

MALABAR TOWN COUNCIL WORKSHOP
APRIL 18, 2005 7:00 PM

This meeting of the Malabar Town Council was held at Town Hall at 2725 Malabar Road. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by the Chair, Bobbi Moccia. The prayer and pledge were led by Bobbi Moccia.

ROLL CALL: MAYOR/VICE-CHAIR
CHAIR:
COUNCIL MEMBERS:

TOM ESCHENBERG
BOBBI MOCCIA
FRANK HICKSON
BRIAN VAIL
STEVE RIVET
ED BOOTH
KARL BOHNE
SUSAN KABANA

ADMINISTRATOR:
ATTORNEY:
CLERK:

DISCUSSION OF THE MALABAR FIRE DEPARTMENT

Moccia-this Council workshop was put together and we are going to begin with listening to Mr. Rossman.

Rossman-thank you Council, Council Member and Mr. Mayor. The reason that I asked if I could open this workshop is because I feel responsible, when I was on Council, for this coming to pass. I haven't seen the final report of the TD Group, but I do have the draft. I did give my copy to Brian Vail, at the last Council meeting I was at, my copy of the draft and I hope you have one. On page 73, I think it's important that this is the starting point, he read from this page. How this came about when I was on Council, Mr. Hickson, Mr. Vail and Mr. Eschenberg were not on Council. About 2 ½ years ago, we had a volunteer firefighter come to Council, a female firefighter and she was very upset and unhappy, and as a matter of fact I gave a copy of the minutes to Mr. Booth, he should have it with the woman's name. She took about an hour of our time in front of Council. That's what started or peeked my curiosity with the Malabar Volunteer Fire Department. About four or five days later, I had another volunteer firefighter come to my home and voice some of their concerns. Within the next six months, I must have had eight or ten different volunteer firefighters, I guess the reason they contacted me was I apparently showed interest or it appeared interest to the female firefighter when she was here. It did peek my curiosity when she was here. When we got the budgets, I was not happy with the budgets we were getting from the Fire Department. That's what started and peeked this and I ask that maybe we should look at the volunteer fire department and find out is we doing what we really need to do for the citizens of Malabar. Then we started talking with the people from Grant and Valkaria about annexation. One of the questions that came up was about fire safety and could we provide it and we realized that we really couldn't. So what I would like for you to do, if you still have your drafts, when I said to Mr. Vail, page 21 on the draft, it goes to planning. I feel that in the past several years, and I'm not necessarily, and it may sound like it, but I'm not knocking the Fire Department, but I think the planning has been remiss. I think that's been an area and a step that we haven't been done. On page 21, it says: Step One: establish a Fire Department Planning Committee. Usually, recommendations for Council, and everything that is said tonight, you will be the one to have to decide, and I hope that in your decision process you don't take a parochial view or a small myopic view of what's happening. I hope that you take a view of what benefits the entire community, not what just affects the volunteer fire department. In doing this, I did meet with Mr. Booth prior to this draft being done. I did meet with Mr. Booth and some of the Fire Board and we did talk about some deficiencies, and the Fire Board, I have to say, is addressing that. One of the deficiencies is that came out of these meeting was, if you'll go to page 23, it talks about leadership practices and it says that there exists a level of deficiency in the Fire Department, and I think that was true. Budgeting on page 24, I think the budgeting process was flawed. I think it still is. One of the things that came as a result of and you can ask Mr. Booth about this. There is property that is missing and unaccountable from the Fire Department, whether it's lost or wherever it's gone. That's just poor planning and poor

