

SPRING HILL FIRE RESCUE
Commission Meeting
8/22/01 - 7:00 PM

Present: Chairman Kanner, Commissioner Andrews, Commissioner Hollander,
Commissioner Martin, Assistant Chief Morrison, Attorney Salzman

Excused: Commissioner Panozzo, Chief Morgan

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 at the last meeting he had requested that Chief Morrison or Chief Morgan attend the County Commission meeting on September 5, 2001, with representatives from Pristine Place regarding an additional entrance into their community for emergency vehicles. The President from the Association is looking for confirmation on this. There are two County Commissioners who have requested that we have someone at the meeting to back up our letter. Chairman Kanner asked for a consensus from the Board.

The Board agreed that a member of Staff would attend.

Assistant Chief Morrison stated he will be attending the meeting.

Consent Agenda

Motion

Commissioner Andrews made a Motion to accept the consent Agenda.

Commissioner Hollander seconded the Motion.

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

Commissioner Andrews asked for more information regarding the memo from VFIS advising a

settlement was made on the accident involving the training van.

Chairman Kanner reported that Chief Morgan did discussed this with him. We received the letter advising the suit had been settled. When Chief Morgan questioned VFIS they advised that if we wanted to object it we would have to hire our own Attorney, that this was what they planned to do. We had no say-so in the matter. As you will recall this happened recently with a former employee, in which monies were paid out and we were unaware of a suit.

Commissioner Andrews stated we were not at fault in this accident, why did we have to pay a settlement? VFIS is a good insurance company but he has a problem paying on an accident in which our vehicle which was responding in emergency mode was hit and totaled by impact.

Assistant Chief Morrison stated we were not a fault, he will get more information for the Board.

Commissioner Hollander stated that the insurance company would rather settle then go to court. We have no choice, when an insurance company writes the policy they advise you that this is their right.

Chairman Kanner asked Counsel if we have any grounds regarding this matter.

Attorney Salzman stated probably not, he does not know the exact terms of the agreement. As Commissioner Hollander explained the has company looked at their exposure and what their defense expenses would be and then settled it for less than that. That is not unusual.

The Motion to accept the Consent Agenda carried unanimously. (4-0).

Chairman Kanner welcomed Joan Chiofalo, the new Board Secretary to the meeting.

Report of Counsel

Attorney Salzman reported on the pending unemployment claim. You are a reimbursable employer which means when a claim is made you will receive an invoice. You don't pay into an unemployment fund until there is a claim made. There is a provision, however, that you have 20 days to challenge it. The problem is the invoice went to the County first so by the time we received it that time period had past. We have put the County on notice that we are objecting any future claims on this individual. For the first invoice of \$50.12 we have no choice but to pay it. He has to disagree with the County, just because you are a reimbursable employer you do not lose the opportunity to challenge claims.

Chief's Report

Chairman Kanner asked to move to Item D under the Chief's report.

D. Definition of "Retirees" by Mike Abate

Mike Abate, our Insurance Agent of Record, stated there are two issues, one is an issue the other is a request for direction. Assistant Chief Morrison informed me of two individuals that are covered under Cobra Insurance who are not active employees. They are being carried as retirees, but at this time we do not carry retiree coverage. If you have somebody that doesn't meet the definition of a covered employee, Blue Cross can come back later and say this person does not meet the definition and they can say they are not going to pay. What needs to be done is to amend the policy to cover retirees. At this point you need to define retirees. The impact of covering retirees at the moment is that there is not going to be cost associated with it, however, down the road it will be cost associated.

Commissioner Andrews stated that we need to redefine why these two people went out and were carried on the plan. There have been other cases where we have extended coverage for a short period of time until they reached a settlement and able to get coverage on their own. I don't think our intent at the time was to have everybody that retires fall under our insurance.

Mike Abate stated that you have Cobra which will carry an employee for a minimum of eighteen months and in some cases up to thirty-six months. If that is what will take care of those situations than Cobra is the way to go. Depending on the age of the employee Cobra may not carry an employee to age 65. It is not a problem making a clause that gets people to age 65 it just needs to be contracted with an insurance carrier.

