



**MEETING MINUTES
CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE
FIRE-RESCUE FACILITIES BOND ISSUE
BLUE RIBBON COMMITTEE
THURSDAY, JULY 23, 2026
3:30 P.M.**

**1/2026 through 12/2026
Cumulative Attendance**

Board Member	Attendance	Present	Absent
John Vratsinas, Chair	P	5	1
David Cooper, Vice Chair	A	5	1
Bruce Angier	P	6	0
Michelle Heiser	A	3	3
John Hooper	P	4	2

Also Present

Wilfredo Negron, P.E., Senior Project Manager, Capital Projects
Robert Bacic, Deputy Fire Rescue Chief
Victoria Bryan, Senior Administrative Assistant

Communication to the City Commission

Motion was made by Bruce Angier, seconded by John Hooper to approve sending the Memorandum of Summary of the Fort Lauderdale Fire Rescue Facilities Bond Status – History and Current Situation as a Communication to the City Commission. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

{Memorandum attached to the meeting minutes.}

Communications are to be adopted by a motion and majority vote or a clear consensus of a majority of the board.

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 3:32 p.m.

• **Roll Call**

Roll was called and quorum was present.

2. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes



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1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 3:32 p.m.

• **Roll Call**

Roll was called and quorum was present.

2. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

- **June 25, 2026**

Motion was made by Chair Vratsinas to approve the minutes of the June 25, 2026 meeting as presented. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

3. Staff Liaison Report

Mr. Negron distributed the memorandum dated July 23, 2026 and highlighted the issuance of the purchase order to CORE Construction on June 8. He advised City staff held a Preconstruction meeting with CORE Construction, its design team, and the City's consultant (H2M Architects & Engineers) on June 30. On July 14, City staff conducted its first bi-weekly progress meeting with CORE and their design team to discuss the design and permitting process. A demolition permit for Station 13 is scheduled to be submitted to the Development Services Department by July 24, 2026. Asbestos abatement and demolition are scheduled to begin September 2026.

Mr. Negron noted there was an updated baseline schedule in the Board packet, with a target start date for construction of December 2027. He reviewed the financial update on completed Fire Stations, as follows:

Fire Station 54 and 8 – The projects have been completed. A budget amendment was submitted by the Fire Rescue Team and was approved by the City Commission on June 2, to return the remaining project funding balance to Fire Rescue Station 13. Fund transfers are pending.

Temporary Fire Station 13 – The project is in complete status, however the Fire Rescue staff will keep the project open pending completion of remedial work related to the HVAC system.

Fire Station 13 – The design-build contract with CORE Construction is \$13,814,364, the construction engineering inspection contract with Artaic Group is \$752,269.

Deputy Fire Rescue Chief Robert Bacic stated he had reviewed the asbestos report and expected a relatively smooth abatement process. He noted he was excited to see a schedule in place.

Mr. Negron added that a virtual public outreach meeting was held on July 20, where the design was presented and questions from the residents were addressed.

Chair Vratsinas asked how the meeting was advertised. He advised that he is on the committee and lives in the neighborhood but did not hear about it. Mr. Negron stated the consultant had handled the advertising.

Mr. Hooper asked what concerns were raised. Mr. Negron stated there were questions regarding the design and operations, but no concerns were raised and people were happy to have the project move forward.

4. General

a. Communication to the City Commission

Chair Vratsinas shared a draft Memorandum of Summary of the Fort Lauderdale Fire Rescue Facilities Bond Status – History and Current Situation he had prepared at the direction of the Board to provide as a Communication to the City Commission. Discussion ensued briefly.

Motion was made by Bruce Angier, seconded by John Hooper to approve sending the Memorandum of Summary of the Fort Lauderdale Fire Rescue Facilities Bond Status – History and Current Situation as a Communication to the City Commission. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

b. Public Comments

None.

5. Adjournment – Next regular meeting: Thursday, July 23, 2026

There being no further business to come before the Committee at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 3:45 p.m.

