

**Spring Hill Fire Rescue**  
Commission Meeting  
10/25/06 - 7:00 P.M.

Present: Chairman Panozzo, Commissioner Jacobs, Commissioner Raborn, Commissioner Biro, Commissioner Perreira, Assistant Chief Davies, Attorney Burbine

**Call To Order**

Chairman Panozzo called the Commission meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**Invocation**

Rev. Clemons gave the Invocation

**Pledge of Allegiance**

Chairman Panozzo led the Pledge of Allegiance

**Approval of Consent Agenda**

Chairman Panozzo asked if there were any questions regarding the Consent Agenda. There were none.

**Motion**

Commissioner Jacobs made a motion to accept the Consent Agenda. Commissioner Biro seconded the motion . The motion carried unanimously.

**Medical Director Update - Dr. Blackburn**

Assistant Chief Davies stated, the medical director will be late but will be attending this evening's meeting.

**Report of Counsel**

Attorney Burbine had nothing to report.

## **Chiefs' Report**

### **A. ST#3 Update**

Assistant Chief Davies stated they are waiting on the structural engineer to come up with a plan for the two walls. Also, in the interim, what they found with the living quarters walls. They x-rayed the remaining walls and they do not meet what the drawings say. The structural engineer is working it out to see if they can possibly salvage those walls or if they must be brought down also. A lot of the site work is continuing to go forward. Legal stated, there is a four-year statute of limitation which starts on the day the problem is found.

Attorney stated, they can file suit.

Commissioner Raborn asked if the deficiencies that are being found have contributed to the overall demise of the building?

Assistant Chief Davies said he would have to get an expert's opinion on that. He then asked if there were any other questions regarding ST#3. There were none.

Assistant Chief Davies stated, the medical director has arrived.

### **Medical Director Update - Dr. Blackburn (Cont'd.)**

Dr. Blackburn greeted the Board of Fire Commissioners. He updated the Board as its Medical Director informing them of recently having free training and CEU on Friday, October 13, 2006. It was held at the Hernando County Government Center from 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Mr. Maurice Ramirez, Board Certified Emergency Room Physician and Federal Medical Officer associated with the Department of Homeland Security and Mr. James Schultz who is Director of what they call a Deed Program. Mr. Schultz's program is at the University of Miami Medical School of Medicine. Mr. Schultz's is the person who wrote the book on Surge, Support, Operations, Training and was the one-day interactive training program for hospital and health care professionals. Information Mr. Schultz provided was pertinent to this area and in his opinion, the presentation was fantastic. Included in the seminar was what to do in the emergency room based upon how many people are in the emergency and how the patient load increases.

Dr. Blackburn stated all the different scenarios that were given, including wars such as the Gulf War, Afghanistan and other wars were used as examples of what happened and how it affected everyone. In his opinion the program was very good and something they could all use because as the Board knows, every year they must face hurricanes, surge, different types of ways of transporting the sickest individuals, etc. and this was basically a good introductory course to triage those types of patients and placing them in the proper facility.

Dr. Blackburn stated he would have liked to have seen a lot more support from SHFR at the meeting. They only have a few attendees from SHFR, the rest of the seating were packed. The event was catered, well received by everyone who did attend and as far as he knows, the instructors received accolades on their teaching. There were evaluation forms to be filled out and heard they received mainly "excellent."

Dr. Blackburn stated, hopefully, everyone will be able to view the event, each and every paramedic at SHFR and as Medical Director, he is going to make it mandatory. He is going to have a check-off sheet that it has been viewed and he is going to have the paramedics sign that sheet. He thinks it is that important. If the Fire Board has the opportunity, he would like them to view the film also. Hernando County was gracious enough to have filmed the seminar and distributed the CDs. Also, there are some of the original books that were at the seminar available. For free, everyone actually received a book. In the future, he would like support in having a good attendance at these types of learning opportunities. He would also like to make sure that the management, the chiefs, captains and district chiefs and the personnel who will be involved in the extrication of people are in attendance at these types of seminars so they can have an opportunity to talk and ask questions with the people who actually write the book on this sort of topic.

Dr. Blackburn pointed out this did not just cover surges from hurricanes, but also touched on bio chemicals and terrorism and what to expect and how to meet the psych and social needs of the patients. It is his opinion, that is going to play a big part of what they might have to do if that ever happens. As they know, this area is close to a nuclear power plant, railroads which transport chemicals, etc. and they have two major road arteries through this area, if not three if they count Suncoast Pkwy. They are also in close proximity to a military base and it is his opinion that all of these things come into play and they should be prepared.

