

FRUITLAND PARK FIRE SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
January 31, 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 31, 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 Ray Lewis and 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, and David Campbell, 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. Elton, seconded by Mr. Towne and unanimously carried, the committee approved the January 24, 2017 minutes as submitted.

4. PRESENTATION

Interim Fire Chief Gilpin referred to the previous presentations made before the committee gave his vision of the future Fruitland Park Fire Department, and suggested emulating the City of Mascotte Fire Department’s services.

Interim Fire Chief Gilpin reviewed the following spreadsheets; copies of which are filed with the supplemental papers to the minutes of this meeting:

- the firefighter (operating) costs and recommended retaining six fulltime personnel (two full time staff together), administrative chief, and a fire safety liaison to assist with daily administration; whilst maintaining the automatic aid agreement for fire and rescue services with the City of Leesburg and the Interlocal Agreement with The Village Center Community Development District, and utilizing the benefits including the

option of the Florida Retirement System or the city's retirement benefit at a cost of \$316,272;

- the fire assessment fee chart and how he attained the figures, and
- the historic Fruitland Park assessment figures.

After much discussion and following Chair Logan's reference to the city's zoning map and the lack of fire services to serve residents north of Spring Lake Road and Gray's Airport Road, Interim Chief Gilpin addressed the resolution of improving the working relationship with Lake County or utilizing the city as the closest service call.

Mr. La Venia addressed his expectations of the full-time fire department for the county to enter into an interlocal service boundary agreement as a requirement which would obligate them to have an automatic aid agreement as opposed to a mutual aid agreement. He voiced concerns on the city's previous efforts to foster a relationship with the county as it relates to its fire rescue services and public safety.

As a result of the growth in population, Interim Fire Chief Gilpin suggested the city addressing its needs to businesses to avoid lowering the insurance services office rating.

The prospects of the city repairing the relationship with the county, in addition to other jurisdictions, would be having a full time staffed fire department which has been addressed before the city commission.

Mr. Whitaker stressed the priority to serve the citizens and cited the definition of mutual and automatic aid. He mentioned his longevity and initial operation as a single-person station which he is not in favor.

Mr. Whitaker referred to the county's fire rescue public safety department's presentation made at the committee's January 24, 2017 meeting highlighting the service proposal/deployment; noted Lake County Fire Rescue Stations 53, 59 and 56 are within five-mile radius of each other with a five-minute response coverage for the city, and described the respective units' makeup, resources, and obligations; thus, the National Fire Protection Agency's codes and standards for residential structure fires. He stressed the need for coverage and believed the combination departments to be a positive method for support.

Mr. Whitaker pointed out the statistics for the City of Leesburg's Fire Station 62 located at Griffin Road (the next closest station which responded to 3,143 service calls in 2016, 261 per month); questioned the likelihood said station being available to respond to the City of Fruitland Park until the time for another engine, a common practice. relocating to said area, and believed that such inquiries ought to have been raised noting the ultimate decision-making rests with the city commission and the obligation to the citizens.

5. COMMITTEE MEMBER QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

After Chair Logan questioned Ms. Geraci-Carver on her involvement with various county staff pertaining to the fire rescue services agreement and her confirmation, in the affirmative, on the county commission's awareness of the city's current situation, he addressed his plan to communicate with the elected officials.

In response to Mr. Galbreath's inquiry on the city financially managing its own fire department, Mr. La Venia outlined the factoring of costs in ad valorem and fire assessment which would be addressed by the consultant at the next committee meeting; thus, paying the same as the county for future purchases of equipment. He referred to the cessation of automated funds earmarked for the radios; however, they are seeking the utilization of federal grant funding a countywide.

In response to Vice Chair Cihoski's inquiries, Interim Fire Chief Gilpin estimated the average response times for medical calls utilizing four firefighters to be six minutes and gave reasons for responding to same using a fire engine with proper equipment.

After discussion, Interim Fire Chief Gilpin's addressed his aim to continue with Basic Life Support BLS intervention; projected using Advance Life Support in the third year with staff and proper training where possible grants or capital improvement could be utilized; noted the cost to purchase medication and supplies from Lake Emergency Medical Services Inc., and described the medical equipment in the fire engines. Recognizing that the Lake Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Inc.'s vehicle is not always at the city, Interim Fire Chief Gilpin described the usual procedures for responding to service calls utilizing BLS intervention.

In response to several questions posed by Chair Logan, Interim Fire Chief Gilpin recognized the volunteer firefighters level of training and experience; pointed out the county's fire rescue power-point presentation on January 24, 2017 regarding service proposal/deployment, and interpreted the county's consideration of *existing qualified Fruitland Park personnel to receive priority hiring consideration* that volunteer firefighters would be taking the county's testing.

Later in the meeting, Chair Logan thanked everyone for their time.

6. STAFF COMMENTS

There were no comments from staff at this time.

7. NEW BUSINESS

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

8. FUTURE MEETING DATES

Upon Chair Logan's suggestion and **by unanimous consent, the committee members agreed to hold its next meeting on February 13, 2017 at 6:00 p.m. where a presentation on the fire special assessment will be made by Ms. Sandi Walker, Government Services Group Inc.**

9. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. Pat Guy, City of Fruitland Park resident, compared the county's original proposal for fire services on its service delivery with its January 24, 2017 presentation regarding their service proposal/deployment and questioned the county's reevaluation and reassessment and expressed concerns on its ultimate decision on the fire department.

Mr. Mark Isom, explained that the county's fire rescue public safety department is managed by the Professional Fire Fighters of Lake County International Association of Firefighters local union and referred to previous newspaper articles on the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response grant award the county received for additional staffing. He gave his opinion on the county's method of generating revenue and his belief that the county is self-serving and not looking out for municipalities.

Commissioner Lewis relayed questions posed earlier by Mr. Galbreath, describing the city's attempts in and the solution to mend relationships with the county and stressed the need to take care of the citizens.

Referencing an inquiry posed earlier by Chair Logan, Commissioner Ranize expressed his dismay on the Cities of Eustis and Mount Dora not having an automatic aid agreement with the county. Commissioner Ranize addressed the City of Fruitland Park's efforts in obtaining an Interlocal Service Boundary Agreement with the county and his conversations with Mr. Jerry Smith, Lake EMS, in resolving the installation of the automatic vehicle locaters (AVLs).

Commissioner Ranize described the circumstances leading to the death of Mr. Kirkland who lived on Spring Lake Road due to the lack of AVLs – the county's communication center not dispatching the service call which was escalated to medical to the city's fire department (who was near the scene) but assigned same to The Villages Public Safety Fire Station. He reported on the son's arrival -- who lived nearby and works as the county's deputy sheriff -- to his father's death before Lake EMS and the fire department.

Commissioner Ranize described the city's previous attempts in resolving the problem -- namely; his November 28, 2016 email to Mr. David Heath, Lake County Manager (with a copy to District Lake County Commissioner Sean Parks) and Mr. La Venia's November 2, 2016 to the city commission to no avail -- and explained that the issue concerns him deeply as, in his opinion, the county is placing lives and property below a contract.

Commissioner Ranize referred to his previous communications with Mr. Melvin Stone, State of Florida, Division of State Fire Marshal, and relayed his view on how impressed he was on how far the city's fire department has come in the last few years with training, documentation and review and questioned the fire department's unawareness of same. He indicated that the city will continue to try and expressed appreciation to the committee on its time in considering the issues and what it has to offer to the city commission.

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 February 22, 2017 meeting.

Signed 

Esther B. Coulson, City Clerk

Signed 

James P. Logan, Chair