

FIRE RESCUE BOND
 BLUE RIBBON COMMITTEE MINUTES
 REGULAR MEETING
 City of Fort Lauderdale
 100 North Andrews Avenue
 Commission Chambers
 Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33301
 September 28, 2006

Attendance	Meeting	Cumulative	
Board Members	Attendance	from 01/19/2006	
Thornie Jarrett, Chair	P	P-7	A-0
Dianne Shuler, Vice Chair	P	P-6	A-1
Mary Graham	P	P-7	A-0
Allan A. Kozich	P	P-6	A-1
Patrick McTigue	A	P-6	A-1
Douglas Ruth	P	P-6	A-1
Don Bastedo	P	P-7	A-0
Norman W. Thabit	P	P-6	A-1

Vacant

Staff

Robert Bacic, Battalion Chief
 Albert Carbon, Public Works Director
 Frank Snedaker, Chief City Architect
 Mina Samadi, Engineering Design Manager
 Fernando Blanco, Acting Airport Engineer

Lt. Carter, Fire Union Representative
 Assistant Fire Chief, Jeff Justinak
 Assistant Fire Chief, Stephen Mc Inerney

1. Call to Order/Roll Call

Chairman Jarrett called the September 28, 2006 meeting of the Fire-Rescue Bond Blue Ribbon Committee to order at 6:01 p.m. A quorum was achieved with seven committee members present.

2. Approval of Minutes - August 17, 2006.

Ms. Graham made a motion to approve the minutes of the August 17, 2006 meeting, with the correction provided by Chair Jarrett. Committee member [name unstated] seconded the motion. In a voice vote, all voted in favor. (Motion passed unanimously).

3. Staff Liaison Report

A. ACTIVITIES OVER THE PAST MONTH

Station 53 Bid. Mr. Carbon advised that the temporary fence was up and that the construction trailer was on site. Permits had also been received and the contractor was mobilized and working on the project.

Station 47. Mr. Carbon advised that on September 19, the Commission awarded the bid in the amount of \$3.8 million to Padula & Wadsworth Construction.

Mr. Thabit commented that the budget for this station was documented at \$3.94 million. Mr. Carbon advised that the total project budget was actually \$4 million but construction cost \$3.5 million.

Station 29. Mr. Carbon advised that the DRC review was completed and that the Planning and Zoning review was scheduled for mid-October. Final plans would be completed by January, 2007. He added that a community meeting was scheduled for October 11 at the George English Recreational Center from 6-8 p.m. Mr. Carbon indicated staff would invite all commissioners accordingly.

Vice-Chair Shuler advised she would be out of town at a business conference on this date.

Regarding Station 53, Ms. Graham asked when the groundbreaking ceremony was scheduled. Mr. Carbon advised that this was not yet scheduled. He added that the contractor had just received final permits, which had been delayed due to FAA issues. He stated that the City had given the contractor its notice to proceed. He agreed to provide the Committee with an approved construction schedule.

Regarding Station 47, Mr. Thabit asked when the groundbreaking ceremony was scheduled. Mr. Carbon advised that once the bid documents returned, a groundbreaking ceremony would be scheduled. Ms. Graham asked if the permit was ready to be picked up. Mr. Carbon explained that the Planning and Zoning department did not issue the permit as the plat was not recorded by the county.

Regarding Station 29, Mr. Ruth asked how much of the east elevation showed above the building in front. Mr. Snedaker stated that only the top third of the building

would be visible. Mr. Carbon advised that the community meeting would be held before going to Planning and Zoning.

Regarding Station 53, Mr. Bastedo asked who removed all the dirt at the site. Mr. Carbon explained that West Construction was responsible for this. He added that this cost was factored into the bid.

Station 54. Mr. Carbon advised that the fire department was conducting floor plan reviews. Also, the City was seeking resolution on the vacation of the alley and 10 feet of right-of-way on NE 32 Avenue. He stated that staff was working with the planning department to finalize site design. Staff was also working with consultants on structural, electrical and mechanical issues.