Dr. Blackburn stated, he hopes everyone will have the opportunity to review the material, get back with him to let him know what they think of the material.

Dr. Blackburn stated, also, physicals have started on the new hire employees and everything is going smoothly. Other than that, he has nothing else to report. He asked the Board if they had any questions.

Commissioner Biro asked, where was the class held at.

Dr. Blackburn stated it was held at the Board of County Commissions Chambers and it was 8:30 in the morning until 4:30 in the afternoon. They received a book, a CD, some complimentary gifts.

Commissioner Biro asked Assistant Chief Davies if SHFR was informed about this?

Assistant Chief Davies said, it went out as soon as he got the information. It went to every

station.

Commissioner Biro asked, is there a reason why they did not have people there?

Assistant Chief Davies, said, probably because it was not made mandatory.

Dr. Blackburn stated, he realizes mandatory sometimes means paying the people there overtime, but if they could have gotten there, he certainly would have appreciated it. If they knew the time and effort placed into this event and the quality of the speakers and knew that it was the person who actually wrote the book on this, it would have been good. They speak all over the United States and their last engagements were in Tallahassee, Florida to the legislature. In Pinellas County, Bayfront and Orlando Regional hospitals' emergency crews, staff, fire and rescues, paramedics, etc. They actually spoke to his medical group where more than thirty physicians were in attendance. It was mainly those interested in emergency room medical, management, medical directors and people who are interested in being a part of a triage team when it comes to disasters in the State because there are several disaster support committees within different medical organizations. It was well attended by Hernando County Fire Rescue, Hernando Beach, as well as nursing staff, the County Attorney, Red Cross, lay people, ACLS/BLS instructors were there attending. It was a full room but certainly room for more people and hopefully in the future, SHFR people.

Dr. Blackburn pointed out this was not mandatory, but he thought it was mandatory that he try and present something to the SHFR on a yearly basis and he certainly would like to see some support if he is going to put these programs forward. It's either that or he is going to have to just erase that from happening and he will just present a program to be handed out and have the training division do it. But from now on he wants to see the attendance or he won't be there.

Commissioner Perreira asked, is it possible, could put a calendar out so the Board would have a copy of the classes being presented, so they can perhaps bring them up at their Commission / Workshop meetings?

Commissioner Biro agreed because the Board had no idea this event was even going on.

Assistant Chief Davies said, he will make sure that happens.

Commissioner Jacobs asked Assistant Chief Davies how much lead time did he have from the time he knew about it before they were informed about it?

Dr. Blackburn stated, the calls were actually received in the SHFR to sign up for the seminar. They've known about this for two months, but advertised about it six weeks in advance. He felt that would be plenty time to work the schedules around it and attempt to accommodate as many people as possible. Because he thinks the information being given is pertinent

information. If it were not, he would not have been so adamant about it. Not only that, but the information was free and they would have gotten seven (7) free CEUs and they got fed, they received booklets, CDs, etc. They get to meet the people who actually write the books. If they were having any questions, those are the people to certainly ask.

Commissioner Biro suggested to Assistant Chief Davies, that perhaps in the future they might need to look at this as a Board and if something like this comes out that is really important that they make sure their officers get to attend and if they have to bring people in they should. Sometimes a little overtime has to be paid to get opportunity for good knowledge.

Commissioner Jacobs asked how Hernando County Fire Rescue handled it? Did they make it mandatory for their people?

Dr. Blackburn said, they did not make it mandatory for their personnel. It was volunteer attendance.

Dr. Blackburn stated, Assistant Chief Davies, Captain Bill Eagle, the engine crew from ST#4 and Jimmy Zabetka attended.

Commissioner Raborn asked, was there anybody there from SHFR that wasn't getting paid?

Dr. Blackburn and Assistant Chief Davies said, Bill Eagle.

Commissioner Raborn asked, Bill Eagle was the only one in SHFR that should an interest to gain extra knowledge, without getting paid for it.

Dr. Blackburn added, and get 7 CEUs for free.

Assistant Chief Davies stated, he wasn't really sure what this class was going to be about, but after spending the day at the class, he wished more of SHFR had attended because it was a great class.

