

WAKE COUNTY FIRE COMMISSION MINUTES

Special Called Session

Tuesday, June 4, 2002

(ADOPTED 7/22/2002)

A special called session of the Wake County Fire Commission was held on Tuesday, June 4, 2002, at 4:30 p.m. at the Wake County Commons Building, Cary Drive, Raleigh, North Carolina. Cathy Lohr presided as Facilitator and called the meeting to order.

Roll of Members Present: Chief Tony Chiotakis, **West Region/Primary**
Herb Council, **Wake County Commissioner**
Robert Gibbs, West Region/Alternate (late)
Cathy Lohr, **Citizen/Consumer**
Tony Mauldin, South Region/Alternate
Billy Myrick, **Citizen/Consumer**
Donald Pierce, **South Region/Primary** (late)
David Price, **Firefighter's Assoc. President**
Rodney Privette, East Region/Alternate
A.C. Rich, North Region/Alternate (late)
Ron Roof, **North Region/Primary**
Tom Vaughan, **East Region/Primary**

(The bolded Membership Type equates to members eligible to vote.)

Members Absent: Cloyce Anders, External Facilitator*
Ned Perry, **Citizen/Consumer**
Charles Sannipoli, **Citizen Consumer**
Buddy Scarboro, **Wendell Town Representative**
Bonnie Woodruff, **Citizen/Consumer**

Staff Present: David Cooke, County Manager
Joseph Durham, Deputy County Manager
John Rukavina, Public Safety Director
Raymond Boutwell, Budget & Mgmt Director
Jennifer Willis, Budget & Management Analyst
Ray Echevarria, Fire/Rescue Director
Chris Perry, Chief Deputy Fire Marshal
Jason R. Loftus, Shift Supervisor
Sherry Scoggins, Executive Secretary

There were 45 guests present at the Wake County Fire Commission meeting.

Ms. Lohr called the meeting to order. As this is a special called session, there is no agenda. The special called session is convened to discuss FY 2003 Funding of the Knightdale Volunteer Fire Department and also the proposed FY 2003 fire department funding. Mr. Billy Myrick was recognized as our newest Citizen/Consumer member.

Ms. Lohr recognized Mr. Lucious Jones, Mayor of Wendell. Mr. Jones expressed concern about the proposed one-cent tax rate increase for the Wake County Special Fire Tax District, as the increase would affect the citizens in Wendell.

Ms. Lohr recognized Mr. David Cooke, Wake County Manager. Mr. Cooke shared and discussed several handouts with the Fire Commission and guests. After discussion, Chief Roof proposed that discussion to identify budget process for next year be included on the July agenda of the next regular scheduled Fire Commission meeting. Chief Roof commented that the Fire Commission needs to make a decision before leaving, need to have a specific recommendation. Mr. Cooke stated the group is an advisory board to the Commissioners. Commissioners value the input of the Fire Commission. If you want to make other changes, need to make a recommendation. Commissioner Council then commented that he would like to see more recommendations.

Chief Vaughan stated that he wanted to hear from Durham Highway and Western Wake about the increase and then make a recommendation.

Vernon Jones, former fire chief of Durham Highway, was recognized and spoke on behalf of Durham Highway. Mr. Jones answered questions posed to him reference the upcoming budget.

Robert Gibbs, Fire Chief of Western Wake Fire Department, was recognized and spoke on behalf of the Western Wake Fire Department. Chief Gibbs answered questions posed to him reference the upcoming budget.

Ms. Lohr motioned to take a recess.

Upon return from recess, the board members of the Knightdale Volunteer Fire Department were recognized. Ms. Barbara Poole, secretary to the Knightdale Volunteer Fire Department spoke first. She presented the history of the department and discussed the progress made to date. Stressed that we cannot put have professional firefighters to risk their lives to save other without paying them. Mr. Randy Wilkerson, Vice President to the Knightdale Volunteer Fire Department spoke and made a presentation to the Fire Commission and guests. Knightdale has the third largest district and will have a 4.5% reduction in area, not 1/3 as reported in the paper. Mr. Wilkerson explained the \$362,000.00 requested amount takes into account the \$282,000 loss from the Town of Knightdale and the remainder is to give salary increases to the paid firefighters. Mr. Thomas Brooks, Treasurer to the Knightdale Volunteer Fire Department was introduced and also available for questions.

Ms. Lohr then asked if there were any other comments from the guests.

Chief Jimmy Keith of the Wake Forest Fire Department was recognized. Commented that the Wake County fire Commission should be challenged to come up with a budget recommendation, with more time.