Assistant Chief Morrison stated that Attorney Salzman has let him know what he is and is not allowed to discuss because he is part of the negotiation team with the union. Obviously what you are talking about may possibly be construed as a benefit. What we need the Board to resolve tonight is the two employees that the Board has already granted permission to stay in our group. He needs the Board to make a legal decision. We can narrowly define retirees to just include these two individuals. He would like to make a recommendation for management to make the previous Board's decision legal. That we advise our Agent that our definition of a retiree is simply these two employees. This is the group that we are willing to add to or contract when it goes in for renewal October 1, 2001.

Chairman Kanner reported as a member of this Board and the previous Board, we did agree to provide medical coverage for these two employees. We have to stand behind our guarantee. We cannot throw them to the wolves at this stage of the game.

Assistant Chief Morrison stated before a motion is made he would ask that you also check with the Union President that he conveyed the conversation clearly.

John Ferriero stated that this was clear to him.

Commissioner Hollander stated that he disagrees and he asked Counsel if this will lead to

discrimination tests?

Attorney Salzman stated that he doesn't think so in this particular situation. In the future if this is accepted a retiree would have to meet certain criteria and be approved by the Board to go into this classification. This is a special classification that you are permitting. You are doing something out of the ordinary and I do not think you are discriminating, based on that. If someone challenged it and was successful you would probably have a choice whether to keep people in that classification, open it up, or remove the classification completely. It could end up backfiring on individuals.

Chairman Kanner stated that he would want this Board to agree upon these two employees. He would appreciate Mr. Abate and Mr. Salzman get together for a meeting to put the wording together so that the wording will be legal and not have a problem with it in the future.

Mike Abate stated that would be fine. In regards to discrimination issues if there is anything you want to research, Sections 1, 5, and 6 of the Internal Revenue code will tell you what is considered discrimination with regards to benefit programs as opposed to civil.

Chairman Kanner asked for a motion to place the two former employees into a category to allow them to continue receiving health benefits.

Motion

Commissioner Andrews made a Motion to continue Health Benefits for the two former employees.

Commissioner Martin seconded the Motion

The Motion Carried unanimously (4-0).

Mike Abate stated he also handles the insurance for Hernando County. They have taken their disability insurance and paid for by the employer. What they have done is to continue to provide the insurance to the employee but instead of the County paying for it their salaries have been grossed up and then it gets deducted back out of their pay. The benefit of providing it this way is there is no tax associated with it, it saves paper work as far as preparing W2's and saves Spring Hill and the County from providing the FICA match. You would save some money on producing W2's and provide the employee a better benefit.

Chairman Kanner feels it is a win-win situation and we have nothing to lose.

Mike Abate stated that is correct. He would need direction from the Board to coordinate that with the County

Assistant Chief Morrison stated that we need to get an opinion from Attorney Salzman because this is effecting wages and how can we approach the Union before the vote. The Union President and Vice President are on the Insurance Team and were at the meeting today.

Attorney Salzman asked if this will be put into effect before October 1, 2001?

Chairman Kanner asked why, is it going to have a financial impact on us?

Assistant Chief Morrison stated we are increasing their gross income and then taking the benefit out in a payroll deduction. In fact, the Clerk of the Court strongly recommends it.

Commissioner Andrews stated it keeps the Clerk of the Court's payroll cost down but the fact remains the Clerk of the Court does not run the District.

Assistant Chief Morrison stated we had an employee go out on disability and realized that the current maximum allowable we have has fallen short of what the employee made. When he called up Mr. Abate for his opinion on this, he stated there are two ways of handling this, one is to raise the benefits in your package which would cost more or change it were there is no cost basically to anyone.

Chairman Kanner stated he would like to table this until the next meeting. He asked that Mr. Abate and Mr. Salzman get together to make a recommendation on how this can be done.

Mr. Abate and Mr. Salzman agreed to meet.