Commissioner Raborn stated, he is a little concerned because they profess to have the best interest in their community and to run a top-notch opportunity and this Department pays its people good money. Sometimes training has to be gotten off the clock. When it is offered for free and CEUs can be received all this Board is asking is that the personnel take the little time and the little effort.

Dr. Blackburn thanked the Board for allowing him to give his update.

## **B. Holiday Schedule**

Assistant Chief Davies reported, with the upcoming holiday time coming up, the second

meeting of November will be the day before Thanksgiving and the second meeting in December will be two days after Christmas. In the past, SHFR they held one meeting in November and one meeting in December. Therefore, the November meeting would be Wednesday, November 8, 2006 and the December meeting would be Wednesday December 13, 2006. He needs to know if the Board would want to do a workshop followed by a voting meeting or just a straight voting meeting.

Chairman Panozzo said, workshop followed by a voting meeting.

Commissioner Perreira stated, she is not available on November 8, 2006. Would it be possible to schedule the meeting on November 15, 2006?

There was a consensus to have the first meeting in November on November 15, 2006 and the December meeting on December 13, 2006 followed by a voting meeting for each.

Chairman Panozzo asked that a fax be sent out reminding everyone the November and December meetings have schedule changes.

Assistant Chief Davies said, yes.

### **C. Military Leave Policy**

Assistant Chief Davies explained a few meetings ago, the Board voted to extend some insurance payments for a six-month period for Mr. Romine and his family. The County stated they did not follow SHFR policy. A copy of SHFR's and the County's Military Leave Policy has been placed before the Fire Board. He asked the Board to go to the bottom of the very first page where it says 'Group Life Health and Dental Insurance Coverage and notice where it says both the members and dependents may be continued while on approved Long Term Military Leave for a period of up to six (6) months.'

Assistant Chief Davies stated, that is the original wording and he would like to revise that wording to "up to one (1) year" putting it more in line with the County policy.

Commissioner Biro asked what would stop them from extending it to eighteen (18) months? There are families he knows of that are extended in the military eighteen months.

Assistant Chief Davies stated, apparently they are supposed to be under County policy and County policy is one (1) year. They have not changed theirs to any increased amount of time. If the Board directs to make it eighteen (18) months instead of one year he will make it that way and see if goes through.

Commissioner Perreira stated this had already been discussed.

Assistant Chief Davies stated it was researched and found no actual vote in the Minutes.

Commissioner Raborn suggested changing it to make the policy 'eighteen months or the time of deployment, whichever is shorter.'

Commissioner Raborn stated he believes as long as they are being kept in service by the government for a longer deployment of a full eighteen months, they should protect their own people (employees).

Commissioner Jacobs stated he thinks 'Length of deployment' will cover them a lot better than any of the other suggestions. Right now with the open-ended thing that the government has with their people, he believes they must also have an open-ended policy because it is not the military personnel's choice, it is by choice of the government.

Commissioner Raborn stated if a person volunteers to sign up again, they would be covering the insurance indefinitely. He thinks there should be a limit of duration.

Commissioner Perreira stated, she agrees there should be a limit of eighteen months on the coverage. The policy does say if they volunteer for active duty, SHFR is covering them under the Long Term Military Leave. It states, if they are drafted, volunteered or ordered into service. If a military person knows they have coverage at SHFR for eighteen months and wants to volunteer, it gives the family a chance if there is a pre-existing coverage. They will be covered also by the military at that point. So it gives a family coverage for the eighteen months to get the pre-existing underneath the military as well.

Commissioner Biro agreed that eighteen months is sufficient because a year is too short.

Attorney Burbine pointed out if they change it to eighteen months then the next change is the COBRA insurance.

Commissioner Perreira asked if they are saying that following the first eighteen months the member will have the right to get COBRA?

Assistant Chief Davies stated, if that is the Board's pleasure.

Chairman Panozzo stated, for clarification he asked if what the Board is directing to change the coverage to eighteen (18) months and delete the volunteer section taken out?

Commissioner Biro asked attorney Burbine, if a member was deployed more than eighteen months, does the Fire Board have the option to give a further extension?

Attorney Burbine stated, it says the request must be properly documented and attached for approval. The request must be submitted for approval. Therefore, the Board has the ability

to approve or deny the request.

Commissioner Jacobs stated, they would have to show their orders and it should be required to consider the request.

Attorney Burbine stated, also, if the member were to be reassigned, they would get another time period for that second deployment. The Board may want to limit how many times.

Commissioner Jacobs stated, they have to turn their orders in for that too.

