

APPROVED 3/7/2019

**MINUTES
ORANGE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
JOINT MEETING WITH THE
ORANGE COUNTY CHIEF'S ASSOCIATION
February 12, 2019
7:00 p.m.**

The Orange County Board of Commissioners held a joint meeting with the Orange County Fire Chief's Association on Tuesday, February 12, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. at the Whitted Building in Hillsborough, N.C.

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chair Penny Rich and Commissioners Jamezetta Bedford, Mark Dorosin, Sally Greene, Mark Marcoplos, Earl McKee and Renee Price

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:

COUNTY ATTORNEYS PRESENT: John Roberts

COUNTY STAFF PRESENT: County Manager Bonnie Hammersley, Deputy County Manager Travis Myren and Clerk to the Board Donna S. Baker (All other staff members will be identified appropriately below)

VOLUNTEER FIRE CHIEFS/SORS/ES PRESENT:

Matt Sullivan, Fire Chief, Town of Chapel Hill; Brad Allison, Fire Chief, Caldwell FD; Chief Susanna Williams, Town of Carrboro; Jeff Borland, Fire Chief, Cedar Grove FD; Phillip Nasser, Fire Chief, White Cross FD; Jeff Cabe, Fire Chief, Orange Rural FD; John Stroud, Fire Chief, North Chatham FD; Kevin Brooks, Fire Chief, Efland FD; Pete Hallenbeck, Efland Deputy Fire Chief; Matthew Mauzy, Chief, South Orange Rescue Squad (SORS); Charles Bowden, Fire Chief, New Hope FD; Steve McCauley, Fire Chief, Orange Grove FD; Keith Hayes, Chief, Eno FD; Dinah Jeffries, Orange County Emergency Services Director, Kim Woodard, Orange County ES Operations Manager, Kirby Saunders, Orange County ES Coordinator, Kevin Medlin, Orange County ES Communications Operations Manager, Jason Shepherd, Orange County Fire Marshall

High School Fire Academies: CHCCS -

VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPTS. – CHAIRS, BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Bill Waddell, Orange Grove BOD President; Wayne Paschall, Eno BOD; Fred Stipe, SORS BOD President; Cliff Carroll, New Hope BOD President, Tony Blake, White Cross BOD President

THIS MEETING DID NOT FOLLOW THE AGENDA AND NEITHER DID THE SCHOOLS!!

Chair Rich called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Welcome and Introductions

1. 2018 Highlights - Significant Impact Incidents and Events and Related Services
2. Collaboration and Teamwork Across Departments
 - a) County Mutual Aid Agreement
 - b) Quarterly Training

3. Meeting Benchmarks and Providing Service
4. Council Priorities
 - a) Training (Current and New Fire Fighters)
 - b) Radios/Communication
 - c) Workforce Development
5. High School Fire Academies
6. Training Center

Chief Sullivan said the Fire Chiefs Association is comprised of 10 fire departments, SORS, and Emergency Services and it meets 6 times a year and he is the president this year. He said Assistant Chief Holden of the Orange Rural Fire Department died while in service, and there are countless individuals everyday that make the ultimate sacrifice.

Chief Sullivan said North Chatham and Durham and Mebane Fire Departments also are involved in their association. He said Commissioners also serve as liaisons to the association, which is very helpful.

Chief Sullivan made the following PowerPoint presentation:

Joint Meeting

Orange County Board of Commissioners and Orange County Fire Chief's Association February 12, 2019

Tonight's Discussion

- 2018 Highlights
- Collaboration and Teamwork
- Meeting Benchmarks and Providing Service
- Priorities:
 - Training
 - Communication/Radios
 - Workforce Development and Preservation
- High School Fire Academies
- Training Center

Who we are - patches

2018 and the importance of teamwork

- 2 Hurricanes
- 2 Major Winter Storms
- High Interest Large Gatherings
- Countywide Mutual Aid Agreement
 - Quarterly Training
 - 4 Department Structure Fire Dispatch
- PageTrack Software

Highlights:

- ISO ratings have been reduced
- Received grants to upgrade their fire training facilities, new facilities, co-location of EMS units

- Trying to recruit a diverse workforce
- Trying to increase their workforce

Service and Value to Orange County

- 17 Million Dollar Question- contribution of service Orange County by the volunteer firefighters.
- Risk Assessment Committee- He said that they are looking to have shared resources across the county departments.

Emergency Communications

- Enhanced emergency communications are needed in Orange County, and the Chiefs are looking at a comprehensive package for this.

Workforce Development and Preservation

- High School Fire Academies
- Training Facility Importance- Durham Tech plays a major role in their training

Chief Sullivan said the items below are priorities:

- Health and Safety-
 - Critical Incident Stress Management - they are retiring firefighters due to mental illness
 - Cancer Prevention - firefighters are dying at alarming rates across the nation and here in Orange County and they need to take a whole look at this

Training Center Update

Chief Sullivan said last year Chief Phillip Nasserri applied for, and received, a federal grant for \$330,000 for a training facility.

Chief Sullivan said the Chiefs have ordered the facility and now need to centrally locate it. He said there are two maps at the Commissioners' regarding possible locations: Durham Tech and Blackwood Farms

- Durham Tech – He said he, other fire chiefs, and Travis Myren went to Durham Tech to try discussing co-locating on their Orange County campus, but unfortunately the property is in the backyard of residential properties and he is afraid of the “not in my backyard” concerns. He said this visit did reveal the fact that Durham Tech has some funding to assist with this facility, in exchange for use of the facility.
- Blackwood Farm site: he said the Chiefs understand this is a valuable asset to Orange County. He said this property is an ideal location to place this facility, but this is an Orange County decision.
- He said the training facility prop is movable (picture on slide), and the Fire Chiefs association now owns it. He said a location will be needed by the end of August 2019.

