

# City of Fort Lauderdale

*City Hall  
100 North Andrews Avenue  
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301  
[www.fortlauderdale.gov](http://www.fortlauderdale.gov)*



## Meeting Minutes

**Tuesday, November 29, 2016**

**12:00 PM**

**Joint Workshop with Fire-Rescue Facilities Bond Issue Blue Ribbon  
Committee  
City Commission Conference Room**

## **CITY COMMISSION WORKSHOP**

***FORT LAUDERDALE CITY COMMISSION***

***JOHN P. "JACK" SEILER Mayor - Commissioner  
DEAN J. TRANTALIS Vice Mayor - Commissioner - District II  
BRUCE G. ROBERTS - Commissioner - District I  
ROBERT L. McKINZIE - Commissioner - District III  
ROMNEY ROGERS - Commissioner - District IV***

***LEE R. FELDMAN, City Manager  
JOHN HERBST, City Auditor  
JEFFREY A. MODARELLI, City Clerk  
CYNTHIA A. EVERETT, City Attorney***

**ROLL CALL**

**Present: 5** - Commissioner Bruce G. Roberts, Vice Mayor Dean J. Trantalis, Commissioner Robert L. McKinzie, Commissioner Romney Rogers, and Mayor John P. "Jack" Seiler

**Also Present:** City Manager Lee R. Feldman, City Clerk Jeffrey A. Modarelli, City Attorney Cynthia Everett, and City Auditor John Herbst

**Fire Rescue Facilities Bond Issue Blue Ribbon Committee:**

**Present:** Chair Thornie Jarrett, Vice Chair Douglas Meade, Mark Booth, Patrick McTigue, Frederick H. Nesbitt, Doug Ruth, Frank C. Snedaker, Jr.

**Not Present:** Charles Tatelbaum

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Seiler called the meeting to order at 12:07 p.m.

**OLD/NEW BUSINESS**[16-1484](#)

## Discussion - Board Business

At Mayor Seiler's request, City Manager Feldman updated the attendees on the three new fire stations planned for the City as noted below:

Station 54 will be built on land the City swapped with Bokampers Restaurant. The plans are 100 percent completed and are under review by the City's Building Division. The project should go out to bid in January 2017 with the goal of awarding the bid in February 2017.

Station 8 is currently under design, is over 50% complete, and the IT design is ongoing. Upon completion of the IT design, within four weeks, the design will reach 100 percent, and the bid should go out in the April-May 2017 timeframe. The location is on City-owned land on 17th Street just east of Croissant Park.

Station 13 is located on land owned by the State of Florida (State) in Birch State Park. City Manager Feldman noted the City has been in negotiations with Antioch College and Antioch

University because of a reverter clause in the documents when the land was donated to the State. City Manager Feldman stated both Antioch College and Antioch University are willing to work with the City. The State's position is that moving the Fire Station to the desired location west of the current Fire Station on the Intracoastal is a non-compatible land use for the existing State Park. The State has indicated this cannot be a variance. The State's position is they do not oppose increasing the footprint of the existing Fire Station site. This position remains an issue the City and State will need to work through. The City currently has an architect in place to move forward when a final decision on the site is determined.

In response to Mayor Seiler's inquiry as to the timing of Station 13, City Manager Feldman stated final discussions with the State should take place after the first of the year. City Manager Feldman noted that he did not think the State would agree to move Station 13. Therefore, the City would need to work on extending the footprint of the current location.

Mayor Seiler noted the City Commission, the City's Fire Department, and the Fire-Rescue Facilities Bond Issue Blue Ribbon Committee's (Committee) position is that they would prefer to move the Station 13 West to the Intracoastal. He also noted if this is not possible, it needs to be stated in writing to ensure there is no uncertainty that an effort was made to move Station 13 West of its current location. Further discussions ensued on the need to move forward on this issue.

Mayor Seiler asked City Manager Feldman if City funding is available for the three fire stations. City Manager Feldman stated there is approximately \$13,000,000 in cash available. Additionally, once the City goes out to bid for Fire Station 54, the City will have a good idea of what the current market cost is for this type of project. City Manager Feldman stated that should the available funds not meet the funding requirements for these three fire stations, the City's future CIP will need to be used to make up the shortfall.

Mayor Seiler commented on the belief that there was more funding available and noted the City owes approximately \$983,000 to the Fund. City Manager Feldman stated at the Commission Meeting on December 6, 2016, \$850,000 will be moved from City funds to the Fire Station Fund. He noted the \$850,000 is included in the \$13,000,000 amount he stated earlier.

City Auditor Herbst said he was asked by the Committee to review some of the Fund's charges to ensure they were appropriated

properly. He noted that the Audit Department addressed this request, advised that the necessary adjustments have been made, and the remainder will be made at the December 6, 2016, City Commission Meeting. He also noted that there is another budget amendment that will put additional money in the Fund for future engineering fees.