Assistant Chief Davies stated, both employees who have been deployed, have turned their orders in.

District Chief Carroll commented to the Board, it is his opinion, he does not think any one of the members were drafted but they had volunteered. And the simple fact that these members volunteered and put their lives on the line, they should be covered. Them volunteering to go back into a war that may save any one of their relatives from having to sign up or volunteer. If they are willing to put their lives on the line, then he thinks they owe it to them to do whatever they can, whether they volunteered or not.

Michael Rampino, Union President Local 2794, stated, this policy was created in conjunction with Management and the Union. The only void in this policy currently is the term and the time this Board wants to put on extending the insurance. This policy has been reviewed five, six, seven, eight times, with members who are currently deployed, by the Union President, the Chiefs, the Attorney and the County. The only difference in the two policies, is the amount of time this Board is willing to cover them under the insurance. Through the department policy the Union does have input ability on policies but the Board has the ultimate authority to approve or deny these policies. The only question is how long does this Board want to extend insurance coverage. The Assistant Chief's recommendation was to put it in line with the County's policy which is one (1) year. If this Board decides to extend it to eighteen (18) months, the way the policy is written, if the member is gone for eighteen (18) months comes home for a day and goes away again, the eighteen months start all over again. The Union is in contact with the military members and if something comes up where something is going to change, they will be back to discuss it before the Board asking for whatever they have to in order to take care of their military members. He feels if the Board extends the insurance up to eighteen (18) months this Board is more than covering SHFR and more than covering the employee.

Commissioner Raborn is thinking, if the member is going to get free medical from the government, he is hoping this is not just dollars and scents, but it is. After one year if it is not costing SHFR the medical coverage but the member can still get as good as medical coverage for free from the government while a member is deployed, then he thinks SHFR should go that way. However, if the coverage is inadequate, then he can understand

extending the coverage to the eighteen (18) months. The question is, is it inadequate.

Commissioner Biro said yes, because the family has to cover themselves again so that is a big burden on the family.

Commissioner Perreira pointed out the family is covered by the government. It is because they have specific physicians that won't accept governmental insurance. But that could go on for more than eighteen (18) months.

Roanera Romine, wife of Mr. Romine stated, this is also about having to change doctors and traveling to go to the new doctors, etc. Some doctors don't take the insurance provided through the military?

Mrs. Romine said correct.

Commissioner Jacobs stated, any doctor that accepts medicare has to cover the military. It is not a choice. Also, the only difference between SHFR's benefit package and the military is that right now they changed some of the things. The soldier is totally covered but the family now has to have a supplement. It used to be the family was totally covered.

Commissioner Biro stated, what Mrs. Romine is saying, is that if they are covered by the military they have to go to a VA clinic or some other military site. She cannot go to a regular doctor.

Commissioner Jacobs stated, no, they have TriCare, it comes under TriCare.

Mrs. Romine explained not every doctor takes it.

Commissioner Raborn asked Mrs. Romine, if the Board only extended this to one (1) year, what kind of a hardship would it be?

Mrs. Romine stated, for her personally at this time it wouldn't be, but she does know that another member of this department is deployed for eighteen (18) months and it would be a hardship for his family. Changing it to eighteen (18) months coverage, it would make a difference. That is the case with most military men is that they are eighteen (18) months.

Commissioner Perreira stated, she will make a motion.

### **Motion**

Commissioner Perreira made a motion that the insurance for Long Term Military Leave be extended from six (6) months to eighteen (18) months. Commissioner Biro seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

#### **D. ST#2 Update**

Assistant Chief Davies stated that he spoke with Mr. Kelly on 10/25/06. Based upon the original proposal that he (the Assistant Chief) had informed the Board he was attempting to come up with and then being advised by the Board to have it as a single story structure, the rough sketched Mr. Kelly produced will not be able to make it a single story structure because there is not enough land space.

Assistant Chief Davies gave the Board some options by reducing the size of the structure, and moving some of the equipment to another station. He would like to meet again with Mr. Kelly and reduce the number of additional bays.

There was a consensus to by the Board to meet with Mr. Kelly and consider the changes Assistant Chief Davies recommended.

Commissioner Reborn asked Assistant Chief Davies what the budget was for the two-story structure.

Assistant Chief Davies stated, the two-story structure was 3.4 million which one million was reduced by reducing the amount of square footage in the structure based on the current price of ST#3 to go to one-story.

