

LEHIGH ACRES FIRE CONTROL AND RESCUE DISTRICT

COMMISSION WORKSHOP

MINUTES

March 8, 2011

The March 8, 2011 Commission Workshop of the Lehigh Acres Fire Control and Rescue District Board of Commissioners was held at the Microtel Inn and Suites, 1320 Business Way, Lehigh Acres, FL. The meeting was opened at 2:00 PM by President Berndt. Present were Commissioners Berndt, Adams, Carter, Becker and Shea; Chief Donald Adams, Fire Marshal Ken Bennett, Captain Ralph Ketron, Captain Martin McDowell, Finance Manager Ben VanKlingeren, Secretary Janis Williams and Administrative Assistant Susan Platas.

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

The purpose of this workshop is to:

Discuss Dr. Granito's Recommendations and talk about the Budget

Dr. Granito's Recommendations: Chief Adams stated with regards to the recommendations that Dr. Granito brought forth, only two don't have financial ties.

Commissioner Berndt stated why don't we just touch on the 14 recommendations. Skim through them, make sure they're addressed, see if there is anything we need to put on the Agenda for the regular Commission Meeting and take action on, and label things that maybe we address in the future.

#1. Fire pump, quint and aerial ladder minimum staffing should be four certified firefighters, at least one of whom should be a certified paramedic. Chief stated we are already doing this. This will be an issue once the SAFER grant runs out. Chief stated then Commissioners need to give direction. Are we going to keep the ambulances; get rid of the ambulances; etc.

#2. Ambulance minimum staffing should be two certified emergency medical technicians, with at least one of them certified paramedic. Chief stated we have always been doing this.

#3. A carefully constructed, definitive examination of the advantages, disadvantages, operational challenges, and cost/income of Department ambulance service must precede whatever policy recommendation is made to the Board by the Department, and whatever policy decision is ultimately made by the Board. This section is regarding whether to continue with the ambulance service. Chief stated they do not make money, when you throw in personnel costs. Our ambulances are wearing out. We are going to have to think about purchasing additional ambulances.

#4. While the response distances to outlying areas of the District may preclude meeting the National Standard of four minutes "road time" for a first due pumper, the Department should continue to dispatch sufficient units to meet the fifteen responders within 8 minutes National Standard to working structure fires. The "two in – two out" legal requirement must be met.

Commissioner Berndt stated to Chief to do your best.

#5. Compliance with the requirement for a four person "Rapid Intervention Team" at working structure fires may often require the use of outside mutual aide response. Chief stated prior to the layoffs and during the SAFER grant, the District has met the requirement of the four person RIT Team.

#6. Either a department Training Officer position needs to be established or the Assistant Chief should be designated as Department Training Program Director, in addition to existing responsibilities. Chief stated we filled both the department Training Officer position for fire and Training Officer position for EMS.

#7. The department Fire Marshal position should be assigned the rank of Assistant Chief. Commissioner Berndt stated this needs to be added to the Agenda so we can review more formally and potentially take action on this.

#8. The department needs a position created as Operations Chief/second in command, and responsible for oversight of the Battalion Chiefs, Company Lieutenants and response crews. Chief stated this is not feasible.

#9. An appropriately trained on-scene Safety Officer is needed on each shift, or on immediate call, as called for in the Department's goal #1 for 10/2012. Captain Ralph Ketron, the Fire Trainer is also our Safety Officer.

#10. The Fire Marshal and Assistant Chief for Administration should have shared responsibility for a Department public information and education program. Fire Marshal Ken Bennett is doing this now. Discussion was to have the two training officers help.

#11. An appropriate program should be established to reduce the annual number of false alarms, averaging 288 annually since 2005, directed by the Fire Marshal. A program has been developed to reduce annual number of false alarms.

#12. National professional qualifications as listed by NFPA should be applied appropriately to all department non-civilian positions. Chief stated this will cost money.

#13. A minimum of six shift personnel per station is necessary for adequate, safe fire suppression capability and capacity. That number also is necessary to conduct EMS "First Responder" level service with or without ambulance transport capability; Chief stated we would have to hire 18 people at a cost of over \$1,000,000.

#14. *If a significant financial shortfall is anticipated beginning in September 2012, taxpayer approval should be sought for a special fire-EMS service fee, or other income source. If no additional income or funding can be identified, then a scenario similar to that used before the SAFER grant seems inevitable.* Chief stated the only thing we can do for the future, is have a flat fee assessment.

Commissioner Shea questioned giving the ambulance to a private company...making Lehigh only a fire department.

Budget:

Discussion began on the EMS portion. Discussion was also on gas/diesel; possibly going to a smaller quick attack type truck; volunteers and volunteer departments; putting a pilot volunteer program into effect to see if it works; status of our vehicles and personnel costs.

Commissioner Shea spoke on the spreadsheet for personnel costs. He would like a more detailed analysis. Ben VanKlengeren spoke on the Pay/Benefit Summary that was given to Commissioners.

Adjourn 4:08pm