

Spring Hill Fire Rescue
Commission Meeting
September 27, 2001 - 7:30 p.m.

Present: Chairman Kanner, Commissioner Andrews, Commissioner Hollander, Commissioner Martin, Chief Morgan, Attorney Cobbs (attending in place for Attorney Salzman)

Excused: Chief Assistant Morrison, Attorney Salzman

Invocation

Commissioner Andrews 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 Andrews made a motion to accept the consent agenda.

Commissioner Martin seconded the motion.

Commissioner Andrews asked that on page two, change the plans for \$500.00 for Nickelson Engineering?

Chief Morgan stated that was in an e-mail that the Board received a couple of weeks ago explaining what we needed to do get a permit for the fleet maintenance building.

Chairman Kanner asked that on page four regarding a robotic headset part?

Chief Morgan stated that was a part for the fire prevention robot.

The motion carried unanimously (5-0)

Chief's Report

A. Budget Amendments

Chief Morgan stated that this is the last week of the fiscal year and we are cleaning up line items. The Board has copies of the amendments are there are any questions?

Commissioner Martin asked if the fiscal year starts October 1st, there will not be any more opportunities for amendments?

Chief Morgan stated that is correct.

Commissioner Martin asked about Amendment #01-30 salary and wages increasing \$24.00?

Chief Morgan stated we estimate the wages depending on when the individual gets a raise during the year and we are just \$24.00 short on that line, but there was money available in the overtime line.

Commissioner Martin asked do we typically have this many amendments toward the end of the budget year to get everything cleaned up?

Chief Morgan stated last year was the first time the county would not let us run in the red. In previous years we were able to say we were \$24.00 short in a line but that in the bottom figure there was plenty of money left, now they require us to balance out every line.

Commissioner Andrews asked regarding Amendment #01-32 why it is necessary to move almost \$68,000 dollars in regular wages is this due to our adding extra people?

Chief Morgan stated that his understanding was that the county does not pay out of the special pay incentive line for longevity pay and such as that. At the end of the year we had to drop money out of that line into the regular pay.

Chairman Kanner asked for a motion to accept the Hernando County Budget Amendments.

Motion

Commissioner Andrews made the motion to accept Hernando County Budget amendments 01-25 through and including 01-39

Commissioner Martin seconded the motion

The motion carried unanimously (5-0)

B. Status of Firefighter Hiring

Chief Morgan reported that we received final papers from our department physician on Wednesday for the three people we were authorized to hire and they have been notified verbally so that they can give two weeks notice to their current employer. That would bring them to work here on Monday, October 15th, all three will start a 40-hour orientation at one time.

The Board had no questions regarding the matter.

C. Communication Hire List approval

Chief Morgan stated that there are two people on the eligibility list in the number one and two positions and we will add to that list with the people that have just finished testing. The top five people are the ones that will be added (70% and above.) There are several of them that indicated they will be willing to work part time. We have two openings right now and his recommendation is to hire Frank Zarbua as a part time Communication Officer for one of the part time positions.

Chairman Kanner asked if the two from the old list want part time positions?

Chief Morgan stated that one of them is waiting to finish the medical and expressed an interest in part time and the other, Sharon Rivera only wants full time.

Chairman Kanner asked for a motion

Motion

Commissioner Martin made a Motion to authorize the Chief to offer the part time position as Communication Officer to Mr. Frank Zarbua, and to start the necessary pre-employment checks.

Commissioner Andrews seconded the Motion

The Motion carried unanimously (5-0)

D. Discussion of Needs for the Fire/Police

Chief Morgan stated that he met with the Fire Police organization two weeks ago at their regular monthly meeting and one of the things we discussed were radios which they need but we were unable to afford them. We had worked with the Sheriff to try to get some older model radios as he bought new ones. Mr. Kicklighter head of Communications division stated that Motorola is willing to donate about thirty radios to the Sheriff's office to give to the fire police. There are two problems with this, one is that they are still the old out dated radios and the second is that there will not be enough of them to replace the ones that are not working and those that need parts. We will be able to get the radios that they currently have, but are out dated and that

Motorola does not make parts for them. Due to the recent events in New York Motorola and GE both donated several thousand radios to that operation and once they get those back they will be donating them to different departments. Mr. Kicklighter will put our name on the list.

Chairman Kanner asked if there were any further questions regarding this matter.

The Board had no further questions on this matter.

Chief Morgan stated one other thing that the Fire Police discussed were gasoline prices going up.

Commissioner Martin interjected and stated he will be discussing this under New Business.

