

# LEHIGH ACRES FIRE CONTROL AND RESCUE DISTRICT

## COMMISSION MEETING

### MINUTES

**December 18, 2008**

The December 18, 2008 meeting of the Lehigh Acres Fire Control and Rescue District Board of Commissioners was opened at 4:00pm by President Berndt. Present were Commissioners Berndt, Adams, Barrett, and Hemingway. Chief Donald Adams, Assistant Chief Jeffery Haugh, Administrative Assistant Susan Platas, Finance Specialist Anita Kressel, and Billing Specialist Vanessa Koza. Commissioner Guzman had an excused absence. 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 change the Hardship Ambulance Fees Writeoffs, to Ambulance Fee WriteOff's. He also requested to add under New Business, Impact Fees. Commissioner Hemingway motioned to adopt the Agenda as amended with a second from Commissioner Adams. Motion carries.

#### **Consent Agenda**

- Minutes of the November 19, 2008 Commission Meeting
- Treasurer's Report

Commissioner Barrett motioned to accept the Consent Agenda as presented with second from Commissioner Adams. Motion carries.

#### **Department Reports**

##### **Chief Adams:**

Chief Adams handed out a graph regarding structure fires year to date. In 2006 there were a total of 56 structure fires (mainly as a result of the wildland fires). In 2007 there were a total of 77 structure fires. At the end of November 2008 there have been a total of 95 structure fires.

Chief spoke of items that needed to be replaced; the septic system at Station 101 and relocating the water line from the new water main in the rear of Station 103.

For the first time in many years, overtime was under \$1000 for this past pay period.

**DVP 6 and 19:**

None.

**Attorney Pringle:**

Attorney Pringle stated he is working on the contract w/the Sutphen Corporation. Should have this done at the end of the year.

The hearing examiner approved the request by Verizon for a special exception without approving the dish on the tower. Verizon has a little problem. Either we have a communication dish on the tower or they don't get a lease. Attorney Pringle is working on this issue with Verizon.

**Unfinished Business:**

**Cell Phone Towers** – Chief stated in light of the information Attorney Pringle stated, we can table this issue. Commissioner Adams motioned to table the Cell phone Tower issue until the January meeting with a second from Commissioner Hemingway. Motion carries.

**New Business:**

**Dental Insurance** – Chief Adams stated in our yearly evaluation of our insurances, we need to change the dental plan to meet the needs of the department. The cost change will be approximately \$4,400, but there will be a drastic change of increased out of network benefits for the plan. Commissioner Hemingway stated that a few guys came to him and asked him to check into dental insurance. Commissioner Hemingway stated that we can go to a self-insured plan using Option 1 which the committee recommended and adding several options and saving close to \$30,000 of taxpayer money. That money would be coming back to the department. We can increase benefits with the additional money with the current policy that we have, or we can use this money for next year's down payment. He would like this to go before the Committee in January to be viewed and discussed.

DVP District 6 Mike Pernal stated we have an insurance committee and we all reviewed the information and determined that the insurance we have now is sufficient. It's a little more money but we, as the insurance committee have reviewed the plans and are recommending staying with Reliance Standard but changing plans options.

Commissioner Hemingway would like to sit down and review the information.

Chief Adams stated if we go to self insurance, we need to take some time to review some self insured programs.

Chief Adams appreciates everything the Commissioners are saying, he puts faith in what Staff and the union have done and he is recommending this insurance.

After much discussion, Commissioner Barrett motions to go w/Chief Adams recommendation for dental insurance. Commissioner Berndt seconds the motion.

Commissioners have asked that they get more information at an earlier date to review and make their decision.

Being put to a vote, the motion carries 3-1, with the opposing vote from Commissioner Hemingway.

**Ambulance Fee Write Offs** - Chief Haugh stated that quarterly we have write off's on the ambulance billing.

We need three motions – small balance write off's; deceased write off's; and bankruptcy write off's.

Small Balance Writeoffs: Commissioner Hemingway motioned to accept the report for small balance write off's for ADPI and Lehigh In House totaling \$416.78. Commissioner Berndt seconded the motion. Motion carries.

Deceased Write Offs: Commissioner Adams motioned to write off deceased ADPI and Lehigh In House totaling \$2782.41. Second from Commissioner Berndt. Motion carries.

Bankruptcy Write offs: Commissioner Adams motioned to write off \$80.00 bankruptcy. Second by Commissioner Hemingway. Motion carries.

**Fire Training Officer** - Commissioner Adams asked Chief to place this on the Agenda for some discussion. Commissioner Adams asked what the status of this position was. Chief stated he advertised in-house and one person applied. He plans on running an assessment center to put this candidate through. If this candidate makes it – great. If not, he will come back to the board. He stated this position is important for the safety of the firefighters.

Chief stated he will be very cautious in filling this position. He doesn't want to jeopardize anyone's livelihood.

Commissioner Hemingway asked if this employee can do two jobs – his own and the trainer. Chief stated no.

End of discussion.

**Close the Construction Account** – Chief stated we need to close the construction account and transfer the \$185,158.25 to the money market account.

Commissioner Hemingway wanted to turn this money into a treasury note and receive higher interest.

Commissioner Berndt stated this money could be put in the line items to offset the new septic and windows.

Attorney Pringle stated our auditors will verify where we can place the money and in what amounts to earn additional interest. Make sure the auditors don't have any heartburn with this.

Commissioner Hemingway motioned to close the construction account and move the \$185,158.25 in that account in the district's money market account. Commissioner Berndt seconded the motion. Motion carries.

Commissioner Hemingway motioned for the Chief and Anita to consult with the district's auditor to find out exactly if we have an advantage of going into treasury notes with a second from Commissioner Barrett. Motion carries.

**Impact Fees** - Chief Adams stated according to the auditors, since we paid off part of the construction loan with ad valorem taxes, we are eligible to reimburse ourselves the ad valorem portion we paid with future impact fees. This loan was previously approved to pay off with impact fee money. A motion needs to be made for future impact money to be used for this.

Commissioner Barrett motioned to reimburse ourselves with the impact fees for the ad valorem portion paid on the construction loan. Commissioner Hemingway seconded the motion. Attorney Pringle stated it's a motion to reimburse from the impact fee fund into the general fund. Being put to a vote, motion carries.

**Public Comment:**

Whitey Doidge, Lehigh resident has a problem with PIO Patrick Comer. We are spending over \$100,000. We sent him to fire school. Why? I think he's keeping two fireman out of a job. Which would you rather have? A firefighter or a person taking pictures. Mr. Doidge went on to ask if Mr. Comer was a civilian or a firefighter. Chief stated he is an employee of the fire department and is at regular risk. Mr. Doidge stated we don't need him – he's a waste of money. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

**Commissioner Comments:**

Commissioner Hemingway stated he is disturbed on the output on the dental. He is concerned with our income. We need to do some shaving now.

Commissioner Adams – requests if we could print a sheet out of all the contracts coming up next year.

Commissioner Berndt stated that Mr. Doidge continues to bang the drum on the PIO. Mr. Comer has a great deal of contact w/the children and we are having a positive impact that way. We are reaching the public more than we ever had. We felt it was necessary to keep him and it's a positive in the fire district.

Adjourn 5:06pm.