

EMERGENCY SERVICES DISTRICT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Indian River County (IRC) Emergency Services District Advisory Committee (ESDAC) met on Thursday, January 21, 2010 at 9:30 a.m. in Conference Room B1-501, 1800 27th Street, Vero Beach, Florida.

Present were members: Vice Chairman **Colleen Joy Jeeves**, District 4 Representative; **Charles Martoe**, District 1 Representative; **Toni Teresi**, District 3 Representative (arrived at 9:42 a.m.); **Harry Howle**, District 5 Representative; **Councilman Fernando Herrera**, City of Fellsmere Representative; and **Gary Wheeler**, Commissioner Liaison (non-voting member).

Absent were members: **Sal Neglia**, District 2 Representative; **Jim Hill**, City of Sebastian Representative; **Brian Heady**, City of Vero Beach Representative; and **Phil Redstone**, Town of Orchid Representative (all excused).

Also in attendance were IRC staff: John King, Emergency Services (ESD) Director; Brian Burkeen, Assistant Chief, Emergency Medical Services; and Darcy Vasilas, Commissioner Assistant, District 3. Others Present: Susan Thomasson, Chairperson, Fire Exploratory Committee, Vero Lake Estates; and Nathan McCollum, Community and Government Liaison, Indian River Medical Center.

Call to Order

Vice Chairman Jeeves called the meeting to order at 9:36 a.m., welcomed everyone in attendance and introductions were made. Ms. Jeeves announced since there was not yet a quorum present, the agenda items requiring action would be bypassed at this time. The members were then directed to Item #5.

Presentation and Discussion of the Three Highest Ranked Areas for New Fire Rescue Stations

Mr. John King, Emergency Services Director, distributed two maps. The first was labeled "Indian River County Station Response Areas with a 1.5 mile radius from Station Location". The second map showed the response areas of the next two proposed Fire Rescue Stations staff ranked as having the highest need as requested by ESDAC members at the November 19, 2009 meeting.

The two stations Mr. King recommended were also included on the recent Insurance Services Office (ISO) study recommendations and were: 4th Street between 45th and 43rd Avenues and 66th Avenue and 20th Street (SR 60).

Mr. King then reviewed the nine stations ISO recommended as:

- 1) N. Derry Drive & W. Derry Drive
- 2) Wimbrow Drive & Gerald Street
- 3) US Hwy 1 between 45th Street & 42nd Place
- 4) 58th Avenue & 49th Street
- 5) 4th Street between 45th & 43rd Avenues
- 6) 20th Street between 66th and 71st Streets
- 7) Highland Drive SW & 6th Avenue SW
- 8) South US Hwy 1 & Forest Park Drive
- 9) 81st & 59th Avenues

Mr. King returned to staff's two recommendations and turned the meeting over to Mr. Brian Burkeen, Assistant Chief, Emergency Medical Services.

Mr. Burkeen reported staff calculated the needs based on call volume. He continued currently responses were done by sectors which were predetermined boundaries set by Bell South (AT&T). Staff took the recommended station locations and calculated the call volumes of those immediate response zones.

Mr. Burkeen stated the proposed station for 4th Street had a total of 845 calls for that immediate response sector over a 12 month period. He added that did not include any backup calls provided to any other station. With the current staffing providing response to those zones, the response time for that area was 6 minutes, 42 seconds from the time an emergency response vehicle leaves the driveway until it arrives at the scene.

For the 66th Avenue station location, Mr. Burkeen stated the same criteria was used for the immediate response area and there were 761 calls for service in that area for 2009 with a response time of 6 minutes based on current staffing and location of vehicles.

Mr. Burkeen shared compared to other areas in the County, those were the two areas with the highest amount of call volume and the greatest need for additional stations.

Ms. Teresi asked what the average response time was throughout the County. Mr. Burkeen responded the county-wide average response time was 5 minutes, 24 seconds with a caveat that not every call for service was lights and sirens responses. He gave examples such as brush fires with no buildings involved were not lights and sirens responses; nor were ambulance calls for flu-

like symptoms. Mr. Burkeen stated 62% of their call volume was not lights and sirens responses, but normal driving conditions.