The Board agreed to table the issue.

Chief's Report

A. TRT EQUIPMENT

Assistant Chief Morrison reported that the Board budgeted \$5,000 for equipment for the TRT Team. Captain Rampino leads that team and has a proposal for a piece of equipment that is presently budgeted.

Captain Rampino presented the Board with a quote for a multi purpose tool called a Super Can Maxi Cart. He explained that masks are provided but the tools are not, they do have ports.

Chairman Kanner asked for the opinion of the TRT Team, regarding the old Captain's vehicle. can we surplus it? He recommends we get a tag along trailer to keep the TRT equipment in. If TRT is called out hook the trailer to a responding vehicle and tow. The old vehicle is sitting in the back of the Station 3 rusting away and we are paying insurance on it. He felt we should surplus that vehicle.

Assistant Chief Morrison stated if the Board wants to give Administration direction to look at removing that vehicle from the fleet we would be more than happy to do so. This was discussed with the Team and in the budget process. The Team felt that by removing one seat out of their fire truck and installing cabinetry the TRT equipment could be kept on Engine 3.

Chairman Kanner asked what is the objection to a tag along trailer?

Assistant Chief Morrison stated that would be another option. He asked if the Board would like the Team to research this further?

Chairman Kanner stated yes, he is looking for direction from the Board to have the Chief's office look into the surplus of the Captain's vehicle and if it is feasible to use a tag along trailer. He would like a report at the next meeting.

Assistant Chief Morrison stated he would report back to the Board.

Commissioner Martin asked for clarification on the Super Can Maxi Cart, what will it be used for and does it have the air supply on it. He also wanted to know how the tripod is used.

Captain Rampino stated the main primary use is to set up over a manhole, it extends to nine feet and gives you an anchor point to lower and raise victims in and out of pipes, sewers, and manholes. You can also use it on roof tops for certain types of operations.

Commissioner Martin asked how difficult is it to move this cart around.

Captain Rampino reported that it has wheels like a hand truck.

Chairman Kanner asked if it supplies a breathing apparatus?

Captain Rampino stated it has one that can be used legally up to 150 feet.

Chairman Kanner asked for a Motion to get quotes for the Super Cam Maxi Cart. We will approve the purchase not to exceed \$4,035.

Motion

Commissioner Hollander made a Motion to get quotes for the Super Cam Maxi Cart.

Commissioner Andrews seconded the Motion.

The Motion carried unanimously (4-0).

Chairman Kanner asked for a motion on the tripod.

Assistant Chief Morrison stated we do not need a motion because the cost is only \$675.00.

B. VEHICLE MAINTENANCE FOR OTHER DEPARTMENTS

Assistant Chief Morrison stated that two meetings ago Commissioner Andrews told us that Brooksville Fire Department might be interested in us doing their vehicle maintenance. The Chief of BFD has visited our facilities and met with our mechanic Calvin Hatcher. Last week we (Chief Morrison and Calvin Hatcher) went to Brooksville to inspect their fleet of vehicles. He is asking the Board for permission to present them with a quote for services. It has been hard for them to gather all the information Calvin requires to give an accurate quote, the history, the parts the vehicles take and preventative maintenance inspections. We would like to come back to the Board after we have all this information.

Chairman Kanner stated we also need a hourly labor rate.

Assistant Chief Morrison reported that there will be two quotes, one on how much we will charge for a PMI for each of their vehicles and what we will charge for an hourly rate and parts.

Commissioner Andrews stated we established an hourly rate years ago and may need to readdress that.

Assistant Chief Morrison reported that it might have been an hourly rate of \$18.00 then and 10% was our cost on parts. He also stated that they are talking about actual hours, not book hours. When he gets the quote ready he will come to the Board with it before they go to Brooksville.

Chairman Kanner asked for one stipulation, any sort of disaster, storms, hurricanes, whatever, our vehicles take priority.

Assistant Chief Morrison stated yes, that was explained to them.

Commissioner Martin asked if the issue of Liability Insurance has been addressed yet with our carrier.

