

# **LEHIGH ACRES FIRE CONTROL AND RESCUE DISTRICT**

## **SPECIAL MEETING**

### **MINUTES**

**May 6, 2009**

The May 6, 2009 Special Meeting of the Lehigh Acres Fire Control and Rescue District Board of Commissioners was opened at 1:00 PM by President Berndt. Present were Commissioners Berndt, Adams, Guzman, Barrett and Hemingway. Chief Don Adams, Assistant Chief Jeff Haugh, Administrative Assistant Susan Platas, Finance Specialist Anita Kressel and Secretary Jill Marcolini, and Attorney Richard Pringle.

Also in Attendance were Dr. Joseph Lemmons Medical Director, Walt Stephens President Local 1826, John Wayne DVP District 19, Mike Pernal DVP District 6, John Wilson of Lee County EMS, and Chief Mike Becker of Ft. Myers Beach Fire & Rescue, Chief Kinsey and Assistant Chief Ken Craft of Bonita Springs Fire.

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

Commissioner Berndt stated this is a Special Meeting of the Lehigh Acres Board of Commissioners to talk about different scenarios and discuss the 2009/2010 Revenues & Expenditures for the upcoming budget. Commissioner Berndt stated that back in March when Chief Adams had spoke with Mr. Ken Wilkinson Property Appraiser, regarding the ad valorem tax and the prospect of a short fall of as much as 40%. The Board then decided to schedule a meeting to discuss different scenarios for a solution. He also stated no decisions will be made tonight regarding the upcoming budget. The soft numbers for the District will come out in June.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT (On Agenda Items)**

Jerry Karrick – Majestic Golf Club –Thanked the Board for letting the public speak at this special meeting. He spoke about businesses that want to come into Lehigh and ask about the Fire District, EMS, schools and churches. He asked the Board to look into other cutbacks, adjustments, or millage, and to maintain the status quo.

Ed Weiner believes things should stay the way they are especially with trying to get new businesses in Lehigh. He does not want fire personnel cut. Leave expenditures stay status quo.

Kevin Shea stated the past few years the Board should have watch expenses. He stated at previous Board meetings that he had addressed the Board himself on the impending shortfalls of the ad valorem taxes.

Robert Anderson Lehigh resident stated to the Board his opinion to reduce the budget has 5 major points.

Board of Commissioners work for free for one year, a 12% pay cut from the position of Chief on down, No PIO, no spending capital for one full year, and one Assistant Chief retire.

Chief Adams read part of the April 1, 2009 memorandum which was sent out to all personnel after the prediction that revenue in Lehigh Acres could drop as much as 40%.

Each Board member and extended guests in attendance received summary sheets of the 7 different scenarios. Chief Adams read through each one and explained the consequences of each scenario, (if the short fall comes between 24 to 40 percent). The summary sheets were as follows.

## **SUMMARY SHEET**

### **SUMMARY SHEET 1**

Expenditures stay status quo

### **SUMMARY SHEET 2**

9 Line Personnel  
2 Administration Personnel

### **SUMMARY SHEET 3**

12 Line Personnel  
4 Administration Personnel

### **SUMMARY SHEET 4**

9 Line Personnel  
4 Administration Personnel

### **SUMMARY SHEET 5**

24 Line Personnel

### **SUMMARY SHEET 6**

12 Line Personnel

### **SUMMARY SHEET 7**

44 Line Personnel

Much discussion between the Board and Mr. Wilson from Lee County EMS regarding the elimination of our five rescues and using Lee County EMS to assume the responsibility of our District. Commissioner Guzman concerns are response time and that Lee County EMS has the same level of service for our District as we do now.

Commissioner Hemingway addressed the Board regarding the new engine which is on order. He asked Chief Adams the cost of cancelling the order, if and what penalty would the District have to pay. Chief Adams answered his concerns. Commissioner Hemingway also asked what engine it would be replacing. Chief Adams stated Engine 103. Commissioner Hemingway would like the maintenance information of Engine 103. Chief Adams stated he would be able to get him that information.

Walt Stevens, President of Local 1826 asked Mr. Wilson if he would be able to find the expense for the county to transport here to Lehigh. Mr. Wilson stated he could bring back the information to Mr. Stevens.

Commissioner Berndt asked Attorney Pringle about a lease agreement with the bank against the Buildings (Stations #104 and #105). Attorney Pringle stated he would have to look into a lease agreement with the bank against the buildings for the purpose of General Revenue. He stated it has been done at other Districts for the purchase of equipment. He stated he would bring back the information to the Board.

Commissioner Berndt stated we have a lot of smart employees with good ideas and he wants them to communicate with the Chief and their union representative to come to a resolution that we can work together through this.

Commissioner Hemingway would like Chief Adams to give the Board a little more information on personnel with salaries, all benefits, use of vehicles and what he was he was looking at in reducing the budget. Regarding positions, whether eliminating 2 positions and combining two job descriptions into one.

Commissioner Hemingway stated he has maintenance concerns and if it would be cost efficient to take our apparatus to the county for maintenance or even repairs. He questioned if County employees were certified to work on our apparatus and how many employees they have and what was the down time for repairs. Commissioner Hemingway also commented on Alva Fire District and what their reason was for utilizing the County maintenance shop. He also questioned the propose agreement between Alva FD and Lehigh FD for in-kind services, such as maintenance. Chief Adams responded he was not sure why Alva's decided to utilize the county and was not sure why we have not followed through with the proposed agreement. Chief Adams discussed Lehigh outsourcing our maintenance division and the possibility of price mark ups on parts, and also the turnaround rate to have apparatus back in service would be longer. Chief Adams told Commissioner Hemingway that we could get him the information he requested.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Steve Baker stated no one could have predated this would happen to the economy. He is proud of the District and its EMS. He also commented that the County Commissioner Frank Mann did not attend.

Mr. Baker asked the Board to stick up for their Firefighters; they are doing a great job and thanked Chief Adams.

Eric Crew stated he does construction work in Lehigh and he recognizes the District has a lot of concerns. He had questions regarding the taxes and impact fees the residents pay in Lehigh Acres as opposed to Lee County.

## **COMMISSIONERS COMMENTS**

Commissioner Adams thanked the public, employees and guests for coming out and making comments.

Commissioner Berndt would like attorney Pringle to look into leasing back the buildings to see if we could generate income. He stated the Board is being pro-active. He's glad we had this meeting and everyone's input is important.

Commissioner Hemingway would like to thank the audience for coming and he hopes our next meeting would be an evening meeting so more of Lehigh could attend. To Chief Adams, if he could get this additional information he requested to the Commissioners before the next Commission meeting.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE COMMENTS**

Chief Adams: He stated he would like to make sure of the direction of the Board at this point, we presented a lot of information today. Commissioner Hemingway has asked for additional information from the staff. Chief Adams asked the Board if there is anything else the Board would like to see us do.

Motion to adjourn 3:00 pm

