

**FIRE-RESCUE FACILITIES BOND ISSUE
BLUE RIBBON COMMITTEE MINUTES
SPECIAL MEETING
Fort Lauderdale Executive Airport
Administration Building
6000 NW 21st Avenue
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33309
July 1, 2010 6:00 pm**

Committee Member	Attendance
June Page, Chair	P
Steve Kirsch, Vice Chair	P
Frank Anderson	P
Nadine Hankerson	A
Thornie Jarrett	P
Allan Kozich [6:10]	P
Patrick McTigue	P
Sam Monroe	A
Frederick Nesbitt	P
Douglas Ruth	P

There are currently ten appointed members to the Committee. Therefore, six members present constitute a quorum.

Staff

Albert Carbon, Public Works Director
Mark Friedman, Construction Manager
Chantal Botting, Battalion Chief
Jeffrey Justinak, Acting Fire Chief
Frank Snedaker, City Architect
J. Scott Bayne, IAFF Union President
J. Opperlee, ProtoType Inc. recording clerk

Guests

Kent Greene, ESCI
Ken Newell, ESCI

Communications to the City Commission

By unanimous voice vote, the Committee recommends to the City Commission that any future proposals for the Swimming Hall of Fame include a 7,000 square foot Ocean Rescue facility.

1. Call to Order/Roll Call

Chair Page called the meeting of the Fire-Rescue Bond Blue Ribbon Committee to order at 6:02 p.m.

2. Discuss Feasibility Study

Mr. Ken Newell, ESCI, provided an overview of the Study. He stated they had divided the report into three division: methodology, goals, objectives and processes; facilities location study and station size and operational capacities. Mr. Newell said the methodology section laid out the specific facilities that were studied. The remaining categories were not included in the bond package but were needs that would be determined for future projects.

Mr. Newell reported they had determined that the new Station 49 accommodated Marine Rescue and Fire Boat stationing, so there was no need to identify the needs for that function. They had examined location, coverage and facility size and the cost of each of those, and developed written programs for each facility for comparison.

Mr. Kent Greene, ESCI, explained that the facilities location study had considered current station deployment, current service demand and population and demographics. He said they had performed a lot of analysis on the annexation areas to develop recommendations for them. Mr. Greene remarked that the Intracoastal Waterway presented a barrier that must be taken into account for response and travel time analysis for Stations 13 and 54. Although station locations may have centered on the western side of the Intracoastal when they performed the analysis, they believed the necessity of having a station on the barrier island outweighed moving it several block on the western side of the Intracoastal.

[Mr. Kozich arrived at 6:10]

Mr. Greene stated the Ocean Rescue facility had presented a special challenge because it was not a typical response facility. It was more difficult to determine where service demand was occurring because the lack of specific addresses. Based on anecdotal historical information, a large portion of the calls occurred in the southern portion of the beach area. They had performed analysis on a centralized location, but also provided an option for a station farther south.

Mr. Greene informed the Committee that all of their scenarios had considered ways to utilize existing facilities and improve cooperative efforts with other agencies to provide the best service to the community.

Regarding station size, Mr. Newell said they had developed a brand-new, written program for the stations and the support facilities. They had determined that the needs for Stations 8 and 54 were equivalent. Mr. Newell said depending on the site selected, a two-story station would be larger because of the need for stairwells and an elevator. The program they had developed was a 10,098 square-foot building for a two-story station; this size could be reduced slightly for a one-story building. In their comparisons of stations the City was currently building against national standards, Mr. Newell said they had found that they were close to national standards in terms of individual spaces. Some recommendations had been made, such as using individual toilet/shower rooms that reduced the overall size impact to the station and accommodated the ratios for gender separation. Mr. Newell stated the projected cost for Stations 8 and 54 had been based on recent bids.

Mr. Newell explained that the note regarding a training facility at Station 8 had been added in case the need arose. This would provide a planning tool when they started looking at sites.

Mr. Newell referred to a graphic depicting a comparison of their study results to the Fire Rescue Bond Program and remarked that it was "pretty close."

Mr. Newell stated the difference between Station 13 and the other two stations' program construction costs was due to additional apparatus and personnel. Their study had resulted in a station size of 13,690 square feet, for a two-story building; the Fire Bond program had estimated the building at 15,000 square feet. Costs per square foot were still projected at \$255 as with the other two stations.

Regarding the Ocean Rescue facility, Mr. Newell said this was currently "painfully short in space." The total size of Ocean Rescue facility was projected to be 6,916 square feet.

Mr. Newell said their needs for logistics and warehousing spaces were projected at 5,692 square feet, and a 7,680 square-foot canopy area for apparatus. Mr. Newell stated the training space at Station 53 appeared to be adequate, but if the City decided to relocate training facilities, this would require 7,090 square feet.

