

**FIRE-RESCUE BOND
BLUE RIBBON COMMITTEE MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING**

City of Fort Lauderdale
100 North Andrews Avenue
8th Floor Conference Room
Fort Lauderdale, Florida, 33301
June 21, 2007

Board Member	Attendance	Cumulative Attendance	
		P	A
Don Bastedo	P	6	0
Mary Graham	P	6	0
Thornie Jarrett, Chair	P	6	0
Steve Kirsch	P	5	1
Allan Kozich	P	6	0
Patrick McTigue	P	5	1
Douglas Ruth	P	6	0
Dianne Shuler, Vice Chair	P	4	2
Norman Thabit	P	6	0

Staff

Albert Carbon, director, Public Works Department
Mina Samadi, Engineering Design Manager
Frank Snedaker, Chief City Architect
Robert Bacic, Battalion Chief
Alexandra Woolweaver
John Herbst, City auditor
Jamie Opperlee, Recording Clerk

1. Call to Order/Roll Call

Chairman Jarrett called the June 21, 2007 meeting of the Fire-Rescue Bond Blue Ribbon Committee to order at 6:05 p.m. A quorum was achieved with nine Committee members present.

2. Approval of Minutes: May 17, 2007

Member Ruth noted a typographical error on page two, and Ms. Shuler noted that under Call to Order/Roll Call, it should state there were eight members present, not nine.

Motion made by Member Kozich, seconded by Member Graham, to approve the minutes of the May 17, 2007 meeting. Upon voice vote, motion passed unanimously.

3. Staff Liaison Report

Mr. Carbon invited members' comments on stations 47 and 53 construction reports.

Station 53:

Member Ruth asked if his question regarding the 45-degree roof curbing issue had been answered. Ms. Samadi said this was between the architect and the contractor, and they would decide who was financially responsible between them. She reported that the shop drawings were being reviewed now.

Member Graham asked if the building was dried in so the drywall should be installed. She was concerned about wind-driven rain entering the building and creating a mold problem.

Member Graham suggested that the information and dates for the subcontractor lien releases be included in the reports.

Member Graham asked why there was such a discrepancy, from \$8,000 to \$114,000, for the underground fuel tank fee installation on page four. Mr. Carbon said the City's figure was \$8,000 and the contractor's figure was \$114,000 and the City would not agree to pay \$114,000.

Member Graham wondered if the project manager who authored the report had been on the project from the beginning; Mr. Snedaker said she had been.

Member Graham asked Chief Bacic how close they were to executing the A/V system contract, since the drywall should not be installed until after the A/V system was installed. Chief Bacic said the last proposal contained several items they neither needed nor wanted, and West Construction had been told to remove these items and provide a proper proposal, which they had not yet provided.

Member Graham referred to page two of the report, which stated the window frames were not flush, and asked if a water test had been included in the window specifications. Mr. Carbon said it was the contractor's responsibility to ensure the windows met the specifications.

Member Graham was concerned that the report was not specific regarding prevention of water intrusion. Chief Bacic reported that he had visited the previous day, and every window was covered with plastic.

Member Graham noted that the contract with URS was \$900,000, and wondered if a more detailed report was provided to the City. She pointed out that the reports would need to stand up to scrutiny in any shoddy work or delay claims. Member Kozich said there was, in fact, an enormous amount of documentation for the projects.

Chairman Jarrett asked what other documents URS furnished to the City. Mr. Carbon stated URS provided or performed: daily verbal reports, weekly written reports, daily on-site inspections, invoice review, weekly construction meetings, construction drawing and as-built checking, and many other services.

Station 47:

Member Thabit asked if change order number three had been approved; Mr. Carbon said it had not been generated as yet. He thought it would go through next month.

Mr. Carbon confirmed for Chairman Jarrett that the project was on schedule for completion in January.

Member Thabit asked if they knew the arbitrage amount on the interest earnings yet. Mr. Carbon said the City treasurer had promised to provide this information. At the end of September, the amount was 1.2%.

Station 29:

Mr. Carbon reported that the remediation plan has been approved by the County, and construction drawings had received the County DRP stamp.

Mr. Carbon informed Chairman Jarrett they hoped to bid it in August and make a recommendation in September.

Station 49:

Mr. Carbon said the item had been pulled from the Commission meeting the previous Tuesday due to improper notification of a condominium association. They were working with Valerie Bohlander and other permitting agencies to see if the plans could be reviewed while this was going through the City Commission. On July 18, it would go back to the Planning and Zoning Board with the proper notification. Mr. Carbon noted that there had been no objections raised at their presentations.

