

SPRING HILL FIRE RESCUE  
Commission Meeting  
January 26, 2005  
7:00 p.m.

**Present:** Vice Chairman Panozzo, Commissioner Jacobs, Commissioner Raborn,  
Commissioner Perreira, Commissioner Biro, Chief Morrison,  
Assistant Chief Davies, Attorney Iurato

**Excused:** Attorney Salzman

**Call to Order**

Vice Chairman Panozzo called the Commission Meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

**Invocation**

Rev. Clemons gave the invocation.

**Pledge of Allegiance**

Vice Chairman Panozzo led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Vice Chairman Panozzo stated although the Election of Officers was not on the Agenda, the Board needs to make a Motion to nominate Officers.

**Election of Officers**

Commissioner Biro nominated Vice Chairman Panozzo for the position as Chairman.

Commissioner Perreira second the nomination.

***The Nomination carried unanimously (5-0)***

Chairman Panozzo nominated Commissioner Jacobs for the position as Vice Chairman.

Commissioner Biro second the nomination.

***The Nomination carried unanimously (5-0)***

Commissioner Biro nominated Commissioner Perreira for the position as second Vice Chairman.

Commissioner Jacobs second the nomination.  
*The Nomination carried unanimously (5-0).*

### **Consent Agenda**

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

### **Motion**

*Commissioner Biro made a Motion to approve the Consent Agenda.*

*Commissioner Jacobs seconded the Motion.*

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

Chairman Panozzo stated that before the Board proceeds, Chief Morrison has something to present.

Chief Morrison stated that at the Department's Annual Employee Award Ceremony they recognize those employees who have been with the Department for a length of time. Pete Knauff could not attend the ceremony, therefore, he presented Gilbert Pete Knauff, with a plaque. Pete has worked for the Department for 10-years and in that short amount of time has excelled in communications. Pete is a Communication Supervisor, but started out as a firefighter. Due to an injury while serving in the line of duty and had to leave the Department, but came back to work in communications and does an outstanding job.

### **Report of Counsel**

There was nothing to report.

### **Chief's Report**

#### **A. Update - Station-3**

Chief Morrison stated that the Assistant Chief is the lead of the Station-3 project. By contract the project is slated for 14- months. Everybody knows how construction has been in the area, but he will try to keep the project within the 14-month projection. This item will be on the Agenda every month for the Assistant Chief to give an update on the progress of the project.

Assistant Chief Davies stated that next week there will be a meeting at Station-3 with the engineering company that's overseeing the project. After the meeting, the engineering company will start on the drawings.

Chief Morrison stated that the packets had a letter from the County Attorney clearing the Department to spend impact fees on the project.

**B. Change in Minimum Manning**

Chief Morrison stated that five years ago the Board set an ambitious task of increasing the Department's manpower. This was a safety issue, not only to the employees, but to the residents of Spring Hill. The project was initially slated for 12-years. Each year a firefighter would be added and at the end of 12-years the Department would have increased the minimum manning to 5-people per station. At budget time the Board puts as much as they can towards manning. With 6-firefighters added to last years budget, he was happy to inform the Board, that as of February 15<sup>th</sup>, the Department will have 5-men at each station. This is quite an accomplishment for the Department and the Board.

Commissioner Raborn asked was there any more employee's who will be eligible for retirement?

Chief Morrison said the next time the Department has a senior member retire, which will be in approximately 4-years, they will hire a probationary firefighter. He would hate to lose the experience, but this will save the Department money.

**C. Committee Report - Dispatch**

Chief Morrison stated that with the Board's direction, Administration formed a committee to explore the issue of a countywide dispatch center. The committee consists of the Assistant Chief, representing Administration, Communication Supervisor Larry Foshey, representing Communications, Lt. Scott Edminsten, representing the Union and a former Commissioner, Jeff Hollander who will be representing the Public. The Committee met and setup the ground work, which was very productive, but there are still a lot of questions. The Committee agreed to take a field trip to the Sheriff's current Communication Center and try and get some of those questions answered.

Commissioner Biro stated the County was paying approximately \$140,000 for the Department to do their dispatching, therefore, why would the Department have to pay a \$200,000 fee to the County? Wouldn't that come out of the General Fund?

Chief Morrison stated that if Communications become combined that would be up to the politicians to decide how to pay for it. He understands that this year the Department only charged the County \$148,000, which is also for the volunteer, therefore the County received less than that. If the money comes out of the General Fund the Department would not have to pay that because he feels the Board would lower the millage rate. Currently, the Department is spending half a million dollars on Communications. When Communications moves to the Sheriff's Office they can do all of the fire dispatching for less money. The money does balance out. If the Department retains Communications

he feels they would only need to trim one full-time position.

Commissioner Jacobs stated if they were to combine the operation, why would the Department's employees have to become County employees? Has the question been asked, if the employees can remain Department employees and keep their benefits, but just work for the County?

Chief Morrison said no, but he will bring that question up when he meets with the Sheriff's Office.

The Board further discussed combining Communications.

Chief Morrison stated that this is a delicate issue. The Committee will represent all sides and hopefully they will present the Board with a recommendation that will make sense to the Department.

### **Unfinished Business**

#### **A. Opening - Part-time Office Assistant**

Chief Morrison stated that the Board received a copy of the test results for a part-time Office Assistant position. There were ten people tested for the position and six successfully made it through the assessment process. The names on the list were ranked according to their scores.

Chairman Panozzo asked if the applicants have any relatives in the Department?

Assistant Chief Davies said he does not believe so.