Commissioner Biro asked Assistant Chief Davies if they were still keeping the living quarters without cutting them back?

Assistant Chief Davies stated, they living quarters are fine. There are living quarters for 10 and two officers.

Commissioner Raborn pointed out they have the other station to be built and it could be built to handle the extra equipment and people.

Assistant Chief Davies stated he has a couple of other items to discuss that came up since the agenda was put out.

As the Board is aware, they are in the process of hiring and on one background check it was less than favorable. He discussed it with Attorney Salzman, letting the attorney know what his thoughts were and the attorney agreed. He spoke with the candidate today and told him what they had done and said that at this time SHFR is withdrawing the offer of employment. Assistant Chief Davies stated, in the past the Board did vote to accept these types of things. He has called the next person on the hiring list and has accepted the offer of employment

contingent upon the background check, drug screening and physical. The candidate will be at Dr. Blackburn's office for his physical Monday morning.

Commissioner Raborn asked if they need to make a motion.

Assistant Chief Davies said he needs a motion and a vote to move forward with the withdrawal of offer for employment.

### **Motion**

Commissioner Raborn made a motion to withdraw an offer of employment to the candidate on the hiring list and to make an offer of employment to the next person on the list. Commissioner Biro seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

### **E. ST#5 Update**

Assistant Chief Davies reported that District Chief Rampino has been working on ST#5 plans. They have been able trace to where the paper trail ended. District Chief Rampino talked with the County Administrator today and it will be on the November 14, 2006 County Commission Agenda for discussion.

Chairman Panozzo asked, what will be on discussion?

Assistant Chief Davies explained, the request for a 5.4 acre park site and SHFR is going to do a Public Service Overlay for approximately 1 acre which they estimate would be sufficient to put a station on. They just have to see if the County is willing to agree to have a station there.

### **F. Payment In Lieu of Taxes - Hospitals**

Assistant Chief Davies stated he received a call the other day from Jill Allen who takes care of the budgeting for Hernando County Fire Rescue. Apparently, when Brooksville Regional Hospital was built, there was some type of an agreement made for payment of fees in lieu of taxes. Ms. Allen talked with the budget office about whether that should apply to Pinebrook Medical Center and Spring Hill Regional Hospital since they are all owned by the same company. Ms. Allen wrote the request and had Mr. Zotlin sign it. It was sent to County Legal and yes in fact it probably should fall under all three. If it goes through, SHFR is looking for a check from the parent company of Spring Hill Regional Hospital in the amount of \$53,862.41. That figure is based upon SHFR's current milage rate.

Commissioner Raborn asked, why is it called 'in lieu' of taxes?

Assistant Chief Davies stated, that is what it is. It is called Hernando HMA Payment In Lieu of Taxes.

Commissioner Raborn asked, what they pay SHFR currently?

Assistant Chief Davies stated, they pay SHFR nothing. And as in the past he doesn't believe the County was receiving any money from Pinebrook Medical Center or Brooksville Regional Hospital for the buildings.

### **G. Feasibility Study - Hernando County**

Assistant Chief Davies reported he received a packet today from Karen Nicolai, Clerk of the Court that the County has signed an agreement with the company to start the fire rescue study. It did come in over the County's projected \$100,000. It was approximately, \$121,900.00 for the first two phases of the study. There is a cut off date of January 31, 2007 and there is a possibility the company will be contacting this Fire Board for input. He did not see an exact start date, however, based upon the first phase being completed by January 31, 2007, it will probably commence within the next month.

Assistant Chief Davies stated, the County had already budgeted \$130,000 for this study.

Commissioner Biro stated, what a waste of taxpayers money.

Chairman Panozzo pointed out he fails to understand about all this fighting about a half mill reduction which amounts to \$30 a household and now the County is going to spend \$120,900.00 for a study. He does not understand it at all and if he were the citizens of Spring Hill, he would be up-in-arms over this. People don't realize what the County is spending for nothing. They won't even follow what the report says. What if they say Spring Hill Fire should run the County, does anyone think the County is going to go along with that? Absolutely not.

Commissioner Jacobs stated, having gone to all the candidate forums that are taking place, since he and Panozzo are running for office, this issue came up by Mr. Nolte and what if it was recommended they merge with the County's fire rescue and what he thinks SHFR should do.