Ms. Shuler asked if the temporary accommodations had been arranged. Mr. Carbon said they had not been able to locate the space as yet.

Chairman Jarrett asked if they were still at 4.7 million on the estimate. Mr. Carbon stated they were, and Ms. Samadi thought it could go out to bid in November.

Station 54:

Mr. Carbon said the same notification error had occurred here, so they would re-notice the neighboring properties as they had for station 49. Ms. Samadi explained the notification procedure to Member Graham.

Member Graham requested a printed set of the PGAL drawings for their July meeting.

Station 3:

Mr. Carbon reported that the Land Use Amendment was sent to the County Commission on June 26 and would go to the City Commission in July. They had DRC comments and after the July Commission meeting, it would go to site plan review.

Station 46:

Mr. Carbon referred to the postcard announcing the community meeting for the Station 46 plans, scheduled for June 28.

Member Shuler asked how many public hearings were held for each station project. Mr. Carbon explained that there would be two public hearings, and then they must go through the land use amendment, as they were for Station 3. This would necessitate several public meetings at the City and County level, and would take approximately six months.

Member Graham asked when they anticipated being able to start drawing something that had been approved. Mr. Carbon said once they had the land use amendment through the first stage, Mr. Snedaker and the consultants would begin; he hoped this would be in January.

Station 8:

Mr. Carbon reported there had been no movement by Broward Hospital.

Member Shuler asked if they had confirmed that this had been zoned for hospital; Mr. Carbon said the eastern side was residential and the western side was commercial.

Station 13:

Mr. Carbon referred to an article in USA Today regarding Antioch College indicating it was ultimately not going away. Mr. Carbon said unfortunately, the State wanted them to perform improvements they could not afford. They had decided to build the station where it was, and chief Bacic had been seeking temporary facilities.

Mr. Carbon said the site could accommodate a battalion station, but they could not build the new station and keep the existing station operational. Chairman Jarrett said they still had the issue of the property's depth being insufficient to park apparatus on the apron. Ms. Samadi thought there was sufficient room to park the trucks in the front of the building. Mr. Carbon said they had no choice; they had even pursued this through their state representatives and lobbyists. Mr. Snedaker said there would be room to park the vehicles in the rear.

Chairman Jarrett requested a preliminary site drawing with dimension for the front and rear access for their next meeting. He reminded other Committee members that concerns had originally been raised about access safety.

Station 35:

Mr. Carbon reported that he and Ms. Samadi had a “very pleasant” conversation with Pastor Dan, who said he was willing to accommodate the station’s future parking. Mr. Carbon thought they would restrict their plan to a two or three-story station with covered parking.

Ms. Samadi explained to Chairman Jarrett that 30 spaces were required and they had 19 [for 13 personnel].

Chairman Jarrett asked if secure parking was included in firefighters’ contracts; Chief Bacic said this had been past practice, but he did not believe it was in the current contract. This had stemmed from vehicles being broken into. Chief Bacic explained that when it had been in the contract, secure parking had been required for on-duty personnel; during shift changes, the gates were open.

4. Member Discussion Items

Chairman Jarrett said he had asked Assistant City Attorney Sharon Miller if information could be distributed among Committee members between their meetings. She had informed him that one member was permitted to send email to other Committee members, provided that it was sent as information only, that it was emailed to *all* Committee members, and that it was emailed to Mr. Carbon as well. Members were *not* permitted to ask each other questions, send comments or replies to the email, or to refer to statements made by another member at a meeting.

Chairman Jarrett said this would allow Member Graham to email her updated spreadsheet to Committee members between meetings. This would also allow members to send articles to each other’s as email attachments.

Chairman Jarrett suggested that Member Graham add an “estimated cost” and “construction start date” columns to the spreadsheet. Mr. Herbst suggested adding “original cost” and “current estimate” to the report.

Member Thabit asked that a report outlining fire station costs and schedules be supplied for their July meeting for discussion and comment.

Member Thabit said they had been discussing the southeast station for a year, and they must act to acquire property because land would only get more expensive the longer they waited.

Mr. Carbon explained that the real estate office pulled listings every week for the area they were considering, in search of appropriate property. When developers came in, the Planning Department approached them as well.