Station 3. Mr. Carbon advised that the site layout and floor plan had been reviewed and approved by the fire department. He added that Planning and Zoning had started the land use amendment process, which would take about 6-9 months.

Station 49. Mr. Carbon advised that Chief Bacic and Ms. Samadi had toured the station to review the floor layout. He added that he would provide the Committee with the schedule for design and development at the next meeting.

Station 46. Mr. Carbon advised that staff was trying to identify sites for a temporary station.

Station 8. Mr. Carbon advised that staff had received appraisals for a property in Sunrise. He added that an appraisal for the 9th Street and 3rd Avenue location was due earlier that day, but he had not confirmed whether it was received.

Station 13. Mr. Carbon advised that the City Manager's office had contracted the state representative to expedite the state's decision to grant additional land. He added that the state had not yet shared results of the biological survey conducted.

Station 35. Mr. Carbon advised that the joint venture with the City of Oakland Park was not an option for this station. Staff was therefore searching for alternatives via using more right-of-way at the existing site. Mr. Carbon advised that the deal with Holy Cross Hospital was not viable.

Vice-Chair Shuler asked about the status of the temporary station. Mr. Carbon advised that the Purchasing Department had the specifications. He stated that Station 46 had been identified as the first station in need of a temporary station.

Regarding Station 53, Mr. Thabit asked how much this station had been awarded. Mr. Carbon stated \$6.8 million. Mr. Thabit asked how much of this amount had come from bond funds. Mr. Carbon indicated he would provide the breakdown between the fire bond and airport contributions.

Mr. Ruth commented that Station 35 was next to the Lutheran Church. He advised that the Church was looking for a larger site. He suggested contacting them as their property might eventually become available.

4. Member Discussion

REPORT TO THE CITY COMMISSION

Chair Jarrett wanted this discussion to center on the Committee's report to the City Commission. He referred to the original bond resolution passed by the City Commission. He advised that the staff report made by the fire rescue department was attached as Exhibit A. He indicated that each Committee member had a copy of this. He pointed out that this was the only document attached to the bond that clearly stated what would be done and how much would be spent. He spoke of ongoing concerns about design/engineering fees. He felt the Committee had ignored clear stipulations in the report as to how much these fees should be.

Chair Jarrett also distributed a copy of the breakdown of the \$40 million which included line items not reflected in Exhibit A/Schedule of Costs. He felt the Committee was trying to build more than it could afford. He indicated that according to Exhibit A, Station 47 was supposed to cost \$3.76 million for total design, construction and construction management; however, the City had recently accepted the bid at \$3.8 million for construction only; design and construction management is about \$700K. He pointed out inconsistencies in actual square footage and design costs that went above the stipulations in the Schedule of Costs. Chair Jarrett felt the Committee should "get a grip" and decide where it was going. He read aloud Section 2 of the resolution that created the Committee. He felt that in order to fulfill its obligation to the City, the Commission, the fire department and the union, the Committee needed to come up with more radical solutions to make everything work. He welcomed suggestions from members. He felt the fire department could also contribute some solutions that might involve scaling back in some areas.

Vice-Chair Shuler asked Mr. Carbon what would happen if the Committee did not adhere to the cost allocations outlined on Exhibit A. Mr. Carbon stated that the City Attorney's office would have to address this. He stated that the consequence of not meeting stipulations was running out of money.

Mr. Thabit asked why Station 47 had been designed at 15,000 square feet when the bond clearly stipulated 12,000 square feet. Chair Jarrett felt the Committee was under the impression that it had plenty of money to build whatever it needed. He recalled that the Committee anticipated getting land for two stations for free. Mr. Thabit added that the growing population needed to be considered where station size was concerned. He felt more funds might be needed to complete everything scheduled when the bond resolution had passed.