Commissioner Jacobs stated his response was, it is not the SHFR's decision. It is the decision of the people living within the Spring Hill Fire District. SHFR is a Dependent District and if the study is done properly, it will probably recommend SHFR take over the County Fire Rescue. A question of tax rate was also asked as to whether they should go to a flat rate tax and he told them, no, because the County currently doesn't pay its bills and seconded, it is a regressive tax which hurts those people the most who can afford it the least. He keeps reminding the public it is the people's choice in this District.

Commissioner Perreira asked, who is the company doing the study?

Assistant Chief Davies responded, ESCI. He is not sure of the exact name of it but he can get it from the paperwork.

Commissioner Perreira asked the Assistant Chief to let the Fire Commissioners know so if they are contacted, they will know who they are speaking to.

Assistant Chief Davies stated he would provide the Board with the name of the company after the meeting.

Commissioner Jacobs stated, Hernando Beach Fire station is beyond where it should be repaired and this issue came up over the EOC and the money that they thought they could save the County and be used for that station. Well, this money that they are spending on this study would go a long way toward fixing that station and what they are doing by not fixing that station is, those people are living in bad conditions and if OSHA or NFPA were to come in and take a look at that, the County would have a problem.

Commissioner Biro stated, he thinks this Board should just let the County worry about itself and not get involved with that and worry about the people of Spring Hill and this fire department.

Commissioner Biro asked Assistant Chief Davies when does he think the study is coming out.

Assistant Chief Davies said the completed study will come out in probably a year. There are five total phases and the first two are the \$121,900.00.

## **H. Office Space - Headquarters**

Assistant Chief Davies stated, in some discussions with District Chief Rampino, SHFR is quickly running out of office space, with filling the third chief's position. They are looking at the possibility of purchasing some commercial space. There is a building being built between Headquarters and Stage West Community Playhouse. They are going to look closely at that as a possibility.

Chairman Panozzo asked, what about possibly renting or adding onto the Headquarters building?

Assistant Chief Davies stated, he doesn't know there is enough room because they are close to property line now with the way this building is built. There are not square corners to the Headquarters building. The fence is pretty much the property line and they cannot go to much further that way.

Commissioner Raborn asked if Assistant Chief Davies looked into the price of the building he was describing next door?

Assistant Chief Davies stated, it is 3,000 sq.ft. / \$165 a square foot and SHFR would have to finish the interior, putting up walls / sub divisions, etc.

Commissioner Jacobs asked when would that building be completed?

Assistant Chief Davies asked District Chief Rampino when the building will be completed.

District Chief Rampino said he would say in about 3 - 4 months.

### **VIII. New Station Update**

Assistant Chief Davies reported that District Chief Carroll is working with Devco regarding ST#6 property. District Chief Carroll received a call from one of Devco's representatives and was given the names of two commercial contractors. Assistant Chief Davies stated, he is not sure if the Board wants to proceed with them putting up the building at the moment. He is hoping that they have some positive action on November 14, 2006 for the ST#5 property and he would like that one to take priority ahead of ST#6.

Commissioner Biro agreed, however, they could find out if they would be interested in building ST#6 for in the future.

Assistant Chief Davies stated he will direct District Chief Carroll in that direction.

Commissioner Perreira stated, it would be nice if the Board could get a price and see what they are able to do for their community.

Commissioner Raborn feels, since the land was given as a gift, that is a godsend and he does not want to lose it. They are not looking for handouts, they are looking for help, whatever they can do. They are trying to build two new stations, renovate two stations, with the minimum amount of cost and still have quality, unlike what they found at ST#3. They are not doing substandard work. They need to make sure they stay progressive and that they build quality stations.

Chief Davies stated that is all he has for Chiefs' Report.

### **Unfinished Business**

#### **A. EMT Officers**

Assistant Chief Davies stated, at the request of Commissioner Perreira this was put on the

agenda for the Board to discuss. He believes the Board received a letter before the last meeting.

Commissioner Perreira stated, they had received a letter from one of their EMT Firefighters requesting again that the Fire Board look at amending the policy allowing EMTs the opportunity to test for promotions. They all had received a letter and she wanted to address it at least one more time.

Commissioner Perreira stated, she thinks what is being requested is that they may test to promote and not go on for paramedic training so they would be at a higher level. This Board has already had this discussion. It is kind of having an EMT over the scene and having Paramedics reporting to an EMT.

Commissioner Biro stated, that is not it.

Assistant Chief Davies stated, if he is not mistaken, having not read the letter, he believes, Commissioner Perreria almost has it. The EMTs would be able to test for a promotion and then there would have to be a stipulation that within a specific time frame they must become paramedics. Currently, to be an officer at SHFR certification as a paramedic is required.

