

Spring Hill Fire Rescue  
Commission Meeting  
January 23, 2002

**Present:** Chairman Kanner, Commissioner Hollander, Commissioner Andrews  
Commissioner Martin, Commission Panozzo, Chief Morrison, and Attorney  
Salzman

**Call to Order**

Chairman Kanner called the Commission Meeting to order at 7:10 p.m.

**Invocation**

Rev. Clemons gave the invocation.

**Pledge of Allegiance**

Chairman Kanner led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Kanner stated with Board's approval he would like to move New Business, Item A, Selection of Fire Chief up.

The Board agreed to move New Business, Item A up.

Chairman Kanner stated as per last weeks workshop the Board made a consensus to promote Interim Assistant Chief Morrison to Chief of the Spring Hill Fire District.

**Motion**

***Commissioner Panozzo made a Motion to promote Interim Assistant Chief Morrison to Chief of this department.***

***Commissioner Martin seconded the Motion***

Commissioner Martin stated this is the first time he has ever been a party to promoting someone to a Fire Chief's position. As defined by the County Ordinance #7312, and for those who are in the ordinance, but may not be familiar with # 73-12, he read a small excerpt. To give some explanation about what the Board does here in this department.

**Ordinance #73-12:** is to create the Spring Hill Fire and Rescue District; establishing boundaries for said district; providing for a governing Board; providing for election of a governing Board; providing for dismissal of members of said Board; prescribing the jurisdiction, powers and duties of said Board; providing for the preparation of an annual budget; providing for tax liability

during year of creation of the district; providing for a levy of special assessment; providing for capital reserves; providing for fiscal regulations by the county Commissions; declaration of special benefits; permitting fire and ambulance protection contracts; setting meetings and salary of said board; requiring a referendum to be held within the boundaries of the district to determine if the district shall have the power to levy ad valorem taxation no to exceed 1-3/4 mills for a period of two years; providing a severance provision; providing a repealer provision; providing for an effective date.

**Be it ordained by the Hernando County Board of County Commissioners.**

**Section 1** - The Hernando County Board of Commissioners is hereby authorized to create and there is hereby created a special fire and rescue protection taxing district, consisting of all property in Hernando County located in all units of Spring Hill, a subdivision in Hernando county, Fl, as per plats thereof recorded in the Public Records of Hernando county, Fl. Said district shall be designated as "Spring Hill Fire and Rescue District."

**Section 2** - The Spring Hill Fire and Rescue District shall be governed by the Board of Commissioners, which shall consist of (3) members, but is now (5). That was some background to understand as to why we are here. The district exists as long as the County Commissioners of Hernando County dem that we are fulfilling our obligations and are operating under the parameters that they set for us. We do have an operation side of the house, but we also have five Commissions that oversee that what goes on. He said Chief Morrison has been with the district for quite some time and he worked his way up, so he realizes how relevant # 7312 is to the district. As Fire Chief his responsibilities will be many, however, two primary responsibilities will be that of a Leader and a Manager. He looked up Leader and Manager to get a little more insight as to a good working definition. He found in an old text book to be successful Managers must be Leaders. Is there a difference between a Manager and a Leader? Manager spend most of there time mastering basic routines in deciding how to do things right. Leaders, however, use vision and judgement to create and to do the right things. Great Leaders communicate their vision to their employees and wisely use their power to make their ideas a reality. They devote everything they have to their task and they simplify do not think about failure. Some of the things that he is looking for in a Leader is a who leads by example with a do as I do not as do as I say philosophy. Continuously challenge his subordinates to strive for excellent and provides them with the means to do so. Understands good order and discipline. Knows himself and limitations and seeks self improvement. Goal oriented and willing to do whatever it takes to accomplish the mission of this district. While being ever watchful to protect the man and women placed under their command. With the moto mission first people always. He had the opportunity to observe Chief Morrison in the capacity of Assistant Chief for a year and a half and recently as Interim Chief of the District. He feels confidant by recommending his promotion to Chief, he will seize the opportunity to take command of this District and to continue to deliver and improve upon a professional and timely emergency services which this community demands.