City Auditor Herbst noted the additional amounts spent were:

Fire Station 47 - General Fund - approximately \$1,000,000;

Fire Station 5388 - Airport Fund - approximately \$4,200,000;  
and

The total spent to date is approximately \$36,000,000 with approximately \$13,000,000 remaining.

City Auditor Herbst confirmed for Mayor Seiler that with the above-noted amounts and the adjustments that will be made, the funds are balanced.

City Auditor Herbst explained the previous questionable costs were researched and were verified as appropriate and confirmed for Mayor Seiler that he is comfortable with the current numbers.

Chair Thornie Jarrett noted the Committee had not been informed of these findings until several days ago and the Committee has not had an opportunity to discuss this issue at a Committee Meeting. Mayor Seiler recommended that City Auditor Herbst explain these findings to the Committee. City Auditor Herbst explained the details of his findings.

Vice Mayor Trantalis asked City Auditor Herbst about the details of the City's borrowing against the Fire Bond. City Auditor Herbst addressed this by explaining how interest is earned and spent for the Fire Bond. Additional explanations and discussions continued on the net effect and it was noted that the City is upside down approximately four percent in the Fire Bond. Vice Mayor Trantalis noted the importance of getting these fire stations built, so interest is not being paid for facilities that do not exist.

Committee member Doug Ruth discussed the interest received. Committee Vice Chair Douglas Meade asked if the City was lending money to an outside agency or if it is lending money to itself and paying a lower interest rate. In response, City Auditor Herbst explained in detail how all of the City's funds are collectively managed.

Mayor Seiler confirmed the understanding on Fire Station 54 and City Manager Feldman stated that the bid will go out in approximately two weeks. Commissioner Roberts stated there would be an anticipated rough opening of Fire Station 54 in January 2018. Carlos Acosta, Assistant City Engineer, gave a brief outline of the process until the ground is broken for construction on this fire station and confirmed he was comfortable giving this Joint Meeting attendees an estimate of a soft opening for Fire Station 54 in January 2018.

City Manager Feldman was asked for an update by Mayor Seiler on the details relating to Antioch College and Antioch University and which entity has rights to the property. City Manager Feldman stated that after discussions with both Antioch University and Antioch College, neither entity would stand in the way of the building of Fire Station 13 due to the public safety issues involved. Mayor Seiler asked that the City Attorney's Office prepare the appropriate waiver documents indicating the college and university's consent to the City's plans for Fire Station 13 and City Attorney Everett concurred. City Manager Feldman stated the issue with the State needs to be worked out first to determine what is being requested. Mayor Seiler noted the need for a deadline date for negotiations with the State so that a decision about the location of Fire Station 13 can move forward. Mayor Seiler said there is a consensus that the current Fire Station would not be renovated because it will not suit the needs of the City stating it either needs to be expanded at its current site or moved west to the Intracoastal.

City Manager Feldman reviewed the progress to date with the State on moving the fire station west to the Intracoastal. Following discussions with the representative from the State's Department of Environmental Protection and former employee of the State's Trustees of Internal Improvement Fund, their position is an insurmountable, non-compatible use issue for a fire station at the proposed Intracoastal location. City Manager Feldman noted he had received this in writing. Mayor Seiler recommended going to a more senior level at the State, the Governor's office.

Commissioner Rogers asked City Manager Feldman to explain the difference between moving the fire station and expanding the fire station. City Manager Feldman explained the factors related to creating turning radiuses for the fire vehicles and expanding the footprint would not be a change of use for the existing structure.

Commissioner Rogers asked about the formal appeal process involved. City Manager Feldman stated a formal appeal is the next step. Comments and discussion ensued on the timeline

consequences in the appeals process along with the possibility of ensuing litigation.

Chair Jarrett commented there were multiple reasons for moving the station to the west. One of the biggest was there would not be a need to build a temporary station as it will cost approximately \$300,000 - \$350,000 in addition to other reasons including using the Intracoastal location for the fire boat. Discussions ensued on the negotiations.

Committee member Fred Nesbitt inquired about timelines. City Manager Feldman stated a reasonable timeline would be the end of January 2017.

Committee member Doug Roth spoke about having a site plan to present to the State. Chair Jarrett commented on the need to ensure the process is thorough, complete and not rushed. Mayor Seiler requested the Committee's input on the timelines for their consideration to ensure everyone is on the same page and to prevent any misinformation from being disseminated.

Vice Chair Meade asked Mr. Acosta about expanding the footprint of the current fire station and how far can it be expanded without going to the Intracoastal. City Manager Feldman responded the State said it would allow minimal expansion to hold the building and give the proper turning radiuses.