E. Station 3 Shed

Chief Morgan stated that in last couple of years we have approached the Board during the budget process for three sheds that were needed for the station and the commission has turned them down. Now that we are getting ready to put the rear garage doors into Station Three the prices are between \$600 and \$900 dollars for sheds. Station Three is literally out of storage space because they had stored a lot of things on the back wall, and now they will not have a back wall to do that. He would like to know how the Board felt about researching this and getting some prices regarding this subject.

Commissioner Martin asked if it was Mr. Mixion from the Public Works department sent a memo that they were suppose to start widening Spring Hill Drive back in March, and has he communicated with us as to when we may expect to see activity over there?

Chief Morgan stated he has asked him twice and he reported that they will be getting the bids within thirty days.

Commissioner Martin stated that he was wondering if the County is trying to get their budget together if that is something that they are going to do right away.

Chief Morgan stated that he understood it was already budgeted because it was supposed to occur this current budget year.

Commissioner Martin stated that they marked off the idea of doing anything with County Line Road.

Chief Morgan reported that Mr. Mixion told him that it had already been approved, designed and waiting to get out bids.

Commissioner Martin stated he doesn't see what harm it would do to look into prices.

Chief Morgan stated that we have contacted the vendor and it is approved but with the Boards approval we would like to get this project done in this budget year. The vendor R and R Garage Doors, has the purchase order to put those doors in. We need to check with them and see what the hold up is.

Chairman Kanner asked if we will put the doors in before the County starts their work?

Chief Morgan stated we need to spend that money because they will not let us carry it forward. They have approved it and will put in the concert pad.

Chairman Kanner stated that the county can change their mind and scrap the whole project.

Chief Morgan stated he will make sure that will not happen before we start our work. He said he will check on this matter and come back to the Board.

F. Report on RFP for Tower Replacement

Chief Morgan stated he met with Nextel and they have a proposal that is open ended. They will build a Tower for us and give it to us if we allow them to put their tower on it, that was one of the ideas we had. He has also met with two other vendors and has not yet received any formal bids yet. At the next meeting we should have something to present to the Board.

G. Status of Project

Chief Morgan reported that Mike Carpenter and several other people have been busy on the Fleet Maintenance project and we have received permits and drawings and it is moving right along. He asked if there are any other project the Board wants to discuss.

Chairman Kanner asked about milage logs.

Chief Morgan stated he would like to talk about milage logs at the end of his report.

Commissioner Martin asked what is the status of the project regarding generators?

Chief Morgan reported that they wrote a purchase order to the vendor and he will check to see the status on that.

The Board had no other questions regarding this matter.

Chief Morgan stated that at the last meeting we had a discussion on mileage logs the Board felt we need accountability on our vehicles and where they are. He stated he has an example of a log that he did trip for trip and it can be quite cumbersome. He asked the Board for a variance to go back to the original idea, such as a beginning and ending daily mileage log and anytime a vehicle

lives the district.

Commissioner Martin asked when they do go out of the district it will be more detailed?

Chief Morgan stated that was correct.

Chairman Kanner stated that this is for all vehicles.

Commissioner Panozzo stated that all vehicles that leave the district.

Chairman Kanner stated that they should define the word “district.”

Commissioner Martin stated anything outside the boundary lines known as the Spring Hill Fire Rescue district.

Commissioner Andrews stated this seems reasonable.

Commissioner Hollander stated he would like to see a GPS transmitter system in our dispatch room and be able to look at the map and see where every vehicle may be located.

Chairman Kanner asked for a motion from the Board.

Motion

Commissioner Martin made a motion to allow Chief Morgan to have a variance on the policy in reference to a vehicle logs. Mileage log for local or within the district would be a beginning and ending type log. The District is basically the boundary lines of the Spring Hill Fire Rescue District. Any vehicles that leave the District will have a more detailed log as to the destination.

Commissioner Panozzo seconded the motion.

The motion carried unanimously (5-0)

Chairman Kanner asked for anything else under Chief’s Report?

Commissioner Martin asked about the Thermal Imager?

Chief Morgan reported that he will come back to the Board at the next meeting regarding this issue.

Unfinished Business

Commissioner Martin stated he has a question for clarification regarding the marking of the Chief's car, were we going to use an existing light bar or buy a new one?

Chairman Kanner stated that was the purpose of waiting for October 1st, was to buy a new one.

Chief Morgan stated that was correct.

Commissioner Martin asked how much would it cost for a light bar and any controls that go with it?

