discussed ways to replace the tractor that has been deemed a loss.
 - b. Motion to proceed with purchase was deferred to the February meeting allowing Jesse to investigate high-capacity saltwater pumps that could utilize the tractor's PTO capabilities.

6) Recurring Business Updates

- A. Chief's Report – Chief Cottrell
 - a. Chief's report has been made available on the district's website.
- B. Treasurer's Report – Commissioner Fry
 - a. Report accepted by board by a 5-0 vote
- C. Accessway Maintenance – Commissioner Hammond
 - a. Need tractor to continue with road grooming. Long term repairs still on hold pending final FEMA decision.

7) Public Input on Non-Agenda Items

None

8) Next Monthly Meeting Date: January 16, 2025.

9) Adjourn Meeting was adjourned at 1:05PM