

TOWN OF PALM BEACH

Office of The Town Clerk

MINUTES FROM THE SPECIAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON AUGUST 12, 2002

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order by President William Brooks at 9:30 a.m. in the Town Council Chambers. On roll call, the following Elected Officials were found to be in attendance: Mayor Lesly S. Smith; President William J. Brooks; President Pro-Tem Norman P. Goldblum; Councilman Jack McDonald; Councilman Samuel C. McLendon; and Councilman Allen S. Wyett. Also attending for all or part of the meeting were: Town Manager Peter B. Elwell; Assistant Town Manager Thomas G. Bradford; Fire-Rescue Chief Kent W. Koelz; Assistant Fire-Rescue Chief Jeff Bankston; Assistant Fire-Rescue Chief John J. Deiorio; Fire-Rescue EMS Captain Charles E. Price; Fire-Rescue Inspector William Amador; and Town Clerk Mary A. Pollitt.

II. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The invocation was given by Town Clerk Pollitt. The pledge of allegiance was led by President Brooks.

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Councilman McLendon made a motion to approve the agenda. The motion was seconded by Councilman Wyett and carried 5-0 on roll call.

IV. REVIEW OF STAFFING AND LEVELS OF SERVICE AT NORTH FIRE-RESCUE STATION

Fire-Rescue Chief Kent Koelz introduced Dr. Randall Wolff, the Medical Director for the Town of Palm Beach. Chief Koelz said the program would include a discussion of priority dispatch, a video presentation, the existing service, consultant (Emergency Services Education and Consulting Group) recommendations, the staff's recommendations, and a question and answer period.

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON AUGUST 12, 2002

Using a three dimensional model, Chief Koelz identified the three fire stations in the Town and using model trucks, demonstrated the logistics of different combinations of service calls the Fire-Rescue Department responds to. Assisted by a power-point demonstration, Chief Koelz explained the vehicle terminology: the medic or rescue unit; the engine/pumper; and the aerial platform truck. He continued, explaining the functions of the vehicles and the type(s) of vehicles located at each of the three Fire-Rescue stations.

Chief Koelz said a consultant had recommended the Town use a Medical Priority Dispatch procedure which assigns the appropriate level of response based on need and provides pre-arrival instructions. Currently, the Town uses priority dispatch utilizing a two tiered system: a graded response (sending the appropriate type and number of persons and vehicles as determined by the seriousness of the call) with pre-arrival instructions. He explained a graded response sends the appropriate type and number of personnel and vehicles as determined by the seriousness of the call and provided examples of incidents where engines, medics, and/or trucks would respond.

Chief Koelz, utilizing the power point presentation and the video, pointed out the priority dispatch system which showed the dispatcher using an index file to match the description to the information provided by the caller. He said the information on these index files is used to assist the caller until the time the dispatched unit arrives.

Responding to questions from Councilman Wyett regarding CPR, Town of Palm Beach Medical Director Dr. Randall Wolff responded that 70 to 80% of people are able to follow CPR instructions over the telephone. Dr. Wolff explained the video presentation showing a simulated serious medical emergency, a cardiac arrest, with a medical response team consisting of three paramedics and three EMT's.

Responding to questions from the Mayor and Town Council regarding trips to local hospitals and time spent off-island, Dr. Wolff responded the time off-island can be an hour, plus or minus fifteen minutes, from the time the call is received until the unit returns to the island. Chief Koelz replied, based on EMS statistics, the average time is seventy-four minutes. He said during January 2002, the Department ran 277 calls—55 of those were multiple calls where two, three or four calls were being run at the same time.

Replying to a question from Councilman McDonald regarding the use of the fourth rescue unit, Chief Koelz replied the Town has four rescue units and four engine companies with two front line medical companies. He said the 13 mile long Town geographical area necessitates down time for some of the units, and one engine company is adequate for the engines when they are down for periodic maintenance; however, two medical units are held in reserve with one reserve unit at the North Fire Station. Under the present system, the officer has the

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON AUGUST 12, 2002

option to put that unit into service depending on the seriousness of the call and for the first five months of 2002, that reserve unit was put into service nine times. He noted that many, many operational issues come into play during the process. Chief Koelz, responding to President Brooks' questions, said the fourth reserve rescue unit is housed in the South Fire Station.

President Brooks questioned the reason for 50% of the rescue units being held in reserve.

