

Spring Hill Fire Rescue
Commission Meeting
March 27, 2002

Present: Chairman Kanner, Commissioner Hollander, Commissioner Martin, Commission Panozzo, Chief Morrison, and Attorney Cobbs (attending for Attorney Salzman)

Excused: Attorney Salzman

Call to Order

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

Invocation

Rev. Clemons gave the invocation.

Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Kanner led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Consent Agenda

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

Motion

Commissioner Panozzo made a Motion to accept the Consent Agenda.

Commissioner Hollander seconded the Motion.

Commissioner Martin stated regarding the Bill Explanation for week ending 3/8/02 on page 2. The Walmart purchase for \$239.64, if possible, with a purchase as large as that, can they write what that item was for next to the amount?

Chief Morrison stated that anything more than \$100 needs to be on a separate purchase order, if it is a single purchase. He will have the description put on those items.

Commissioner Martin asked regarding the Bill Explanation for week ending 3/15/02 on page 1, BellSouth, is that for landlines?

Chief Morrison stated he did not know. The calls were on the four thousand lines, which is their

County account number. He will pull those bills to see exactly what they were for.

Commissioner Martin asked about the white towels, which they seem to use a lot of. Would there be a large savings if they were to use brown towels?

Chief Morrison stated he does not know the prices on those items.

Commissioner Martin asked on the same page, frame for brass plate \$75, what was that for?

Chief Morrison stated an artist in St. Augustine did a painting commemorating the tragedy of 9-11. The artist auctioned his original off for \$20,000 and sent the money to New York. He then made copies of his original painting and gave them to Fire departments throughout the State. The \$75 was for the title of the painting that was put on a brass plate. They will hang the painting in their lobby at Headquarters.

Commissioner Martin asked on page 2, what are the flag decals for?

Chief Morrison stated that all the vehicles now have a decal of the American flag on them. They got the idea from the Sheriff's office, and purchased them through the Sheriff's office.

The Motion carried unanimously (4-0).

Report of Counsel

Attorney Cobbs substituting for Attorney Salzman had nothing to report.

Chief's Report

A. Fire Grant

Chief Morrison stated just to recap; they sent two individuals to the workshop for the fire grant. They were disappointed with the information as to the chances of them getting something through the grant program. The two items that have recurred through talks with the officers in their department were the Thermal Imager and grant money to help pay the remaining balance for their Air Pack renewal project. The application for the fire grant was due on April 1, 2002.

Commissioner Martin asked the Chief to refresh his memory regarding the Air Packs.

Chief Morrison stated they are replacing all of their air packs, because their current air packs do not meet NFPA standards. They have made it a three-year project, as far as, paying for them. They are buying and leasing the air packs over a three-year period. The fire grant is a 70-30 percent matching grant. However, because they have already entered an agreement to purchase the air packs, he is not sure if they will qualify for the grant money.

Motion

Commissioner Hollander made a Motion to have the Chief put in the application for the Fire Grant.

Commissioner Martin seconded the Motion.

The Motion carried unanimously (4-0).

B. Special Detail/Fire Safety House Home Depot

Chief Morrison stated that Larry Kozloski, the Hydrant Maintenance man, belongs to an organization that is holding a charity event at Home Depot. The organization asked if they can have the Fire Safety House present for the event. Home Depot is not in the district that is why he is asking the Board for its approval. The employee spoke to Chief Nickerson, and was told that the County has no problem with them attending this event. There would be no overtime incurred for this event.

Motion

Commissioner Martin made a Motion to send the Fire Safety House outside of Spring Hill.

Commissioner Hollander seconded the Motion.

The Motion carried unanimously (4-0).

Chief Morrison asked if he can move Item D Vehicle Purchases up next?

The Board agreed to move Item D up next.

D. Vehicle Purchases

Chief Morrison stated that he passed out packets regarding this item. On the first page is a quote for a GMC pick-up truck to replace the hydrant vehicle. It is a State bid and the funds for this vehicle would come out of the Hydrant Fund.

