

**Wake County Fire Commission
MINUTES FOR TUESDAY, MARCH 16, 1999
ADOPTED 4/20/99**

Time:	7:15 PM - 10:45 PM
Location:	Wake County Commons Building Carya Drive at Poole Road
Present :	Cloyce Anders, External Facilitator Yevonne Brannon, Wake County Commissioner Ed Brinson, West Region/Primary Tony Chiotakis, West Region/Alternate George Mills, North Region/Primary Phil Mitchell, South Region/Primary Ned Perry, Citizen/Consumer Rodney Privette, East Region/Alternate Tom Vaughan, East Region/Primary Ray Echevarria, Director-Fire/Rescue Division
Absent:	Max Ashworth, Citizen/Consumer Ken Farmer, South Region/Alternate Blaine Parks, Citizen/Consumer(Alternate) A.C. Rich, North Region/Alternate Charles Sannipoli, Citizen/Consumer Nancy Schwarm, Citizen/Consumer Bill Stevenson, President of Firemen's Association Bonnie Woodruff, Citizen/Consumer
Topic:	<u>Discussion & Summary of Topics:</u>
Meeting Called to Order:	The meeting was called to order at 7:15 PM.
	The following handouts were distributed: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Press Release Announcing Echevarria as Wake County Fire Marshal</i> 2. <i>Wake County Fire Services Scheduled Meetings for 1999</i> 3. <i>Wake County Fire Commission Members Contact Sheet</i> 4. <i>Letter from Town of Apex concerning funding</i> 5. <i>Letter from Town of Knightdale concerning municipal tax rate</i> 6. <i>Planning Committee: Report on Remodel/Renovation of Fairview Fire Department</i> 7. <i>Planning Committee: Draft Minutes from the 3/9/99 meeting</i> 8. <i>FY 99-2000 Staff Recommendations Regarding Fire Department Budgets</i>

	Roll was taken.
Public Comments:	None.
Old Business:	Motion to adopt 2-16-99 minutes as read. Motion approved.
	Prior to report of the committees, Mr. Anders commented on the rules of absence. Mr. Ashworth has missed three consecutive meetings. Asked that Board of Commissioners replace Mr. Ashworth. Moved to hear committee reports.
COMMITTEE REPORTS:	
Capital Improvement Program:	No report.
Contract & Performance Requirements:	Meeting with County Attorney set for March 29, 1999. Will have a report available for the April Wake County Fire Commission meeting.
Planning:	<p>Mr. Perry read into the minutes the Planning Committees March 9, 1999, report about the planned remodel of the Fairview Fire Station.</p> <p>Made motion to change the word halt to delay; located on the middle of page 2.</p> <p>Ms. Brannon asked is Cary going to build a station in the vicinity of Fairview Fire Station 1?</p> <p>Mr. Perry said Cary would build a station about a mile to a mile and a half away.</p> <p>Mr. Anders then opened the floor to the Fairview delegation.</p> <p>Chief Pierce of Fairview Fire Department spoke. He read into the minutes the timeline, page 2, of the Wake County Fire Commission Planning Committee Meeting Draft Minutes of March 9, 1999. Chief Pierce addressed Mr. Perry's concern that the fire station site is not owned by Fairview Fire Department, but by Fairview Community. The contract with Fairview Community is that as long as there is a Fairview Fire Station on the site, there will be a fire station. Do not foresee being asked to leave. Chief Pierce did check into other land options, but was unable to secure a site that was within budget and staying within the 5 mile rating. Chief Pierce then shared a map of the Fairview Fire District with dots on the map denoting 1998 fires. Stations 1 and 2 are located at each end of the district. Average response time to calls is approximately 7 minutes. Chief Pierce commented that we have served the district well with what we have today. To move would cost \$1.5</p>

million. At end of FY will have \$350,000, and agrees that money will be tight for the next several years. Cary will build a station about 1 - 1.5 miles for Cary, not for the Fairview Community. It will be sometime to come before many communities are annexed. Chief Pierce then displayed a map with each dot denoting where an active volunteer member resided within the district. Would have a longer response time if the site were moved. Believes renovation is best option. Stressed that Fairview Fire Department would trim asset purchases.

Mr. Perry complimented department. The Planning Committee has strong feelings about this project. Current location serves well; to rebuild or renovate not bad. There is a lot happening with annexation in the west. Questioned how do Board of Commissioners feel about condemning a station. Need a site plan for future growth. They can function well at current site. The proposed outer loop interchange would impact station site. Mr. Perry stressed that the Planning Committee did not look at funding. Has had to look at all stations in the county and there are six to eight stations to possibly be closed, moved or merged. All land in Wake County is expensive. This may need to go to Capital Improvement Committee. Then asked Ms. Brannon how would the Board of Commissioners feel about condemning land?

