

**To:** General Membership

**From:** Secretary

**Subject:** Minutes of the North Okaloosa Fire District Board of Fire Commissioners  
Monthly Meeting.

**Date:** July 18, 2019

**Members Present:** Craig Shaw, Chairman, Commissioner Group IV  
Todd McGirr, Commissioner, Group I  
Willie G. Terrell, Commissioner, Group II  
Dan Bowers, Jr., Secretary/Treasurer Commissioner, Group III  
Eugene Wright, Vice Chair Commissioner, Group V At Large

**Advisors Present:** Jonathan Holloway Legal Council  
Brian Howe Chief  
Annette Rayburn, Administrator

The Meeting was called to order by Chairman Shaw at 5:00 p.m.

**Prayer and Pledge of Allegiance:** The Pledge of Allegiance and Prayer were given.

**Approval of Agenda:** Commissioner McGirr motioned to approve the agenda Commissioner Wright seconded the motion. Vote 5/0.

**Approval of Minutes of June 20, 2019:** Motion to approve the minutes Commissioner Wright, 2<sup>nd</sup> Commissioner McGirr. Vote 5/0.

**New Business:**

**a. Medical Calls** – Commissioner Wright said that he really just wanted discussion on the subject and that he had a few questions. He said that he was wondering if our medical responses effect our fire calls. He said per our statutes we are only obligated to run fire calls and may run medical. He said that he met with EMS and wanted to get their opinion and they had nothing but praises for North Okaloosa Fire District. They said that if we were to decide not to run medical and would really throw a monkey wrench into dispatch. We discussed how they actually decide where to locate their EMS vehicles. Commissioner Wright said that he does not have any data to bring forward. Commissioner Bowers said that he did some research based on the data of the Chief's reports over the last 4 years. What he found was that this year 5.46% of calls relate to fire, therefore 95% of our calls are not mandated by our statutes. Over the last 4 years it is about 11 % as the low and 13% as the high relate to fire. I know that I did not sway anybody the last time I talked about this, but I believe that is the reason our costs are so high. Only 13% of the wear and tear we put on our equipment relates to fulfilling our mandated duty. On the contrary Mr. Wright brought a distinction on the medical calls. The medical calls are about 65% to 67%, and I happen to agree with you and I just can't the law of statistics tells me that medical calls will interfere

with the fire calls. As Brian has told us the standard operating procedure is to leave the medical call to respond to a fire call. I feel that if I leave a call to go to another call then the 1<sup>st</sup> call wasn't that important. If you are telling me we choose to leave. Chairman Shaw said that there are limits to what we can do at one time and no matter the size of the department all you can do is provide the service the best that you can until you reach your capacity. At that point you prioritize and go to the most needed area. Commissioner Terrell then asked Chief Howe how many times do we get on scene before EMS. Chief Howe said that he does not have the figures on that. His rough estimate is 35 to 40% of the time. Commissioner Terrell asked how many times are we cancelled on the way to a medical call. Commissioner Wright said that was part of his conversation with Mr. Welborn at EMS, they are aware of our situation with manning, so therefore they will cancel us if we are not needed. Chairman Shaw asked if the other Fire Departments run medical calls. Chief Howe responded that they all do including Crestview. Chairman Shaw asked Commissioner Wright is this a topic just for discussion or do you want to take action on this tonight? Commissioner Wright said this is just an area I wanted discussion I believe more data is needed. Commissioner Terrell told the board the board that last month Engine 85 ran 1,078 miles and the Rescue ran 2,177 miles he said that we need to find a way to cut down the mileage because we are wearing out our vehicles. Commissioner McGirr said that he is concerned about the wear and tear on the vehicles because of the medical calls but he is not willing to pull the switch yet. Commissioner Wright agreed and said it would be different if we were only 1<sup>st</sup> on scene 5% of the time, but until he finds more data, he is not willing to change. He asked if there was any way to strategically position our crews. Chief Howe said that unless we had a station in the middle of Crestview there is not. Chairman Shaw said that we can table this and bring it back at any time for more discussion.

**Public Comment** - Danny Bowers Sr. addressed the board saying that he looked into this subject 3 or 4 years ago and spoke with the different Chiefs of Volunteer depts. and they said that if they can get ahold of somebody they will respond, if not we don't. He also met with the EMS Chief at that time and he said that in their response they have a certain amount of time to get where they need to go. He asked him what is the percent of the time do you get there, they said 99%. Therefore, if they are meeting their statutory obligations then all we are doing is piling on top and not providing any useful function that we are mandated to provide. So my suggestion to you is, you are asking the wrong question and that is not how often do you beat them there, but how often do they not get there in the amount of time that they are supposed to get there, what service do we provide when we get there. I've had numerous occasions in the past years to call EMS and most of the time North Okaloosa got there first, even when I said that I don't need the fire department. I've got somebody sick not a heart attack. I can see maybe going to the calls that are life threatening, but not the calls they don't need to. He suggests that the board speak to the other Chiefs and EMS again.

**Public Comment** – Rodney Lancaster introduced himself to the board that he lives in the district and works for the City of Crestview as a Fire Marshall. He said that running medical calls is a service that fire departments provide as a service, whether we make it to the call or get cancelled. The city does get cancelled a lot of times on the way to a call. The dispatcher has a list of questions that they ask and they do not code the call until the last question. The majority of the City's calls are medical also. As far as dropping medical calls you will be doing a disservice to the constituents in your community. If you wait until EMS is on scene you cause a delay in the patient being treated, it is better that you be cancelled in route. The reason that we run with EMS Mr. Bowers is they put two people on the EMS rigs a lot of times it is two females and the patient is over-weight they are going to need our help. You talk about strategically placing personnel the first thing you need to do is increase your man power. Mr. Lancaster said that North Okaloosa has aid agreements with the surrounding departments so if you are on a call the other departments will be coming to assist. Chairman Shaw asked Mr. Lancaster if someone calls in and says that they do not need fire what happens. Mr. Lancaster said that you can request no fire but we run the same as usual, the caller is not the one to make that decision.