Commissioner Martin asked if there was a specifications sheet forwarded along with the order sheet?

Chief Morrison stated that Lt. Carpenter and Calvin from Fleet Maintenance took on this project, and they have the copies of the State contract. He realizes that this is the first time Commissioner Martin is seeing the quotes for purchasing the vehicles. Therefore, he asked if the Board would like to Table the approval of purchases until they get a full specifications sheet on

the truck.

Commissioner Martin stated being that Lt. Carpenter and Calvin have already reviewed it and have a copy of the specifications sheet, they know what they are suppose to get. Therefore, it is fine with him.

Chief Morrison stated that he, Lt. Carpenter and Calvin spent half a day going over the specifications on all vehicles on the State contract. They went over some ideas in regards to different types of vehicles and they weighed out the pros and cons. This vehicle they feel is the best bang for their buck.

The Board discussed some issues as to the size of the vehicle, pricing and what will they use it for.

Chairman Kanner asked if they checked out any local dealers on the same exact vehicle?

Chief Morrison stated they have not, but he would like to give the local dealers an option if that is what the Board wants. Then they either come back to the Board, or sign the purchase order for the lowest bid. They can take the specifications sheet and bring it to a local dealer and see what they offer for the same vehicle.

Lt. Carpenter stated that there are two ways to go. One is with the State contract and the other is the Sheriff's organization contract. They compared both of them, and the State contract was a little cheaper then the Sheriff's contract.

Chief Morrison stated in all fairness, if they use the bid from the Sheriff's organization to get a cheaper vehicle from a local dealer, he feels they should send the money to the Sheriff's organization.

Chairman Kanner stated he has no problem with that. However, he would like to attempt to shop Hernando County first.

Mr. Andrews former Commissioner, stated in his personal experience, the local dealers cannot come close to the State bid.

Chief Morrison stated if the idea of calling the local dealerships and keeping the money in Hernando County, is preferable to the Board, then that is the way he will go.

Motion

Commissioner Martin made a Motion to authorize Chief Morrison to contact the local GMC dealerships to see if they can meet or beat the price quoted by Garber Buick Pontiac GMC. The Board authorized Chief Morrison to purchase locally, or to purchase the GMC 1500, for

the full purchase price of \$16,061 from Garber.

Commissioner Panozzo seconded the Motion.

The Motion carried unanimously (4-0).

Chief Morrison stated on the second page of their bid sheet, is a quote for a full size van. They will use that van for their Supply division. The Board gave direction to look at a small Astro van, but all of the smaller mini vans came in high. For a full size Dodge van that is less than \$15,000 was a good deal.

Motion

Commissioner Panozzo made a Motion to purchase the Dodge van for \$14,297.

Commissioner Hollander seconded the Motion

The Motion carried unanimously (4-0).

Chief Morrison stated going back to Item C.

C. Communication Officer Hiring List

Chief Morrison stated that the assessment process has been completed, regarding the candidates for Communication Officer. The Chief needed a Motion to accept and put the list in place that he handed out to the Board. He asked permission to offer part time employment, and go down the list until they fill the vacancies.

Chairman Kanner asked if Dorren Eckert, who is number one on the list, is from the YMCA?

Chief Morrison reported yes she is.

Chairman Kanner asked Attorney Cobbs if he can vote on this because he knows her well?

Attorney Cobbs reported that if she is not a relative, it is not a problem.

Commissioner Panozzo asked are any of these former employees?

Chief Morrison reported that Jay Liebman was a former employee, and Tom Hall is currently an Explorer.

Chairman Kanner asked Commissioner Panozzo if he would like a recess to meet with Counsel?

Commissioner Panozzo stated yes he would.

Chairman Kanner called for a recess at 7:35 p.m.

The Board resumed the Commission Meeting at 7:40 p.m.

Chief Morrison stated regarding the last three names on the list, the last two did not show up for the interviews. With previous Board direction, any scores less than 70% of the highest score on the list did not make the list, that covers the last name on the list.

