

**FRUITLAND PARK FIRE SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES  
January 24, 2017**

A meeting of the Fruitland Park Fire Services Advisory Committee was held at 506 W. Berckman Street, Fruitland Park, Florida 34731 on Tuesday, January 24, 2017 at 6:00 p.m.

**Members Present:** James P. Logan, representing District (Group) 5, Chair  
Sydney “Dale” Arrowsmith, representing District (Group) 3  
Edward R. Cihoski, Sr., representing District (Group) 2, Vice Chair  
Edgar J. “Jerry” Elton, representing District (Group) 4  
William “Bill” K. Galbreath, business owner representative, and  
Gary Towne, representing District (Group) 1, and  
Steven “Steve” Whitaker, fire chief representative

**Also Present:** Mayor Chris Cheshire, Vice Mayor John L. Gunter Jr., Commissioners Chris Bell, Ray Lewis, Rick Ranize; City Manager Gary La Venia, City Attorney Anita-Geraci-Carver; City Treasurer Jeannine Michaud-Racine; Interim Fire Chief Don Gilpin; Deputy Fire Chief Tim Yoder, Firefighters Chris Lewis, Madison Leary, Andrew Hall, David Campbell, and Sean Parker, Fire Department, and City Clerk Esther B. Coulson.

**1. CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chair Logan called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

**2. ROLL CALL**

Ms. Coulson called the roll and a quorum was declared present.

**3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**On motion of Mr. Galbreath, seconded by Mr. Towne and unanimously carried, the committee approved the January 17, 2017 minutes as submitted.**

**4. PRESENTATION**

Mr. John Molenda, Public Safety Department Deputy Director, introduced Messrs. Stephen Koontz, Assistant County Manager/Fiscal and Administrative Services Department Director and John Jolliff, Public Safety Department Director, and gave a power-point presentation outlining Lake County’s Fire Rescue Public Safety Department’s services; a copy of which is filed with the supplemental papers to the minutes of this meeting.

**5. COMMITTEE MEMBER QUESTIONS/COMMENTS**

Discussions ensued on the City of Clermont’s agreement with Lake County relating to its division of costs on building and operations; the county’s impact fees; the county’s fire services operations’ funds generated from the Municipal Service Taxing Unit, and the fire assessment and Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response grants.

Later in the meeting, Mr. Galbreath requested that staff provide a proposal and an updated report on advanced life support (ALS) to the committee at the next meeting.

After discussion and on behalf of the committee, Chair Logan thanked Messrs. Molenda, Koontz and Joliff for their hard work and the presentation at this evening's meeting.

**6. STAFF COMMENTS**

In response to Mr. La Venia's inquiry on the likelihood of combining emergency medical services (EMS) with fire services, Mr. Koontz noted the purpose of the EMS study is to improve fire rescue services in the county's unincorporated area; gave his assurance of the anticipated seamless transitional process that there would be no negative impact to municipalities

Mr. Koontz referred to the May 25, 2016 memorandum from Nilgun Kamp and Steve Tindale, Tindale Oliver, consultants retained by the county, to conduct the Lake County Fire Assessment Update Study. He mentioned the county's plan to review the best possible scenario with the City of Fruitland Park as high priority ensuring that its community is addressed and taken care of and anticipated the stability of the rates. A copy of the study is filed with the supplemental papers to the minutes of this meeting.

Mr. La Venia requested that Mr. Koontz provide him with the costs he identified on the cost per square footage for warehouses, commercial properties and financial institutions.

After much discussion and in answer to Mr. La Venia's inquiry regarding the 800 MHz radio system for law enforcement and fire, Messrs. Molenda and Koontz cited reasons why the radios are not replaced individually; noted the county's method of utilizing bulk purchasing, and encouraged the city to apply for grant funding to implement same.

Mr. Molenda identified the county's goal for county fire rescue services facilities to operate as ALS by the end of the year and described the differences in operating as basic life support (BLS) services to which Mr. La Venia recognized the operation of Lake EMS Inc. adjacent with the fire department.

**7. NEW BUSINESS**

There was no new business before the committee at this time.

**8. FUTURE MEETING DATES**

Later in the meeting, Chair Logan determined that the next meeting will be held on January 31, 2017 where costs will be addressed.

**9. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Mr. Paul Frost, City of Fruitland Park resident, voiced concerns on the operations of Lake County Fire Rescue Stations (LCFR) 53 and 59; acknowledged the same response provided by the city's fire department during the service calls, and expressed appreciation for the changes made since the last proposal.

Ms. Donna Seitter, City of Fruitland Park resident, voiced reasons why she believe funding ought to remain in the city and allocated to its fire department.

Later in the meeting, Chair Logan indicated that answers relating to the fire services costs to the citizens will be provided at a later date.

City of Fruitland Park Commissioner Rick Ranize gave examples of and voiced concerns on the deteriorating working relationship with the county and the city's fire department; questioned the outcome of the county executing an automatic aid agreement to assist the city if it decides to keep its fire department; and inquired about the existence of community outreach programs from the county.

Ms. Pat Guy, City of Fruitland Park resident, gave reasons why she believes the city would have the ability to be in control of its own fire department and its fire assessment as well as maintain a continued relationship with the county.

Mr. Mark Isom, City of Fruitland Park resident, recalled his service on a former board along with Mr. Joliff at the inception of the radios which the city did not pay for and the notion of their longevities was predicted for 20 years.

Ms. Rita Ranize, City of Fruitland Park resident, recognized the close proximity of the medical facilities around the city and expressed preference for the city to keep control of its fire department.

Interim Fire Chief Gilpin questioned the situation of the Town of Lady Lake, Howey-in-the-Hills and Astitula with volunteer fire departments prior to the county's control of their fire services.

In referencing the presentation regarding LCFR 54 and 52 and after Interim Fire Chief Gilpin explained that no mention was made of LCFR 59, Mr. Joliff indicated that there was enough funds earmarked for two stations at once and addressed the ability to acquire grant funding to work on as many LCFRs as possible.

Interim Fire Chief Gilpin discussed with Messrs. Joliff and Molenda LCFR fire services vehicles and performance models and the determination to render BLS or ALS based from responding to service calls received from dispatch services.

Mr. Carlisle C. Burch, City of Fruitland Park resident, mentioned his desire for the city, as it grows, to make it a place for people to want to live and gave reasons why he believed that the city could maintain and control the fire department acknowledging the backup received. He mentioned his experience as a volunteer firefighter when Spring Lake Fire Station operated as a standalone and voiced preference for the choice to be towards the fire department.

Lieutenant Yoder pointed out the City of Inverness' reinstatement of its fire department from the county due to increase in revenue; the problems experienced with the loss of

control and funds expended, and mentioned other municipal governments that have undertaken the same process.

**10. NEW BUSINESS**

There was no new business to come before the committee.

**11. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the city commission at this time, on motion made, second and unanimously carried, the meeting adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

The minutes were approved at the January 31, 2017 meeting.

Signed

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Esther B. Coulson, City Clerk

Signed

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James P. Logan, Chair