

**FRUITLAND PARK FIRE SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
January 11, 2017**

A meeting of the Fruitland Park Fire Services Advisory Committee was held at 506 W. Berckman Street, Fruitland Park, Florida 34731 on Wednesday, January 11, 2017 at 6:00 p.m.

Members Present: Sydney “Dale” Arrowsmith, representing District (Group) 3
Edgar J. “Jerry” Elton, representing District (Group) 4
James P. Logan, representing District (Group) 5
William “Bill” K. Galbreath, business owner representative, and
Steven “Steve” Whitaker, fire chief representative

Members Absent: Messrs. Gary Towne, representing District (Group) 1, and
Edward R. Cihoski, Sr., representing District (Group) 2

Also Present: Mayor Chris Cheshire, 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, 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 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. Whitaker and unanimously carried, the committee approved the December 6, 2016 minutes as submitted.

4. PRESENTATION -

At Chair Logan’s request, Mr. Whitaker introduced Fire Department Chief Brady, City of Mascotte, gave a brief historical overview of his background, and welcomed him to this evening’s meeting.

Chief Brady gave a timeline of his services with the City of Mascotte:

- 1986, he started volunteering with the city’s fire department;
- 1990, he became fire chief (whilst working full time in another job) thus the difficulty in managing a full time volunteer fire department by alone;
- 2001, he retained one person for nights and weekends at 24-hour shifts;
- 2002, he employed two individuals per shift;

- 2005, recognizing the department's budget of \$1 million, he received a SAFER grant where six individuals (for per shift) were utilized and a fire rescue truck acquired;
- 2009, the grant ended and jobs were found for those firefighters who were laid off;
- 2010, he maintained volunteers at two hours per shift (one lieutenant, one paramedic with advanced life support, himself totaling seven);
- 2012-2013, Lake County executed an Interlocal Service Boundary Agreement (ISBA) agreement and noted that the fire department and the City of Groveland did not require the county's assistance;
- 2011, the City of Mascotte was about \$6 million in debt and he is working towards the goal in 2018 to be debt-free, and
- 2017 relayed the city manager's rejection to reapply for the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response Grants.

Chief Brady recalled the approach by an elected official to the county, without his knowledge, on the management of the fire department and highlighted the need for firefighters to be able to respond to structural fires.

Answering several questions posed by the committee members, Chief Brady explained the current budget of \$775,000 which includes: operations; payroll and benefits (recognizing the emergency medical technicians (EMT) firefighters' pay at \$75.00 monthly for 24 hours' volunteer service and acknowledging the pay scale ranges -- based on a study that was previously conducted and since revised -- of the lieutenants, paramedics, and EMTs).

After Chief Brady mentioned the need as chief to communicate with the fire department personnel, he responded to several inquiries posed by Mr. La Venia on the city's improved relationships with the county, the automatic aid agreement with the City of Groveland (where the City of Mascotte's fire services are incorporated together), and the City of Groveland's population growth and increased service calls. He mentioned the county's provision of automated vehicle locators which is working out; noted the City of Mascotte's two-year ISBA with the county where its unit, responding to calls, would pay out the city due to its shared response, and recognized the city fire station's operations with emergency medical services (EMS) to be similar to the City of Fruitland Park's. Chief Brady addressed his preference, before he retires, to retain three individuals per shift including the fire chief, lieutenant, and paramedic.

Following further discussion and after noting the City of Mascotte's population of 5,000, Chief Brady pointed out the previous study conducted with the charge of \$178 a year; the city's charge of \$120 per annum, and the reduction two years ago showing the current charge of \$115. He referred to the study on vacant land with a charge of \$40 for every parcel of vacant land only recognizing the number of service calls to brush fires and referenced commercial properties at 12 cents per square foot.

Chief Brady recognized the fire assessment of \$250,000 offset from the budget where the county EMS receives .01 mills for paramedic pay as an hourly salary; confirmed that the firefighters are on a 457-retirement plan, and agreed that same helps to reduce considerable costs.

After discussion, Chief Brady emphasized the reasons for the city to keep what it currently has and noted the difficulties in reverting.

5. COMMITTEE MEMBER QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

The committee members expressed gratitude to Chief Brady for his presentation at this evening's meeting.

6. STAFF COMMENTS

Mr. La Venia announced that Mr. Jerry Smith, Lake EMS Inc., will be giving a presentation at the January 17, 2017 meeting and thanked Chief Brady for appearing before the committee.

7. NEW BUSINESS

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

8. FUTURE MEETING DATES

Mr. La Venia indicated that the county will be giving a presentation at the January 24, 2017 meeting and anticipated that committee decisions would be made at subsequent meetings.

After discussion and **on motion of Mr. Elton, seconded by Mr. Arrowsmith and unanimously carried, the committee approved Mr. Steve Whitaker's request to excuse his absence as he will not be attending the meeting on January 17, 2017.**

9. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Earlier in the meeting and in response to Mr. Leary's question, Chief Brady indicated the decision remains with the governing body to retain the department; make up its mind on what is needed, and what is the best for the city, and move it towards the right direction. He addressed the long term and continued fund raising efforts by the City of Mascotte's fire department and the matching funds received as result which made a significant difference towards the needs of the fire department and gives individuals a place to go.

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 6:47 p.m.

The minutes were approved at the January 17, 2017 meeting.

Signed _____
Esther B. Coulson, City Clerk

Signed _____
James P. Logan, Chair