

Spring Hill Fire Rescue
Commission Meeting
February 13, 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 7:40 p.m.

Invocation

Rev. Clemons gave the invocation.

Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Kanner led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Presentation to Communication Officer - Ales

Chief Morrison stated at a later meeting he would like this type of presentation in their policy. On January 9, 2002, Communication Officer Cheryl Ales handled a 911 call, which came in from a father explaining that his daughter was about to give birth. This pregnancy was unexpected in the family. Because of this situation, the young lady who was about to become a mother, was put on the phone. This call was not in the Spring Hill District, and it was a long response time, so Communication Officer Ales helped deliver the baby on the phone. Because of her efforts over the phone, the young lady delivered a healthy baby girl. He asked the Board to present Communication Officer Cheryl Ales with a pin that she will wear on her uniform with pride.

Chairman Kanner presented Cheryl Ales with the pin of a small pink stork to represent the small baby girl she helped deliver.

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 Martin seconded the Motion

Commissioner Martin asked about the Bill Explanation Sheet for week ending 1/25/02, expense for white towels is that like a shop towel?

Chief Morrison stated that was for paper towels and toilet tissue. Chief Morrison questioned why the department purchased these items from Chem-Plus, and he was assured that they were giving the department the best deals on those items.

Commissioner Martin asked regarding the same Bill Explanation Sheet, on page two, from Ten-8 Fire Equipment for Goggles for the \$2,360?

Chief Morrison stated those are for safety goggles for the firefighters to wear. This is the product from the Safety Committee. The shields that are currently being used do not provide adequate eye protection in certain situations.

The Motion carried unanimously (5-0).

Report of Counsel

Attorney Salzman had nothing to report.

Chief's Report

A. Status of Projects

Chief Morrison stated regarding the Status of Projects, he gave the Board a list, however the number of Projects has changed. Because of these changes, the Board is free to call him anytime and discuss these issues.

Commissioner Martin stated in the future, he would like a date on the Status of Project list so they can keep track of what version they are looking at.

Chief Morrison stated he would also like to share with the Board that Commissioner Martin had recommended to try and identify some target completion dates for these projects. The next list will have that, and the status will just be augmented.

B. Lobby Remodeling

Chief Morrison asked the Board if they would like to table this item for the next meeting?

The Board agreed to table this item for the next meeting.

C. Medical Billing

Chief Morrison stated a new fee schedule and other changes will be coming for Medicare that will be implemented in April 2003.

Chief Morrison pointed out that, Commissioner Hollander stated they will be under (HIPA) Health Insurance Portability Accountability Act in the year 2003. All of this will affect their billing software. As the Board is aware, they have not been happy with the billing software that they have now. It has done the job, but there are better products. They have gone to the Vendor, but the Vendor has not answered their requests in a timely fashion. He recommended that the Board look at purchasing different software to do their medical billing. He feels it will be a benefit to the District. He recommended that they form a small group. He would like Commissioner Hollander be part of this group because of his expertise in this area, and start looking at other vendors. He has developed a list of vendors that do ambulance billing. They can contact some of those vendors to do a demo of their software and get an idea of their prices. He would like to move forward with this issue, and is looking for a consensus from the Board.

Chairman Kanner asked who would he want to be on the committee?

Chief Morrison stated Commissioner Hollander and Helen Gennusa from the billing department.

Commissioner Andrews asked what was the consensus of the majority of people he spoke to that use the software?

Chief Morrison stated that there are two that are nationwide; Amazon which is Sweet Soft's Window-based version and the other is Meda Point.

The Board discussed some software products and how it can benefit the departments medical billing issues.

The Board approved that the Chief move forward concerning the Medical Billing software.