budgeting processes. And that's not the Fire Department's fault, that's all of our faults. In the draft on page 28 & 29, it goes into different types of budgets. They are rather complex for someone who has never looked at or done a budget. But of more importance is page 53, Policies and Procedures. I don't think there are sufficient policies and procedures in place. Although the Fire Board is addressing that, they are looking at it. But every organization, when you come into an organization, as Council members when you came on, you were given policies and procedures handbook. One of the concerns that every volunteer firefighter talked to me about was policies and procedures. They have no idea what they were, they weren't give to them and they were being disciplined for violating policies and procedures that they were not aware of. That's really a terrible thing to do. Page 53 addressed policies and procedures and on page 54, and having been in public government for thirty-seven years and having done policies and procedures, I never re-invented the wheel. Page 54 tells you that, there are departments in the County who are willing to provide samples of their policies, procedures, rules and regulations. You can pick from various columns, you don't re-invent the wheel. There are plenty of policies and procedures available to our Fire Department. Page 59, Personnel Training, every volunteer firefighter that contacted me, complained of lack of training, lack of documentation of training, and lack of availability of training. In fact, some of them stated that there are people riding on equipment that were not trained to ride on the equipment and that there is a liability. I don't know how much of that might be sour grapes or how much of it is factual or not factual. But when twelve to fifteen people from a volunteer fire department the size of ours come and state that there is a problem with training or lack of training, in the fire service, if there is smoke there is fire. My personal opinion is there is a lack of training in our volunteer fire department. On page 60, it talks about letters of certification. It even talks about a fire inspector, and if I'm not mistaken, we don't have a fire inspector, do we? We have to have a fire inspector. It's called for by Florida State Statute, I believe.

Booth-we actually addressed that at the last meeting and we allow the three businesses that need to do them go directly to the County. It seems to be working out well within the last two years.

Rossmann-I think that in the past several years, there are other places that need fire inspections other than just new businesses. I know of one, right off hand I can think of, is the Knights of Columbus on Babcock.

Booth-they are going directly to the County and paying the fee and then coming back here. We couldn't understand why we were paying \$7,000 to the County when they could go directly to them and according to the Building Department and the correspondence, it's working well.

Rossmann-I know that you can train, well I shouldn't say that I know because I'm not a fire person, I've never been involved in fire fighting and I'll direct it to Chief Greene, I know that you can train, if I'm not mistaken, you can train your building inspectors to be fire inspectors and that suits or qualifies the Florida State Statutes. Is that correct?

Booth-you're talking about restaurants, and that's what the three businesses that have to go directly to the County are, the restaurants that have to go on a yearly basis. Everything else is being done by Norm Smith.

Rossmann-that would answer that issue. But it was an issue that was a concern to me and I feel it should be a concern to Council. Again, I think page 73 sums up how I feel and, I hope, how Council feels and that this really is a community deficiency. I don't think the fire department can and should be blamed. I think they have managed, at best, a satisfactory job. I know that there had been response times that have been poor. I was told, also, that they didn't even respond to fires. That's not good. All I ask is that Council be open-minded. Don't be parochial in your view and do address the issue, no matter which way you go, I hope that the decisions that you make is the decisions are the best for the citizens of Malabar because I am one of those residents. I would really be upset if I needed fire service and I didn't get fire service. I think that there are liabilities that the Town has that, for a long time, have been unaddressed and I really think that it is time that they be addressed and I think that we need to move into the 21st century, which is where we are. Thank you very much for your time.

Moccia—thank you Mr. Rossman. I kind of have some ground rules here. We are going to listen to the TD Group first and then we will listen to the Fire Department. So if you would like to go ahead and begin.