Mr. Martoe inquired what the response time improvements would be if stations were added to the two recommended areas. Mr. Burkeen responded if stations were put in the 4th Street and 66th Avenue sites the response times would decrease significantly by over one minute.

Mr. King continued the County currently had owned the piece of property for the 4th Street site, but did not currently own property near the 66th Avenue and 20th Street location. The only other piece of county owned property that was an asset was a piece of property at 66th Avenue and CR 510. He was working with the City of Sebastian for a land exchange of the old Station 9 property on US 1 in Sebastian, which is not suitable for a new station.

Mr. King was reluctant to identify the location for a third station, because it may be 10 to 15 years out before it could be built and things were going to change a lot in dynamics as to where people live and areas of growth.

Mr. King stressed he was not saying the presentation made at the November 19, 2009 meeting by the Vero Lake Estates (VLE) representatives about the need for a station in that area was not to be considered. His opinion was when the decision to add a station was based on call volume and the history for the past three to five year; he would still have to suggest to the group that the 4th Street site should be the next location for a station.

Commissioner Wheeler asked what the percentage was for Advanced Life Support (ALS) calls as opposed to Fire calls. Mr. Burkeen responded on a county average, 82% were Emergency Services calls (40% Advanced Life Support, 60% were Basic Life Support) and 18% were Fire related calls.

Commissioner Wheeler then inquired the length of time it took from the initial call coming into 911 until the vehicles were on their way to the call. Mr. Burkeen stated it was approximately 2 minutes. In the north county where there was a much larger service area, such as VLE where the average response time was 8 minutes, it would be approximately 10 minutes from the time the call was received to the time the vehicle arrived on scene.

Mr. Jason Brown, IRC Director of Management and Budget, gave a brief scenario of the costs involved in building a new fire/rescue station. The initial capital costs with property and building was approximately \$2 million. To staff a full complement with a fire engine with three personnel and an ambulance with 2 personnel for each shift, would be approximately \$1.6 million per year.

Mr. Brown continued one of the concerns was the timing of adding more stations right now with an already large decrease in property tax revenue and possibly another 10-15% decrease in the tax roll this year. In order to avoid increasing the tax rate, that would result in a loss of about \$2.4 to \$3.6 million in the operating budget. If the economy remains in the slump it was in, it could be 10 or more years down the road before a third station could be added.

Ms. Teresi asked if there was any reimbursement by the residents for the use of the fire/rescue service. Mr. Brown responded if a person was transported at a cost of \$420 - \$650 depending on the type of service rendered, there was about 76% overall collected reimbursement. He added \$3 million was collected per year to reduce the impact of ad valorem taxes.

Mr. Howle acknowledged staff would be the experts in determining where a new station should be located, and the importance of following the ISO recommendations to receive a lower insurance rate, but he felt there was a large unprotected area in the northern corridor of the county.

Discussion was held regarding the needs for services and revenues collected to provide those needs.

Ms. Jeeves thanked Mr. Brown for attending the meeting and providing his comments and insight. She went on to say even with the recommendations made by staff, the members should not lose sight of the presentation made by Ms. Thomasson at the last ESDAC meeting regarding VLE's' request for a station providing valid concerns with schools and population. She reiterated the purpose of ESDAC was to make sure they were a voice from the citizens to the Board of County Commissioners.

Commissioner Wheeler related as we go through cycles with the economy, instead of focusing necessarily on what we do not have, we need to be thankful for what we do have and try to maintain and find ways to gain a greater use for those assets. He continued as a Commissioner, he was proud of the level of service IRC could offer and the level of commitment from those providers.

Ms. Susan Thomasson, Chairperson, Fire Exploratory Committee, Vero Lake Estates, asked to make a few comments, they were as follows:

- Taxes – While it had been mentioned that VLE pays less taxes, in actuality, proportionally compared to the level of services they do not receive, VLE is not paying less taxes. She reported in a VLE

membership meeting, it had been brought forward having the residents pay a higher fee for a better level of service and the vote was almost unanimous to pay the higher fee.