Commissioner Perreira stated, but she does not know that is what the letter had recommended.

Commissioner Biro said, basically.

Assistant Chief Davies said he does not know because he did not receive a copy of that letter. He thought that was the intent of the original one, now maybe it has changed.

Commissioner Biro stated, it was his understanding that they would be able to act as an officer, but if a promotion came up they would have to meet the qualification as a paramedic to actually become an officer. Most of all it is wanting to take this test so they can act and get some training as far as officer training goes and eventually, if they decide, to go on and become paramedics.

Commissioner Biro stated, a lot of people are happy with the fire end of it. If they can act and get to see exactly what the duties of the officer is and what it entails is what it is. This is basically an acting position so they can sit for the test.

Commissioner Raborn stated, talking with some captains where he works who preside over paramedics, he asked them if they have problems. They told him, they have no problems. Talking with some district chiefs, he has gained a lot of insight to where he feels, SHFR is trying to best people in the public that they can. He doesn't want to say that he has flipped-flopped, but he has begun to side with EMT's position a little bit. He does not have a problem

with allowing EMTs to test and he thinks this Board was leaning in that direction a few months ago when they took the position of let the EMTs test, let the EMT be put on the list and if they want to get promoted they have to be a paramedic.

Commissioner Perreira stated, she thinks that is right and they had discussed that and can relate it to the nursing profession and being an RN. Promoting an LPN to be in charge of the RNs and then let the LPN become an RN would not make sense to her. So the LPN would have to become an RN in order to be an acting officer. The same in this case, they would have to complete paramedic training and then be in an officer position. She agrees with that scenario.

Commissioner Perreira stated, this is the reason she wanted to address the letter. So they are not really changing anything that they already have a current stance on regarding this.

Commissioner Raborn asked, so it stays the way it is?

Commissioner Biro responded, from what he understands, an EMT can still test for the position, correct?

Commissioner Raborn answered, right now they don't.

Assistant Chief Davies responded, currently, EMTs cannot.

Commissioner Biro stated, but what he is hearing from this conversation is that EMTs can test for the position, but to be promoted, they have to be a paramedic.

Commissioner Raborn stated, he does not see a problem letting them test. If they score high enough, they have to become a paramedic if they want that position.

Commissioner Biro agreed stating, it gives an EMT an incentive.

Assistant Chief Davies asked, in the current situation the department is in now, where they need two officers, how would that affect the list if the number one person on the list is an EMT. Will the EMT get a one year, two years, three years time frame to become an officer? If the EMT is on the list before he could come off the list, he would have to be a paramedic?

The Board said, correct, he would first have to be a paramedic.

Commissioner Raborn stated and if the second person on the list is a paramedic and a position is open, number two on the list gets the position.

Commissioner Perreira stated, they think they should put a time frame on it then. They can't sit on top of the list for years.

Assistant Chief Davies stated, he thinks that is not in the policy and would require a policy change and possible a contract change. He is not sure if it is in the Union contract.

Troy Hagar, Union Secretary, stated, he is familiar with the gentleman who wrote the letter and he really just thinks what he wanted to do was bring this back before the Board as his personal feelings as the Board can see in the letter with his personal feelings.

Troy Hagar, stated, this is a policy issue and he would suggest the Board send this to the Policy Committee which this Board will have a representative on. The Committee would meet and discuss future qualifications for future officers.

Commissioner Biro stated, he had asked quite a while ago, when was the last time the Policy Committee met. This has no reflection on the current chief. Can anybody tell him how long ago it was since it met?

Troy Hagar stated, it's been quite a while and he would recommend this Board direct that it happen soon because even this Board's Military Policies that was discussed tonight need to be addressed.

Commissioner Biro stated the reason he got for not meeting and still doesn't agree with it and will never agree with it is that the reason they have not met is because they are not sure what policies the department is operating under. Whether they are operating under the County's policies or operating under SHFR policies. It doesn't matter, SHFR still needs to have policies for what SHFR does regardless of what the County does.

Commissioner Raborn stated, they need to do it before the next Workshop.

Commissioner Biro agreed. He then asked Assistant Chief Davies regarding the new hires that are to start at SHFR, are they getting policies for SHFR or the County policies?

Assistant Chief Davies said, the new hires have been given SHFR policies.