***The Motion carried unanimously (5-0).***

Chairman Kanner stated it gives him great pleasure to presented Chief Morrison with the Fire Chief's badge.

Chief Morrison thanked the Board.

The Board had a two minute recess 7:20 to 7:25.

### **Consent Agenda**

Chairman Kanner asked if there were any questions regarding the Consent Agenda.

### **Motion**

*Commissioner Andrews made a Motion to accept the Consent Agenda*

*Commissioner Panozzo seconded the Motion*

Commissioner Andrews asked regarding the Bill Explanation sheet for week ending 01/11/02, pool enclosure repair what it was for?

Chief Morrison stated that was property damage by one of Bayflite's helicopters, and they are going to reimburse the District.

*The Motion carried unanimously (5-0).*

### **Report of Counsel**

Attorney Salzman stated they have the results on the title search regarding old station-1, that the Board requested, however the analysis will be ready Thursday. There were some restrictions, about a Church that was going to be built back in 1970. That was just one issue, but they are working on this and he will have the answers for the Chief Thursday. The other issue is coming up under the Chief's report, which is the update on the sinkhole.

### **Chief's Report**

#### A. Update on Sinkhole

Chief Morrison introduced Mr. Art Dillman, from All Coast Engineering, the firm in which the Board approved to help oversee the sinkhole project. Since the last Commission Meeting, they have been contact by VFIS, our insurance company. It was the day the article hit the newspaper, stating the Board was retaining a Legal Firm to help with the sinkhole issue. With Attorney Salzman's advise, he held off signing a contract with the other Legal Firm to give our insurance company a chance. VFIS retained an engineering firm, their representative came here and walked the site and took some pictures. The Department's insurance company did not get back to them. He finally insisted on getting something from them, so they faxed a letter to Attorney Salzman's office.

Attorney Salzman stated it was a Reservation of Rights letter. They are saying at this point, they are not excepting liability.

Chief Morrison stated our insurances course of action would be to send their engineering firm here to take a survey. It is a duplication of effort that All Coast has already done. They are saying they cannot start their survey for another six weeks.

Attorney Salzman stated when the insurance company recently contacted us, it seemed like they were going to be responsible and stand up for us, as far as, realizing there was damage to the building. Now that they are delaying, he recommended signing the contract with the Law Firm and continue forward and allow them to handle this matter. They have given the insurance company every opportunity to step forward, and they have not.

Chairman Kanner stated they have given them more then ample time to do what has to be done.

Attorney Salzman stated that is the only reason why they did not do the action that the Board has already authorized, and they wanted to update the Board.

Chairman Kanner stated he feels they should sign the contract and start litigation. Whatever needs to be done to move on and get the hole fixed.

Chief Morrison stated if the Board makes a decision and has any questions, he asked Mr. Dillman to come to the meeting.

Chairman Kanner asked Mr. Dillman if he could assure that the Fleet Maintenance building will be safe six weeks from now?

Mr. Dillman stated he cannot assure that the building would be safe six weeks from now.

The Board discussed some issues with Mr. Dillman regarding sinkholes.

Chairman Kanner stated he recommends the Board direct Chief Morrison and Counsel to start litigation and continue with the repair of the building.

### **Motion**

***Commissioner Martin made a Motion to allow Staff to process under the guidance of Counsel to obtain necessary legal counsel to represent them on behalf of the sinkhole issue. To move forward and remedy this situation to protect District assets and personnel.***

***Commissioner Andrews seconded the Motion.***

***The Motion carried unanimously (5-0).***

B. Lobby Remodeling

Chairman Kanner stated Chief Morrison would like to table Item B Lobby Remodeling.

