

LEHIGH ACRES FIRE CONTROL AND RESCUE DISTRICT

COMMISSION MEETING

MINUTES

March 25, 2010

The March 25, 2010 regular Commission Meeting of the Lehigh Acres Fire Control and Rescue District Board of Commissioners was held at the Veteran's Park Recreation Center, 55 S. Homestead Rd., Lehigh Acres, FL. The meeting was opened at 4:00 PM by President Berndt. Present were Commissioners Berndt, Adams, Barrett and Hemingway. Chief Don Adams, Fire Marshal Ken Bennett, EMS Division Chief Mike Pcolar, Administrative Assistant Susan Platas and Finance Manager Ben VanKlingeren. Attorney Richard Pringle was also in attendance.

After the Pledge of Allegiance, Commissioner Berndt asked Chief Adams to give the invocation.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA:

Commissioner Berndt asked if there were any additions, corrections or deletions to the Agenda. Chief Adams requested to add under New Business; Safer Grant, Staffing Levels, Assistant Chief Position, Negotiation Team. Commissioner Barrett motioned to adopt the Agenda as amended with a second from Commissioner Hemingway. Motion passed.

CONSENT AGENDA:

- Fire Board Special Commission Workshop of February 16, 2010
- Fire Board Regular Meeting Minutes of February 18, 2010
- Treasurers Report

Commissioner Adams questioned the account analysis fee. Also, he questioned the Life Safety Page. He wanted to know if these accounts will ever be collected.

Commissioner Hemingway questioned the interest amounts. He wanted to know if there was a better way to get more interest on our money.

Commissioner Hemingway motioned to accept the Consent Agenda with a second with Commissioner Adams. Motion passed.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Chief Adams spoke on the following items:

- Met twice with District 6 and 19 regarding negotiations.
- Our District collected over \$8,000 for MDA.
- Ben VanKlingeren obtained his CPA license. Congratulations go out to him.
- Spring Festival Parade this weekend. Commissioners are welcome to participate.

Mike Pcolar showed how the SALT device worked. This device makes it easier to access a patients airway. What used to take up to a min – this device makes it much quicker.

DVP 6 and 19:

None.

DEPARTMENT ATTORNEY:

There has been much discussion about having elections on different items. He wanted to remind the Board that any Resolution needs to be adopted 120 days prior to any election.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS:

None.

COMMISSIONER REPORT:

Commissioner Hemingway spoke about the requirements of a Volunteer Fire Department.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Vacant Commission Seat – Commissioner Berndt stated three resumes were received for the vacant Commission Seat; Larry Becker, Cathy Kruse, and Kevin Shea. Commissioners asked questions of the candidates in alphabetical order. Highlights were:

Larry Becker - he is looking forward to doing the best he can do for this fire district.

Cathy Kruse - she has a lot of Community experience. She brings her experience to the district.

Kevin Shea – very experienced with government.

Commissioner Berndt asked Commissioners if they wish to nominate someone.

Commissioner Adams nominated Larry Becker.

Commissioner Barrett nominated Cathy Kruse.

Commissioner Hemingway nominated Cathy Kruse.

Commissioner Berndt nominated Larry Becker.

No Commissioner wished to change their nomination.

Attorney Pringle stated based on what was said, no one at this point is selected. If the vote stays 2 to 2, no one is selected, the seat stays vacant.

Commissioner Adams motioned to table the item indefinitely. Second from Commissioner Berndt. Motion passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS:

Presentation of 2008-2009 Audit – Jeff Tuscan from Tuscan and Company spoke on the audit. He reviewed all aspects of the audit and the projection of future budgets.

Approval of 2008-2009 Audit – Commissioner Hemingway motioned to approve the audit for 2008-2009 with a second from Commissioner Adams. Motion passed.

Safer Grant Update – Chief stated we were notified that our application was favorably reviewed by a panel of our peers. There are some questions that need to be answered by the Board. Chief read through each question. Chief stated there are three questions that he needs Board direction: 1. *If you are selected for a grant award, would you accept?* 2. *If applying under the Rehiring Laid-off Firefighters Activity, have you discussed this application with your governing body and is your governing body willing to accept this commitment to rehire these personnel?* 3. *Whether awarded under the Hiring New Firefighters Activity or the Rehiring Laid-off Firefighters Activity, the 2009 SAFER Program Guidance prohibits firefighter layoffs during the two-year Period of Performance. Will your department be able to meet this requirement?*

After some discussion on the above questions, Commissioner Berndt motioned to vote yes to the three pertinent questions for the SAFER grant with a second from Commissioner Hemingway. Motion passed.