David Green—of the TD group came forward and made their presentation. We were hired several months ago to evaluate the Fire Department. My background, I have been with Fire Services for 28 years and a Fire Chief for 20 years with the City of Palm Bay. I worked with the Malabar Department for 28 years as a firefighter, a fire officer and fire chief and no considerable history of the Malabar situation. Years ago, back in the early 70's, the Town of Malabar received fire protection from the City of Palm Bay. Up until the volunteer department started, was it in the early 1980's? Does anybody know? It was started in 1977. At that time, the response times to the Town were in the vicinity of seven minutes. So when we evaluated and looked at the documentation that we had available to us from the Malabar Fire Department, the times of response had really not changed that significantly over that period of time from the 70's to now. So we set out to look at what were the reasons for that and naturally and historically, volunteer fire department's, in most cases, start off with a deficiency and that deficiency is that they start off from their homes, to the station, to the incident. So that is a very difficult situation to overcome. Also, looking at the National Standard in the United States, that is highly recommended, a multitude of reasons that we will probably get into later, is six minute response time. Now, that includes a one minute processing the call, that's the 911 call from the Call Center, one minute for getting on the apparatus at the station and four minutes from the station to the incident. So that's the National Standard that is recommended. Unfortunately, you folks in the volunteer fire department are not unlike hundreds of departments throughout the United States. What is occurring is growth is overwhelming the departments. The ability to provide the financial support to the departments is deficient. So what you have is a multitude of problems, that are not, all in all, the fault of the volunteer departments. So if they don't have the funding to provide the specific services to allow them to come in line with the recommendations, then that's a Town, City or Municipal problem that has to be worked on. As we went through the process, we started out with meeting with Mr. Booth and we met with the Fire Department on two occasions. One was formal meeting, one was an informal meeting. We requested, I believe, about 35 documents, which were requested and I believe we received about 12. Now one of the problems is, and this here is no blame to the fire department, that's what we are here for is to provide guidance and direction on gathering information that helps communities measure quantitative and qualitative measurements as far as performance goes. That's what it's all about today, it's all about performance and how it's measured. In our document, we provided several formats that are applicable in the majority of cases, information that is gathered so that the fire department can determine where they are at from year to year and where they need to go from year to year. That's what the qualitative and quantitative measurements are. The other problem is, with a town the size of Malabar, with approximately 3,000 residents and approximately 1,100 structures, there isn't that day to day need to respond to incidents. I believe the last year, we had two structure fires. The majority of the volunteer force is directed to EMS. The smaller percentage is the structure fires. When I go back to my days in the Palm Bay fire department, we ran into the same identical problem and we were a paid department. Insufficient funding, the growth in the 1980's, we were the fastest growing city in the United States for two years. The fire department sat down and, with its entire staff, and tried to gather as much information as possible to cope with this overwhelming demand for services. The same issue is facing the entire Town today. There's the ambulance transport problem, which is a major issue. The regional fire protection is a major issue. The costs of fire protection are unbelievable today, just enormous. Most communities, like yourself, have a very difficult time to look at what the alternatives are, what the options are, how you go about providing a equitable service for growing population and as I drive through the Town, it seems like everywhere I turn there's a new structure under construction. They are not \$150,000 homes, many of these homes, I believe, is in \$300,000 and up. So, the dilemma is that this causes another problem for your fire service, square footage. The bigger the structures, the more difficult it is to put the

fires out and maintain them and to provide sufficient number of personnel on the scene to do what is needed to do to exhaust the fire. You have what is called today, in the fire service, a

two man two out rule. That means if you have two people inside the structure, you have got to have two people outside ready to back up the two inside. Now, I would bring it to you, the acting chief, this is pretty difficult for you to do today, correct? That's correct. It's a difficult situation, the dilemmas are enormous. All we have tried to do is provide some guidelines, direction and ways that the fire department can utilize the information to structure their department to provide better performance. We went through options that we've looked at, not only as past employees ourselves of the fire department, but trying to look at where you can get the best for your dollar expenditure the quickest. Basically, and this is not against your department at all because they are in a situation where they are willing participants to provide the best service they can available and it's pretty difficult for them to compete with a paid department that already has somebody in a fire station ready to go if an alarm comes in. Although, I have to say many people don't realize this, that the vast majority of fire stations in the United States are volunteer departments. They are not paid. Paid firefighters only make up about probably about 300,000, 25%. About 300,000 paid firefighters in the United States, the rest are volunteers. So how do you overcome those deficiencies, and there is a multitude of other options that are available. A lot of cities mix and blend today. There are all kinds of different formats of fire protection. There is automatic aid; there is district type of situations. Malabar has a specific issue. It's a little conclave that belongs to Malabar, which is located off of Port Malabar Boulevard. You can't get there very quick. When I was the Fire Chief in the City of Palm Bay, the folks from Brook Hollow would call me monthly in regards to insurance; their insurance company would call them and ask where they get fire protection from. I could not tell them that Palm Bay provided their fire protection. Of course, they were upset about this. However, we never denied fire protection for that conclave. My directive, if there was a call, go ahead and respond. We will work out the details later, let's not have someone's home burn down when we have a fire station who can respond in 2 ½ minutes. We went through that for years. What is your response time to Brook Hollow today, about 7 ½ minutes from the station? You have a dilemma today. You have that issue that needs immediate attention. Does Palm Bay still provide that kind of service? Have you had arrangements with them? I don't know myself.

Firefighter-it's an automatic mutual aid with them. We call it in and control sends them out.

Green-under the mutual aid, the mutual aid agreement, there has to be or required to be the municipality is supposed to have one of their apparatus on the scene.

Firefighter-no there isn't.