Commissioner Biro stated, then as far as he is concerned, SHFR employees are still operating under SHFR policies, correct?

Attorney Burbine said that is correct.

Commissioner Biro said, that is all he wanted to know. Then they need to get the policy committee back together and start getting meetings again.

Commissioner Perreira stated, she agrees with Commissioner Biro's recommendation that the EMT becoming officer issue needs to go back to the policy committee.

Commissioner Raborn stated, he thinks what the County tried to do with SHFR wasn't to change them to follow the County's policies. It was to oversee SHFR's policies were being followed and that they were keeping to the policies.

Commissioner Biro stated, he was told flat out that SHFR was under the County policies.

Commissioner Perreira stated, that is not the directive that the Board received.

Commissioner Biro stated, he was told that.

Commissioner Perreira stated, while they are discussing committees, there is a strategic planning committee that was also supposed to be meeting and she does not think they've met in quite a while either.

Chairman Panozzo asked, Assistant Chief Davies if he will be making the arrangements for the policy committee?

Assistant Chief Davies responded, he believes Hamilton was on the committee and Mr. Jacobs replaced Mr. Hamilton. He asked Mr. Jacobs if he would like to sit on the committee.

Commissioner Jacobs stated, he would be glad to sit in on the committee.

Commissioner Biro stated, he would sit on the policies committee.

Commissioner Perreira pointed out that Commissioner Biro is volunteering to sit on the committee also.

Commissioner Jacobs pointed out Commissioner Biro is more familiar with the committee procedure and that would be fine.

Assistant Chief Davies said, that would be fine. Commissioner Biro will be on the committee and he will get meetings set up for the two committees.

Commissioner Perreira said, thank you.

## **New Business**

### **A. Settlement Article**

Commissioner Raborn stated, there was an article in the paper this morning and he is disturbed over it. SHFR made a settlement with a gentleman for one: anything about the settlement was not supposed to be disclosed and yet it is in the paper. Secondly, he finds out from the newspaper article that he is suing SHFR because he did not get paid on time.

Commissioner Raborn would like to know firstly, why didn't he get paid on time? And if it was not due to SHFR's fault, but the fault lies elsewhere like maybe the County holding the check

up, maybe the County needs to be added to the lawsuit. Secondly, he needs to know from Attorney Salzman, if the disclosure of the settlement became public, can SHFR go back and get its money back.

Commissioner Perreria asked, wasn't it part of the settlement that the money would not be publicly disclosed?

Commissioner Jacobs said, yes, he violated the agreement.

Attorney Burbine stated, he is not familiar with the article but he will research it for the Board.

Assistant Chief Davies stated he will provide the attorney a copy of the article.

Chairman Panozzo pointed out, the newspaper made it look like SHFR paid the amount of money the gentleman was suing for and they did not settle for that amount.

Chairman Panozzo asked if there were any other items to discuss under New Business. There was none.

### **Comments of Commissioners**

Commissioner Raborn - None

Commissioner Biro - None

Commissioner Perreira - Received a copy of a letter Assistant Chief Davies received by email complimenting ST#3 A Shift written by a Spring Hill resident and she thinks it is a very nice letter and thanked the resident for taking the time to write to them to tell them that she feels their paramedics are very capable and also compassionate in taking care of not only the residents but also the animals of residents. It is nice to hear the positive things also.

Chairman Panozzo stated, and she hopes the newspaper prints it.

Assistant Chief Davies stated he believes the resident did send a copy to the newspaper editor.

Commissioner Jacobs - None.

Commissioner Panozzo - Don't forget to set clocks back one hour and change the batteries in smoke detectors. Everyone should have smoke detectors and if they do not contact SHFR.

Commissioner Perreira thought to mention be safe this Halloween Holiday next Tuesday.

### **Open Forum**

Mr. Monk, Spring Hill resident asked who is paying for the \$121,000 Study?

Assistant Chief Davies said, the County budgeted for the study and thinks it is coming out of the General Fund, which means Mr. Monk as a resident is helping pay for the study.

Mr. Monk stated, as a resident, he doesn't want the study.

Commissioner Biro stated, Mr. Monk will have to let his County Commissioners know that.

Chairman Panozzo asked if there were any other items for Open Forum. There were none.

**Motion**

Commissioner Raborn made a motion to adjourn the Commissioner meeting. Commissioner Jacobs seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

**Adjourn**

The Commission meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

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Gene Panozzo, Chairman

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Michele B. Stevens, Recording Secretary