Commissioner Andrews stated he believes we updated our policy.

Assistant Chief Morrison stated he will let the Board know by the end of the week.

Commissioner Andrews asked to table this issue until the Chief's office is ready to give a formal presentation.

Chairman Kanner agreed.

C. MAINTENANCE TECHNICIAN STATUS

Assistant Chief Morrison stated that the Board received an e-mail from Chief Morgan regarding the resignation of Fred. Doerge, Maintenance Technician.

Chairman Kanner asked if he could address this issue as he was personally involved in it. Last week he was south bound on US 19, south of the County line. Waiting for a red light across from him was our hydrant truck going north. He called dispatch and asked for a status on the truck. He had his radio on and heard him say that he was in front of Hooters on Highway 19. He was actually well into Pasco County. Immediately he had Chief Morgan paged and from what he knows, at this point, Chief Morgan accepted the resignation from the employee. As far as he is concerned, he is one Commissioner who will not accept his resignation. He felt he should have pulled him over immediately and had him arrested for stealing a vehicle. Taking a vehicle without permission is grand larceny auto. Instead of a resignation he would like him terminated and charges put in his personnel file. He stands firm with this issue.

Assistant Chief Morrison reported that Chief Morgan did not accept the resignation at the Board level. Chief Morgan called the employee in and conveyed to him the seriousness of the offense and felt that this employee should no longer be employed here. He allowed that employee to tender a resignation effective immediately pending Board approval of course.

Chairman Kanner stated that a comment from the employee at that time was he was going to resign anyway because he was moving out of state.

Assistant Chief Morrison reported termination or resignation it is not going to effect the paycheck he receives next week. He would like the Board to ask Counsel how wise it is to try to discipline someone and follow our discipline procedures when he no longer works here.

Attorney Salzman stated this could be an unemployment issue.

Chairman Kanner reported that we are going to have an unemployment issue no matter what. He also stated that we will have something in his file that shows he violated policy.

Attorney Salzman stated if your intent is that he violated policy and you want to put it in his jacket so that it will follow him, it may not, because he could say he never worked here. If he is going out of state he can makeup whatever he wants to.

Chairman Kanner stated that is if he is going out of state.

Attorney Salzman reported that he does not know if the Board is going to accomplish what they want to by insisting that he be terminated. He understands what the Board would like to accomplish but that may not be guaranteed no matter what the scenario.

Chairman Kanner stated nothing is guaranteed, but he violated policy.

Commissioner Andrews stated if we have accepted his resignation we would be putting something negative in his file, post his leaving. He never had the opportunity to review, agree or repute it, is that legal?

Attorney Salzman reported that the normal idea is to allow anybody, in any circumstance, if they so desire an opportunity for a name clearing for a particular issue. He stated he does not think it would be inappropriate to put a memo in his file advising that the individual resigned during an investigation into a possible violation of policy. He reminded the Board that we don't give out that information anyway if someone asks.

Commissioner Andrews reported that his file is still public record. If the Commissioner walked in and he wanted to see his file, he can view that document.

Attorney Salzman stated we started the investigation, he was confronted with the issue and he resigned. How he explains that in the future is up to him, we may accomplish what you want if you have a memo in his file. This gives us the opportunity to fight some unemployment issues.

Chairman Kanner asked if the Board would want to do that or go straight to termination.

Commissioner Andrews stated if we terminate him he will be open to an unemployment claim and the County seems not to question many of these issues at this time.

Chairman Kanner asked what if we would terminate him and also send a letter and a memo to the County.

Commissioner Andrews stated it does not matter he can still file for unemployment and say whatever he wants to say. He believes that we are going to end up fighting it. He is inclined to agree to put a memo in to his file which includes a statement from the Chief that this gentlemen was called in and confronted then at the time discipline action was being considered he resigned. He also feels that we have a better leg to stand on because he opted to leave before he stood up and fought it.

Chairman Kanner asked Mr. Salzman to draw up a memo to put in his file since this is a legal situation.