Mayor Seiler asked for the amount of land to keep the existing fire station in place and building the new building a little to the west for the footprint needed. Alan Dodd, Assistant Public Works Director, responded that it would be a 30 foot expansion into the park land. According to conversations he had with Diane Martin, Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Recreation and Parks, this would likely be acceptable. He noted that it would also need to be approved by Division of State Land and Acquisition Board (Board) for approval which likely is acceptable because it is a slight enlargement of the current fire station site. Mr. Dodd noted those on the Board are the Governor's appointees who would come up with a recommendation to approve or deny the request.

Mayor Seiler asked for timelines for the following two options:

Intracoastal Site west of the existing location

An expansion of a new facility by 30 x 200 feet at the existing location.

Vice Mayor Trantalis stated these options are dependent on the effort the City will make to work with the State.

Commissioner Rogers recommended asking Fire Chief Robert Hoecherl to address the issue of public safety with the current situation and if public safety was being impeded due to the inability to move forward, and the increase in population this fire station serves.

Fire Chief Hoecherl commented that a public safety issue does exist. He noted the State had taken the City's 40-foot easement when Sunrise Boulevard was expanded. The City's original lease was 200 x 200 feet, and the City's proposed expansion of the current footprint gives the City back its original amount of land area for the fire station. Chief Hoecherl said the Fire Department would like to be on the Intracoastal for public safety reasons. Mayor Seiler confirmed everyone is in agreement that this is the best option.

Mayor Seiler requested a consensus on a reasonable timeframe for a path to move forward with the State. He said he would speak to the City's lobbyists and State Representatives regarding this matter. Vice Mayor Trantalis concurred on the need to marshal forces to get a commitment to move forward on either:

Waterfront construction on the Intracoastal of a new Fire Station west of the current Fire Station (the preferred option); or

Expansion of the current Fire Station with an entirely new facility, taking off the table the rehabilitation of the current facility noting that with either option the fire station needs to be a state-of-the-art brand new fire station facility.

There was a consensus on a 60-90 day timeline for this decision.

Chair Jarrett discussed the issue with the Ocean Rescue Facility being built next to the Fire Station at a later date because it relates to the issue of public safety and could be incorporated at a later time at this location. Chief Hoecherl responded that Ocean Rescue's response to this location was too far away and too far north. Further comments and discussions continued on this topic.

There was unanimous agreement and a consensus among the Commission and the Committee on the following plan regarding Fire Station 13:

- March 31, 2017, will be the deadline for a clear indication of the waterfront location for the fire station property and

if not;

- The City will move forward with plans for a newly expanded facility next door (immediately west) to the current location with a larger footprint.

Mayor Seiler initiated discussions on a location for Fire Station 8.

Chair Jarrett presented the Committee's in-depth Feasibility Study (Study) completed on July 1, 2010, for the location of Fire Station 8.

Chair Jarrett gave an overview and a review of the Study presented to the attendees, gave a thorough explanation of the areas noted and explained the results of the Study. It was confirmed that the population density and number of calls in specific areas have increased since the July 1, 2010, Feasibility Study and is a consistent statement of the situation.

***A copy of the Study is attached to these minutes.***

Chair Jarrett stated the ideal location for Fire Station 8 would be the corner of South Federal Highway and SE 7th Street noting the areas best served and focusing on the future development of the downtown area which is projected to have an increase of 20,000 residents.

Chair Jarrett noted that the fire station located on SW 17th Street (formerly known as the Rio Vista Fire Station) lacks the ability to reach the downtown area in a reasonable period for both medical and firefighting emergencies and lacks the necessary level of service.

Chief Hoecherl commented he was in agreement that the recommended location by the Committee was the best location for Fire Station 8, on South Federal Highway between SE 7th and SE 9th Streets (South Federal Highway). He noted the location of the land for Fire Station 8 on SE 17th Street was given to the City, and it does improve response times though he would prefer the South Federal Highway location.

Mayor Seiler noted the need for a discussion on finding a better location to serve the needs of the citizens in the areas noted in Chair Jarrett's presentation. Past opportunities for a better site for this fire station were discussed. Issues relating to the possible location of the fire house at the County's Building Department building located on South Federal Highway as a possible location were also discussed. The attendees also discussed possible locations in the area on Southeast Federal Highway between SE 7th and SE 9th Streets, but it



was stated that there was not adequate space in any of these parcels where businesses currently exist.

Mayor Seiler raised the question as to whether there is any City-owned land that could meet the preferred location, in the area of Davie Boulevard toward the tunnel and South Federal Highway towards Andrews Avenue. Commissioner Rogers noted the possibility of using the NW corner of the Park in this area which had previously been suggested by City Manager Feldman. It was noted that the residents in the area were strongly against it and this was not an alternative for the location for Fire Station 8.