Chief Morgan reported that his car already has controls in it, but the light bar would cost between \$800 and \$1,200 dollars.

Commissioner Martin stated he would like to try and get use out of a light bar on the vehicle that we will no longer use for emergencies.

Chairman Kanner asked for a motion.

Motion

Commissioner Martin made a motion that the light bar that is presently used on the vehicle which is a pick up truck that is used to tow the fire safety house if it is serviceable that it be transferred from that vehicle to the Chief's vehicle.

Commissioner Andrews seconded the motion.

The motion carried unanimously (5-0)

New Business

A. Security Concerns - Commissioner Martin

Commissioner Martin stated one of the concerns that he has been addressing are some security issues within the district. He would like to bring it up for discussion regarding what are we doing right now and what is in the works? He noticed that in the back of the communications office we still do not have a security fence and he was wondering if that door stays locked? He asked the Chief if there is any kind of security protocol for the district?

Chief Morgan reported that as far as security that has been discussed before. The security for this building has been budget for next year.

Commissioner Martin stated that it is very tricky to secure vehicles, if you are on a scene you cannot run around with a large key ring unlocking doors and cabinets every time you have to take

a step. Maybe this is something we need to take a look at and work on, due to the threats which are not going away at this time.

Chief Morgan stated he knows of some type of locking systems where you can leave the vehicle running but you cannot just put it in drive and leave. This would be something to look into regarding expense and such. Whether it is a terrorist threat or not, it is always a concern with running an unattended vehicle on a scene.

Chairman Kanner stated he feels that it would not hurt to close the doors down in the bay for at least a month.

Commissioner Andrews stated he thinks we need to make some kind of plan to make employees much more aware of what is going on. There are systems out there that are made for police cars that can work in ambulances as well. We just need a heightened awareness right now.

Commissioner Hollander feels that the prime concern should be with the people and not with the equipment. He is concerned if one of these devices malfunctions stopping someone from getting to a scene on time. We have a lot of built in safety right now with every station. We have portables and dispatch. He also agreed that there should be more heightened awareness.

Commissioner Martin stated that Chief Morgan is responsible for the operation so we will leave this with him and look at some way to asset our threats and develop some heightened awareness.

Chief Morgan stated that the Emergency Management Department of the county has just purchased a system which they are presenting a demo on next week.

The Board discussed types of locking systems available and how they are used.

Chairman Kanner asked Chief Morgan if he would come back to the Board with this matter.

Chief Morgan stated he would.

B. Discussion of Fire/Police Training

Commissioner Martin reported that we should have other things to offer Fire Police that may help to enhance their abilities. He met with Angelo Liparito, our maintenance technician, and he said that there is some training that the Fire Police go through. We can look at First Aid, CPR and advanced First Aid and even if the Sheriff's department has a program for Traffic Control. He thinks when people volunteer they like to know that they are going to be contributing and they are going to be getting something out of their volunteer efforts. If you can offer something that can challenge people it will also be a benefit to the district, perhaps we can recruit and maintain more volunteer and it would be nice for people to take a course and have a certificate.

We do not want them to get to the point to interfere with the EMT's or Paramedics, but maybe they can assist them. From this stand point, if we agree on the concept then give them the opportunity to discuss it with their people and see what they are willing to commit to.

Commissioner Panozzo stated it depends on where the union stands on this.

Lt. Ferriero stated he does not see a problem with the concept. These individuals are an asset to us, so we will support the Board on this concept.

Commissioner Martin stated he would look into this and come back to the Board. Another matter was also a stipend, which is a tricky area that we may have to do research on. We are going to have to figure out a fair way to offer a stipend. If we agree on the concept, he can start looking into this and what the possibilities are and report back to the Board.

Commissioner Panozzo feels that if these people will stay in the Spring Hill Fire Rescue District then he is in favor with this concept.

Chairman Kanner stated they should not to be toned out unless it is in Spring Hill.

Commissioner Martin stated that he is just looking at a concept right now.

Chairman Kanner directed Commissioner Martin to come back to the Board on these two concepts.

Commissioner Martin asked the President of the Fire/Police Association if there was anything he had for us to think about regarding this subject?

Steve Aanonsen stated that he wanted to thank the Board and the Chief for thinking about their safety. He will have to meet with Mr. Liparito and the Association. As far as talking about money that is not a top priority, the top priority is getting radios this needs to be handled as quickly as possible. The money or gasoline can be tabled.

Commissioner Martin stated that depending upon how this comes together we may or may not be able to do anything in this budget year. So we are discussing it now and looking at some ideas on how to support and put it into action.