MOTION

Commissioner Andrews made a Motion that the action against this employee be that we accept his resignation as submitted to the Chief. Also, that a memo will be drawn up by Counsel to include the information that Commissioner Kanner submitted to the Chief. The outcome of the meeting Chief Morgan had with the employee in which he gave his resignation is to be placed in his file also.

Commissioner Martin seconded the Motion.

The Motion carried unanimously (4-0).

Chairman Kanner stated that he would like to put under New Business on the agenda for the next meeting if the Board agrees, the use of mileage logs in vehicles. He brought this issue up some time ago and it definitely needs to be readdressed.

The Board agreed.

Assistant Chief Morrison stated we need to discuss replacing the position of Maintenance Technician.

Chairman Kanner directed Staff to advertise for the position.

Assistant Chief Morrison reported that they may have an active list, if the list is inactive we will advertise for that position.

Chairman Kanner reported that he went to the fire last night. We were recently lent some equipment from a vendor called a Thermal Imager. When the fire was just about out prior to the over haul Commissioner Martin and himself were put in bunker gear and went into the building with Captain Rampino. He showed them how this Thermal Imager works. He feels that this is the greatest invention since the wheel. There was a chair outside by the pool with an amber on the cushion that you could not see with the naked eye, but through this Thermal Imager it is stood out like a sore thumb. With this equipment you are able to see through smoke as clear as day. He feels this Department needs a Thermal Imager not only to lower the risk of rekindles, but without a doubt it is what we need to save lives.

Assistant Chief Morrison has is no argument on any of those points.

Chairman Kanner stated that there are many different kinds of Thermal Imagers. He would like if the Board would agree, to direct Staff to find the money to buy it and to find one that is feasible.

Assistant Chief Morrison stated he will get someone in this Department to research this and come back to the Board with a recommendation, a price, and how to fund the purchase. This will be a topic if the paper should ask if there was anything interesting at the meeting. He will also remind them that he mentioned to the Board that in numerous cities these are on every Fire truck and they have been put there by the businesses in the city.

Commissioner Andrews reported that several cities have involved their businesses. There have been a lot of grants also, some of the Fire Academy grant money has gone towards Thermal Imaging.

Chairman Kanner asked if there were any grants available.

Assistant Chief Morrison reported that no grants are available but we are up for the County EMS matching grant.

Commissioner Andrews stated he was upset that we did not apply for any Fire Academy grant money.

Assistant Chief Morrison stated that issue needs to be addressed with Chief Morgan.

Commissioner Andrews stated he understands and he did address this issue with the Chief. There was \$90 million dollars that were available and there were quite a few Florida departments that received it. He sat on the Board that approved these grants. There is a department in Florida that received \$58 thousand dollars towards a wellness program. There was a lot of small equipment and Thermal Imaging would have been one of the things that would have probably fit all the criteria for the grant. We may have not received all of it but we would have at least received a good part of it.

Chairman Kanner stated you know what it takes when we start to go out for contributions.

Assistant Chief Morrison stated that he was not suggesting going out for contributions.

Commissioner Martin asked if there is a possibility that this type of equipment might be available on a rental or lease program were we do not contribute \$15 to \$20 thousand dollars for one piece of equipment and in two years down the road something else comes out that would be half the weight and price. He suggested something easy for us to get out of because he feels these things are like any piece of sensitive electronics they have to be calibrated or serviced somehow.

Commissioner Andrews stated that they are constantly updating this equipment. There are several very good units out there that can take a lot of abuse.

Assistant Chief Morrison reported that the technology now is all but Firefighter proof.

Commissioner Andrews stated during their study of this equipment one was taken up five stories and dropped, buried in a bucket of water and it continued to work. On some the technology is quite good and the demand for them is high. He feels that they are not really in the mode for leasing anything out, as far as saying there is a new one out so give me back the old one. There is a company in Tampa called CMC that does lease purchasing of equipment. If we were to buy four of them at \$20 thousand dollars each, then for \$80 thousand dollars they may set it up for us to pay \$8 thousand dollars a year for 10 years.