D. Pump Operator Class

Chief Morrison stated that by contract the District is to supply a Pump Apparatus Class. With the help of Commissioner Andrews, Captain Rampino has secured instructors to teach that class. It is going to cost the District, roughly, \$3,500 to put that class on. The target date to begin the class is February 25, 2002. The Board needs to be aware of, to get members into the class, firefighters cannot swap with other firefighters, because they themselves will be in the class. With the approval of the Board, he would like to do is change the operation during class time to help them get people into the class. Some changes would be having the Shift Commander ride down as a Lieutenant for the class hours and he will cover for the Shift Commander during those hours. He would like to get five members from each shift into this class while they are on duty. He would like to also approve swap time between firefighters and

officers for this class with the stipulation that the repayment for that swap time would not create overtime.

Commissioner Panozzo asked how long is this class?

Chief Morrison stated it is 2-five day weeks for eight hours a day.

Commissioner Andrews stated it is for the forty hour hydraulics class and the forty-hour apparatus class which they require now.

Chief Morrison stated he will make sure the District is covered during these classes.

The Board agreed to go ahead with the Pump Operation Class.

E. Paramedic Program

Chief Morrison stated there is a statewide and national shortage of Paramedic's. Because of the shortage, Pasco County is opening acceptance applications every two weeks, where as this department accepts applications every two years at times. To attract and retain Paramedic's, Hillsborough County has recently increased their starting wage to \$38,000 and offered them kelly days every three weeks. The need for Paramedic's is evident. They have not suffered the same crunch as the other departments, instead of reacting to that shortage, he would rather anticipate it and do something about it. They traditionally sent two people to the Paramedic Program, they have four employees' who are interested in attending that program this year. With the consensus from the Board, he would like to move forward on trying to get all four employees' on that program.

Commissioner Panozzo asked about this program, will it create overtime?

Chief Morrison stated no, but if that becomes an issue, he will let the Board know. Right now with the Budget we cannot do an overtime version on this issue.

Commissioner Panozzo stated if they can keep this limited overtime, anybody in this department, even if it is ten employees, he would favor sending them to school.

The Board discussed the training and schooling for Paramedics' and EMTs', how important it is to have a Paramedic on the ambulance.

The Board agreed on training those four employees, and if the budget can handle more employees' without overtime the Chief may do so.

F. Medical Director R.F.P

Chief Morrison stated Commissioner Hollander and Commission Andrews are on the committee, subject to availability. Many employees are interested and would like to help with the project, but he felt five employees' should be enough for the project. With Board's approval, he will schedule the first meeting. He suggested that it would be easier for a project like this when there is only one Commissioner.

Chairman Kanner stated that is not a problem, he would like to be the alternate if Commissioner Hollander cannot make it.

Commissioner Andrews stated he really does not have the time, but he can supply information.

Chairman Kanner stated the committee will have one Commissioner at a time for this project.

G. Inspector 1 Vehicle

Chief Morrison stated that he was to let the Board know of the plan and price for converting the old inspector 1 vehicle into a second Fire Police vehicle. At the next meeting he will come to the Board with a detailed vehicle replacement program. He spoke to their mechanic and he suggested giving the Fire Police the hydrant vehicle. With the vehicle replacement funds currently for this budget year, they should replace the hydrant vehicle. The Board has not stated where that money is going to be spent and they have to address other vehicle needs.

The Board discussed some issues regarding old vehicles.

Chief Morrison stated he will come back to the Board on the status of vehicles.

H. Status of Communications Officer Applicant

Chief Morrison stated that the Board gave an offer of employment to a Ms. Coates for a dispatch position. He consulted with Counsel, and his recommendation was, due to the background check, he suggested that the Board withdraw their offer of employment.

Motion

Commissioner Hollander made a Motion to go ahead with Counsel's recommendation to remove Ms. Coates from the hiring list.

Commissioner Andrews seconded the Motion

The Motion carried unanimously (5-0).

Unfinished Business

There were no Unfinished items to report.