Green-that's no longer required?

Firefighter-no

Green-well, that's an improvement over a few years ago. However, the other deficiency that could be worked out for the future is the travel time from the north end to the south end of the city. The fire department is already in deficient mode to begin with, let alone trying to respond from one fire station that is at the north end of their territory all the way to the south end. So that adds time. So when you look at the entire picture, as to how you are going to determine the direction you go with the fire department, you are going to have to consider how you are going to help them with their deficiencies, how long it's going to take you to remedy those deficiencies and what is the costs related to those deficiencies. Now one of the things that we recommended is that what you can do in order to try to get up to speed as fast as you can, you could contract some services out and maintain the fire department until you can decide which direction as a municipality that you want to go. So all we have done is provide information as far as direction and guidance from how to get from A to B. We are willing to help you pro bono, at no cost, for the next year as far as being there to help you find direction and determine how you want to get there. Basically, that's it in a nutshell. The fire department that you have is, and I believe we said a couple times in our document, the ladies and gentlemen are outstanding citizens. They are out there putting their life on the line on a day to day basis and they are not even paid personnel. So you have to take a look at that factor. You have to take a look at the

volunteers and what they are providing for the Town. One of the things that we thought was peculiar, and I don't know if you have an opportunity to address it or not, but a lot of the firefighters, volunteers, work from adjoining communities and there was a lower percentage of

members from the town. Is that still correct? I don't know what the reason is there, but there needs to be a community effort to promote the volunteer department if that's the direction you are going to maintain, to promote the department to more the of community involved. There are a lot of little options that could bring about some minor changes to the department to help them perform at a better level of service that they could provide today, through no fault of their own. It's just efficiency with volunteer departments is the response time. The other thing is do you still maintain, I don't believe that you told me, your paramedic program?

Firefighter-we never had a paramedic program.

Green-but you did have a lot of paramedics?

Firefighter-we have two.

Green-we were told that paramedics would respond to calls.

Moccia-could I, please, allow them to come up and make their presentation? Then, if you have questions, I know that you have given us your overview of what you expect and the options, you've chosen option two. I would like to hear from the Fire Department now; we only have a certain amount of time during workshops. Whoever is speaking, please go ahead.

Dave Ruip 1830 Eva Lane-came forward and addressed Council. For less than a month, I have been acting Chief. We have a new member on the department, Bob Rowan, who lives on Corey Road in Malabar. I have appointed him as our information officer. He has done a tremendous amount of work investigating and reviewing the TD Group's report and trying to come up with some factual information to substantiate our stand. Not necessarily tearing down yours, because there is a lot in there that we did appreciate that you stated. So I will let him speak and make his presentation. I will defer any questions to Bob, our retired chief, Chuck McClelland. I have appointed Marshall Gerhke as Deputy Chief. If there are questions, please feel free to answer them.

Moccia-we will listen to his presentation first and will hold questions after.

Bob Rowan, Residential Operations Coordination-came forward and made his presentation to Council. A copy of the power point presentation is hereby made a part of these minutes. I think that we are all here for the same reason. We want to be able to provide the citizens of Malabar with the best services that we can possibly provide. We have some suggestions that we have put forward in the department and there are some good things that I found in the TD document but I just don't like to address, I'm a person of fact and I like to deal, when I make a statement, to back that up a little bit. I have been appointed the Residential Operations Coordinator. The corporation president, John Futch and all the rest of the department are represented here. The Malabar Volunteer Fire Department, Inc. run by President John Futch, who has a responsibility to oversee all business operations of the fire department. We do currently hold monthly meetings. Mr. Rowan had responses to several issues from the TD Group study. In regards to the record keeping, Mr. Rowan stated that once we get our office space back and get some filing cabinets, this particular issue would be taken care of. My job is to control and protect the office computer files, including inventory. With regards to property accountability, I know that we have some equipment that is missing, whether from the storms or not. Everything will now be bar coded. We will ask the Town of Malabar to purchase a small bar code scanner so we can go around and scan the equipment with a certain dollar amount and download to the computer for periodic checks. Equipment issued to members would be identified and signed for. Our firefighter data base will be completely updated with all the equipment. Any equipment lost by a member of the fire department becomes their responsibility. The budget tracking for the fire department is handled by the Town. With regards to capital improvements, the TD Group made some very good suggestions and we hope to adopt them fairly quickly. The issue