Commissioner Martin stated he was just looking at the possibility of a way to obtain these without having to make budget amendments and go before the County to request additional funding or moving money from one budget to the other.

Chairman Kanner stated no matter how we do it we would have to make a budget amendment.

Commissioner Andrews reported that they will have to write specifications and put it out for bid.

Chairman Kanner stated that he was looking for direction from the Board.

Commissioner Martin stated that the request is for the Chief's office to research where we could get the funding, what type of equipment is available and what the personnel feel most comfortable using.

Chairman Kanner asked if they can put a high priority on this issue. He would like it placed under Unfinished Business at the next meeting.

Assistant Chief Morrison stated yes he would put a high priority on it.

The Board also agreed.

Chairman Kanner asked about how we stand on the reverse 911 alert systems Have we purchased everything that was needed.

Ed Guillen Communication Officer stated it is in the works, they have one piece of software right now.

Chairman Kanner asked if there is a report to give the Board on the injured Firefighter.

Commissioner Andrews reported that he was uninformed in regards to this situation.

Assistant Chief Morrison stated he was sorry, but the Commission Group was paged this morning. The Firefighter was taken to the hospital last night for smoke inhalation and released last night.

Commissioner Andrews reported that the last page he received was to bring in his Storm SOG book. He thought he gave direction to the Chief at the last meeting to correct this issue. When he is at the Fire College he only gets a third of his messages. He had asked to be e-mailed especially during the day when he is at the College.

Assistant Chief Morrison stated that he remembers this and he does apologize. He asked if he would like those things faxed to the Fire College or his home.

Commissioner Andrews stated he would like them faxed to his home, but they can just e-mail and he will get them on his computer.

Assistant Chief Morrison stated that they will set up an e-mail group for the pagers that will

correct this problem.

Commissioner Andrews stated that all was forgiven.

Unfinished Business

A. DISCUSSION OF REQUIREMENTS FOR AGENDA ITEMS

Chairman Kanner stated the Board had in their packet this week a form from Chief Morgan to be filled out whenever we put something on the agenda. This form would state what we want and why we want it. The form asks for an overview, budget impact, legal impact and administrative notes. He would like to hear how the Board feels about this issue.

Commissioner Hollander stated he would like to know the background on this issue and what made this necessary.

Chairman Kanner stated the Chief explained to him that there are times when things are put on the Agenda and he is not aware of exactly what we want and he then comes to the meeting unprepared. He told the Chief if he came to the meeting unprepared for one reason or another we can table it until the next meeting.

Assistant Chief Morrison reported that he has not seen this form. Obviously, it is something Chief Morgan feels might be a useful tool in conducting business. He asked if this can be tabled until Chief Morgan gets back in town.

Chairman Kanner stated this is the second time we have tabled this issue. The Board needs to make a decision on whether they really want to do this. Personally he is totally against it and will not fill out the form. He feels that he is a superior with this Fire District and feels he does not need to put in a request to agenda an item.

Commissioner Hollander asked if the Chief was asking for a request or just asking for more information regarding agenda items.

Attorney Salzman stated that he has not seen the form but why couldn't you give some of this information verbally. If you are putting something on the Agenda that requires additional information to the Board this information should be prepared and presented at the Board meeting.

Chairman Kanner stated that if he is putting something on the agenda that the Chief needs to prepare for he would definitely tell him. If you want to make it an option he has no problem with that but not to have it done every time..

Commissioner Andrews stated that we can turn the table around. Anytime he asked for anything specifically he sent the Chief a memo with very explicit information as to what he may be

looking for. He gets a packet and an agenda and sometimes there is no backup for the items. He feels there is not a problem with the way they do it right now.

Commissioner Martin stated he would like to avoid getting to a point where every time they do something they have forms. As a professional courtesy, if you send something in memo format it would accomplish the same thing.

Chairman Kanner asked for a Motion for approval or disapproval of the form for Agenda items.