Ms. Brannon did not feel this would go well. The Board is currently trying to push to buy land ahead of time and not just when it is needed. Trying to allocate up-front money for the next eight years. Also added that the EMS Task Force is looking into a 15 year plan. Also questioned if committee had been in contact with municipalities. Would need their 10-15 year plan. This is because we don't know if Cary is planning to annex. Need to have meeting with Mr. Jennings and EMS Task Force. This is a decision that should have been done five years ago.

Chief Pierce advised this was set up five years ago.

Ms. Brannon noted that we need to somehow tie planning needs together.

Mr. Perry commented that timing is crucial. Fairview has provided good coverage. Look at fire protection for whole county. How does County feel about capital outlay projects? How does County feel about money for land? Ownership is different for each of the fire departments. Fairview has a good contract reference land. May be that eight to ten years they may want to expand and do not see that expansion possible in a watershed. Spoke with Cary Fire Chief House about coverage in non-developed areas. Chief House has in place

contracts for areas that will be annexed. There appears to be a willingness to working together. Chief House will mail copy of contract. Chief House says information can be shared without a cost as to when a fire station needs to be built. Really moving on several areas. Moving much quicker than intended.

Chief Vaughan questioned if new station built, would it be central and cover area.

Mr. Perry stated no. If relocated and Garner comes in from the East, second station may need to close in eight to ten years.

Chief Vaughan then asked if there are any Cary water and sewer lines in the fire district.

Chief Pierce stated there is a short piece of water line on Kildaire Farm Road.

Chief Vaughan commented that it looks like you may get annexed in five to ten years.

Chief Vaughan asked if primary reason for renovating building is code violations.

Chief Pierce stated yes.

Chief Chiotakis questioned would they lose five mile coverage.

Mr. Perry stated that Cary and Apex have developed border of where they will annex up to. Appears a lot will happen.

Chief Chiotakis stated some areas with mobile home parks are a concern. Expose people to potential risk beyond the five mile fire district.

Mr. Anders stated looking at planning process in concentrated populated areas.

Mr. Brinson questioned what is the current response time.

Chief Pierce responded 7 minutes.

Chief Brinson then questioned if given authorization to proceed, can you continue without additional funds.

Chief Pierce responded yes. Continue to use what equipment on hand and with budget received this year, yes. What is life expectancy of station? In about 15-20 years, may need to close station one and move to station two. Two things to mention. First, reference the map of the volunteers, have a

turn over rate of two people per year over the past ten years. Have one opening and have a wait list of six to eight people. Of that wait list, four or five live in the immediate area.

Chief Chiotakis commented that Ned encapsulated well. Both groups have done well. There is no crystal ball for the future. Agree with approach with planning committee. This department did not start last year on feasibility. Have gone beyond emotional to professional on how can we continue to provide coverage. Current information on annexations for Cary and Apex are facing water impact. Both town councils have come up with a slow growth concept. Use what information out there to develop for Wake County plan. Believe Fairview should do renovation based on planning. Is in best interest.

Chief Mills commented on the subject of personnel. The volunteers are the backbone of the county. If we lose volunteers, we do not have the funds for career fire department personnel. You might alienate personnel. Comment about station, 1.2 million is a lot of money for half a station. Oppose notion of condemning property. Would have to pay fair value for land and legal fees. Supports Fairview's proposal to move forward.

Mr. Anders recognized Mr. Echevarria as the new Fire Marshal.

Ray commented that Fairview deserves a good fire station. There are a lot of opportunities; maybe co-locating.

Chief Pierce advised he has spoken with Apex EMS. Do have a bay for an ambulance. Have at least a 9 - 12 minute EMS response time. Fairview one of the first to be first responder. Have spoken to Apex to put a rescue squad in the station.

Ray commented to take what Fairview has and build on it for the long term.

Mr. Anders inquired could Fairview cover district with one station.

Chief Pierce advised no.

Chief Vaughan recommended we table for 30 days so more people can get information.

Chief Mitchell seconded the motion.

Chief Chiotakis commented to draw a line after Fairview. Have stopped Fairview when they have been planning. Fairview should be the line. In favor of Ned's recommendation to plan