New Business

B. Update on Fire Police

Commissioner Martin stated that the Fire Police have some issues. They still have some members that are being processed with background checks. In November or December of last year, he addressed the Board and asked about the idea of expanding training for the Fire Police. The Board agreed with the idea. Commissioner Kanner had volunteered to conduct training. That is something that will remain on hold until they get the remainder of the people cleared on their background checks. The Fire Police have requested some space on the Web-page to list some things about their organization, and to help with recruiting etc.

Lt. Bill Herman of the Fire Police stated all applicants who have passed will be notified and accepted.

Commissioner Panozzo asked if their Fire Police are still responding to, for example, Brooksville?

Chief Morrison stated there was a time where it seemed that their Fire Police were getting abused, as far as, getting called out of the District. The Department agreed, along with the Fire Police that when there is a need they will be there. They let the Sheriff's office and their neighbor's know that if they have a crisis, the Fire Police or any member of their organization will be there to help them.

The Board suggested that Attorney Salzman leave at 8:25 p.m. due to his illness.

Chief Morrison stated as per the request from Commissioner Martin, they pulled a report about how often the Fire Police have gone out of the District. They are monitoring these reports to the point where they notify the Chief when they call them out of the District. This problem seems under control.

Captain Sal Rotella of the Fire Police stated most of the time there is a Deputy with the Fire Police while out on the scene. Once that was a problem, when the Deputy left the scene, and a problem would accrue, the Fire Police had no one there. This issue has gotten better. One issue that he brought up to Chief and Commissioner Martin was that the Fire Police would like to have some training. As far as, directing traffic, not that they do not know what they are doing, but to become certified.

Lt. Bill Herman displayed the Fire Police's new landing light and explained how beneficial they

are to the District.

B. Feedback from Fire Rescue East

Commissioner Martin stated that he was glad to see the District send some personnel to Jacksonville. It gave them an opportunity to look around and speak to people and it gave them a feel about what goes on over there. Not only was it an Expo, but they have training seminars. He spoke to some vendors while he was there. Two things that they are pushing right now are training, and grants. Many people there were conducting training. Amoco B.P. had a compressed gas tanker that they had there as a trainer. They said they will make that tanker available to communities for training purposes. He spoke to the Chief and told him that they charge \$10,000 to dispatch the tanker, but they do not enforce that. The Fire Chief, City of Bradenton, was excited about the fact that B.P. will come down from their office in Illinois. He is looking into the possibility of pooling as many departments as he can to get B.P. to send their tanker. They offer a very extensive course, if this is something that they can work into the schedule, and the budget provides, this may be something that they should look at. There are so many opportunities out there. This is one thing he is looking for as they hire an Assistant Chief, and if they do something with a Training Officer. Someone that could write grants and pursue grants, but also able to tie the grants and training together to maximize their dollar benefit. It is almost grant application season, therefore, money is out there, but you have to meet the cut off dates.

Commissioner Andrews stated that this year is 300 million dollars are available.

Chairman Kanner asked how do they apply for this grant money?

Commissioner Andrews stated they need to put in an application. However, this year they can fill the application out online.

Chief Morrison stated there has to be a need to receive the grant money. He fully intends on the District being in on this grant process.

Commissioner Andrews talked about some things he reviewed last year from other departments seeking grants. What they looked at on the applications, was that all the information requested was filled out, keeping it simple, and meeting the criteria set in place by the government. Chairman Kanner asked the Chief to see what he can do concerning the grant issue.

Comments of Commissioners

Commissioner Hollander told a story about a 911 call he recently had to make from his office. He received a radio from the department over a year ago, and never thought he would use it, but this day he did. He called in for an ambulance for an employee who was having chest pains.

Commissioner Panozzo had nothing to report.

Commissioner Andrews asked if the Explorers' they sponsor re-chartered for this month yet?

Chief Morrison stated he will find that out for the Board.

Commissioner Martin complimented Ed Guillen for maintaining their Web-page. It has phenomenal information on it, which promotes a positive and professional image for the department.

Open Forum

There were no comments.

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 9:55 p.m..

Robert Kanner, Chairman

Joan E. Chiofalo, Board Secretary

