

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING
OF NOVEMBER 10, 2008 TOWN COUNCIL
TOWN OF CAROLINA BEACH**

November 10, 2008

The Town Council of the Town of Carolina Beach met in a special meeting on November 10, 2008 at 9:00 a.m. in the Fire Department Training Room, 202 Dow Road, Carolina Beach, North Carolina. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss various fire related matters. The following were present: Mayor Joel Macon; Mayor Pro Tem (MPT) Dan Wilcox; Councilwoman Pat Efird; Councilman Jerry Johnson, Town Manager Tim Owens, and Town Clerk Lynn Prusa. Councilman Alan Gilbert was absent.

The meeting opened with a presentation given by Mr. Scott Garner, Garner and Brown Architects, PA. Mr. Garner presented several different fire station expansion options.

He received a rough estimate from a contractor projecting the cost to be \$1.7 million for the addition and \$250,000 for the renovation. Mr. Garner thinks that is too high, and he believes the cost will be about \$1.1 million and \$250,000 just for the renovation or the “new skin” for the exterior of the renovated part of the building. This figure does not include the internal renovations.

After considering the various plans, Mr. Garner concluded by saying that he recommends the 5 bay addition with the renovation.

Chief Rorie was the next to present (*Exhibit 1 – pages 1-4*). He said there are 3 existing bays now. With the new equipment being ordered, they will need 4 of the bays now. The other bay could be used for storage of small equipment and for future growth.

The existing building is two stories but there would be some code problems that would need to be dealt with if it were renovated with sleeping quarters. MPT Wilcox is concerned about why we are not using the existing bay and why we would want to take everything we have in place and wipe it out. There was some discussion about the 50% rule and if it still applies. Mr. Garner said there is a new rule that would apply now and that is if it is determined to be a significant renovation then you have to bring it up to code. MPT Wilcox said he would like an answer to that because he doesn't feel we should have to bring that renovation up to code.

Councilman Johnson said we are in economic times and we have some priorities and we have to look at what is the most essential thing. He said we need to consider what we want to spend now and what construction cost will be in 5 years.

MPT Wilcox was curious about what had been done to retain the existing fire house and existing bays and could it be used, plus there is an upstairs and maybe we haven't done enough research.

Chief Rorie said the purpose of the renovation and addition is to house the apparatus. We need a place for personnel to safely meet, sleep, eat and conduct business. It does not have to be a tourist attraction but something the town and staff can be proud of. He said “nice to do and need to do” should be in balance.

Chief Rorie recommended that we proceed with the current station first, and he estimates a approximately \$550,000 for the renovation. This will include the sleeping quarters, storage, exterior upgrades, and traffic pre-emption. He said they cannot fully utilize the new bays until they can take possession of the Keplinger House for 5 years. Current debt service for two engines will be retired in five years. \$63,000 could go toward additional upgrades or apparatus replacements. Economy impacts, future property value reevaluation could limit ad-valorem tax revenue. Sales tax could decline, and occupancy tax could decline.

Councilman Johnson asked about the cost to get the drawings ready for bid. Mr. Garner said typically it is 10% of the budget cost.

There was discussion about support from the county or grant opportunities. Chief Rorie said he doubts we can get anything from the county but he will check into other possible funding opportunities.

Mr. Garner said to give him a month and he will talk to other contractors and can use the same drawings to get estimates. The \$1.7 million estimate was about 2 weeks ago but contractors don't look at things the same. He believes the last was mistaken. It will take about 2-3 weeks to get revised figures.

The next item discussed was the apparatus replacement (*Exhibit 2 - pages 5-7*). Chief Rorie presented two options: (1) equipped aerial ladder \$700,000, and (2) equipped aerial platform \$900,000. The platform provides a working platform for firefighters. There are mixed emotions among the staff as to which one to purchase. As firefighters some want a platform and some want a ladder.

Chief Rorie said he can't get to the recommendation of a platform with integrity because of use and cost. Safety is a concern but driving down the road provides a greater chance of getting hurt. He recommended submitting an RFP for a 100' aerial ladder and loose equipment by November 15, 2008 with the bid opening by December 1, 2008, and contract by December 20, 2008. We will need to secure competitive financing rates.

Concerning the current apparatus, we could dispose of E1292 and current ladder; transfer asset with reduced costs and maintain reserve apparatus points. Should we sell it? What will we get for a 17 year old engine? We could lose reserve ISO points which we can't get if we have it. We could trade since third world markets are not impacted by NFPA standards. We need to consider making a trade as part of the RFP for new aerial ladder.

This item will come up for action at the regular Council meeting scheduled for this evening.

The last item discussed was staffing (*Exhibit3 - pages 8-13*). Chief Rorie would like to see staff 24/7 with a minimum of three personnel. Two full-time personnel per 24 hour shift and one part-time per 24 hour shift. He would like to utilize current trained volunteers to staff part-time position in the day time from 7 am to 7 pm. He would like to utilize current trained volunteers to establish sleeper program to supplement on-duty staffing at nights between 7 pm – 7 am. FLSA changes to allow full-time personnel to provide contingency back up staffing when part-timers are unavailable, respond to call-back for full-alarms, and to be on standby.

The proposed part-time benefits to the town are:

- Minimum response and training requirements 35% of calls and 108 hours of training per year.
- Retirement contribution - \$120.00 NC Firemen's Pension Fund FY 09/10 Budget. Cost \$3,600.
- Tuition Reimbursement FY 09/10 Budget Cost \$250 per person per year.
- Supplemental Retirement FY 09/10 Budget Cost \$40 per month into 401K or 457K program based upon having five years of service. Cost \$5,280 based upon current membership.

The part-time benefits to the relief fund:

- Currently provides supplemental accident and death benefit for all members.
- Proposed benefits after twenty years of credible years of service (35% of calls and 108 hours of training). Defined benefit for current vested members. Annual contribution for unvested members through the town's 457 Program.

Chief Rorie talked about how crucial it is to immediately respond to a fire call and how every minute counts. Council viewed a video of an actual night club fire that demonstrated his point.

In conclusion Council said they would like to bring back these issues on the December agenda. They will consider the aerial purchase this evening.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynn N. Prusa
Town Clerk

Approved: _____