	<p>sites. Fairview needs some direction.</p> <p>Chief Brinson advised he concurs with Chief Chiotakis.</p> <p>Chief Pierce commented that he agrees with Ray about everyone deserves a nice station. If you find a department that has gone through the effort we have today. We are so far along.</p> <p>Ms. Brannon questioned can the renovations be done cheaper.</p> <p>Mr. Anders advised the discussion was closed and to move to motion for vote. Four members in favor and two members opposed. Motion upheld.</p> <p><i>Break at 8:40 PM. Resumed at 8:50 PM.</i></p>
<p>Budget Review:</p>	<p>Mr. Anders opened the discussion of the budget. He met with members of the Budget Review Committee during the two day workshop at the Ramada Inn, the weekend of February 20 and 21. Came to conclusion this is an impossible task. Some information is missing. It was a genuine exercise. Heard the comment that I am not in a position to make a decision for a fire chief.</p> <p>Chief Mills reviewed the notes of the budget committee workshop. A couple of questions that arose while reviewing budgets:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is this for? 2. What are other benefits for fire fighters? <p>The submissions totaled 12.5 million. The estimated tax rate will generate approximately 8 million. Did not want to manage at line item level. Focused on funding at current level. May need to look at career staff during daytime to improve level of service. There are four departments to adopt the first responder program - burden placed on these departments for daytime personnel. Even at 10 cent rate versus 8.5 cent rate, would need the 1.5 cent rate tax revenue to add personnel, add station for future use, and upgrade departments that would allow ISO rating better than 6/9S. Needed to raise tax rate to 10 cents as recommended in the 1994 study. Put forward a plan to improve the fire service. Volunteer fire departments carry own water to scene. Cary and Raleigh do not pay to transport water and they use hydrants. Need to remember that it costs to provide water in rural areas. Did look at amount of indebtedness. Some departments are paying 10% in interest. Thinks there is an opportunity for some departments to refinance and / or consolidate loans. Also looked at amount of money departments have in reserve. Departments have been</p>

implementing plans for apparatus. Durham HWY spent down out of reserves rather than raise tax rate. Already have two departments underfunded at 8.5 cent tax rate, therefore, 10 cent tax rate proposal. In past you would get all money that has been collected. Also, there are several hundred thousand dollars not recognized due to county growth. Motion that overage of funds used for recruitment retention, capital expenditures and emergencies.

Chief Brinson seconded the motion. The Wake County Fire Commission would determine the percentage.

Chief Vaughan questioned are we going to get monthly report of overage.

Ray responded we can do this through our office.

Mr. Anders called for motion and members were all in favor of motion.

Chief Mills commented that committee members want to have input from chief officers to make necessary adjustments.

Mr. Anders commented to look at the handout prepared by Ray (*FY 99-2000 Staff Recommendations Regarding Fire Departments*).

Ray commented that the Board of Commissioners appointed Wake County Fire Commission to make recommendations. Wake County Fire Commission will make recommendations to Board of Commissioners. Part of current duties is to make these recommendations. If there are not enough copies of handout, let us know. Had hoped to have ready before tonight. When service tax district created, 8.5 cents recommended. I fully understand that to improve service county wide, will take money. There is not a consensus funding for items in each department. Recommendation to develop minimal level of service for citizens. Do we want staff? Reduce response time? What would it cost to get that level of service? Need to do additional planning before requesting additional moneys. The 1994 Fire Study did recommend 10 cent with six million being generated. Based on today's tax estimate, will generate 7.5 million at 8.5 cents. Even at 8.5 cents, have more money than in the past. Reason for service tax district is to equalize paying. Not to transfer tax burden, but to equalize cost for fire protection.

Mr. Anders opened the floor up for comments.

Ms. Brannon noted observations. Obvious that at county level, under gun to do a lot of things, especially with schools. Can

How do we open / close stations?

Chief Brinson commented to get out on the street level of the 700+ volunteers / citizens of Wake County. Need to get to street level before making recommendations.

Chief Pierce commented the summaries are confusing.

Mr. Anders pointed out these are summaries.

Ray advised these pages are strictly for reference and background on how we got where we are today.

Chief Pierce stated he would like clarification about the back pages.

Ray stated these pages are recommendations. Does not want to intercept the Wake County Fire Commission responsibility. As Fire Marshal, felt it was my responsibility to prepare.

Chief Pierce questioned why 8.5 cents when the budget review committee came up with 10 cents.

Chief Vaughan stated should be 10 cents because of study. Would rather compromise. Can live with what is received. Is concerned about misinformation from staff about fire departments. The previous Fire Marshal had wanted Wendell to request a higher tax rate last year, but did not go with that request.

Ms. Brannon noted that this is a fresh start. Do not want to destroy the system. May have to hang in there. Have to go from where we are and it will not be easy. You are all working on the best recommendation.

Chief Mitchell stated the budget review committee recommended 10 cents.

Mr. Anders stated that according to charge, we are to recommend a budget to Board of Commissioners. We are to submit a unified budget.

Ms. Brannon stressed that staff does not work for her. Only the County Manager and the County Attorney work for the Board of Commissioners.

Chief Chiotakis commented that the County Manager would use Ray's report for informational purposes.

Mr. Hayes stated that before this kind of report comes out, that it be discussed with the fire departments.

	<p>Ray asked Mr. Hayes to call him to discuss the handout.</p> <p>Mr. Anders commented credit is given for the level of professionalism and the discussion has been meaningful. Extremely proud of the group.</p> <p>Mr. Anders motioned to adjourned.</p>
<p>Meeting Site for the Tuesday, April 20, 1999, Wake County Fire Commission Meeting:</p>	<p>Wake County Commons Building Carya Drive off Poole Road</p>
<p>Adjournment:</p>	<p>Meeting adjourned at 10:45 PM.</p>

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