

FRUITLAND PARK FIRE SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
November 15, 2016

A meeting of the Fruitland Park Fire Services Advisory Committee was held at 506 W. Berckman Street, Fruitland Park, Florida 34731 on Tuesday, November 15, 2016 at 7:00 p.m.

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

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

1. CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mr. La Venia moderated the meeting, called the meeting to order at 7:02 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. WELCOME/INTRODUCTIONS

After Mr. La Venia welcomed the members and upon his request, they gave self-introductions and described their backgrounds and experiences.

4. OVERVIEW OF COMMITTEE’S ROLE/FUNCTION

Ms. Geraci-Carver:

- (a) **Resolution 2016-042, Creating the Committee** outlined the process and the attainment of a quorum to be five members out of a membership of seven and later in the meeting, she reviewed Resolution 2016-042 under Preliminary Topics for Consideration;
- (b) **Florida’s Government-in-the Sunshine Law** (prepared by Ms. Patricia R. Gleason, Open Government Special Counsel Attorney General Pam Bondi, for governmental entities’ boards) gave a power-point presentation from the Open Government Overview (a copy of the presentation is filed with the supplemental papers to the minutes of this meeting);

- (c) **Public Records Law** highlighted the law under the power-point presentation; discouraged committee members from using their electronic devices to transmit text messages, and cautioned the members from communicating with each other.
- (d) **Parliamentary Procedures** identified Robert's Rules of Order currently implemented by the city commission and indicated that guidance will be given during the conduct of the committee's meetings, and
- (e) **Preliminary Topics for Consideration** reviewed Resolution 2016-042 Creating the Committee and pointed out the consulting group who prepared the fire assessment study that was previously conducted.

5. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

At this time, Mr. La Venia recognized the election of officers.

(a) Chairperson

Mr. Galbreath placed the name of Mr. Edgar J. "Jerry" Elton as Chair of the Fire Services Advisory Committee.

Mr. Elton requested that his name be withdrawn for consideration from the floor.

Mr. Whitaker placed the name of Mr. James P. Logan as Chair of the Fire Services Advisory Committee.

There being no further nominations and upon Mr. Galbreath's request, **the committee, by unanimous consent, declared the nominations closed.**

Upon Mr. Galbreath's request, and **by unanimous consent, the committee approved the unanimous election of Mr. James P. Logan as Chair of the Fire Services Advisory Committee.**

At this time, Mr. Logan assumed the chair.

(b) Vice Chairperson

Mr. Whitaker placed the name of Mr. Edward R. Cihoski, Sr. as Vice Chair of the Fire Services Advisory Committee.

There being no further nominations, and **by unanimous consent, the committee declared the nominations closed.**

On motion of Mr. Whitaker seconded by Mr. Elton and unanimously carried, the committee approved the unanimous election of Mr. Edward R. Cihoski, Sr. as Vice Chair of the Fire Services Advisory Committee.

By unanimous consent the following item was taken out of order on this evening's agenda.

10. ESTABLISHING FUTURE MEETING DATES

After discussion and upon the Chair's suggestion, **the committee, by unanimous consent, agreed to hold its future meetings on Tuesday nights and determined the date of the next meeting to be November 29, 2016 at 6:00 p.m.**

6. COMMITTEE MEMBER QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

In response to Vice Chair Cihoski's inquires, Mr. Whittaker gave his belief of the city commission's preference to review the differences between the fire department consisting of volunteers and a department of fully paid staff.

As former Fruitland Park Fire Department Lieutenant and Chief and City of Leesburg's former firefighter staff, Mr. Whitaker recalled the City of Fruitland Park's volunteer department's composition, available hours, and periodical stipend received; described their on-going firefighters I and II training requirements by the State of Florida, and recognized volunteers' pursuits towards educational opportunities (borne at their own expense) and advancements to other paid fire departments and return to the city to volunteer their time.

After discussion, Mr. Whitaker addressed the high costs in retaining in-house state approved instructors to train the City of Fruitland Park's volunteers and mentioned his experience in performing same. He pointed to the similar makeup of the City of Mascotte's Fire Department who has been implementing the use of volunteers as support and the combination of paid firefighter staff; referred to a fire department document he utilized -- as former City of Fruitland Park Fire Chief -- which compared the costs of fully paid fire departments in the Cities of Mascotte, Groveland, and Mount Verde, and expressed willingness to provide same to the committee members for review by the next meeting.

Mr. Whitaker described the City of Fruitland Park's two-tier system (fire department and emergency medical service (EMS)); the protocol set forth by Lake EMS Inc., and the provision of service to which Lieutenant Yoder voiced his concurrence and relayed the fire department staff's discussions with Lake EMS on working with the city to provide a 24-hour service.

Following subsequent discussions, Mr. La Venia indicated that the committee may wish to engage in discussions regarding the calculations from the fire assessment study that was previously conducted and agreed, along with Interim Fire Department Chief Don Gilpin, on their availability at the next meeting to provide more information on the fire department's figures and residential and business property taxes at the next meeting. Additionally, Mr. Whitaker noted the agreement with the City of Leesburg for the provision of automatic aid for fire and rescue services

Following much discussion, Mr. Whitaker confirmed the ability of six firefighters -- with a basic salary of about \$43,000 on 24 to 48 hours per day shift -- to fulfill the city's requirements and gave an example of volunteers conducting similar services in the City of Mascotte.

Mr. Gilpin noted that currently 19 volunteer firefighters (all of whom do not live in the city) work on a 12-24-hour shift and receive a monthly stipend). He described the type of fire department vehicles and the capacity at which they operate.

After further discussion and by unanimous consent, the committee agreed with the chair's suggestion to provide the fire department's Fiscal Year 2016-17 budget, the fire department document previously alluded to by Mr. Whitaker, and the special fire assessment calculations in advance of the next meeting.

7. STAFF COMMENTS

Earlier in the meeting, the Chair explained that establishing the next meeting's agenda would be determined based on the committee members' plans.

8. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Paul Frost, City of Fruitland Park resident, thanked the committee members for their involvement in the city's current fire services process and explained that the public is very much aware of this evening's meeting. He expressed concerns on service calls from Lake County Fire Station 53, and requested that the Fruitland Park fire services not be transferred to Lake County.

Deputy Chief John M. Sokol, Pembroke Fire Protection District, Pembroke Township, Illinois, explained that he has been observing the current fire service events in the city; indicated that he has a business in the City of Leesburg, and mentioned his involvement with fire services for many years. He referred to the subject of grants, an option which have not been addressed and recognized that the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response Grants is not a solution for all situations; however, he addressed his willingness to share such information with the committee as well as how other departments are managing which may help as guidelines for the State of Florida.

9. 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 8:26 p.m.

The minutes were approved at the November 29, 2016 meeting.

Signed _____
Esther B. Coulson, City Clerk

Signed _____
James P. Logan, Chair