**Public Comment** - Dave Skarzynski asked the commissioners who covers the south end, and Commissioner McGirr said he and Commissioner Terrell. Mr. Skarzynski asked if they had heard from any

of your citizens that they are not getting service. Commissioner McGirr told him yes, Mr. Lancaster.

**Public Comment** – Jean Howe the South end gets a lot of calls and we should not have to call Crestview to cover.

Commissioner Bowers asked if there was an option for us to strategically position our trucks like EMS does? Chief Howe said that where we are is the central location. Chairman Shaw said that you cannot plan where a call will come from.

Chairman Shaw also said that for the record we are not suspending medical calls.

Commissioner Bowers said that this did not dawn on him until recently, but when you read the charter, this is a different time and different place. If I read the charter and try to ascertain the intention of the parties, the intention of the parties was not to provide every service under the sun to every constituent in its jurisdiction. If that had been the case then they would have allowed more than what they did in their financing provisions. They would not have put a cap as it relates to the CPI, they would not have put restrictions on other revenue streams. It is clear from their structuring of the finances; this was not the intention of the fire district. I am sometimes surprised at our ability to do what we do with what we got. Because it is the natural thing to do, compare us to Crestview, have you looked at their budget? They have 30 million dollars in their budget. When you compare our budget our constituents only allow us 1 million to provide our service.

### **Old Business:**

**a. Contract Update** – Chairman Shaw said that he and the Chief had spoken with Company Two about the trade in on CRV83 and that they have offered \$40,000.00 and to be taken off our lease over the period of 48 months. Motion by Commissioner McGirr to give Chairman Shaw the authority to negotiate the leases and the trade in of CRV83. 2<sup>nd</sup> Commissioner Wright. Vote 5/0.

**b. Impact Fees** – Commissioner McGirr said that the representatives do not want anyone to talk to them unless they have a consensus in our district the best time to put this on the ballot will be Aug 2020. Motion to have Commissioner McGirr contact the Elections office to get Impact fees on the ballot in 2020 by Commissioner Wright, 2<sup>nd</sup> Commissioner Terrell. Vote 4/1 with Commissioner Bowers voting nay.

**Public Input** – None

### **Advisory Reports:**

**Attorney Report-** Attorney Holloway said a little bit of good news as you can see, we are not having an executive session tonight. We turned in a new claim to both of our insurance companies and they both denied it, but after some discussion the old insurance company VFIS is taking it on due to it being one of the previous claimants where the case is still open. So therefore, we need not take any action on this. We will be having some discussion on the ARFF contract coming in the next month.

**Chief's Report** – Chief Howe briefed the report as follows- personnel which now lists 2 management, 14 paid firefighters, 2 part-time firefighters, 4 relief firefighters, 2 certified volunteers and 3 support personnel, 198 calls for the month June 2019. Chief Howe let the board know that our manning has gone down by 3 relief Fire Fighters. Chief Howe reviewed the ongoing Vehicle repairs. Rescue 82 we received a bid to put in a ultra-high-pressure system and they said that it can fit into the existing box. It will cost about 30k to 35k. We are waiting on another bid. We are having a problem with the slide out unit. He has contacted Deep South. On CRV82 we have temporarily fixed the tank leak, if we decide to keep this vehicle, we will need to take the water out and fix it correctly. Once we get another lease vehicle here, we can take it out of service and empty the tank. CRV 81 the damaged air block has been fixed by Commissioner McGirr; however, it is still out of service because it needs new brake drums. Attack 85 a

new pump has been installed and it is now in service. Engine 80 a transmission control module has been installed, and four new tires have been installed. The air conditioning system has been repaired at Ten -8 Fire, and all nine 2.5" discharge gauges on the pump panel have been replaced. Engine 82 Serviced with new fluids/filter and replaced all tires. Engine 84 updated the scene lights. Engine 85 is leaking oil and is at Empire Truck Sales waiting on an estimate. From what they have said they think it is the rear main seal. We did take our trailer apart and had it sandblasted, enclosed the rails, re wired it and painted it. Command 83 the air conditioning is not working. The tanker did sell for 15K so after the deductions we should get around 14k. Chief Howe updated the board on the status of the stations. We sent tow people off for training for Emergency Vehicle Driver Training Instructor. We have been training with Crestview the last month. Motion to accept the Chief's report by Commissioner Wright, 2<sup>nd</sup> Commissioner McGirr. Vote 5/0.

**Secretary/Treasurer's Report-** Commissioner Bowers reviewed the financials with the board. We are at the end of our revenue period for the income for 911, and he feels that we will have the funds to get us thru this fiscal year and into the next until the revenue starts up again. He also pointed out to look at the first line of the combined sheet and because of the boards decisions we have generated 26k in revenue from interest income. Chairman Shaw updated the board that we did get pricing on the cancer policy and it will run about \$250.00 per person each year. We did receive our copy of the FY 2019 Audit from Dawn. Motion to approve the Treasurers report by Commissioner McGirr, 2<sup>nd</sup> Commissioner Wright. Vote 5/0.

**Commissioner Comments:** Commissioner Wright said that he did go to the Milligan Fire, and when speaking with the Deputy who called in the fire it was already through the roof when he got there. He said that he heard a lot of positive feedback about our department from the other departments.

**Set Agenda for next meeting August 15, 2019.**

The Meeting was adjourned at 6:38pm.

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Craig Shaw

Chairman