Attachments:

- Staff Memorandum dated July 23, 2026
- Memorandum of Summary of the Fort Lauderdale Fire Rescue Facilities Bond Status – History and Current Situation

MEMORANDUM

Fire-Rescue Facilities Bond Issue Blue Ribbon Committee

City of Fort Lauderdale, Florida

TO: Fort Lauderdale City Commission
FROM: John Vratsinas, Chair, Fire-Rescue Facilities Bond Issue Blue Ribbon Committee
DATE: July 20, 2026
SUBJECT: Summary of the Fort Lauderdale Fire-Rescue Facilities Bond Status – History and Current Situation

Summary

In 2004, the City Commission approved an ambitious plan via Resolution No. 04-145 to build approximately 10 new or replacement fire stations for the City of Fort Lauderdale and formed the Fire-Rescue Facilities Bond Issue Blue Ribbon Committee to oversee the bond issued for their completion. Dedicated residents have faithfully served on the committee for more than two decades, keeping close watch over taxpayer dollars dedicated to this critical public safety project.

Today, with the large majority of stations completed or substantially upgraded, the committee's remaining members are pleased to report that the program is in its final phase. Demolition and groundbreaking for the last new station — Fire Station 13 on East Sunrise Boulevard — is scheduled for August 2026 upon permits approval. Road improvements on Sunrise Boulevard will accommodate the new driveway configuration for the station, supporting smoother integration and operational readiness.

We hope to see you there as we mark this significant milestone in Fort Lauderdale's long-term investment in fire-rescue infrastructure.

Background and History

The bond program was voter-approved in November 2004 following the Commission's adoption of Resolution No. 04-145. It authorized the issuance of bonds (primarily Series 2005, with subsequent 2011 refunding/support) providing initial funding of approximately \$40 million to modernize fire-rescue facilities across the city. The Blue Ribbon Committee was established to provide recommendations on the expenditure of bond funds for acquiring, constructing, developing, improving, renovating, equipping, and furnishing the facilities.

Early implementation faced challenges, including project delays and cost pressures. By 2016, only about seven stations had been completed, prompting committee reports on financial tracking and funding sufficiency. Despite these hurdles, steady progress continued through diligent oversight.

Progress to Date

Multiple fire stations (including Stations 29, 47, 3, 35, 46, 49, 8, 54, and others) have been delivered, along with associated temporary facilities, renovations, and shared project costs. Later general obligation bonds have supplemented broader public safety initiatives. The Blue Ribbon Committee has provided ongoing citizen oversight throughout the program's duration.

Current Situation – Final Phase

The program is now in its concluding stage, centered on **Fire Station 13** (a multi-bay facility on East Sunrise Boulevard designed for enhanced capacity). The project has transitioned to a design-build procurement approach. Negotiations with top-ranked contractors (such as CORE Construction, selected for qualifications and experience) continue, with efforts underway to manage costs that have exceeded original bond reserves through value engineering, design adjustments (e.g., single-story options), and supplemental Capital Improvement Program (CIP) funding.

Road improvements on Sunrise Boulevard are timed to accommodate the new driveway configuration, ensuring seamless operational integration upon completion. Demolition and groundbreaking remain on track for August 2026 upon permits approval.

The Blue Ribbon Committee (currently chaired by the undersigned, with Vice Chair David Cooper and members Bruce Angier, Michelle Heiser, and John Hooper) continues to meet monthly to review staff reports, financials, and project milestones.

This long-term initiative reflects the City's sustained commitment to improving emergency response capabilities for residents and visitors. The committee extends its appreciation to all who have contributed to bringing this vision nearly to fruition.

Please contact the committee at FireRescueCommittee@fortlauderdale.gov or the City Clerk's Office for the latest meeting minutes or additional details.

Respectfully submitted,

John Vratsinas

Chair, Fire-Rescue Facilities Bond Issue Blue Ribbon Committee