MOTION

Commissioner Andrews made a Motion that the form as submitted by the Chief not be adopted officially, but it may be used on a voluntary basis if the Commissioner feels they need to give the Chief more information.

Commissioner Martin seconded the Motion.

The Motion carried unanimously (4-0).

NEW BUSINESS

A. BOARD SECRETARY/BILLING POSITION

Commissioner Hollander stated that we had given Helen Gennusa, Office Assistant in the Billing Department a commitment that we were going to provide her help with the billing chores. At the time we were also looking for a Board Secretary. The Chief said that he had already implemented some changes with Helen that he believed would increase our revenue and they decided to wait on any further action and see how it went. Later on Mrs. Gennusa was granted additional overtime to work on the billing. The fact is that medicare has not changed and phone calls have not changed. What has changed is her ability to do her job in a very superior way, using very limited tools, with limited help. He is concerned that they have hired several temporary board secretaries which was suppose to help her and she had to train each one of them who came and went. You need to understand this is not an easy job. You have to call insurance companies and be knowledgeable about what you are doing. If you hire someone that has no knowledge of coding or billing in our industry it is going to take two months to get a full time person trained. If they already worked in a medical office and know about medical billing and the terminology then they only have to learn the ambulance portion. In essence, he is asking the Board to consider the amount of revenue that department is bringing in and the amount of extra effort that Helen has been willing to put in. Think about in review of our commitment to her and how we can handle that in a better way. He is putting the information on the table and asking the Board to think about it and to see if there is something that we can do.

Chairman Kanner stated that the new temporary board secretary will be full time, contractual to be reviewed again sometime in October.

Commissioner Hollander stated there is one more thing he would like to make mention of. He would like to commend Assistant Chief Morrison for his abilities to keep this computer system going. We discussed the deficiencies in our billing system. He was assured that these deficiencies have been addressed with the company and Mrs. Gennusa wrote the company advising what needs to be done. Within 90 days we hope to see some great improvements in that billing system. He would say that in the future the Board should be ready to spend some significant money on upgrading the system and getting a system administrator. He would like the Board to discuss where we are heading as far as help for Mrs. Gennusa. Are we willing to assure her and the Department that the billing department will be sound and properly manned.

Chairman Kanner stated that it has already been discussed some time ago, we would hire a contractual person, which we did and the entire overall situation will be reviewed in October. At that time a decision will be made.

Helen Gennusa stated that they are not behind right now. One big issue is that she can not go on being Board Secretary and do the billing. Taking care of the Board is not just taking the minutes and typing them that is just part of it. It is time consuming and it takes concentration. There are a lot of steps to being Board Secretary. She feels being Board Secretary and doing billing is totally insane. We got very far behind when she took over this system because there was no real training and she didn't know ambulance billing. With a little bit of extra time she is now able to call insurance companies and straighten out billing issues.

Chairman Kanner stated in the past they have hired personnel through our testing process that did not work out and had two very good employees that were hired through temporary services. Even if they were to go through our testing process that would take at least seven or eight weeks before they have someone on board.

Assistant Chief Morrison stated to help Mrs. Gennusa we would not be out of line when we discuss the additional position. There is revenue out there that is time intensive to capture. Mrs. Gennusa helped us challenge Medicare for the first time. She collected 100% of those claims. He thought he was clear on the amount of revenue we would get from ambulance services with the commitment of help from the Board to the billing department. He heard Chairman Kanner say we will address this sometime in October. Our budget is based on hitting the ground and running October 1st, 2001 which would mean that process starting before then. He feels it needs to be addressed sooner than in October.

Chairman Kanner stated to correct him if he is wrong, they had a full Board at that time and the Board stated that they would first look into it in October.

Assistant Chief Morrison reported that the Board budgeted the position.

Chairman Kanner reported that they budgeted the position, but not guaranteed to be used.

Assistant Chief Morrison stated they need to readdress that because the budget is based on that position being there. His name is tied to that budget figure that had been predicted as income for next year in medical billing based on that help being in billing. If you are telling him that it is not a definite then we need to notify the County that the figure needs to be adjusted.

