

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

City of Fort Lauderdale
100 North Andrews Avenue
8th Floor Conference Room
Fort Lauderdale, Florida, 33301
May 21, 2009 - 6:00 p.m.

Board Member	Attendance	1/2009 through 12/2009 Cumulative Attendance*	
		P	A
Thornie Jarrett, Chair	P	4	0
Frank Anderson	P	1	0
Don Bastedo	P	3	1
Steve Kirsch	P	4	0
Allan Kozich	A	3	1
Patrick McTigue	A	3	1
June Page	P	4	0
Douglas Ruth	P	4	0

*Note: the Committee did not meet in January due to lack of a quorum

As of this date, there are eight appointed members to the Committee. Therefore, five constitutes a quorum.

Staff

Chantal Botting, Battalion Division Chief
Frank Snedaker, City Architect
Mark Friedman, City Construction Manager
Albert Carbon, Director Public Works Department
J. Opperlee, ProtoType Services Recording Clerk

Communications To City Commission

- The Fire Bond Committee recommends a feasibility study be completed as recommended in their report dated May 8, 2009

1. Call to Order/Roll Call

Chair Jarrett called the meeting of the Fire-Rescue Bond Blue Ribbon Committee to order at 6:01 p.m.

2. Approval of Minutes: April 2009

Motion made by Mr. Kirsch, seconded by Mr. Ruth, to approve the minutes of the Board's April 2009 meeting. In a voice vote, motion passed unanimously.

3. Welcome New Member

New member Frank Anderson introduced himself and said he had been visiting the area since 1991 working as an architect for Wayne Huizenga. He had moved here three years ago to be Wayne Huizenga's project manager. The other Board members introduced themselves in turn.

4. Staff Liaison Report

Mr. Carbon stated the City Commission had requested the Board include bullet point items under "Communications to the City Commission" at the beginning of their minutes for the Commission to review.

Station 29

Mr. Ruth thought the interior stud walls had been pre-built and transported to the site, but Mr. Snedaker explained that some fabrication may have taken place outside, but normally the walls were constructed in place. Mr. Friedman speculated that the contractor might have fabricated some walls at his warehouse in Pompano Beach.

Mr. Friedman remarked that Station 29 was "going great guns;" they had essentially finished the shell and were working on the interior framing and electrical. He was very pleased with the contractor, DiPompeo Construction.

Station 49

Mr. Friedman announced that the old station had been demolished and they would soon prepare the site for the new station. The temporary station was up and running.

Station 3

Mr. Carbon stated that DiPompeo's construction had just begun. Mr. Friedman explained the trees on site had been cleared in preparation for construction and the trailer would be moved on site the following day. He pointed out that the City Arborist had been on site regarding the tree removal.

Station 35

Mr. Carbon explained to Mr. Anderson the property swap process the City was pursuing with the Shepherd of the Coast Church. The public meeting was tentatively set for June 22 at Shepherd of the Coast Church.

Mr. Carbon informed Mr. Anderson that per State statute, public buildings must now be LEED certified. Mr. Snedaker confirmed the City intended to achieve LEED certification, but not to seek silver or gold status.

Station 46

Mr. Carbon said they were scheduled next week for the second hearing at the County Planning Council. After that, the project would go to the County Commission for approval.

Mr. Snedaker said there had been a question whether the zoning would need to be changed with the land use, which would trigger parks preservation issues. This was not the case, since Mills Pond Park was zoned P, which allowed a fire station to be built there. Mr. Carbon stated they were obtaining a land use amendment to change from Open Space to Community Facility but they need not change the zoning in order to build the station.

Station 13

Mr. Carbon said the State had informed him that by the end of this week, a letter would be sent to Antioch College, which was back in business.

Station 54

Mr. Carbon stated they were still trying to negotiate a land swap with a private developer who was "making the rounds through City Hall" regarding his proposal for a boat storage facility /Publix. The developer wanted a guarantee that his project would be permitted before he would consent to a land swap, but Mr. Carbon noted that there could be no guarantee until the building permit was issued, and this would not allow the City sufficient time to move the existing station.

Mr. Bastedo felt they had a nice piece of property at the current location; Mr. Carbon reminded him it was not big enough for the new station. Mr. Snedaker explained that at the current location, there was nowhere to put a temporary station.

Station 8

Mr. Carbon said they were still trying to find property for this new station.

5. Member Discussion Items

Fire Station Priorities

Ms. Page asked which stations were in the worst shape. Mr. Snedaker felt 46 was the worst, followed by 35, 54 and 13. Chief Botting agreed with this assessment. Chair Jarrett said the Board had asked Chief Botting for the Fire Department's order of priority; she explained the Fire Chief had yet to address this and was currently out of town. Chief Botting stated the Fire Chief was still evaluating whether Station 53 would be the permanent Battalion office.

The Board's Report to the City Commission

Chair Jarrett referred to a copy of the report that had been provided to the commissioners and explained that the only thing that had changed since the Board discussed it was the removal of decimal points from the square footage.

Ms. Page was concerned that the Board had not approved the final version of the report. Chair Jarrett assured her that nothing had changed from the Board's last discussion, but in the future, the final version would be presented for Board members to review prior to its submission to the City Commission.

Chair Jarrett said Commissioner Roberts had sent an email to the other commissioners and the Mayor stating his support for the report. Chair Jarrett had not heard from the other commissioners. He was awaiting an invitation from the City Commission to attend a conference meeting to answer any questions they had.