Chairman Kanner asked if there was anything else under New Business?

Chief Morgan stated that there was one other thing he would like to bring up. Workers' Compensation is due for renewal and unless the Board wants to discuss anything we are going to renew with FCCI. They have what is called an incentive plan were we get money back depending on the amount of claims during the year. The premium would be \$235,000 the net cost after return dividend will be \$210,000.

The Board had no objections to renew with FCCI.

Lt. Ferriero asked the Board for permission to use the department vehicles for the boot drive that in the effort to do their part in trying to establish some closure regarding the events of the tragedy that happened in New York and Washington. They have a variance from the County to do this weekend,

Chairman Kanner asked for a motion.

Motion

Commissioner Panozzo made the motion for our personnel to use the vehicles this weekend for the boot drive.

Commissioner Andrews seconded the motion.

The motion carried unanimously (5-0)

Lt. Ferriero stated that he has another issue. This is not a grievance nor a proposal for a grievance. There were some dispatchers who were disciplined a week or so ago, they didn't like the discipline they received but they did accept it. It was a delay in a toning of a call, but there was no significant loss from that delay. His concern is that there was a supervisor on duty but he was not in the room at that time. He would like some of the blame to be placed on management because this supervisor was assigned to duties outside of his job class.

Commissioner Hollander stated that supervisors generally do not have to be at a scene to supervise many times supervisors are off scene. The people sitting in that dispatch room know what their job is. The supervisor's job is to supervise and not to be there and look at them every minute to make sure that they are doing their job.

Lt. Ferriero stated there were three dispatches on duty and yet we took one of them away and that played a role in the timing of this particular call. If the supervisor was in the dispatch room supervising instead of doing what he was directed to do outside of his job description then maybe with an extra set of eyes and ears in that room this may have not happened. He cannot make a guarantee that if he was in that room this would not have happened.

Commissioner Andrews asked why Lt. Ferriero is taking a position that this is not a grievance?

Lt. Ferriero stated the employees in question choose not to and that was their position. He feels there can be some corrective measures to see that this does not happen again and that is all he is asking for.

Chairman Kanner stated that he was one of the Commissioners that was against putting

Communication Supervisors in place, but then it was explained to him that if something went down somebody has to take the responsibility. He also stated that he has a problem with the fact that a supervisor is doing things outside of his job description.

Commissioner Martin stated anyone who is put in a leadership position regardless of where it is basically designate of a Chief. When that person is put in that position of responsibility and authority they are an extension of the Chief. They are then responsibly for all the good and the bad on their watch.

Chief Morgan stated he sees two issues, one is that the discipline is over and done with and Lt. Ferriero is not grieving it, and two that he does not want the supervisor to do what he was directed to do by Assistant Chief. This point is very valid and we need people in the dispatch room and we have three people scheduled in that room only 10% of the time.

The Board discussed the details of the incident at a length with Union and the Chief.

Lt. Ferriero stated that all he wants is some shared blame regarding this issue and some mutual cooperation in terms of saying that this does not happen again and that would be achieved by narrowing the scope of what we allow our supervisors to do outside of their job descriptions.

Commissioner Andrews stated this will send a single that we need to be more cautious in what we do.

Chairman Kanner asked if we can let the supervisor know if they are going to do extra duties, that their primary job is the responsibility for the dispatch room.

Chief Morgan stated he would try to go above that. We would enjoy to see three people in the dispatch room at all times.

Chairman Kanner asked if there was anything else under New Business?

Commissioner Andrews stated that in his packet there is some information based on an investigation into an EOC complaint. His question was based on the information that was provided to him that he considers to be public record. He made some notes because he had some concerns regarding the Communication Officer where we had authorized testing earlier in the year. We sent a letter out advising people of the tests results. Records show that this individual went in for a medical evaluation around June the 5th, but here is a letter our packet from our physician Dr. Blackburn, the stamp at the top looks like June 29th, . His concerns are that the letter to the Assistant Chief states, that the physical could not be finished and suggested to go ahead with the hiring process due to her pregnancy if her Doctor gave release or information.

Attorney Cobbs stated that because there has been a charge filed the Board might want to be

cautious on discussing the details.

Commissioner Andrews stated he understands and that is why he was going to be cautious on this. The fact this has been put out as public record this is the same information that has been requested through the public records act, and it does not have a complaint on it. The other fact is that the Board has no other place to discuss this issue other than at Board meetings.