of Policies and Procedures, these books can be found in the trailer. This book, a loose-leaf notebook, contains the By Laws along with the policies. As I was thumbing through it, there is a page in the front of each section that is required to be initialed by each member as they read through the sections. Could it be better? In my opinion it could. With hurricane recovery and the new chain of command that is happening, I think you are going to see a different policy file. I brought one from my old department in New York. It has everything you could talk about and we can review it and make changes as needed. On page 55 of the TD Group study, there is a vast list of documents. We need to look at this list and add some of these policies to our department. There is some very good information for our new administration to consider. Training is not quite what I heard. It is training directed to the stuff that we see on the fire line, the things that are going to happen here in Malabar. We are not going to train on a six story structure or basement fires. We don't have that, so we, particularly, focus our training to what our needs are here in Malabar. We are currently looking to train a Trainer Program. That is one thing we were very successful in my department. By the way, the department that I came from in New York, the whole County, Nassau and Sumter Counties, were strictly 100 % volunteer departments with tremendous response times. We are evaluating external training material as a cost effective approach, and that's mainly for standardizing, so for example, if we are doing a search and rescue training and I give the training this week and someone else gives the training next week, that the person receiving the training, that I'm not telling them to how to search a room and then someone else is telling them something different. The key word here is standardization. We train every Thursday night. We model our training on the International Fire Service Training Association book and EMS training from the Brady Book. There is a gap in the lack of fire prevention training. We understand that this needs to be resolved. However, what we have done, and I have a sample page, is residential pre-planning. I came up with a form and we handed it out at the Springfest. We only have about 30 people so far, but its start. We asked questions like directions to homes, where children's rooms are located (if they wanted to share that information with us), is there any handicapped people in the home, is there any oxygen used in the home, do you have any large propane tanks. This is all the stuff that we'd want to know before rolling up to that scene. Ideally, if we get set up properly, all this information in our fire program and download it to a palm pilot. This palm pilot would be taken to the scene by the Fire Chief to have on hand at the scene. It is readily accepted by the residents who filled out the form. I have gotten a lot of positive feed back from them. I am currently developing a commercial pre-plan. I have pulled some information off the internet. Anyone who has any suggestions on what a commercial pre-plan would look like, we would be happy to talk to you about that. We do have a team in place. The head of the team is Mike Foley. We are about to get that going. We have the pre-plans, about 20 commercial structures identified by the Town. We are going to go around and put up visitation schedules together. With digital cameras what they are today, I believe that this is one of the ways to go. Management Information on page 64, I had a little problem with this. It just seems that it was much too extensive data for this type of department. Most of the stuff we have on pages 65-70, are already included in our fire program's software. We come back from a call, or at some point we enter the data in. We have enough data here to do trend analysis and risk analysis on our calls. Once we download this information, we send the data State Fire Marshal's office and I have copies for the last five years of all the data from our fire calls. The response time, one of the comments made in the TD report was below from surrounding departments, stated on page 8. Where's the data? I haven't seen anything in there that states what surrounding departments do. You did say that paid firefighters are expected to be on the scene within five minutes. We got, from public records, Brevard County is 5.05 minutes. Volunteer firefighters are expected to be on scene within 9 minutes of the page to structural fires 90% of the time. To improve our response time, actually someone hit is right on that we should have more people who live in the town join the department. We now have a handful of residents and are possibly looking at second and third shift work. The biggest thing we can do to help ourselves is to get a Firefighter I course regularly scheduled, so that new members who come in they can get certified as quickly as possible, they are taught to drive as quickly as possible to respond on a scene as quickly as possible so they are not waiting at the station for someone to show up. A

little more on response time, the TD Group showed EMS was 39% of the time were greater than 8 minutes and 80% of the time for fires was greater than 7 minutes. Here's the data, this is the average data from each of the years: 2001-6.3, 2002-7.5, 2003-7.6, 2004-6.8, and 2005-6.4. I really expected 2005 to be a little higher because we have switched to alpha numeric pagers, which adds delays to our response time. We are about to fix that.

Green-I have a question about that. Does that response time include the 911 calls?

Rowan-no, it's the time we got the page.

Green-we are looking at two different issues.