Chief Sidney Perry of the Zebulon Fire Department was recognized. Spoke on behalf of fire department and the Town of Zebulon since the town manager had to leave for another meeting. Ask that the Commission look at the numbers before them and see if some of those numbers can be changed. Knightdale has been on the front of the list for a number of people's conversations. Zebulon had asked for one person to give us eight people to have two people for each shift full time and did not receive funding. Certainly the cost and the operating expense would go down since Knightdale is not serving the municipality and I would hope the Commission would look at these numbers at this time and maybe the \$350,000 something could be used for other projects in the County. Zebulon would like some of that. Believe money could be used for other areas of the County and not fund the department the full \$350,000 or \$360,000 and believes there are other options. Seriously look at funding of and see if it can be reduced.

Chief Robert Pearce of the Wake New Hope Fire Department was recognized. Commented that he too shares a concern about the budget process. Saw the budget as three components: operating expense, salaries and debt reduction. It's not about the numbers; it is about serving Wake County.

Chief Ron Roof of the Bay Leaf Fire Department and representative of the Northern Region was recognized. This year consolidated Six Forks with Bay Leaf. As a result of holding the line with the budget, already in the hole as a result of the insurance increase.

Chief Vaughan was recognized. He made a motion that the Knightdale Volunteer Fire Department keeps the initial budget request of \$617,721.00; allot \$109,000.00 to assist with debt service; and allot \$51,000.00 to assist with salaries for a total of \$777,721.00. The remaining \$200,000.00 be put into escrow for other fire departments to apply for funds on an as need basis. Motion seconded by Chief Chiotakis. Upon vote, six members approved and one nay.

Chief Ron Roof then motioned that the Bay Leaf Fire Department budget be amended by 1% to \$946,866.00. Seconded by Chief Donald Pierce. Motion approved unanimously.

Chief Ron Roof then motioned that the funding of the consultant study, thermal imaging, and defibrillator be funded out of the fund balance and not the operating budget for a total of \$255,000.00. Motion seconded by Chief Chiotakis. Mr. Raymond Boutwell stated this should also include the SCBA's for a total of \$323,000.00. After group discussion, motion was approved unanimously.

Tom Vaughan then motioned to deduct \$50,000.00 from the Western Wake Fire Department and Durham Highway Fire Department budgets and put into escrow account. Motion seconded by Chief Tony Chiotakis. Motion approved unanimously.

Chief Ron Roof offered a statement of recommendation, not for a motion and vote. Recommend staff and County Commissioners look at recommendations and identify the best and most appropriate way to fund the recommendations at the lowest tax rate possible and avoid a tax rate increase if it possible to do that. No formal action by Fire Commission on statement of recommendation.

Mr. Myrick expressed concern over what had happened to the budgets.

Mr. Ron Roof motioned to adjourn. Motion seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

The next regular scheduled Fire Commission meeting is Thursday, July 18, 2002, 4:30 PM, at the Wake County Commons.

Handouts:

- Summary of Budget Requests from Fire Departments
- Summary – Determination of FY 02-03 Base Budget
- Fire Tax District Revenue Projections at \$0.09 and \$0.10
- Fire Tax District Special Fund
- Fire Tax Fund – Monthly Actual (July-December 2001)
- Proposed Allocation for Fire Departments (6/04/2002)

ACTIONS OF THE WAKE COUNTY FIRE COMMISSION:

Chief Vaughan was recognized. He made a motion that the Knightdale Volunteer Fire Department keeps the initial budget request of \$617,721.00; allot \$109,000.00 to assist with debt service; and allot \$51,000.00 to assist with salaries for a total of \$777,721.00. The remaining \$200,000.00 be put into escrow for other fire departments to apply for funds on an as need basis. Motion seconded by Chief Chiotakis. Upon vote, six members approved and one nay.

Chief Ron Roof then motioned that the Bay Leaf Fire Department budget be amended by 1% to \$946,866.00. Seconded by Chief Donald Pierce. Motion approved unanimously.

Chief Ron Roof then motioned that the funding of the consultant study, thermal imaging, and defibrillator be funded out of the fund balance and not the operating budget for a total of \$255,000.00. Motion seconded by Chief Chiotakis. Mr. Raymond Boutwell stated this should also include the SCBA's for a total of \$323,000.00. After group discussion, motion was approved unanimously.

Tom Vaughan then motioned to deduct \$50,000.00 from the Western Wake Fire Department and Durham Highway Fire Department budgets and put into escrow account. Motion seconded by Chief Tony Chiotakis. Motion approved unanimously.

Mr. Ron Roof motioned to adjourn. Motion seconded. Motion approved unanimously.