Chief Koelz responded staffing is the main reason those units are held in reserve; however, call scheduling plays a part in the process. He said the four rescue units are identical, as far as equipment carried.

Chief Koelz said the Town Consultant, Emergency Services Education & Consulting Group, reported three options at the meeting before the Mayor and Town Council on June 11th:

- I. The flex response from the North Station, at no cost:
With existing personnel, the type of incident would dictate which vehicle. This provides both an Engine and a medic vehicle at the North Fire Station—just three personnel. The existing three personnel would respond with the appropriate vehicle depending on the type of incident. The outcome of this, is the medic unit does arrive first, but there is still a delayed response in the second group of three people who are coming from the center of Town. Two-thirds of the fire protection coverage is lost on the first medical call in the North End.
- II. Moving the central medic unit to the North Station at a cost of \$338,000:
Six personnel would be at the North Station with three personnel at the Central Station on an Engine with no one on the truck. The existing truck at the Central Station would have to be staffed with a driver on three shifts at a cost of \$338,000. The outcome would be the improved response to a serious medical call in the North End, and the Central truck remains available more often; however, the initial response for a serious medical call in the Central area is now delayed. In effect, the delayed response area has been moved from the North station to the Central station, and the Central area has a higher medical call volume than the North area.
- III. Staff a third medic unit at the North Station to equalize the medical response in all areas of the Town by hiring 3 positions at a cost of \$932,000:
The initial response for serious medical calls in the North area improves, and responses are equalized in all areas of the Town with the ladder truck and medic unit remaining available more often at the Central station.

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON AUGUST 12, 2002

Conclusion

Chief Koelz, reviewing the consultants options, said the Staff thought numbers 1 and 2 were not desirable and number 3, staffing a third medic unit, was desirable but costly. He continued that he, Dr. Wolff, and the Fire-Rescue Staff thought there are other ways to accomplish number 3 above that are budgetarily responsible. He proposed the following option containing three steps:

- 1st step: Add one firefighter/paramedic per shift to the North Fire Station that would have four people, on a given day, between the two vehicles. The engine would have two personnel and the medic unit would have two personnel. The cost in FY2003 would be \$260,000 that would cover the additional personnel and a small amount of additional equipment and radio equipment.
- 2nd step: Add one additional firefighter/paramedic per shift to the North Fire Station for a total of three additional personnel. The engine then would have three personnel and the medic unit would have two personnel. Additionally, the proposal would include the hiring of a shift commander for a total of three shift commanders. The additional cost in FY2004 is proposed to be \$550,000.
- 3rd step: Add two additional firefighter/paramedics per shift to the North Fire Station. With those additions the North Fire Station unit would be operational on its own and equal to the other two fire stations in ability to respond to emergency calls. The additional cost in FY2005 is proposed to be \$370,000.

After discussion, **President Pro-Tem Goldblum made a motion to approve Step 1, adding one firefighter/paramedic per shift (4 personnel total) to the North Fire Station, at a cost of \$260,000 in FY2003. Councilman McLendon seconded the motion.**

Town Manager Elwell said the projected revenue from the billing for medical unit transport costs for the first year will exceed the \$260,000 cost of additional personnel. However, the proposed EMS revenue is already included in the proposed FY2003 budget, and the tax impact for the additional \$260,000 cost will be approximately \$36/\$1million of property value. He said he thought it was important for the Town Council to reserve its judgement regarding additional personnel and

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON AUGUST 12, 2002

staffing decisions in future years and to make those decisions in future years.

President Pro-tem Goldblum and Councilman McLendon accepted Councilman Wyett's recommendation, as part of the motion, to have a report on this plan presented to the Mayor and Town Council at the March or April 2003 meeting.

Mayor Smith said she would like to see the figures in April or May regarding the difference of projected and received revenues for medical transport services.

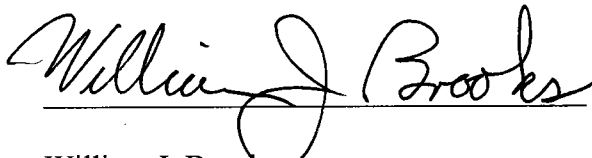
On roll call, the motion passed 5-0.

V. ANY OTHER MATTERS

There were none.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 10:50 a.m.



William J. Brooks
Town Council President



Mary A. Pollitt
Town Clerk