Chairman Kanner reported that he does not believe it was a definite.

Commissioner Martin stated that as he recalls they said they would revisit the situation, but he will go back to the minutes and find out exactly what was said.

Assistant Chief Morrison stated that is how our ambulance revenue went up so much from one budget year to the next. The evaluation process to see if this works, if somebody can work as Board Secretary and work in billing and if it helps the system was answered within the first few weeks.

Chairman Kanner stated they came to him with a suggestion to hire a part time Board Secretary so Mrs. Gennusa did not have to do that anymore and he agreed to that. Then he was asked now that we have a Board Secretary contractually can we add some time to that schedule and have them help in billing and he also agreed to that. Why the rush all of a sudden to make it a permanent position with the Fire District?

Helen Gennusa stated that it takes a lot of time to train someone and that time takes away from her accomplishing anything, therefore the revenue is going to go up or it is going to go down.

Chairman Kanner asked are you talking about training the Board Secretary

Helen Gennusa stated both Board Secretary and Medical Billing.

Chairman Kanner stated that was one thing he wanted to speak to Chief Morgan about when he gets back.

Helen Gennusa stated she does not have a problem helping and doing what needs to be done to help the department. She feels you can not train and work to your utmost at the same time.

Assistant Chief Morrison stated to clarify that this is not a rush, this is a position that has been budgeted to start October 1st, that date is approaching. He feels that this position would bring in additional revenue.

Commissioner Kanner and the Board agreed to address this issue in a timely fashion.

Commissioner Andrews asked what is the problem with the billing system software.

Assistant Chief Morrison stated the software equipment has limitations, but it also has

advantages and we are addressing this issue.

Commissioner Hollander reported that the company that handles our billing software now has 90 days to correct the programs. The Chief is to advise him as to what has been taking place with the billing system. We may have to expedite moving into a new system.

Commissioner Andrews reported that we have a program called Sweet Soft that the Board purchased in 1995. That is when we started to upgrade our system. Everyone gave this system a thumbs up. Things came to a halt and the training was stopped and that's when the Cisco System came on board. There is a county that is using the Sweet Soft system quite successfully.

Assistant Chief Morrison reported that the Sweet Soft system was to be installed as a stand alone PC. We went with a more modern network.

Chairman Kanner stated to Commissioner Hollander that this is his area of expertise and to come back to the Board with a report.

Commissioner Hollander stated he would.

COMMENTS OF COMMISSION

Commissioner Hollander - nothing

Commissioner Andrews - nothing

Commissioner Martin - nothing

OPEN FORUM

Mr. Gennusa, Spring Hill resident stated in regards to the growing department and the hiring of temporaries as opposed to hiring full time employees. The Department has hired four part time employees from a contractual temporary agency and each time you do that it sets the wheels in motion backwards. He feels with the hiring process for this department six to eight weeks at a minium, you can go through 3 or 4 more employees from now in 12 to 14 weeks. It seems like you are going backwards every time. You have 6 weeks before the October 1st, deadline you already have money budgeted for the position, why are you waiting six weeks to decide. The hiring process should start now and then on October 1st, we can have a full time employee doing a full time job.

Chairman Kanner reported that Ms. Chiofalo is a full time employee she is just contractual but she will be working a forty hour week.

Mr. Gennusa stated that they have gone through three temporaries already.

Chairman Kanner stated that there is no assurance whether you hire someone contractually or through our testing process.

Mr. Gennusa feels you have more assurance when you hire someone and make a commitment to them as far as a contract and a benefit package with stability. He also feels that October 1st, should be the hiring date not the date to start looking for a full time employee.

Motion

Commissioner Andrews made a Motion to Adjourn the Commission Meeting.

Commissioner Martin seconded the Motion

The Motion carried unanimously (4-0)

Adjourn

Chairman Kanner Adjourned the Commission meeting at 9:10 P.M.

Robert Kanner, Chairman

Joan Chiofalo, Board Secretary