**Motion**

*Commissioner Martin made a Motion to table Item B Lobby Remodeling.*

*Commissioner Andrews seconded the Motion.*

C. Inspector-1 Vehicle

Chief Morrison stated that the old Inspector -1 vehicle is still in the fleet. Calvin, our fleet mechanic feels the vehicle is serviceable, to remain in the fleet as a spare vehicle. We currently have a training van. However, he has no opinion on this issue. If it were his decision, he would surplus the vehicle. Because the mechanic said it was serviceable, he wanted to come to the Board and see what the Board would like to do with this vehicle.

Chairman Kanner asked if he thought about making it a Fire Police Vehicle?

Chief Morrison stated that could be done. If the Board would like himself and Commissioner Martin to sit down with the Fire Police and discuss how they feel about getting a second vehicle in the fleet. Also to find out if they can use it.

Commissioner Martin asked what kind of money would they have to put into this vehicle, as far as, light bars and other equipment?

Commissioner Panozzo stated that vehicle does not have a light bar on it. It has dash board lights and lights in the grill, which is all the Fire Police would need.

Chief Morrison stated from what he is hearing from the Board, there is a consensus that before they surplus this vehicle, see what can be do with it. He can get together with the Fire Police or Commissioner Martin and come up with a plan and a cost for that vehicle and come back to the Board.

D. High Point VFD Sheriff's Day Request for FSH

Chief Morrison stated the Sheriff from High Point Volunteer Fire Department has requested our Fire Safety House for the event. He will talk to the Inspector-1 about going over there and manning the event.

Chairman Kanner asked if any units will be out of service?

Chief Morrison stated he will make sure that no units will be out of service. And a last call unit will be with it.

**Motion**

***Commissioner Hollander made a Motion to allow the Fire Safety House to go to High Point as requested.***

***Commissioner Panozzo seconded the Motion.***

***The Motion carried unanimously (5-0).***

E. Advertising for Assistant Chief

Chief Morrison stated they missed the Florida Fire Chief's publication for February. The next publication would be for March. The closing date would be the minimum of three weeks into March. He would like to get a consensus from the Board if they would like to wait that long, and any input on the ad.

Chairman Kanner asked what is the alternative?

Chief Morrison stated the Florida Fire Chief has a web-site that we can post the ad on, and we can also advertise in the local newspapers.

Chairman Kanner asked how quickly can they get the advertisement on the web-site?

Chief Morrison stated he cannot see it taking more than a week.

Chairman Kanner stated then they can have the closing date for February 28, 2002.

Commissioner Andrews stated that because of Fire Rescue East, they will be vacating their office next week to go to Jacksonville, for the set-up. If the Board approves the ad, and they get it to them by January 24, they might get it on the web-site. Otherwise, it will be the week after because they close down for the event.

Chief Morrison stated he can base the closing date on that.

Chairman Kanner stated they can make the closing date for the first week in March.

Commissioner Martin asked if they went into the publication when would they need to set their closing date?

Chief Morrison stated the publication would be their March addition, in which they receive the

last day of February, first day of March. If they are going to publish an ad in that publication, they should have the closing date three weeks after the first day of March. That is with publication in their Journal. If they forgo that publication, they can put it on their web-site and this would speed up the time line. By putting it into publication they would be getting it into a larger circulation.

Commissioner Martin stated he favors advertising in both, the web-site and the Journal. He would like to get as many applications as possible to give the Chief a larger pool to draw from. He asked how does the Chief feel about that?

Chief Morrison stated he has mixed feeling. He feels it is about time to get some help in this department. Also, he would hate to miss qualified applicants because they are rushing the issue. He feels Commission Andrews is familiar with the publication verses the web-site and they should listen to some of his input on the issue.

Commissioner Andrews stated the publication goes out to all of the members and other entities. The web-site is open to the entire world, another web-site to look into <http://Govtjobs.com> for Government jobs, but he does not know the charge. This is a national site that many people use.

After the Board discussed whether to put the ad in the newspaper or on the web-site.

Chairman Kanner stated to advertise on the Florida Fire Chief's web-site. The closing date will be Friday, March 8, 2002 at 12:00 p.m.