Mr. Ruth commented that the Committee had not anticipated the exorbitant rise in real estate prices. He questioned whether there was any way to project how far ahead the Committee was on projects already started.

Mr. Thabit suggested asking Public Works to provide a revised estimate based on square footage and present a schedule for the Committee. He agreed that the Committee could tighten its belts where bid prices were concerned.

Vice-Chair Shuler asked Mr. Thabit if he was referring to current square footage on the schedule or based on what was planned by Public Works for each station. Mr. Thabit stated there were only two sets of square footage numbers – one for satellite and one for battalion stations.

Chair Jarrett wanted to move forward on the southeast station. He stated that there was \$25 million in the contingency fund. He felt part of the Committee's report should include a request for additional money to make up the difference in order to purchase the land needed. Regarding square footage of stations, Chair Jarrett felt the Committee was bound by the Exhibit A document until the Commission changed it. He thought the union should conduct a survey to its members to ascertain what areas they felt they could do without. Chair Jarrett stressed that costs had to be pared down without sacrificing quality.

Mr. Ruth agreed that the Committee needed to purchase a site for the southeast station now. He was concerned that prices would not go down on commercial property.

Chair Jarrett wanted to pursue every avenue to find out if there were alternatives before going to the Commission with a request for additional funds.

Don Bastedo felt the Committee should analyze Exhibit A to see how realistic it was.

Ms. Graham did not feel the Committee should ask for more money without having it allocated for specific usage. She pointed out that every construction job had contingency funds allocated. She stated that progress could only be evaluated when a station finally came on line with a certificate of occupancy. She pointed out that in the meantime, costs escalated monthly and resulted in ongoing change order requests. She was not in favor of reducing square footage or width of bays to cut costs. She stated that the Committee could instruct and coordinate with the architect in order to pare down costs in other areas.

Mr. Thabit pointed out that the Committee was bidding out these projects and getting the best prices the market offered. He was not sure that the higher costs were the fault of the Committee.

Chair Jarrett suggested pulling some items out and requesting that the Commission approve purchasing these beyond the bond issue.

Mr. Kozich was not in favor of the City buying equipment for buildings as it would be responsible for any problems with equipment. He wanted caution and recommended optimizing work through value engineering.

Chair Jarrett stressed that he did not want to get halfway through these projects and run out of money.

Vice-Chair Shuler felt going to the Commission to request land for the southeast station would go a long way and help keep the other stations on schedule.

Mr. Carbon felt it was wise to go back to the basics of the bond issue. He spoke of the high inflation rate in Florida and felt the Committee was addressing the right issues.

Mr. Thabit felt the differentials versus the bid prices should be included in the Committee's report to the Commission with a note stating "until such time as we know what the offers are, additional funding would have to be met." He was not in favor of cutting back on station sizes in light of future population needs. He pointed out that projections first outlined in Exhibit A were cost estimates and not finite numbers. He felt the Committee should carefully lay out numbers for Stations 47 and 53 in narrative form. He suggested including a note that the southeast station land had not been purchased. He further suggested including a recommendation for the Commission to budget appropriately for additional increases annually.

Mr. Thabit asked Mr. Carbon about the 2007 fiscal year budget. Mr. Carbon advised that general fund for 2007 was a total of \$5.7 million. He added that this went into the capital improvements project list. Mr. Carbon advised that the fire bond projects would be listed as a separate funding path in the capital improvements fund.

Regarding the southeast station, Ms. Graham voiced her frustration about the site selection process. She questioned how the Committee could ask for the money without identifying a site yet. Chair Jarrett pointed out that if the Committee did not request funds on this report it would have to wait a year to ask again.

To recap the discussion, Chair Jarrett asked whether the Committee agreed to: 1) ask for proceeds from the Sunrise property sale to be added to the fund; 2) encourage this sale or a trade to take place; 3) ask for money for the southeast station.

Mr. Thabit agreed with these steps and wanted to ask staff and the fire department to determine whether anything could be done to help with construction costs for these stations.

