



**Fire Rescue Advisory Committee  
City of Fort Lauderdale  
March 18, 2023, 3 P.M.  
Fire Station #2  
528 NW 2 Street  
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33311**

<b>Committee Members</b>	<b>Attendance</b>	<b>Cumulative Attendance 3/2024-2/2025</b>	
		<b>Present</b>	<b>Absent</b>
William Brown, Chair	P	1	0
George Farrell	P	1	0
Carlos Lang	P	1	0
Jacquelyn Scott	P	1	0
Dennis Ulmer, Vice Chair	P	1	0

**City Staff**

Robert Bacic, Deputy Fire Chief, Liaison  
Garrett Pingol, Administrative Chief  
Stephen Gollan, Fire Chief  
Karen Cruitt, Prototype, Recording Secretary

**COMMUNICATION TO THE CITY COMMISSION**

**Motion** made by Ms. Scott, seconded by Mr. Lang, that the Committee accepts the FRAC's Communication to the City Commission document as amended, and communicates it to the City Commission. In a voice vote, motion passed unanimously.

**Motion** made by Mr. Lang, seconded by Ms. Scott that the FRAC requests a workshop with the City Commission at their earliest convenience to discuss the FRAC Communication to the City Commission. In a voice vote, motion passed unanimously.



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**ROLL CALL/DETERMINATION OF QUORUM**

The meeting was called to order at 3:00 PM. Roll was called and a quorum was determined to be present.

**APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

**Motion** made by Ms. Scott, seconded by Mr. Lang to approve the meeting agenda. In a voice vote, motion passed unanimously.

## **FIRE RESCUE BUDGET DISCUSSION**

Chief Gollan provided an overview of their budget for next year. He noted the City was set to increase population from 200,000 now to almost 300,000 in five years, which would require a substantial increase in personnel to respond to the corresponding call volume. He said their number one priority was to have two more rescue units up to three people and said they would also pursue a Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response [SAFER] grant. They were also seeking two new positions to create a Homeless Action Team to coordinate with the Mobile Integrated Health Team. Chief Gollan described how this could change the way they helped the homeless population.

Chief Gollan stated they were also seeking to address deficiencies in some specialty teams by offering block training that would use approximately \$500,000 in offsets to accommodate shifts and training better. They were also requesting some updated equipment. Chair Brown asked if this would be funded by the Fire Assessment Fee and Chief Gollan stated the fees could only be used for Fire, not for EMS [such as the three-person rescue staffing]. He was researching a special taxing district to fund EMS, which would need to be voted on by taxpayers. Ms. Scott suggested asking the City Clerk if this could be ready for the fall ballot. Mr. Farrell suggested the Committee point out that a special taxing district could be used to fund EMS without raising the millage rate. Chief Gollan said they would need to calculate how much they needed to make EMS cost neutral in the General Fund. Committee members were in favor of the special taxing district.

Ms. Scott asked about utilizing closed schools for housing the homeless and Chief Gollan said many solutions were being explored but the City did not want to be in the business of providing homes and were working with non-profits to provide that resource. City staff was examining options being used in other municipalities.

**Motion** made by Ms. Scott, seconded by Mr. Farrell to inform the City Commission that the Committee supports and recommends that the Fire Chief and staff pursue the ability to have an EMS/Fire Rescue special taxing district. In a voice vote, motion passed unanimously.

## **APPROVAL OF MINUTES – February 25, 2024**

**Motion** made by Mr. Farrell, seconded by Mr. Lang to approve the February 25, 2024 minutes. In a voice vote, motion passed unanimously.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **OTHER ITEMS AND COMMITTEE DISCUSSION**

Chief Bacic said Chief Gollan had a difficult time making the Committee's meetings so they should consider a different day/time. He would send a list of options to members to discuss at the next meeting.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

- **Communication to the City Commission Document**

Chief Bacic distributed a draft communication, a copy of which is attached to these minutes for the public record. Committee members edited the document, including adding a bullet point regarding the EMS special taxing district. Chief Bacic said he would make the revisions based on the Committee's input and send it out to Committee members. Chair Brown suggested a workshop with the City Commission to present and discuss their recommendations.