Chief Morrison stated he gave the Board a sample of the wording for the ad. In the Policy and Procedure book it did not state that the Assistant Chief has to have a Florida State Certified Firefighter. However, he added that to the job description.

The Board agreed that the Assistant Chief be State Certified as a Firefighter.

Chairman Kanner asked if the ad also stated they must be a resident of Spring Hill?

Chief Morrison stated that the ad reads you must reside within the District six months after appointment.

Commissioner Martin stated the area known as Spring Hill is larger then the District.

Commissioner Andrews stated it has always been that they had to live within the Fire District.

Commissioner Martin stated that a tobacco free workplace to him means, no tobacco like on the school properties. Is that something that needs further definition or is it understood that when we hire them they have to be tobacco free for a period. However, if they want to go back to tobacco they may?

Chief Morrison stated Board direction is currently, that all applicants sign an affidavit stating that they were tobacco free one year prior to the date of signing the affidavit. That is what we use as the tobacco free workplace.

Commissioner Martin asked Counsel if he foresees a problem with that?

Attorney Salzman stated that other departments use the affidavit.

Commissioner Andrews stated originally it came from State that you had to be certified as a firefighter. They argued it and it became a statute and said it would be up to the local jurisdiction to enforce that. Many of them have continued to do that.

7. Unfinished Business

8. New Business

B. Discussion of Department Physician and Medical Director Services

Commissioner Martin stated on November 27, 2001, Dr. Blackburn put together a proposal and submitted it to the Board of Commissioners. This was something that they submitted to us. The Board should extend to the Doctor the courtesy of reviewing the package and decide if this is something the Board needs to act upon. If the Board acts upon it or not, they can at least thank him for submitting the proposal. They should let him know that they received it, maybe it is being kept on file, but apparently some work went into the proposal. He would like to give the Dr. Blackburn the opportunity to explain why he submitted the proposal to the Board.

Chairman Kanner stated that if they are going to give Dr. Blackburn the opportunity to speak, then they have to give Dr. Pagnette, equal time.

Dr. Blackburn stated what the Board has is a proposal of what he put together. He tried to give the Board an overview of some services that maybe they do not currently have. He has been with the Spring Hill Fire and Rescue since 1992. He has preformed their physical's and working directly with the Chief's, Captains and the rank and file. The proposal is simply to provide, not only Medical Directorship duties, but to preform Medical Education. This would pertain to reviewing and auditing patient care reports. The other issue would be to develop and provide in service professional, educational and medical related topics. Dr. Blackburn discussed some of his ideas and his background to the Board.

Chairman Kanner asked how often can he ride along with the Emergency vehicles to see how they response?

Dr. Blackburn stated it would be about three or four times a year. He would like to hit different shifts at different times.

Chairman Kanner asked if he is not in the emergency room, how is he going to see the patients that they are bringing in?

Dr. Blackburn stated he is a Board Certified Family Practice MD. He sees the patient from the minute the patient comes to the office to the minute they get to the emergency room. He has been a full time medical staff for twelve years at Oakdale Hospital.

Chairman Kanner asked Dr. Blackburn what was his emergency room experience?

Dr. Blackburn passed out some information for the Board to look at. At either their leisure or he can go over it with them now.

The Board and Dr. Blackburn discussed the Doctor's practice, background and experience.

Dr. Blackburn stated what he would hope to do, that we are not doing now, is to expand the education. Continuing education is one of the most important parts, to have an up to date fire and rescue, EMS personnel. That is where he feels he can enhance their current situation. As far as, claiming to be an emergency room Doctor, he is not. That is not his criterion, most of their responses are on the scene, and he is familiar with that.

Dr. Blackburn stated he would like to correct the newspaper, because there was an article with some misinformation. In no way, shape or form did his proposal concerned the physicals for the department. He had no knowledge of the article until someone brought it to his attention. He would hope the Board and the Chief did not perceive it that way. This will not affect his ability to preform the department's physicals. This would not be part of the physicals, but a separate entity and has always been.