Ms. Page felt they should explore additional funding sources for Station 8. She acknowledged that most Board members felt this station was most necessary, but they did not have sufficient money left in the bond fund.

Mr. Carbon stated the Fire Department did service Rio Vista, and Chief Botting agreed that they serviced all incorporated areas of the City. Mr. Carbon said the Fire Department wanted a station built in that area to help reduce response times. Chief Eddy had stated he wanted the existing stations rebuilt before building the new station. Mr. Carbon explained that the City had purchased the property at 815 Sunrise Boulevard as a site to relocate Station 29 before the Fire Bond had been approved.

This Board and the neighborhood had agreed that Station 29 should be rebuilt in its existing location. The Sunrise property could be sold at the discretion of the City Commission, and the funds added to the City's capital improvement program funds or to the Fire Bond. Chair Jarrett said the Board had recommended that the money be put into the Fire Bond.

Mr. Ruth felt that if response times for a station's location were good, the station should be rebuilt in its current location. Chair Jarrett remarked that there were areas in the northwest that had bad response times, but the areas with bad response times in Rio Vista affected more residents.

Feasibility Study

Chair Jarrett wanted to encourage the City Commission to read the Board's report and also wanted to offer to answer any questions the Commission had.

Ms. Page suggested they tell the City Commission that they wanted a feasibility study. Mr. Anderson felt they were waiting for the Fire Department to state their priorities for the stations. Chair Jarrett explained that the Board had operated under three Fire Chiefs, and each had expressed a different opinion regarding the construction of the stations.

Chair Jarrett stated the Board was responsible to advise the City Commission whether the Bond Funds were being properly spent. The last page of their report specifically stated how big the fire stations were supposed to be. The second Fire Chief had enlarged the size of the stations and the two that were complete were larger than what the bond language described. The remaining stations had later been reduced back down to their original size, but they were now building stations smaller than the bond language specified.

Chair Jarrett said the main reason they wanted a feasibility study was because "if we're going to shortchange the citizens of what they voted for, we need to have something to say, 'this is why we're doing this, this is legitimate, this is not just a knee-jerk exercise because...we spent the money wrong at the beginning, we don't have money to finish and so this is what we're doing.'" Chair Jarrett said it appeared that even with the smaller stations, they would not have sufficient money to finish, and they must explain this to the citizens. He believed this indicated the need for a feasibility study from an outside consultant.

Ms. Page suggested their communication to the City Commission state the feasibility study should be done to determine the appropriate size of the stations and the order in which they should be built because there was a lack of funds.

Mr. Anderson felt they should trust the current Fire Chief to advise the City where the money would be best spent. Chief Botting acknowledged that many variables had changed since the City had begun the fire station project, and they should give Chief Eddy the opportunity to provide his feedback. Chair Jarrett did not believe the Fire Department should make the decisions regarding the fire stations' construction; this should be determined by consultants.

Mr. Ruth stated the size of the stations had been reduced according to the money left in the budget and he did not feel this was the proper way to determine the proper size. He thought Chief Eddy had determined the square footage of the stations based on the remaining funds. Mr. Snedaker explained that they had reduced the square footage by reducing the size of some public spaces and by reconfiguring other areas of the stations; they had not reduced the number of firefighters or pieces of equipment, which would have affected the efficiency of the station operation.

Mr. Anderson stated he was "not a big fan of feasibility studies" and noted, "The City of Fort Lauderdale has numerous studies after numerous studies that get put on the shelf and it seems like it's money not well spent." Mr. Anderson said they had reached a problem with the budget and the Fire Department had determined it would be best to work on the existing facilities rather than to build a new Station 8. Mr. Anderson felt the Board was more concerned with response times and future growth and they should ask the Fire Department to explain where they anticipated growth; this could lead to a decision to build Station 8 rather than renovating other stations.

Chair Jarrett stated this issue would not have come up if the City were building the stations according to the language in the Fire Bond. Since the Board was charged with oversight of the bond funds, there must be justification for reducing the size of the stations.

Chair Jarrett remembered the Board had recommended that instead of spending \$95,000 two years ago on an audit, this money should have been spent on a feasibility study because the audit was "asking questions that weren't solving the problems that were facing us."

Mr. Anderson suggested the Board wanted to inform the City Commission that they desired the feasibility study to confirm the Fire Chief's direction. Chair Jarrett said they wanted it to provide guidelines, not to confirm or deny any other opinion.

Chief Botting reminded the Board that there was extra room in the stations she had seen to anticipate future growth. Chair Jarrett said the Board had been told that the stations had an extra bunkroom to accommodate the fourth crewmember on a company, but there was no accommodation for an additional company. The original fire stations had accommodations for an entire additional company. Mr. Snedaker clarified that there were extra bays, but not additional bunkrooms in the original program. In some cases, the number of apparatus bays had been reduced on the advice of the current Chief. The previous Chief had thought these additional bays could be used to store reserve equipment. Mr. Snedaker said they were designing the stations that had sufficient land to accommodate an additional bay in the future, when the need arose and funds were available.

The Board decided to include their recommendation for a feasibility study in their communication to the City Commission, but Mr. Anderson did not agree.

6. Adjournment

With no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Next regular meeting: June 18, 2009

Attachments:

- Financial Report
- Minutes – April 2009
- Fire Station Monthly Reports
- Program schedule

[Minutes prepared by J. Opperlee, Prototype, Inc.]