

SPRING HILL FIRE RESCUE  
Commission Meeting  
August 24, 2005  
7:00 p.m.

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

**Call to Order**

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

**Invocation**

Rev. Clemons gave the invocation.

**Pledge of Allegiance**

Chairman Panozzo led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Consent Agenda**

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

**Motion**

*Commissioner Jacobs made a Motion to accept the Consent Agenda.*

*Commissioner Biro seconded the Motion.*

*The Motion carried unanimously (5-0)*

**Report of Counsel**

Attorney Salzman reported that the Jennifer Couch case was originally scheduled for this past Monday, however, there was a trial before it. It is possible the case will be set for next week, but there might be another trial before it again. If that is true, the case will have to be reset and he will inform the Board when that occurs.

**Chief's Report**

**A. Ladder Truck**

Chief Morrison reported that the vendor Emergency-1 brought a 100-foot ladder truck to Headquarters today for a demonstration. He feels E1 built a fine piece of equipment and he would like to move forward with this project. He suggested that the Truck Committee go to Ocala and take a tour of Emergency-1's plant and see how the truck is built. He thanked Commissioner Raborn for coming to Headquarters for the ladder truck demonstration. He will let the Board know how the tour went and what the next step will be.

Commissioner Raborn reported that in 1993 he experienced some bad dealings with E1's ladder truck. He addressed those issues today with the E1 representative and was assured that all those past issues have been corrected. He was very impressed that E1 corrected those issues and he was very pleased with the new equipment E1 has today.

Chief Morrison thanked Mr. Foti of HGTV, for filming the demonstration.

Chairman Panozzo stated that he heard one of the Commissioners backed the truck into the bay at Station-2

Chief Morrison said yes, and it fit nicely.

**B. Station-3 - Update**

Assistant Chief Davies reported that the County's Plans Review Department sent their comments on the Plans to Atelier, the architect. Some minor changes need to be made on the drawings, which are expected to be done this week and resubmitted to the County's Plans Review Department. Hopefully, the Department will be ready to go out to bid the first week of September.

As far as the Station-2 project, he received a fax from Fleischman Garcia stating Mr. Kelly made contact with all of his engineers and was waiting on a report from one more engineer. Hopefully, he (Assistant Chief Davies) will have something prepared for the next Workshop.

The rental property across the street was painted today and the water was turned on and the electric will be turned on tomorrow. Once the phone lines and computers are hooked up, which will probably be another week, then they will be able to move in.

Chief Morrison stated that completes his report.

**Unfinished Business**

**A. EMS Grant Update on Vendor**

Chief Morrison stated, to bring the Board up to speed, the Department received an EMS Grant to purchase 12-Lead EKG monitors for the ambulances. At the last meeting he talked about two different vendors. The vendor Zoll has equipment that is the same brand as the current laptops the ambulances are using and the other vendor is Physio. They are still in discussions with both vendors. The vendor Zoll, came to Headquarters to answer any technical questions the Training Division or Mr. Guillen, the Department's IT may have had. Zoll will present one of their newest monitors on Monday morning, August 29<sup>th</sup>, and will be here for three days to train 3-shifts to use the new machine. The new machine will be left here for a week to be evaluated. He will not request to purchase this machine until the field has a chance to have hands-on. It is a brand-new machine and nobody in this area has seen the new monitor or had a chance to use it. As far as the vendor Physio, the jury is still out on the bid from this company. The representative for Physio will be at Headquarters on Friday, August 26<sup>th</sup>, with his piece of equipment. At that time, he feels a decision will be made as to either write up a RFP for both vendors, or go to a sole source because of the technology involved. This issue should be settled by the Board's next Workshop, therefore, he would like to set up a Voting meeting before the Workshop to address the EMS Grant and award the Grant to one of the vendors. The training on this equipment will be held on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday of next week starting at 9:00am. This equipment has been built for the pre hospital setting and he is looking forward to the demonstration.

The Board further discussed the 12-Lead EKG monitor.

Commissioner Raborn asked will the vendor lend the monitors to the Department until the new monitors come in and will it be at no extra cost?

Chief Morrison said yes, but he will have to find out from the County's Finance Department if that can be done.

Commissioner Raborn asked how many Departments in the Tampa Bay area are working with a 12-Lead EKG?

Chief Morrison reported a lot of Departments have gone to a 12-Lead EKG, the County being one of them. He (Chief Morrison) has been resistant to the 12-Lead because of the short time between the patient's home to the hospital. He believes there will not be a choice in the future because the 12-Lead EKG will be standard.

Commissioner Raborn said this will bring the Department up to standard.