Motion

Commissioner Martin made a Motion to accept the list as stated.

Commissioner Panozzo seconded the Motion.

The Motion carried unanimously (4-0).

Chief Morrison stated regarding the Communication list from the last meeting, which he asked to offer part time employment to the last name on the previous list. The pre-employment background check was not completed successfully. He asked the Board for a motion to withdraw their offer of employment.

Motion

Commissioner Panozzo made a Motion to withdraw their offer of employment.

Commissioner Hollander seconded the Motion.

The Motion carried unanimously (4-0).

Chairman Kanner asked the Chief what was he going to do about hiring part time employment?

Chief Morrison stated that they are going to offer part time employment from that list. During the interview process they told all the candidates that part time employment had nothing to do with full time employment with the District.

Commissioner Martin stated that because he did not make the last meeting, he had a question regarding the Hydrant vehicle. How are they funding the Hydrant vehicle, is it coming out of the Hydrant fund?

Chief Morrison stated yes it will be coming out of the Hydrant fund. They will give the old hydrant vehicle to the Fire Police in order for them to have a second vehicle for eastside coverage.

Commissioner Martin asked regarding the van that they are purchasing for supply, what fund is

that coming out of?

Chief Morrison stated that will be coming out of the vehicle replacement program. That fund comes out of Administration 215.

F. Finalized Budget

Chief Morrison stated that they have completed the budget for sometime. After the budget process, the Board signed a contract with the Local Union. The contract mandated certain changes, but did not change the bottom line. At the end of every budget cycle they had to guess how much money they have left over from last year to carry forward into the current budget year. It takes County finance approximately four months to pay all the old bills, balance the books and find out exactly how much money is left over. They are off to the good side of the carry over by approximately \$150,000, which would be added to the Carry Forward. This was reflected in the budget presented to the Board.

Unfinished Business

Chief Morrison stated regarding the last page in the Board's packet, was the updated project list. The Board could contact him if they had any questions regarding the list.

New Business

A. Mutual Aid Charges

Chairman Kanner stated as per the newspaper article, a resident from Timber Pines called 911. All of their resources were in use, and under the mutual aid policy the County's ambulance responded. The resident received a bill for the excess of \$400. The question presented was that they are taxpayers in Spring Hill and aware that Spring Hill charges \$285 for this type of service. The resident wanted to know, why should they suffer the burden because Spring Hills resources were out on call? The resident was not looking for a reimbursement. He was concerned about what will happen in the future with the growth of the County and Spring Hill. He feels it is up to the Board and the Chief's office on how they can handle this.

Chief Morrison stated that the Board deliberated on setting their ambulance prices, at the County Commission. Each department has different needs and different funding sources. The simple solution in his opinion, would be not to penalize a Spring Hill taxpayer. He recommended that if an agency transports a Spring Hill taxpayer, because not only do they use Hernando County, but they use Pasco County from time to time. Therefore, any additional cost from the taxpayer's pocket, because the Spring Hill ambulance could not respond, they should reimburse the taxpayer.

Chairman Kanner asked how often does something like this happen?

Chief Morrison stated something like this, does not happen that often. With a private ambulance, they bill Spring Hill Fire Rescue, as stated on the Bill Explanation Sheet under checks for Florida Regional.

Chairman Kanner asked about the agreement with Rick Pearson from Florida Regional, in which they would charge the same amount as Spring Hill Fire Rescue for mutual aid calls?

Chief Morrison stated he is not positive, but he believes the agreement was that Florida Regional would bill Spring Hill Fire Rescue. In turn, Spring Hill Fire Rescue would bill the patient at their rate. Then they would pay the bill to Florida Regional.

Chairman Kanner stated this could run into thousands of dollars.

Chief Morrison stated that with the growth and proper planning, as they see a need to call for more mutual aid, then that is the time to put on an additional rescue unit.

Chairman Kanner stated he would like to monitor this issue for at least 30 to 45 days and see what it is costing Spring Hill to reimburse the patient.