In summary, Mr. Newell stated many of the City's assumptions regarding station size had been close to on target. Regarding site location, Mr. Greene explained that the Fire Department used a program called Deccan to predict station locations and ESCI used ESRI GIS software, but the variations were not significant.

Questions and Answers

Mr. Carbon said the Feasibility Study had been forwarded to the City Commission in an informational memo, but they had taken no action. Chair Page said it would be useful to indicate in some of the tables what apparatus was located at the individual stations. Mr. Greene said the apparatus had been identified for the stations in the Study, but not for every station in the City. Mr. Carbon said this version of the Study was a draft that would be finalized with the Committee's and the Commission's comments.

Mr. Ruth asked about creating a comparison between Fort Lauderdale's stations and other comparable cities. Mr. Greene said from a deployment perspective, they had built their travel models on NFPA 1710 standards. Mr. Newell said regarding station sizes, their recommendations reflected current national standards.

Mr. Jarrett noted that the Study had been based on a 20-year standard, but the residents had been told this was a 50-year bond issue. Mr. Jarrett believed that the volume of calls would grow in proportion to the population growth estimate of approximately 35%, which would require a corresponding increase in personnel and apparatus. He would like to see "some kind of connection between the size of those three stations and the number of bunks and the number of bays tied to that 35% increase."

Mr. Greene said for a typical 20 or 30-year Master Plan, they would include a map of station locations to accommodate demand for the next 20 or 30 years, but the scope of this project had been to focus on those three stations and the ancillary facilities. He agreed that as the community grew, additional resources would be needed. Mr. Jarrett wanted to see something to indicate that they were not building stations that were too small.

Mr. Newell explained that the Fire industry had changed dramatically in the past 20 years and no one could predict what would be needed in the future. The goal was not to build stations that were big enough today, but to lay out the designs in a way that made them easy to add on to in the future. Mr. Jarrett stated, "Your Study has been reduced from 50 years down to 20 years, and you're not even telling us what we need for 20 years; that's the problem I have." He thought that was the point of the Study.

Chair Page asked if the Study had anticipated their needs for the next five years in these areas. Mr. Newell said they had looked at the growth of the entire district. He noted that some of the recently built stations were not fully staffed to meet their maximum levels. Mr. Ruth asked if any stations were designed to be expandable. Mr. Snedaker said they were expandable if adjacent property was acquired.

Mr. Greene explained to Mr. Nesbitt that the location of the Ocean Rescue was a policy issue; this was why they had not made a particular site recommendation. They had mapped several locations, and Mr. Greene said the most beneficial location would be in the Station 49 area. Mr. Jarrett informed Mr. Bayne, IAFF Union President, that the Ocean Rescue facility was not part of the Bond issue, but it was included in the Study. Mr. Bayne said they could determine the locations of Ocean Rescue calls because transport units often responded to the calls. He said this should not affect where the Ocean Rescue facility was located because lifeguards went from a central location to their stations. Mr. Greene said they had discussed what the primary function would be and questions still remained before the facility was built.

Mr. Nesbitt wanted something more definitive regarding the Ocean Rescue because it could turn out that Station 13 would have been an appropriate location and he did not want to miss an opportunity. Mr. Newell reiterated that this was largely a policy decision, and said it was frequently mentioned that Ocean Rescue's current location provided great opportunity for training and relocating it would reduce this. It was not just a matter of tracking the calls. Mr. Nesbitt agreed this was a policy decision, but said Mr. Newell and Mr. Greene had been asked for a professional opinion that the Commission could endorse or ignore. Mr. Snedaker said there was not sufficient room at Station 13 to accommodate Ocean Rescue and a parking garage.

Mr. Anderson said it was important to keep Stations 8, 13 and 54 in order in the report and he requested this be changed in the next draft.

Mr. Anderson referred to Figure 16 and compared it to Figure 29 and said the proposed site for Station 8 did not allow a four-minute travel time to the high-risk areas. He thought it appeared that Station 8 should be located farther east to be closer to the high-risk areas. Mr. Anderson said Figure 29 did not show the redundant coverage for Station 8 that was shown for Stations 13 and 54. Mr. Greene explained that the zoning layer they used to generate the Community Risk map was the highest allowable use; some areas that were zoned high risk might currently be vacant lots. Regarding the location of Station 8, the text described the lack of street connectivity near the central point; Station 8's location had been moved west to allow better access to the street network. Mr. Anderson said one of the high-risk areas was north of Las Olas where there were several apartment complexes and neither Station 8 nor Station 13 could reach this area in four minutes. He asked that this be considered in a report update.

Regarding operational capacities, Mr. Anderson requested an indication of square footage for the sites, not just the station buildings. Mr. Newell said they could provide those estimates.