Chief Morrison said yes. The new monitors go well above the standard because it not only does a 12-Lead EKG, it also takes the patients blood pressure and incorporates it to the same data set. It checks the oxygen in the blood and carbon monoxide in the lungs. The monitor can do a number of things for one patient and it will send it right to the PCR (patient care report).

## **B. Assistant Chief's Annual Evaluation**

Chief Morrison stated that he placed the Assistant Chief's evaluation in front of the Board. He informed the Board that it has been challenging times in the Department this past year and as a partner in Administration, the Assistant Chief has done an incredible job. The Assistant Chief's contract requires a minimum raise of 3% and a maximum of 8%. After breaking up the evaluation into three categories, he recommended a 6.50% increase in the Assistant Chief's annual salary.

The Board had no questions or concerns.

Chief Morrison stated that the Assistant Chief's evaluation requires a vote by the Board. The vote will approve the evaluation with the recommended salary adjustment and retro pay back to the Assistant Chief's anniversary date.

Commissioner Raborn asked what was budgeted for the Assistant Chief's raise?

Chief Morrison said he believes he budgeted 7%.

### **Motion**

*Commissioner Perreira made a Motion to accept the overall performance rating and raise.*

*Commissioner Jacobs seconded the Motion.*

*The Motion carried unanimously (5-0)*

### **New Business**

#### **A. Insurance Committee Report**

Chief Morrison thanked Commissioner Biro for joining the Insurance Committee and making himself available. The Committee consists of himself, Commissioner Biro and Captain Rampino, the Union President. By contract the Department formed this Committee and the Union plays an active role in it. The Committee met with the Department's insurance agent last Friday and he received good information. The Department budgeted a 18% increase for health insurance, which came in with a 14% increase. Currently, the Department has an HMO and a PPO plan with Blue Cross Blue Shield, however, the insurance company will be migrating to a new plan called Blue Choice and eventually the Department will have to go to the Blue Choice plan. Blue Choice will be less expensive for the

Department, but the plan has some significant changes, which would mean more money out of pocket for the employees. He spoke with the attorney because this is a contract issue and the attorney feels that the Union needs to agree on any changes. Captain Rampino informed him that the Union is willing to discuss a change in the plan, but he (Captain Rampino) needs to discuss it with the members first. If the Union agrees to meet and discuss the changes, a negotiation session would have to be immediately set up. If there are any changes made in the contract after the negotiation session, the Board would need to ratify the contract as soon as possible because the new insurance policy goes into effect October 1<sup>st</sup>.

Commissioner Biro asked if this item was budgeted at 18%?

Chief Morrison said yes, the Department will be under budget on this item.

Commissioner Biro stated, the 14% is under what the County was hit with. He believes the County received a 21% increase.

Chief Morrison stated that the County has Blue Cross Blue Shield, but they have different policies.

Commissioner Biro said if you compare the two plans, the County's benefits are not as good as the Department's current plan.

Chief Morrison stated that the County's benefits are different. The Department's benefits are a little better, but there is a cost associated with it.

Commissioner Raborn asked how is this going to affect the new Ordinance with the County?

Chief Morrison stated that the County and Administration have been in contact constantly over the last few weeks. He and Ms. Dupree the Director of Human Resources, talked about health insurance. It might be a benefit for the Department to eventually blend with the County's health insurance plan.

Commissioner Raborn said he just wanted to make sure this issue is handled correctly for all involved.

Attorney Salzman informed the Board that the County has been notified and representation from the County will be at the negotiation session.

Chief Morrison stated that the Department has a different agent for Workers Compensation and he spoke to the County about possibility combining Workers Compensation. The County is self-insured whereas, the Department is not. The Department has a year to discuss whether or not to join the County's Workers Compensation plan.

Commissioner Raborn asked if the County is self-insured on their vehicles?

Chief Morrison said he wasn't sure. The County has a Fleet allocation plan that the Department is not a part of and will not become a part of. Fleet handles all of the County's fuel purchases and the County is looking at possibility putting a fuel depot on this side of the county.

## **B. Military Leave Policy**

Chief Morrison stated that there are new developments since the last time he approached the Board on this issue. For the employees who are recalled to active duty, the Department supplements their pay up to the amount of what they would have made working for the Department. He found out that the Governor does that for all State employees. The Department policy is to supplement pay for 12-months because that was the average activation, which no longer applies. The laws keep changing when it comes to veteran benefits and one change that came into affect is when an employee is called to long term active duty they should receive 30-days of full pay, however, the attorney and the County are still researching this issue. Pasco and Hernando County always have given their employees 30-days full pay, but they do not supplement any pay. There is still no set answer to this question yet, but the Department is moving in favor of the employee.