## **COMMUNICATION TO THE CITY COMMISSION**

**Motion** made by Ms. Scott, seconded by Mr. Lang, that the Committee accepts the FRAC's Communication to the City Commission document as amended, and communicates it to the City Commission. In a voice vote, motion passed unanimously.

**Motion** made by Mr. Lang, seconded by Ms. Scott that the FRAC requests a workshop with the City Commission at their earliest convenience to discuss the FRAC Communication to the City Commission. In a voice vote, motion passed unanimously.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:16 PM.

Any written public comments made 48 hours prior to the meeting regarding items discussed during the proceedings have been attached hereto.

**Commission Communication:**

Dear Mayor and Commissioners,

Over the past year, our committee has met and had the opportunity to discuss both successes and challenges with Fire Rescue staff. Our first several months were spent learning about Fire Rescue operations and reviewing their Standard of Cover that outlines their operational benchmarks. We as a committee spent the last few months asking questions about specific areas, we found challenging. The population is expected to increase by approximately 90,000 residents within the next 5 years. This increase in population is also expected to create a higher daily influx of commuters into the city. This increase in both population and daily commuter numbers will create challenges beyond Fire Rescue's current capabilities. Due to current recruiting challenges, efforts to expand Fire Rescue services must have a proactive approach.

The committee would like to communicate the following recommendations to commission:

- Continue implementing the needed goal of the 3-person rescue staffing model.
- Work towards full staffing of the Marine Team with a phased approach.
- Continue working with the Regional Communications System to address the needs of Fort Lauderdale Fire Rescue.
- Consider the need to add additional fire stations in the area of powerline and NW 10 St as well as the Sears Town/ Flagler Village area.
- Consider an EMS taxing district to meet funding needs for Fire Rescue services as is being done in other municipalities such as Pompano Beach Fire Rescue.

**3 Person Staffing Model** – This staffing model supports a higher level of patient care in the pre-hospital medial setting. Additionally, over recent years the advancements in medical treatment, technology and the increased need for detailed medical documentation support this staffing model. Furthermore, the 3-person staffing model reduces the number of out of zone responses for the first arriving unit, which improves response times for high priority calls. Under this 3-person staffing model, the additional 3<sup>rd</sup> person holds the position of Lieutenant. This creates the opportunity for a higher trained supervisor to oversee today's increasing challenges of expanded medical care and crucial report writing.

It is the recommendation of this committee that the city continues to work toward reaching a staffing factor that places 3 personnel on all rescue units. As of October 1, 2024, Fire Rescue will have 7 rescues staffed with 3 personnel and 9 rescues remaining with 2-person staffing.

**Marine Team Staffing** – The Marine Team is currently staffed through an adaptive response model. This model leaves the team exposed to response delays on both land and water. When units are responding to land based 911 calls the fireboat response is delayed or even at times non-capable. Additionally, when units from the marine team are on a boat-based response the land based response area must be serviced by a neighboring firehouse. The full staffing model can be reached through a phased approach.

**Regional Communications** – Currently FLFR is a part of the regional communications system and is one of many stakeholders within the county. Regional Communications has been the subject of much

conversation and scrutiny over recent years. FLFR staff have reported that they are seeing large areas of improvement within both technology and performance. We recommend remaining with Regional Communications. Fire Rescue and this committee will continue to review all performance measures of regional communications to ensure our needs are being met.

**Additional Fire Rescue Stations** – FLFR currently responds to over 54,000 emergencies annually from 12 fire stations. The committee has determined that city development and population growth over recent years has created a geographical response challenge for fire rescue. Additional fire stations in the area of Flagler Village and 900 West Sunrise would provide improved response in these areas. This determination has been made after reviewing effective response force (ERF) mapping models. It is likely that these additional fire stations would improve response times city wide while also addressing 2 areas that currently face response time challenges.

**EMS Taxing District** - Consider an EMS taxing district to meet funding needs for Fire Rescue services. Other municipalities such as Pompano Beach Fire Rescue have implemented an EMS taxing district as allowed by Chapter 189, Florida Statutes to help fund the delivery of EMS services by the Fire Department. We currently bring in revenue through the Fire Assessment Fee that can only be used for firefighting. An EMS taxing district could help fund the EMS services side of the Fire Rescue operation.