Rowan-I think what we want to get out of this, whether it's your number or our number, how do we make it better? That's the end result.

Green-we are going by the national recommended standards.

Rowan-with regards to the paramedic program, we never had a paramedic program in Malabar. The first responder usually, almost always, we have an EMT on board. Either it's on an engine or on one of the rescue vehicles. Sometimes we have a paramedic at the scene. We have two paramedics in the department. It's Brevard County's Charter to provide advanced life support. When we get to the scene, we do patient assessment and all that an EMT is allowed to do. We have to wait for rescue 88 to respond from Palm Bay Hospital.

Green-please allow me interrupt again. In reference to that, we probably should have worded that differently. We were advised that you were attempting to develop the paramedic program. This even goes back several years ago as to when I was Chief at Palm Bay. So what we are saying is the loss is that the program didn't come to fruition.

Rowan-with regard to the issue of lack of fire suppression experience, on page 11. We have 32 members ready to respond. These are accepted members, fully trained and ready to respond, firefighter and above. We have 18 probationary, that number kind of shocked me but we've got a lot of quality people that joined in the last four or five months, categories of fire, police and reserves, etc. Of those 32 members, 12 have the basic voluntary certification, 2 are Firefighter I, 6 went to Firefighter II; you have to have Firefighter I to be a II. Two of the people are forestry; one or two are HASMAT, 19 EMTs and two paramedics. We have talked about the lack of fire experience. Malabar has very few fires. Our skills are maintained to training rather than practice. We are glad that works out that way. At this time, Mr. Rowan provided some statistics for Council and the audience with regards to volunteer fire departments. Mr. Rowan addressed train derailments. He could not find current information regarding this issue. A derailment pre-plan, I contacted all of the surrounding areas. No one has a derailment pre-plan with the exception of Titusville. Once we get up and running you better believe that the Town of Malabar will have one.

Green-Palm Bay should have a plan. I don't know who you talked to, but we developed it.

Rowan-we are sorry for the misinformation. We would like to have a copy of this pre-plan if it is available.

Green-it was developed five years ago, with a fee of \$300.00 spent on it.

Rowan-we will take that and digest it. We are going to get a copy of Titusville and do the same. A five year plan is definitely needed. We need to work better and closer with the Town to identify their short term and long term goals because there are big expansions planned for this town probably within the next two years. We also need to do a risk analysis on that town plan against both manpower and equipment, as you mention previously, station location. Once we have all that data absorbed, create a strategic plan with the town administration to be financial and equipment goals to meet protection requirements within a cost schedule. We cannot go out and spend a lot of money. We are not a wealthy town; we need a lot of bang for our buck. I saw the ISO water plans. Class one is best, class five is pretty good. Class nine is the best you can do for a rural town with no water. Changing from a class five to a three, this is an estimate, I have no data, would save homeowners approximately \$50/year to the homeowner. I went out and benchmarked this data. Malabar is a class 5 to 9, class 5 in the hydrant areas and 9 in the rural areas. Satellite Beach is a class 5; Brevard County is a class 5/9, the same as Malabar. They were 5 in the hydrant areas and 9 in the rural areas. Fallon, Nevada, in the middle of the desert, is one of the few class 1's. How did they do it? They built a 3,000 gallon system in the developments. Do we want to do that? Well, can the Town afford to improve that water supply;

can we get that kind of guaranty delivery? Is it cost affective for residents? Will our new plans to get that new tanker in four months, or whenever it's coming, provide added protection for the commercial/residential structures of Malabar? We have some 3,000 gallon tankers, yesterday, dumping water into our trucks. We never once ran out of water, never. We always have water. One of the suggestions is that the Town could consider is suggesting to homeowners who have lakes/ponds install draft hydrants. It's a dry hydrant that runs pipe into the lake and we could suck water out through the hydrant into our trucks. There was some issue that was dealt with in the past that we would have to satisfy the hundred year drought. I don't know if this is a viable alternative, but we are making suggestions just like the TD Group is. At this time, Mr. Rowan gave a general summary of this presentation.

Moccia—since both of those took such a long time, this is a lot of information to ingest for one night at a workshop. I believe that the Council should ingest this, take this home and look at the details and look at both sides and let's see if we can make some decisions at the next council meeting.