Commissioner Jacobs stated, there are a lot of things happening with the Military Leave issue, whereas, people in the Reserves and the National Guard have not been paid for some reason. This causes a lot of hardships on the family members who are left behind with no money and having to get aid. The employee who recently was called for active duty should keep the Department up to speed on any problems he runs into, whether it is his pay or his family. If there's a problem, the Department needs to find out how they can help the family and notify Congress right away.

## **C. 9-11 Memorial Blood Drive**

Chief Morrison stated that he is on the Board of Advisories for the Hernando Blood Bank. He requested to have the Blood Mobile come to Headquarters for a blood drive in honor of the firefighters who died on 9-11. The blood drive will start on September 6<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup>, starting at 8:00am to 3:00pm. The crew that donates the most blood will receive a Job Shirt that the New York City firefighters wear. The Blood Bank will supply hotdogs and hamburgers and the Union will bring their grill and do the cooking.

Chairman Panozzo asked if the blood stays in the State?

Chief Morrison said yes.

The Board further discussed the Blood Drive.

## **Comments of Commission**

Chairman Panozzo stated that he agreed with everything said at the meeting. Nobody is knocking the County Fire Department and their people are as good as Spring Hill Fire Rescue. People fail to realize that Spring Hill Fire Rescue covers 47-square miles and Hernando County Fire Rescue has the same manpower and equipment and covers more than 10-times the area. Therefore, he feels Hernando County Fire Rescue cannot provide the same level of service.

Commissioner Jacobs stated that he was glad to find out exactly what “accountability” means to the County Commission. He watched the last County Commission Meeting on television and they discussed the Hernando County Fire Department and the state it is in. They are operating on a deficient of \$251,000 and working their people on overtime, which is not wise because the people are working on emergency calls. If this is what the County Commission calls accountability, he is surprised the residents of Spring Hill would want the County Commission to represent them. Spring Hill Fire Rescue has never been in the red and have even lowered the taxes for the last 2-years. He feels when Ms Nicolai the County Clerk, stated that she stays awake at night, it’s possible she was thinking of the wrong Department. He wants the people in Spring Hill to know that Spring Hill Fire Rescue is their Department and elected the Board to serve them. The newspapers have stated that the residents do not want to be an independent District, they just want somebody to overlook the budget. He looked, but could not find anywhere that states the residents of Spring Hill asked the County Commission to take over control of the Fire Broad and tell them what to do. If there was a referendum held since the Department was established as a “Special District,” he could not find any records stating that the Department is no longer a Special District and has become an MSTU. If the people of Spring Hill wanted the County to take the Department over, they need to come to the meetings and voice their opinion.

Commissioner Biro thanked Chief Morrison and Commissioner Raborn for having E1 bring the ladder truck to Headquarters to look over. There was an article in the newspaper that he feels was against Spring Hill Fire Rescue. The article was a drawing of the ladder truck pulling into the station and roof collapsing on top of it. He is glad to see this issue can finally be put to rest because the ladder truck can fit in the bay of Station-2.

Commissioner Raborn said regarding accountability, the ladder truck was at Headquarters today, which is all about accountability. It is about accountability for all the citizens and business people in Spring Hill that deserve their monies worth. If the ladder truck is needed, most likely it will be for the business person and maybe for the residents too. The ladder truck was something that the Department was missing and is needed in the District. Unfortunately, not everybody is happy with the Department’s decision to purchase the ladder truck, but the citizens of Spring Hill need this in the District.

Commissioner Jacobs said the Chief of Brooksville also felt the Department needed a ladder truck.

Commissioner Perreira stated that she was happy to hear that the Department is moving forward with the 12-Lead EKG. If she can be any help with evaluation or education, she would be happy to provide

that for the Department.

Chief Morrison asked if Commissioner Perreira is available, the monitors will be at Headquarters on Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday. He would like for the Commissioner to come and take a look at the monitors and to discuss the educational part of bringing the employees up to speed on 12-Lead EKG monitors.

Chief Morrison stated that Mr. Foti from HGTV taped the ladder truck demonstration and if the Board was interested they can watch the video after the meeting is adjourned. He thanked HGTV and all the people involved.

### **Open Forum**

Lt. Eagle stated that on behalf of the Department's military members who are deployed and their families, he thanked the Board for their continued support. He is the unofficial liaison with the families involved, therefore, if anything does go wrong he will try and handle it first, then the Board will be informed. He appreciated the Board's support.

The Board agreed that they all appreciate what the man and women are doing for them.

### **Motion**

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

*Commissioner Raborn seconded the Motion.*

*The Motion carried unanimously (5-0)*

### **Adjourn**

Chairman Panozzo adjourned the Commission Meeting at 8:10 p.m.

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Gene Panozzo, Chairman

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Joan E. Chiofalo, Board Secretary