Member Thabit was insistent that City staff present the Committee with properties that met the requirements. Member Graham noted the extensive development taking place in the southeast area, and suggested that rather than wait for property to be put on the market, someone should drive the neighborhood to seek property. Mr. Carbon stated the boundaries of the area in which they were seeking the property: The New River, 17th Street, the railroad and US 1.

Member McTigue offered to drive the area and make some phone calls. Mr. Carbon said the Fire department and the real estate office had already done this.

Member Thabit wanted staff to bring some potential sites with purchase price estimates to their next meeting. Member McTigue asked about the site on 3rd. Mr. Carbon said this was a great site, but it was over \$4 million. Chairman Jarrett said the amount for this property in the bond was \$1.2 - \$1.4 million.

Chairman Jarrett reminded Committee members that they had been charged with building 10 fire stations with \$40 million, but it was clear that there was not sufficient funding to complete the task. Chairman Jarrett said they had asked City staff, the Fire Department and the union for suggestions to reduce costs, but the union had not responded with any ideas. He believed City staff and the Fire Department had submitted some ideas.

Chairman Jarrett wanted all parties to address this problem. He pointed out that their report would come out in October, and he wanted to include positive suggestions for cost reductions and for additional funding. He felt it would be difficult to request more funds from taxpayers. Considering the proposed changes in property taxes, Chairman Jarrett also felt they should not expect that the City Commission could provide additional funds.

Member Thabit agreed that they could include the updated figures in their yearly report, and agreed that there were insufficient funds to complete the projects, and additional funding must be identified. He said they would have to let the City Commission and Finance Department find a way to provide the additional funds.

Member Kozich agreed they must "bite the bullet," acknowledging that costs would only escalate the longer they waited. He felt that as of now, they would be unable to complete at least two stations.

Member Graham said the spreadsheet she would send out prior to their next meeting would allow them to see the soft costs. She said this was one reason she had brought up URS's being paid \$900,000 for oversight on two stations. Member Graham noted this was a tremendous amount of money, and reminded the Committee that they had

not yet factored in oversight for the other eight stations. Member Graham thought that any assessment of their fund shortage should include soft costs as well as hard costs.

Chairman Jarrett felt they were \$20 million short on a \$40 million bond, indicating they were “way out of line.” Member McTigue suggested that they “put it in the paper that the Fire Bond Board warns of cost overruns.”

Regarding the funding shortfalls, Mr. Herbst advised the Committee, the sooner you get that out, the more palatable it’s going to be.” If it was possible that they would be unable to complete stations, he said they should “start that dialog early.” He thought coming up with an additional \$20 million would be a “virtual impossibility.”

Member Thabit thought they must give the City Commission ample notice that they must either develop a financing plan to support the additional costs of completing the projects, or make a decision regarding which stations would have to be eliminated.

Acknowledging that they may be forced to consider not building some of the stations, Member Shuler asked, “just to create dialog, who can we go to for staff to start looking at what stations we could possibly live without?” She asked how they had decided upon the 10 site locations. Chief Bacic said the City and Fire Department had made these determinations. Member Shuler asked about legal ramifications in the event they could not complete 10 stations with the bond issue money. Mr. Herbst said there would be no legal issue concerning the bond as long as the funds were not diverted to some other use.

Member Graham said, “This is bait and switch, in my opinion, and there is absolutely no reason to even think, not even three years past the bond passing the voter referendum, to even think about eliminating stations because somebody’s going to be left not getting what they voted for.” She felt this idea was unacceptable, and “the money has to be found some other way.” Member Graham wanted a legal opinion from the City Attorney regarding the legal ramifications of not building all 10 stations, and wanted to determine ways to cut soft costs.

Member Shuler stated it was possible they would be forced to consider not completing all 10 stations, and Chairman Jarrett said, “You have to sometimes show the worst scenario in order to get everyone’s attention.”

Member Kozich said the City would not close any stations because the fire insurance rating would rise; all stations would remain running, some would “not be as nice as the other ones.”

Member Graham thought this would “open up a door for the County to try to take over the fire stuff.” She did not want this to happen, and suggested they include “emphatic language in the report” in order to “find a way to get their attention at the City Commission and City Manager’s level and figure out a way to do it.”

Chairman Jarrett reiterated that they had requested the following from City staff: an updated construction schedule and cost estimates; a site plan for Station 13, a set of the PGAL drawings, and one set of drawings for Station 3.

5. Adjournment

With no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 8:11 p.m.

Next regular meeting: July 19, 2007

Attachments:

Financial reports

Minutes: May 17, 2007

Construction monthly reports