Chief Morrison stated that the testing process was put together by Cindy Taylor, the Department's Administrator Office Supervisor. Cindy and the Assistant Chief conducted the oral interview and did an outstanding job. He feels the number-one name on the list would be the best person for the position.

### **Motion**

***Commissioner Jacobs made a Motion to adopt the current Eligibility List, which was determined by the testing process.***

***Commissioner Raborn seconded the Motion.***

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

Chief Morrison stated that the person who is currently in the part-time position was a full time employee for years. He hates to see her go, but due to family obligations she cannot come into the office to work

20-hours. He asked if anyone knew a better word to use then terminate?

Commissioner Jacobs suggested the word “sever” could be used instead of “terminate.” Attorney Iurato asked if the Department gave the employee the opportunity to resign?

Chief Morrison said no, but he will offer her the opportunity to resign.

Commissioner Jacobs asked how soon will the Department hire the new part-time office assistant?

Assistant Chief Davies said after the physical and background check, which could take 2-3 weeks.

The Board gave a consensus to speak to the current part-time employee.

### **Motion**

*Commissioner Jacobs made a Motion that upon the resignation of the present part-time office assistant an offer of employment be made to Annette Doying, the first name on the Eligibility List.*

*Commissioner Raborn seconded the Motion.*

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

### **New Business**

#### A. Training - Personnel Policies

Chief Morrison stated that the Department’s new insurance carrier sent over a Risk Manager to analyze the Department’s policies. He has not received the formal written recommendations as yet. If the Board decides to adopt the new polices, the Risk Manager recommends that there be mandatory training for all employees. Also recommended is that the training be done by a labor attorney. In the past, the previous Board used Walter Dry, however, as much as he likes Mr. Dry, in order to protect the Department he feels they need to consider using Attorney Salzman’s firm.

Chairman Panozzo asked what would the difference in cost be?

Chief Morrison said he has not negotiated a price with Attorney Salzman yet.

Attorney Iurato stated that Attorney Salzman has extensive experience in Labor and Employment issues. He feels Attorney Salzman would be extremely qualified to handle this issue on behalf of the Department. If the Board desires, Attorney Salzman will be available to negotiation his fee.

## **B. Dispatch Eligibility List**

Chief Morrison stated that Assistant Chief Davies did the testing and interviewing for this list. There were eight individuals who entered the testing process, but only three passed the rigorous testing. Currently, this is for a part-time position, however, if a full-time position opens up they would use this list and the same goes for the office assistant's list. The list will stay in effect up to 2-years at Board discretion.

### **Motion**

*Commissioner Raborn made a Motion to accept the Dispatch Eligibility List.*

*Commissioner Perreira seconded the Motion.*

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

Chief Morrison stated that there is one remaining part-time position in communications. He recommended that the Board offer employment to Richard Russell, the first name on the Dispatch Eligibility List.

### **Motion**

*Commissioner Raborn made a Motion to offer a part-time position of employment to Richard Russell.*

*Commissioner Biro seconded the Motion.*

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

### **Comments of Commission**

Commissioner Perreira stated that she will not be able to attend some future meetings. She will give those dates to the Board.

Commissioner Raborn thanked Chief Morrison for having Chief Alan Brunacini from Phoenix give his lecture. It was a great idea.

Chief Morrison said the lecture was on behalf of the Pasco-Hernando Fire Chief's Association. It was a good day and well attended.

Commissioner Biro asked how is the Strategic Planning Committee coming along?

Chief Morrison stated that the Strategic Planning Committee has not yet met. Commissioner Raborn and Commissioner Perreira have indicated that they would like to be on the Committee, but a meeting has not been setup yet, however a meeting will be setup in the near future.

Commissioner Biro stated that the previous Board discussed looking at land for a station-5. Is that still in process, because land is getting harder to come by in Spring Hill. He knows there was some type of negotiation with the County for a piece of property on Spring Hill Drive. Is that still in the works?

Chief Morrison stated that the Department never had a chance for that piece of property. The County wanted to build a library on the property. The property still under consideration is the old Florida Water property. The property is now owned by Hernando Utilities and they have not given the Department an answer. The need for a station-5 will be discussed when the Strategic Planning Committee meets.

The Board further discussed property for a station-5.

Commissioner Jacobs asked the Chief if Kate Adams from Hernando Utilities called him?

Chief Morrison said he has not spoken with Kate Adams for a couple of weeks.

Commissioner Jacobs stated that the Florida Department had a Board meeting a few weeks ago and there are some wells in Arpieka.

Chief Morrison stated that he will be speaking to Kate Adams and that would be an interesting possibility.

Commissioner Jacobs stated regarding the future of the Department, Jimmy Zabetka is doing a good job as Training and Safety Officer, but he is overloaded. Are there any plans in the near future to get somebody to help Jimmy in that capacity?

Chief Morrison said yes, but that will be discussed during budget time. He has no plans to do anything prior to next October because it was not budgeted. He has taken a few items off of Jimmy's plate and given them to the Captains.

Chairman Panozzo stated the Brunacini lecture held at Stage West was a good deal.

### **Open Forum**

Michael Rampino, Union President stated the 5-man minimum manning was not put into the Union contract during negotiations, but wanted to thank the Board and the Chief's Office for keeping their word on putting 5-men in each station.

**Motion**

*Commissioner Raborn made a Motion to adjourn the Commission Meeting.*

*Commissioner Jacobs seconded the Motion.*

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

Chairman Panozzo adjourned the Commission Meeting at 8:00 p.m.

---

Gene Panozzo, Chairman

---

Joan E. Chiofalo, Board Secretary