

# **WAKE COUNTY FIRE COMMISSION**

## **Thursday, March 21, 2013**

### **Adopted Minutes**

*(Audio Replays of the meeting are available upon request)*

A meeting of the Wake County Fire Commission was held on Thursday, March 21, 2013, 7:00 PM, in the Wake County Commons Building, Cary Drive, Raleigh, North Carolina.

#### **CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

Commission Chair Lucius Jones called the meeting to order.

The following members were present: Chief A.C. Rich, Chief David Cates, Chief David Price (South Region Alternate), Chief Tom Vaughan (East Region Alternate), Judge Keith Gregory, Billy Myrick, Bob Stagg, Lee Price, Barbara Poole.

Other members present: Chief Tim Pope (North Region Alternate).

The following members were absent: Commissioner Paul Coble, Chief Tony Mauldin, Judge Michael Denning, Commissioner Phil Matthews, Chief Mark Haraway (West Region Alternate), Chief Rodney Privette,

The following County officials and staff were present: Deputy County Manager Joe Durham, Budget and Policy Analyst Chad Balke, Emergency Management Director Josh Creighton, and EMS / Fire and Emergency Management Business Officer Demetric Potts.

Mr. Billy Myrick gave an invocation.

#### **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Upon motion of Chief Tom Vaughan and second by Bob Stagg, the Fire Commission unanimously approved the Agenda.

#### **MINUTES**

Upon motion of Bob Stagg and second by Billy Myrick, the Fire Commission unanimously approved minutes of the January 17, 2013, Regular Meeting.

#### **REGULAR AGENDA**

There was no Agenda Items Requiring Fire Commission Action.

## INFORMATION AGENDA

### FIRE TRAINING CENTER PUMP UPDATE

Demetric Potts reported to the Fire Commission that Wake County General Services (WC GSA) advised that the contract for the pump repair has gone to the Wake County Finance Office for approval and execution. WC GSA advised that work regarding the pump repairs would begin after the executed contract was returned from Wake County Finance. Mark Dubois, Director of Physical Plant, Wake County GSA has estimated that the repair work would begin the week of May 1, 2013.

### FIRE TRAINING CENTER RFP UPDATE

Demetric Potts updated the Fire Commission with the following information regarding the Fire Training Center Request for Proposal:

On February 25, 2013 the Fire and Emergency Management Department released a Request for Proposal for a Comprehensive Assessment and Evaluation of Fire Services Training Center and Training Programs. The Scope of Services requested in the Request for Proposal is as follows:

1. Assessment and Evaluation of fire training programs and facilities in Wake County to determine the most cost effective and efficient service delivery.
2. Assessment and Evaluation of fire service training agencies in Wake County to identify any duplication of fire training delivery. Provide specific details of duplication identified and propose possible solutions.
3. Assessment and evaluation of partnering opportunities for delivering fire training programs.
4. Demographics, fee schedules and revenues, fire protection delivery services and fire protection services structure shall be considered when comparing training programs with other areas.
5. Presentation of Findings and Recommendations to assure optimal service delivery with consideration of meeting or exceeding the minimum required levels of training and certifications needed to be a firefighter in Wake County.
6. The Consultant will provide project management support services such as handling coordination of meetings, creating meeting agendas and meeting minutes, and scheduling activities associated with this project.
7. The County reserves the right to expand the scope of services if other areas requiring evaluation are identified.

Demetric also shared that there would be a committee put together to review the proposals once they are delivered and he asked that the Fire Commission appoint members of the Fire Service to participant in the RFP review to assist in making a recommendation on awarding the bid.

### FIRE TAX FANANCIAL REPORT

Chad Balke stated that he a couple quick things to mention about the Fire Tax Operating Expenses. He stated that to date we were at 75% of appropriations for each department which makes sense because we have one quarter left to go in the fiscal year. Chad said that he wanted to point out on the revenue side that we are just under 20 million dollars and he would expect that by the end of March we would hit the 20 million dollar mark. Chad reported that we budgeted about 20.16 million dollars and the projections are about 20.5 million dollars. He pointed out that the projection comes from the Revenue Director Marcus Kinrade.

### FIRE TAX DISTRICT BUDGET UPDATE

Commission Chair Lucius Jones asked how the Budget Committee meetings were going. Chad informed the Fire Commission that the Committee met the previous week and the night before. He stated that the previous week was mainly about revenue outlook as well as the departmental request and expansion request. Chad stated that yesterday we spent most of the time going over CIP as well as talking a bit about the recommended budgets. Chad shared that the goal is to complete the staff recommendation on what we think the entire Districts budget should look like.

Budget Committee Chair Billy Myrick asked that Chad explain the difference in this years' process as compared to last year. Chad stated that staffs' intention was to do a line item review of department budget request, and we sent out department budget recommendations to the departments with the last departments receiving their budgets on the 19<sup>th</sup>. We have been having some second reviews when departments have responded to us with questions, he noted that there were a few departments that we have yet to respond to but we will respond and listen to and review any question that they have. Chad stated that he would be completing that process within the next two days and at that time everyone will have gotten a response from staff. After that we will be able to finalize the recommendation and that recommendation will be made available Monday evening. Staff plans to spend the Wednesday Budget Committee meeting going through the entire budget recommendation which will include Operating, Revenue, and CIP. The intent is to not go through the line item budget for the departments, but we would share the recommended budget appropriations for the individual departments. Chad stated that after that meeting there would be two scheduled budget meetings left and those meetings would be turned over to the Budget Committee to determine what they would like to do regarding the recommendation.

Chief Cates asked what the methodology was in reviewing the budget, were there target areas? Chad responded that for example one area that we were focused on was with apparatus, we were trying not to budget for what ifs in terms of maintenance and repairs of apparatus. Chad stated that the main focus was looking at audits, actuals for FY 2012, looking at the amended budgets, departmental projections, and departmental requests.