Phillip Nasserri said the property needs to be bought and paid for by the end of August, so a location needs to be hammered out by mid-March, in order to do the grading. He said there are lots of possible locations, but he does not want the cost of grading to outweigh the cost of the building. He said the location needs to be economically feasible, easily accessible, centrally located, and close to city water. He said Durham Tech is amenable to help fund it, and discussions are ongoing. He said Durham Tech may be willing to contribute to an off-site location as well.

Chief Sullivan said the Chiefs will continue to work on this as it is so desperately needed.

Commissioner Price asked if the Chiefs are interested in a particular spot at Blackwood Farm.

Phillip Nasserri said the location needs to have at least 2 acres of space, but it is up to the Orange County Board of County Commissioners. He said it would be nice to have a flat, clear space.

Chief Sullivan said Orange County is blessed to make all kinds of decisions, and this is a direct reflection of the quality public safety services that undergird the community.

Commissioner Dorosin said he is the new liaison to the Fire Chiefs committee, and there is a lot to recommend Durham Tech as a site: water and sewer already there; goal of trying to create an Orange County fire academy at Durham Tech. He said the Board of County Commissioners can play a more significant role with Durham Tech and this process, and this is an opportunity to work collaboratively. He said the Commissioners need to prioritize these negotiations, as this facility hits on multiple goals that they share.

Commissioner McKee said the \$17 million figure came out of the Emergency Services work group from 2011-12, and that number is probably low now. He said there is a deadline for this process because this a federal grant, and time is not on their side.

Commissioner Price said echoed Commissioner McKee's comments about time. She said if they decide to go with Durham Tech to make sure they partner with them in all aspects of fire training. She said \$17 million is too low.

Chair Rich said she is impressed with how the fire departments coordinate with one another, and a lot can be learned from this coordination. She said she has a meeting with Durham Tech this week, and she will discuss this with them. She asked if there are more specifics available about the timeline, as March is very soon.

Phillip Nasserri said they need enough time to get the grading done for the facility, and the foundation marked up. He said the facility is pre-fabricated, and takes about 5 days to assemble. He said he is trying to get everything done expeditiously.

Chair Rich said the grading at Durham Tech would be easier than Blackwood Farm.

Phillip Nasserri said there is a lot of rock at Durham Tech, and is not the most level terrain. He said if Durham Tech agrees to the memorandum of understanding, it can help fund to remove the rock. He said if Durham Tech does not work as a location, it has said that some funding may still be available for another site, as long as Durham Tech can use the facility.

Chair Rich asked if the Town of Hillsborough would need to be involved in approval.

Travis Myren said Durham Tech's existing Special Use Permit would allow for any educational facilities related to the educational mission. He said if the Town sees this facility as fitting those parameters, it is possible that the current SUP would cover the installation of this facility. He said if the Town will not allow the SUP to cover the installation, the time line will be much longer.

Commissioner Marcoplos agreed with pursuing the Durham Tech site, but asked if the Millhouse Road site could be more specifically pinpointed, should Durham Tech fall through.

Chief Sullivan said the Town of Chapel Hill has a small parcel of land between the transit and the public works facilities. He said this property was supposed for a transfer station and he may be able to use this property temporarily. He said the structure is portable, and could be moved at a later date. He said the County has two large parcels on Eubanks, which may also be possibilities.

Commissioner Dorosin asked if those locations are too far south.

Chief Sullivan said possibly.

Chief Hayes (Eno Fire Department) said it was brought to his attention that a resident came to the February 5th Board of County Commissioners meeting with some complaints, which he wanted to address:

- The resident expressed concern about station 2 on St. Mary's Road, and its lack of EMS services. He said this has been a work in process, and EMS will be stationed here full time within 2-3 weeks. He said the resident expressed concern about the sprinkler system failing should the power go out (due to well water), but noted that this station has a 100K generator.
- He said there are firefighters that live on St. Mary's Road, who pass station 2 going to work Monday through Friday, and there are people at this station daily.
- He said during storms, EMS and the Sheriff's department utilize this station. He said a lack of tracks in the snow does not mean the station is unstaffed, but rather no calls have been run.
- The resident stated the department only has a "john boat with a paddle". He said the department has a zodiac military style boat with two paddles for water rescue. He said the boat does not have a motor at this time due to budgetary constraints, but if the department receives a water rescue call, Orange Rural Fire Department goes along, and SORS is on standby, if necessary.
- The resident said the department cannot answer calls in the State Park, but this is not true, and resources do not come from Alamance County, as claimed by the resident. He said there are 15 personnel on a 48 person staff who are trained in water rescue.

Commissioner Dorosin asked if Chief Hayes could provide this information in writing so the Board could respond to the resident.

Chair Rich said Dinah Jeffries had already responded.

Commissioner Dorosin said this information should be made publically available to refute the allegations made by the resident.

Commissioner Marcoplos referred to the two paddles and a high quality boat, and asked if a motor would be useful.

Chief Hayes said a motor would be very useful, but require the purchase of a different style boat as the current boat is not equipped for a motor. He said funds will not allow for such a purchase at this time.

The meeting adjourned at 7:49 p.m.

Penny Rich, Chair

Donna Baker
Clerk to the Board