Attorney Cobbs advised to keep in mind the potential of this issue.

Chief Morgan stated that he would like to add to that comment. He had a discussion with Attorney Salzman and he specifically said this should not be discussed at a meeting at this time.

Chairman Kanner asked each Commissioner their opinion to discuss the matter at the meeting.

Commissioner Martin asked what are we hoping to pursue this evening by discussing this issue?

Chairman Kanner stated that would be the only type of forum to discuss this issue with the Board.

Commissioner Martin stated providing we use discretion and not open our self up to any further liability limited to that. He would go along with whatever the procedure is, but he does not want to discuss the whole thing concerning this issue.

Chairman Kanner asked the Attorney if we only discuss what is here for public record we can't do any harm we are not acting as witness or giving any information out we are not behind closed doors.

Attorney Cobbs stated we have to prepare a response. It would be best that there would not be comments before we prepare response.

Commissioner Andrews stated he would be willing to withhold discussion if the board feels until we have counsel respond.

Chairman Kanner stated he would go along with him asking questions. This is all public record.

Commissioner Panozzo stated no, we have an attorney here who is telling us that it is not a good idea to discuss this at this time.

Commissioner Hollander asked the Attorney is it usually when something is a known investigation that it should be public record?

Attorney Cobbs stated that most things are public record it is usually the things that were

prepared in the anticipation of litigation.

Chief Morgan stated that as he said over the last couple of weeks he would encourage the Board to contact Attorney Salzman regarding this issue.

Chairman Kanner stated he spoke to Attorney Salzman the only thing that was not public record was the EOC complaint itself.

Attorney Cobbs stated her concern is opinions being formed before they have an opportunity to formulate a response.

Chief Morgan stated he would encourage the Board to contact Attorney Salzman it appears that everybody is looking for someone to blame in this issue. Attorney Salzman's opinion is there is nothing to blame on anyone.

Chairman Kanner stated it was his understanding that Chief Morgan stated he had nothing to do with this he was not even here when this transpired.

Chief Morgan reported that the original decision was made when he was out of town for two weeks. He has played the tape back and would be glad to give you the tape of Attorney Salzman's conversation with the Board.

Chairman Kanner stated he is assuming any decisions that were made were between Assistant Chief and Attorney Salzman.

Chief Morgan stated he is not finished going through all the paper work and we are developing a time line for Attorney Salzman so he can develop his response. When the time line is established then all those questions will be answered.

Chairman Kanner stated he just wants to know if Chief Morgan was away when the decision was made to handle this.

Chief Morgan stated that the original decision between Attorney Salzman, Assistant Chief Morrison, and Dr. Blackburn about the physical was made while he was out of town.

Chairman Kanner stated he would like to have a private conversation with the Assistant Chief regarding that.

Comments of Commissioners

Commissioner Martin stated that he attended Temple Beth David tonight and they had a memorial service for the fallen Firefighters and Law Enforcement personnel and other personnel involved in the evacuation of the World Trade Center in New York City. It is nice to see a

community willing to recognize people for the sacrifices they made. He feels that when the Board attends a function and a tie is required maybe what they should do is have a name badge that we can put on a blazer or something like that to show we are representing the district.

Chairman Kanner stated that we have a white dress shirt with long sleeves and a name badge.

Commissioner Martin stated he does not think all that is necessary just a name badge that says this is your title and you represent the district.

Chief Morgan reported that they make several different types of name badges.

Chairman Kanner asked if the Commissioners were issued dress shirts?

Commissioner Panozzo stated yes, the uniform dress shirts.

Commissioner Martin feels that if you go to a function and you are representing the Board, if you have something that you can slip on your pocket then people know who you are and who represent.

Chief Morgan stated that he would look into it for the Board.

Commissioner Andrews stated regarding the policy of our flag display at all the stations there was a memo that came out that asked all Fire Departments in honor of the fallen firefighters to remain at half staff until October 11th, which would give a full thirty days of mourning as is the tradition. He would like to have the Board agree for this district to keep the flags at half mass until the full thirty day period is up.

Commissioner Martin stated he is in agreement and we also need to replace the flag we have when flags are available again.

Chief Morgan reported that he has someone taking inventory for that and we are just waiting for next Monday for the order.

Open Forum

There were no comments from the audience.

Motion

Commissioner Andrews made a motion to adjoin the meeting.

Commissioner Martin seconded the motion

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

Chairman Kanner adjourned the meeting at 9:37 p.m.

Robert Kanner, Chairman

Joan Chiofalo, Board Secretary