Dr. Paquette stated that he is the Medical Director for the Spring Hill Regional Emergency Department. He has had the pleasure of that job for the last six months, and has been practicing at that facility for the last two years. He discussed his experience and certifications to the Board. However, he did not plan to come to the meeting with a proposal. His immediate response when he read the newspaper article, like Dr. Blackburn, was a little bit of misconception. The article made it seem like he was going to be the firefighter's Doctor, and the Supervising Physician for them. Which in fact he would be doing two jobs. That was his concern, to have a physician in charge of your care as a firefighter, and review your run sheets, he had a problem with that. Therefore that is why he came to this meeting to address that issue. He feels those two jobs should be kept separate. He made it public that he is interested in becoming a Medical Director. He has worked with many different groups, but the men and women of the Spring Hill Fire

Rescue units impressed him very much. He came to the meeting as a citizen and a physician to encourage the Board to keep those two jobs separate. However, he would be honored to put a proposal forward in which the Board can make comparisons.

Commissioner Martin stated what he was looking for at this meeting was an open discussion on this information. He was not looking to make any motions, or make any changes. He just wanted to get a general feeling for what is going on, to get some background information. In the future they can bring this issue back up for discussion and decide how the Board would want to continue regarding this issue.

The Board discussed issues concerning Dr. Newhaller, the Medical Director's contract.

Commissioner Martin stated Dr. Newhaller is not present at this meeting, and he has some question that he would like to ask him. They are not doing the Doctor any justice by us discussing this issue without him being present. They should give him the opportunity to give the Board some insight about what he is doing and what his plan is. That way Dr. Blackburn and Dr. Newhaller, who are service providers, will be informed what is going on.

Chief Morrison stated the department should put together what they are looking for, and what it can afford in a Medical Director. He would like things to change with the relationship between the department and the Medical Director. He feels the first step is to put together a group. Such as, EMT'S and Paramedic's in the department to evaluate other contracts, for Medical Director's across the State to see what is available. Then they can come back to the Board with advice on what they in a Medical Director. Then it would be up to the Board to decide whether to fund that mechanism. They can use that as a vehicle to go out for request for proposals from local physicians.

Commissioner Martin stated it would be in the Board's best interest to table this issue and bring it up at another meeting.

Chief Morrison stated they do not have to table this issue. If the Board would like seeing what is available, they have to design a request for proposal. That is a process that will take sometime. He would also like to have one Commissioner participate in the group.

Chairman Kanner stated he would like to see Commissioner Andrews involved in the group.

Commissioner Andrews stated as far as he knows he would have the time to be involved with the group.

Commissioner Hollander asked if two commissioners can be in this group?

Attorney Salzman stated then it would have to be a public meeting.

Commissioner Hollander stated this is something he is interested in.

Commissioner Martin stated just to make it clear, they are looking to put a group together to make recommendations how they will solicit proposals for a Medical Director.

Chief Morrison stated it would be to write the request for proposal for the Medical Director. Then come to the Board with that proposal.

Chairman Kanner asked how many people would be in this group?

Chief Morrison stated he will come back to the Board with the appropriate number of people, at the next meeting.

### **Comments of Commissioners**

Chairman Kanner stated his congratulations to the Chief

Commissioner Hollander had nothing to report.

Commissioner Andrews had nothing to report.

Commissioner Martin stated he would like to welcome aboard Chief Morrison.

Commissioner Panozzo had nothing to report.

### **Open Forum**

Chief Morrison stated he thanks the Board on their vote of confidences. He hoped that he proved he deserves it. He is looking forward to a long and healthy relationship.

### **Motion**

*Commissioner Andrews made a Motion to adjourn the meeting.*

*Commissioner Martin seconded the Motion*

*The Motion carried unanimously (5-0).*

**Adjourn**

Chairman Kanner Adjourned the Commission Meeting at 8:55 p.m.

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Robert Kanner, Chairman

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Joan E. Chiofalo, Board Secretary