Commissioner Panozzo stated he thinks they would need more than 30 to 40 days, he feels maybe six months.

Chairman Kanner stated to look at it and then in 60 days look at it again. Then monitor it closely and then in 120 days look at it again.

Commissioner Hollander asked what are the mechanics? Does the person have to notify them or does this happen automatically?

Attorney Cobbs recommended developing a policy. As far as, do they want to direct bill or reimburse.

The Board further discussed some issues regarding the different rates and insurance companies.

Chief Morrison stated he would like some direction from the Board to investigate different ways of reimbursements, and then report back to the Board at the next meeting.

Chairman Kanner directed the Chief to meet with Counsel and discuss this issue to see what would be legal.

Chairman Kanner stated regarding the statement in the St. Pete Times newspaper, whereas, the Chief of Hernando County Fire Department said that the people of Spring Hill are paying higher fire taxes than Hernando County. That statement was not true. He figures that Hernando County is paying more than 3% and the people of Spring Hill are paying 2.75%.

Chief Morrison stated they are two different organizations they are not comparing apples to apples. They operate differently and fund differently for very justifiable reasons.

Chief Nickerson Fire Chief of Hernando County, reported that the newspaper misquoted his statement. He would not say that across the board Spring Hill residents are paying more fire taxes.

Chairman Kanner asked Chief Morrison to bring back to the Board, at the next meeting, the issue of mutual aid charges.

Comments of Commissioners

Chairman Kanner had nothing to report.

Commissioner Hollander stated he would like to get an update on the committee that was being formed for the Medical Director Request for Proposal.

Chief Morrison stated that he Committee members are looking over the Medical Director Request for Proposals. He will reconvene the committee when he has written a sample Request for Propsoal for Medical direction, as far as, medical billing. Currently, that is on hold until they get through the current crisis of the new Medicare fees as of April 1, 2002.

Commissioner Panozzo had nothing to report

Commissioner Martin stated he understands the Fire Police have some new members who have passed their background checks. There are approximately twenty members. That figure includes new members who need additional training, If they need to order training materials for these classes, does the Department pay for these materials?

Chief Morrison stated the vest are expensive that they supply tothe Fire Police, but the best. The District purchases those vests for them. The Fire Police needed flashlights, and they are buying their own. They do have funding sources outside the District, but as far as training materials, he feels the District should purchase them.

Commissioner Martin stated he would like to find out if there is any kind of Fire Police manuals available. He would also like to see if the Sheriff's department has some kind of traffic control training being that there are some new members. He asked the Chief if he would like for the leadership of that organization to contact him when they are ready for this type of training?

Chief Morrison stated he would be happy to work that issue out with them. They are currently talking to the Sheriff's office, regarding training in First Responder for their Deputy's. They can work off some kind of trade with the Sheriff's office.

Open Forum

Bob Bestercy retired police officer, stated for accidents, the Sheriff must respond first. The minute the Fire Police show up, they tell them to take over. He feels the Fire Police should train the Sheriff's department in first response.

Chief Morrison stated that he and Commissioner Martin have worked on a badge for the Commissioners to wear to identify themselves when they are in a suit. They picked out something that best represents the District. He asked the Board to look at the new badge after the meeting, and see if they like it. If they approve of the new badge, he will then order them for the Board.

Chairman Kanner asked former Commissioner Andrews if he had any comments?

The Board discussed some issues regarding the new fax machine and former Commissioner Andrews' old fax machine.

Chief Morrison recommended working with Mr. Andrews on any equipment that he may have, and that the Board direct him to follow policy.

The Board agreed with Chief Morrison to follow policy.

Motion

Commissioner Panozzo made a Motion to adjourn the meeting.

Commissioner Martin seconded the Motion.

The Motion carried unanimously (4-0).

Adjourn

Chairman Kanner adjourned the Commission Meeting at 8:20 p.m.

Robert Kanner, Chairman

Joan E. Chiofalo, Board Secretary