- Coverage for VLE – The area for VLE was covered by three different fire/rescue stations and she wondered how the station sent to an emergency in VLE was determined.

Mr. Burkeen replied VLE has a halfway point, 101st Avenue, between the Fellsmere station and Barber Street station. Anything west of 101st Avenue would be Station 10, and anything east would be Station 8 as a primary responder. He explained when the calls came in, the location automatically is shown on a computer screen so dispatchers know what station to send. Station 9 or 11 would provide backup coverage.

- Getting on the New Station List – Ms. Thomasson stated the purpose of the VLE presentation at the last meeting was so they could at least make it on the New Station List in some sort of planning stage.

Election of Chairman and Vice Chairman

The floor was opened for nominations of Chairman and Vice Chairman for 2010.

ON MOTION by Ms. Jeeves, SECONDED by Ms. Teresi, the members voted unanimously (5-0) to elect Harry Howle as the 2010 Emergency Services District Advisory Committee Chairman.

ON MOTION by Ms. Jeeves, SECONDED by Mr. Martoe, the members voted unanimously (5-0) to elect Toni Teresi as the 2010 Emergency Services District Advisory Committee Vice Chairman.

Ms. Jeeves then turned the meeting over to new Chairman, Mr. Howle.

Approval of November 19, 2009 Meeting Minutes

ON MOTION by Councilman Herrera, SECONDED by Mr. Martoe, the members voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the November 19, 2009 Emergency

**Services District Advisory Committee meeting
minutes as submitted.**

**Updates on Personnel, Retirement & Recruitment, Continuing Education,
Equipment and Infrastructure**

Mr. King reported there were three current vacancies, mostly related to retirement. He continued three new people were starting tomorrow to fill those vacancies. He continued there would also be three more vacancies relating to retirement so they were advertising to hold a new hiring and selection process which will close February 15, 2010 and from there the selection process would begin. He hoped by early March the three positions would be filled.

Mr. King offered to provide one-on-one tours for any members wishing to tour any of the stations.

Discussion of Meeting Frequency

Chairman Howle would like to meet more frequently but opened the matter up for discussion. Ms. Jeeves reviewed past attendance problems, especially in the summer months.

Ms. Vasilas distributed a cost analysis for holding an ESDAC meeting (approximately \$1,200 for each meeting). This information is available in the Commission Office.

Ms. Teresi stated she felt there had been many meetings that were not productive or necessary. She would prefer to meet quarterly.

Discussion was held regarding readdressing why the committee was in existence and reviewing the original resolution establishing the committee.

Commissioner Wheeler interjected annually the Commissioners review the many committees that fall under the Board of County Commissioners (BCC), and there were several committees he felt should meet on an as needed basis. He explained the recommendations made by ESDAC would go to the BCC and they would vote on making changes.

Chairman Howle made a recommendation to the members that the meeting frequency be changed to quarterly.

ON MOTION by Ms. Jeeves, SECONDED by Councilman Herrera, the members voted unanimously (5-0) to request the Board of County Commissioners change the meeting frequency of the Emergency Services District Advisory Committee from bi-monthly to quarterly.

Ms. Jeeves asked when the IRC budget workshops would begin. Commissioner Wheeler responded staff starts putting the budget together now, gradually, and workshops were generally held in July with the final budget hearings in September. He continued the BCC generally receives the draft budget in June, the major changes were made in July, with the final decisions taking place in September.

Chairman Howle asked Ms. Vasilas to add the budget item to the March, 2010 ESDAC agenda.

Ms. Teresi suggested reviewing the current ESDAC charter at the March meeting as well. Ms. Jeeves asked Ms. Vasilas to e-mail the two previous Resolutions to the members prior to the March meeting.

Chairman's Comments

There were none.

Public Comments

There were none.

Committee Members Suggestions/Comments

Councilman Herrera commented he appreciated the maps and presentation Mr. King made with the highest ranked areas for new fire/rescue stations, but he would still like to see a station in Vero Lake Estates.

Adjournment

Chairman Howle adjourned the meeting at 10:56 a.m.