Mr. Anderson agreed with Mr. Jarrett regarding building stations that would accommodate future growth, and suggested the additional bays could be used for reserve stock, instead of storing this equipment in the open. He said this must be taken into account in selecting the lots. Mr. Newell said if the direction was to alter the station projections to accommodate additional bays that would be used temporarily for reserve equipment, he also needed input regarding reduction of support services, i.e., the canopy that had been designed to cover the reserve equipment. Chair Page reminded Mr. Anderson that they only had a certain amount of money and if they decided to enlarge Stations 13 and 54, they might not be able to afford to build Station 8. Mr. Anderson said they did not need to build the expanded stations now but they could design for them. Mr. Kirsch noted that the money was not within the scope of the Study; they wanted to determine if they were building appropriate stations.

Mr. Jarrett said a canopy for the reserve equipment would not provide optimum protection for the vehicles and the equipment contained inside. Mr. Anderson said the Study should indicate the best solution for the reserve apparatus site. Mr. Newell said the canopy was the solution chosen by the vast majority of municipalities. Chief Justinak acknowledged that they did not live in a perfect world. He explained that their current facilities allowed for a 40% increase in personnel. He stated personnel decisions were for the Fire Chief and policy makers to make.

Mr. McTigue anticipated future stations would be smaller and more numerous to provide adequate coverage. Mr. Newell said most larger municipalities they worked for took the approach of building stations that would accommodate their needs, plus a potential 30-40% staffing increase, acknowledging that in the future they would build additional substations.

Mr. Green pointed out that a 35% increase in volume did not indicate a 35% increase in structure fires, rescues and medical calls. He explained that the vast majority of calls were for EMS services. As fire prevention efforts increased, the likelihood of structure fires decreased, so it was not necessary to create space to house additional ladders and engines in proportion to the number of additional Rescue units.

Chief Justinak explained that call demographics would change due to technology and Code Enforcement. He agreed with Mr. Greene that there would be a change in call profiles with more medical calls. Chief Justinak said they were examining profiles and how they would respond to calls. He stated their role was to get to a location as fast as possible, and their objective was to improve response times, which he thought could be accomplished with creative approaches and new technologies.

Mr. Jarrett thought that stating they had the ability to accommodate a 40% increase in personnel assumed they would never meet the NFPA standard for four personnel on an engine and three on a rescue, which the Committee had been told was the reason there were extra bunks.

Regarding potential areas of annexation, Chair Page asked what the impact would be on the Fort Lauderdale Fire Department. Mr. Greene said a vast majority of the three primary potential annexation areas could be covered by existing mutual aid stations. Chief Justinak explained that annexed areas could be covered in three ways: the City could be the primary provider; the common dispatch center could enable staff to determine available units, or the County-wide mutual aid system would allow the Chief officers to coordinate response. Mr. Greene stated Station 46 would cover some of the potential area to be annexed.

Mr. Anderson stated the current coverage of his district was “one area ...that probably had the highest dollar value of property with the lowest coverage” and he therefore felt it was critical for the study of Station 8 to consider four-minute response time and redundancy coverage. He said he wanted to know how Station 8 would address the existing coverage gap problems. Mr. Greene said they must consider where the demand was occurring, not just dollar amount covered. He said the analyst had determined this was the best location, based on street connectivity. Mr. Anderson suggested building Station 8 south to pick up the area near 17th Street, and addressing the areas north of Las Olas in the future. Mr. Ruth said demographically, Rio Vista houses would probably have fewer fires, but greater need for EMS.

Mr. Anderson requested a second draft of the report incorporating the Committee’s comments.

Mr. Kirsch was surprised that “the growth wasn’t addressed in some manner as well” and requested that this be explained in the report.

Mr. Anderson said he was very happy with the results of the Study, which showed the City was doing its job at properly designing the new buildings. He did want to see a second draft, however. Mr. Newell said they would determine what comments to incorporate into the program and see how this affected the scope of the report. Chair Page acknowledged that there had been conflicting opinions, but said the Committee requested Mr. Newell and Mr. Green’s professional opinion on whether they should build larger stations or plan on smaller satellite stations in the future. Mr. Kirsch stated if the consultants’ opinion was that they could not plan for the size of the stations, he would like this included in the report, as well as an explanation of how they would deal with growth.

Mr. Bayne asked that the second draft include national averages for sizes of comparable facilities. Mr. Newell agreed to include a size range.

Other Items

The Committee agreed to meet next in August.

Motion made by Mr. Ruth, seconded by Mr. Kirsch, to schedule the Committee's next meeting for August. In a voice vote, motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Jarrett noted they had an opportunity to suggest that an Ocean Rescue facility be included in the redevelopment of the Swimming Hall of Fame.

Communication to the City Commission

Motion made by Mr. Jarrett, seconded by Mr. Anderson, to recommend to the City Commission that any future proposals for the Swimming Hall of Fame include a 7,000 square foot Ocean Rescue facility. In a voice vote, motion approved unanimously.

With no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 8:01 p.m.

Next regular meeting: August 18, 2010