Mr. Thabit made a motion to have staff come back at the November meeting with input from the firefighters and the union, to determine if there was any way to reduce square footage on stations that were not yet planned or built. Vice-Chair Shuler seconded the motion.

Chair Jarrett felt the Committee should acknowledge that it would be awkward to go back to the Commission requesting more funds without reviewing all other alternatives.

A committee member commented that cutting down station sizes would not necessarily result in the cost savings expected in the overall scope of the project. He also pointed out that if another storm came next year, inflation would rise enormously again. He agreed that the Commission should be informed of the current inflation problem which caused the numbers to be considerably off.

Vice-Chair Shuler asked whether the Committee should tell the Commission that staff was directed to examine other ways to save money.

In a voice vote, all voted in favor. (Motion passed unanimously)

NEIGHBORHOOD OUTREACH

Chair Jarrett stated that where Station 29 was concerned, some members of the community wanted a contemporary façade. He commented that a contemporary façade could be done for \$200-\$300,000 less than the current design. He thought it was a mistake to ignore the community's input on this, especially since it cost less money. Chair Jarrett was in favor of listening to more input from the neighborhood. He felt it would be easier to go back to the same voters for more money if the need arose. Ms. Graham agreed that the budget was more important than subjective aesthetic opinions. Chair Jarrett wanted to encourage neighborhood input as this was promised to the voters. Mr. Bastedo recalled that he had asked for different designs to be provided to the community.

Chair Jarrett advised that after these comments were incorporated into Ms. Graham's draft, the revised report would go to Gerri, Mr. Carbon's secretary. He requested that the second draft be finalized by the October 19 meeting. Thereafter, the report would be submitted to the Commission in November.

Mr. Ruth stressed the need to push for appraisals to be done quickly. Mr. Carbon explained zoning issues that made the process difficult.

A committee member supported Chair Jarrett's position on neighborhood outreach as long as it did not slow down the process.

Mr. Thabit made a motion to have Ms. Graham make corrections to the draft report submitted, and to have that this report go to the Public Works Director to disseminate to all members for final approval at the next meeting. [name unstated] seconded the motion.

Chair Jarrett offered the following amendment to the motion: "that the Chair be given permission to write a conclusion after receiving the revised report." Mr. Thabit agreed to this amendment.

Mr. Thabit amended the motion to state that "if anyone had additional comments to be added to the report, that these be submitted to the Public Works Director for distribution to the members for approval at the next meeting."

In a voice vote, all voted in favor. (Motion passed unanimously)

Mr. Thabit asked if Mr. Carbon could provide a current cost projection outline for the fiscal year 2007. Mr. Carbon advised he would provide this information via email.

Ms. Graham asked whether the firefighters were able to get the Committee's minutes online yet. She also asked when the new fire chief would be selected. Chief Bacic advised that no decision had yet been made.

Chair Jarrett asked whether it was possible to discuss the issues concerning the Station 46 move at the next meeting.

Chair Jarrett asked for comments from the Chief.

Chief McInerney, Acting Fire Chief, stated he wholeheartedly agreed with all comments made earlier and voiced his desire to work with the Committee on the stations. He pointed out that Station 47 was originally discussed as a satellite station. However, the annexation in Riverland and Rock Island areas allowed for Station 47 to reach that area better. He stated that a battalion-sized station would actually be needed for the future. He added that the department was trying to address the needs of reserve trucks sitting outside and 17 units that needed housing.

Lt. Carter, union representative, commented that he had seen spending mistakes made over the years. He was in favor of building quality projects from the beginning to avoid such mistakes. Lt. Carter commended the Committee on its work.

5. Adjournment. Next Regular Meeting: **OCTOBER 19, 2006**

Mr. Thabit made a motion to adjourn. [Name unstated] seconded the motion. In a voice vote, all voted in favor. There being no further business to come before this Board, the meeting was adjourned at 8:06 p.m.