Mayor Seiler stated that he did not mind putting a decision on a location for Fire Station 8 on hold until a suitable location could be determined. However, Mayor Seiler stated a time frame needs to be established for determining a location.

Commissioner Rogers noted the two areas that have the potential for a catastrophic fire emergency are the Fort Lauderdale International Airport (Airport) and Port Everglades (Port). Fire Station 8 being located on SE 17th Street would allow efficient access to the Port. It was noted that the County has fire apparatus to address emergency needs at the Port, but in high-level emergency situations it is important to have the ability for the assistance of City Fire Rescue.

Commissioner Roberts noted possible alternatives because 80 percent of the EMS calls are for medical issues and may negate the need for a full fire apparatus response. He suggested a hybrid approach, the possibility of keeping Fire Station 8 at its current location and have trained medical staff available to respond at substations in other areas of the City.

Chair Jarrett responded this would require adding more personnel. Mayor Seiler noted the City has already done this and the addition of medical substations may be an alternative solution for locating Fire Station 8 at its current location while still providing the necessary solutions for public safety.

Discussions continued on the possible real estate locations for Fire Station 8, future medical substations and areas that are currently not adequately covered for prompt response of fire and emergency medical teams. The attendees recommended a medical substation near the Venetian that would address the needs of Las Olas Isles.

Mayor Seiler requested a consensus and a complete understanding by both the Commission and the Committee on the next best options

for Fire Station 8. He noted this is the reason for the Commission having Joint Meetings, to ensure both the Commission and Committees are in agreement and on the same page moving forward to prevent the communication of misinformation on the topics discussed.

Commissioner Rogers noted the importance of having Fire Station 8 built, the land allocated for it is owned by the City, and its plans are completed.

Chief Hoecherl discussed the facts relating to the data study done for Fire Station 8 noting the response times south of the River into Harbordale and Rio Vista are improved with Fire Station 8 at the current proposed location. Additionally, the plan is to move the Hazmat Unit into this location because the current response time to the Airport is 39 minutes. Chief Hoecherl noted that the majority of the Hazmat calls are in the downtown area and the Fire Department has been waiting to build Fire Station 8 since 2004.

Frank Snedaker noted the goal should be better coverage throughout the City and agreed with Commissioner Roberts's suggestion of having medical substations. Committee member Fred Nesbitt concurred with Mr. Snedaker's recommendation. Committee member Patrick McTigue also concurred with his recommendation. Committee member Doug Ruth recommended giving a two-month deadline to find an alternative location, and if one cannot be found, he recommended moving forward with the recommendation of keeping the location of Fire Station 8 on the land already owned by the City and creating medical substations in those areas of the City. Vice Chair Meade also concurred with this recommendation stating adding medical substations will be important for the growth of the City.

Chair Jarrett made the following two points on density. He noted the close distance between Fire Stations 54 and Fire Station 29 and the area around the location of Fire Station 8 has some of the lowest density in the City, which will probably not see growth due to zoning issues. He noted the average distance between fire stations is 3 miles and the closest fire stations are less than two miles apart, Fire Station 54 located at Birch and these two stations noted above.

Mayor Seiler noted the issue is finding a solution for improving public safety in the City and the need to focus on a solution for the location of Fire Station 8, along with the addition of proposed medical substations to find a compromise and the best possible scenarios.

Mayor Seiler recommended a concerted effort for a better location for

Fire Station 8 and discussed the timeframe for deciding on a better location.

City Attorney Everett stated she would work with City Manager Feldman to research other possible locations. City Manager Feldman discussed his efforts to find other location options for Fire Station 8. Discussions continued on possible locations options.

Commissioner Rogers noted the size of Fire Station 8 would be 12,000 feet due to the addition of the hazardous material personnel and equipment. Chair Jarrett noted this did not include the dormitory space for additional medical unit personnel or medical treatment. Discussions continued on the space usage for Fire Station 8.

Mayor Seiler confirmed there was a consensus that March 31, 2017, will be the deadline for this search. Should a new location not be obtained by this date, the City will move forward with locating medical response substations to serve the Las Olas Isles and Rio Vista areas.

Mayor Seiler requested a report with background from City Staff on the medical substations, what other cities have done regarding this to include labor with input from Fire Chief Hoecherl and City Auditor John Herbst. City Manager Feldman stated he would work with Fire Chief Hoecherl to address his need for assistance with his input.

Chair Jarrett gave his final comments on his hope of finding a better location for Fire Station 8.

The Commission thanked the Committee for their time, efforts and continuity of service noting this meeting has been a success.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Mayor Seiler adjourned the meeting at 1:40 p.m.