Revision of Commission Manual – Commissioner Berndt asked that Commissioners take home the revisions to the manual, study it, and we can discuss and vote on at the April Commission meeting. Commissioner Berndt motioned to table this until next meeting with a second from Commissioner Hemingway. Motion passed.

Handbook Clarification – Chief Adams stated EMS Division Chief Mike Pcolar is retiring in April, 2010. Mike has requested to remain on the department group insurance, but the handbook states you must be a 10 year employee of the District to do so. FS112.0801 states that employees retiring from a special district are allowed to stay on the group insurance plan.

Chief is requesting Board action to allow Mike Pcolar to stay on our group health insurance at his own cost and clear the handbook language at a later time. Commissioner Adams motioned to allow Mike Pcolar to remain on the department's insurance with a second from Commissioner Hemingway. Motion passed.

Negotiation Team – Chief is requesting to add Ben VanKlingeren to the negotiating team to assist with the financial aspect. Commissioner Berndt motioned to add Ben VanKlingeren to the negotiation team with a second from Commissioner Barrett. Motion passed.

Staffing Levels – Chief stated he would like the Board to state how low manning can be on the Engines. Chief is recommending the Board establish a policy of 3 firefighters on an engine. We would like to staff the 3 rescues and shut down a rescue if needed or allow for overtime to keep the engines staffed properly. There was much discussion on the safety issues of running only two on an engine. Commissioner Berndt stated what if we said 3 on an engine for 90 days so we can see what the costs will be. Commissioner Berndt wanted Commissioners to consider this compromise. It would be the June meeting that would give us a definitive time to make a decision.

Commissioner Berndt motioned to set staffing at a level at 3 on an engine and to brown out an ambulance if necessary and to maintain 2 ambulances at all times. Commissioners Barrett and Hemingway seconded. Motion passed.

Budget Line Transfers – Chief stated that we need to transfer some line item around in the budget due to purchasing a trailer, 2 replacement computers and Bad Debt for ambulance fees. Commissioner Berndt motioned that we approve the budget line transfers that involve Line Item 522-9901 Capital Reserves to 522.6645, Vehicles in the amount of \$59,462.00. This is for the trailer. Line Item 522-9901 Capital Reserves to 522-6643 Computers in the amount of \$10,695 for 2 new computers that need to be replaced and 522.8000 Bad Debt to 342-0600 Ambulance Billing in the amount of \$635,000. Commissioner Hemingway seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Incentive to Retire – Chief Adams stated some of the employees wanted the Commission to consider an incentive for them to retire. Ben spoke and reviewed some of the items. A copy of this is attached. This will be studied by the Commissioners.

Assistant Chief Position – Chief would like to make Mike Pcolar's job into an Assistant Chief to take Mike's position and some of the load off Ken Bennett. After some discussion regarding the pay range, Commissioner Berndt requested that Chief Adams offer this position internally first. Commissioners consensus was to go ahead and fill the Assistant Chief of EMS position.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Cathy Kruse spoke re: the COPCN. She is wondering at what point are the county commissioners going to determine that we cannot have a reliable ambulance service. We are doing a disservice to the public if we allow this to happen. She would like information monthly about having an ambulance brown-out, especially if they don't have to be. She would like to see a report of how many times we are dropping down to 2 ambulances and how many times LCEMS is coming in to Lehigh to run calls.

Kevin Shea spoke on the ad valorem tax situation. The issue here in Lehigh Acres is not commercial, it's vacant land and residential housing.

Frank LaRosa spoke on items that have been voted on and haven't been voted on. He wishes the Commissioner seat was filled. Just to put it off until November, you're not doing the public any service. This should have been done in a workshop.

COMMISSIONERS COMMENTS:

Commissioners thanked the auditors for an excellent job and to the candidates for putting in their resumes.

Adjourn 7:57pm.