Chief Cates stated that another question that he had heard was that potentially some changes were coming because of changes to responses County wide and he didn't know if that factored into fuel decisions. Chief Cates stated that we had a department that wanted to adjust some responses in their jurisdiction and they were told that the County didn't want to make any changes at this time pending evaluation of what type of responses we were having. Demetric Potts stated that he wasn't aware of any conversations along those lines. But changes in response did not play into our recommendation in terms of fuel.

Chief Vaughan asked why the County was redrawing all the fire response district boundaries. Demetric responded that the schedule for reviewing the fire response boundaries is every three years and it did not occur according to the schedule. Wake County GIS does the program for the Wake County Fire Tax District, and it is not a redrawing of the district boundaries it is the response boundaries, based on current road segments, and speed limits. Chief Rich stated that he could validate that as being true. Demetric stated that there has not been any action taken to redraw Fire Insurance District boundaries. Lee Price stated that the last time this was done the speed limits were defaulted to 35 mph instead of what it was. Demetric stated that GIS has data that they have collected over the past three years that has actual speed limits on the street segments that allows for a better system because we have better data.

Demetric stated that staff has met with the departments that had concerns with the new response boundaries and all issues had been resolve with the exception of one department (Rolesville) and they were still working to resolve those issues.

### CHAIR REPORT

None.

### FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIRECTOR REPORT

Deputy County Manager Joe Durham informed the Fire Commission that the recruitment process for the Fire Service Director was going very well with interviews scheduled for the next day. He stated that we had three good viable candidates. Mr. Durham stated that if things continued to go well he hoped to have someone named by the end of the month of April.

Mr. Durham stated that we have reported to the Fire Commission before about sustainability and we talked about initiating discussion with the different fire departments. He stated that this was underway and we were trying to get to all of them. The conversations have been very good to date, and we have had multiple conversations with Eastern Wake and the Town of Knightdale. That conversation is going very well and we are waiting for a study to come in later this Spring which will trigger a review and evaluation of how we go forward with that that one. Mr. Durham stated that we also are having discussions with Bay Leaf, Stony Hill, and Durham Highway. So we are continuing to have those discussions and will continue to do so.

Mr. Durham stated that he had a couple more informational items. He reported that the City of Raleigh is building a new 911 Center, and Emergency Operations Center and they have asked the County to partner with them in the Emergency Operation Center so we are currently reviewing and evaluating that. The cost of the building is \$68 million dollars and the cost for the County to partner in the EOC would be \$4 million dollars. Mr. Durham stated that this is something that is not currently in our CIP but we are taking a look at it. It is a great opportunity for the County to partner with the City of Raleigh for a better coordinated response in emergency operation, also representing a cost savings to the County.

Mr. Durham stated that we are continuing to have discussion about financial sustainability. He stated that he met with the Sustainability Committee approximately two weeks ago. This group is charged with coming up with potential recommendations for more cost savings. Can we do a better with purchasing, joint purchasing of insurance, or other things that could potentially yield

some cost savings to the Fire Tax District. He stated that we are looking forward to hearing back from that group in the future.

### OTHER BUSINESS

Chair Jones stated that he wanted to recognize a retiring Fire Chief who was sitting on the Fire Commission, Chief Tom Vaughan. Chair Jones stated that Chief Vaughan has spent 35 years in Wendell as the Fire Chief and supported the fire service, and he has been an outstanding member of the fire community. He stated that Chief Vaughan was retiring in a week or so he wanted to recognize him tonight and give him an opportunity to speak if he wanted to.

Mr. Myrick stated that the fire service has lost a number of Fire Chiefs over the years through retirement, and he felt that the Fire Commission should recognize these members for their years of service to Wake County.

The Fire Commission requested that staff draft a letter of recognition to the retired Fire Chiefs for the Chairman to sign.

### PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chief Early of the Wake Forest Fire Department stated that he wanted to share his concerns about Wake Forest Fire Department being partially funded by the County around 10% give or take a few. He stated that over the years they have intended to save money including merging with another department to save the County money and they have proven to do that. He stated that his concern is that over the five years they have always submitted only a third of their overall budget, that was requested of us and that is what we have done. He stated that they never requested the entire budget, but this year for some reason they were cut more than anybody in the County, about 6% of their total money from the county was recommended to be cut. When he received it there were a lot of unknowns in there and he sent an email back to Joe, Demetric, and Chad Tuesday around 1 PM just asking for a meeting, just give some answers, I need something, come to my office look over the entire budget, you tell me where these proposed cuts are which in his opinion were malicious and unnecessary. He stated that the cuts involved his staffing, personal protective equipment, vehicle maintenance, and tools. This is everything that we do in this business. He stated that he would have to close a fire station a few days a year just to meet these cuts, so this is a concern of his without no true justification, there has been no response. He stated that he sat with Demetric for an hour a couple weeks ago in a budget meeting and after that he was chased out, there really were no answers or recommendations for cuts that day. He stated that this is a concern and he hoped that they could sit down and staff could offer more justification for the recommended cuts. He wants to see some fairness across the board.

Mr. Myrick asked if staff could respond to Chief Early about his meeting. Demetric responded that Chad was not at that meeting. Demetric stated that he met with Chief Early one on one, and that staff allocated an hour for department budget meetings with every fire department. Demetric stated that he does not recall chasing Chief Early out of the meeting. He stated that at the end of the meeting he asked the Chief if he had any additional questions or anything additional he wanted to share. The Chief had none so it was assumed that the meeting was over.

## ADJOURNMENT

Being no further business, the meeting was adjourned