Eschenberg—has a question for the current fire department. There is a lot of things involved here, administrative procedures and all, keeping track of the equipment and budgets. I think that what the Town's people are really concerned about is that if my house catches on fire, how soon can a truck be here and start putting water on the fire? I think that's really the bottom line is. I think that's really where the concentration needs to be. I suggest to the Council that this is what they concentrate on, not that the rest of it shouldn't be done, but that really needs to be the focus.

Vail—I think a lot of this is contingent upon the station being complete. The manning of the station, they have a trailer with two rooms in it. As far as keeping manning, it's very difficult to do right now. Once the station comes back up and is fully functional, this group is prepared to take whatever measures necessary to straighten out any problems that may be or have been. The response times, from what I understand, have been pretty good. The current paging system is lacking. They have another paging system that is much more and so it's just a matter of getting it back up to speed. Nobody's completely over the hurricane thing, getting contractors, getting people to come in and do stuff. Mr. Booth has encountered many difficulties in putting this together and hopefully, it's coming together real soon. We have a good group of people here that are willing to provide service for this Town and keep this department together and working with anyone that is willing to help.

Rivet—I wanted to say that I agree with what I have heard here tonight. We have a lot of good people, but we do have a lot of deficiencies that need to be addressed. I think there are a lot of changes that need to be made, I don't want anyone to take it personally, and we do have a good group of firefighters here. The TD Group has some valuable insights and suggestions, we can all work together.

Hickson-Hickson—my limited familiarity with the fire department has been just a couple of calls where I felt like they responded in good fashion. I agree with the Mayor that one of the priorities needs to be the safety of the Town, the people's houses, whether it's a medical call or something; but also safety of our fire personnel. That's why I want to advocate that we make sure they get the fire training they are talking about, they get the training they need. To be able to provide the safety to our community, they need to be safe as well. We need to rank that high as a priority also.

Vail—we also have a lot of new members that are able to dedicate all of their time to the department. Bob Rowan, who made the presentation, he lives on Corey Road and retired and this is what he's out to do.

Moccia—I'm just going to close up by making my statement. My statement is that I did get to see it first hand; the fire was in back of my house. They did respond well. They did a really good job of babysitting me and the fire, mostly me because I had to evacuate all of the thirty-seven animals that we have. I wasn't there at the exact moment when they got the call, but my neighbors stated that they got there very fast but they couldn't do a lot with the winds that were there but they were there if they needed to. So I feel very good about our fire department. I know that we have some deficiencies, as a matter of fact, I have listed both what the TD Group

has said and what you said that you concurred with him, I think that maybe getting together with the Council, let's get some more feedback for you. In particular, maybe you can meet at the next meetings and we'll go from there. We'll use TD as a base line and try to help these deficiencies.

Audience—since meeting with the Fire Department last June or July, there have been great strides made. What was showed here tonight shows that there have been some rapid improvements that have already been made.

Moccia—it's a need and they are going to fill that need. That's what this Town has to do.

Green—one other thing that I would like to add, in the entire discussions tonight with both presentations, as far as he is concerned as a former Fire Department employee and Chief, we are all on the same page. It's just a matter of putting this things together where they are pitiable cost wise. The funding is the bottom line. When that comes to fruition, then everybody has to understand that this, whatever is chosen, is the compilation as what the Town desires as its level of service.

Audience—one last comment, the options that we have provided in there are not restricted to just those options. There are other options out there then what is listed in the TD Group book.

Moccia—as we see the improvements and meeting the needs that need to be met for this Town in the deficient areas, maybe we will ask you for those other options. But for now, I think we will ingest this information and Council get back within the next meeting. We'll have a little feedback and maybe you'll have some more feedback for us.

Rivet—I would like to thank the TD Group for offering further consulting services gratis, this is wonderful. It demonstrates the spirit of volunteerism, something shown by our firefighters as well as the TD Group.

ADJOURN

This meeting adjourned at 7:55 pm.

BY:

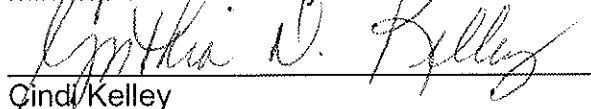


Chair Bobbi Moccia

ATTEST:

Susan Kabana, MMC
Town Clerk/Treasurer

Minutes transcribed by:


Cindi/Kelley

DATE: 5/16/05