

FIRE COMMITTEE MINUTES

November 17, 2003

The Fire Committee of the City of Mesa met in the lower level meeting room of the Council Chambers, 57 East 1st Street, on November 17, 2003, at 3:02 p.m.

COMMITTEE PRESENT

Claudia Walters, Chairman
Dennis Kavanaugh
Mike Whalen

COUNCIL PRESENT

Mayor Keno Hawker
Rex Griswold

OFFICERS PRESENT

Mike Hutchinson

1. Hear an update on the Community Emergency Notification System (CENS).

Fire Chief Harry Beck and Management Assistant Dorinda Larsen addressed the members of the Committee relative to this agenda item.

Chief Beck provided a brief overview of the Community Emergency Notification System (CENS) and reported that in January 2003, the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) awarded a \$2.5 million contract to the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) to develop and operate the CENS in Maricopa County. He explained that the system, which uses the 911 telephone database, will notify county residents of emergencies such as the disappearance of a lost child, terrorist attacks, hazardous fires, toxic spills and mass casualty incidents.

Chief Beck stated that he has participated in this process as Chairman of both MAG's 911 Oversight Team and the CENS Stakeholder Work Group. He advised that the Stakeholder Work Group is a diverse assemblage of citizens representing all of the potential users of the system (Public Safety, Flood Control, Homeland Security, Animal Control, Emergency Management, Communications, and Transportation).

Discussion ensued relative to a series of activation policies established by the Stakeholder Work Group including, among others, that any emergency agency in the MAG region may use the CENS; that the field units will determine if emergency notifications should be made; that the definition of "emergency" includes imminent threats to life or property, disaster notification, endangered children and elders, and evacuation notices; that activation will occur through the Public Safety Answering Points (PSAP) that receive 911 calls throughout Maricopa County; that legal opinions are being sought with regard to clarification for non-emergency use; that the CENS funding will cover all activation costs until January 1, 2005, and thereafter agencies requesting the activation will pay those fees (an estimated 45 cents/minute for completed calls); that funding will be subject to change once the system is activated; that a steering

subcommittee will be formed to offer guidance on system development, and that the Stakeholder Work Group reconvene whenever deemed necessary.

Chief Beck further commented that the MAG 911 Oversight Team also intends to research a variety of issues including liability (overuse/under use of the system), ongoing maintenance and activation funding, and the non-emergency use of the CENS.

In response to a series of questions from Committeemember Kavanaugh, Chief Beck clarified that the CENS will operate on landlines only and will not be capable of activating cell phones at this time. He explained that as the 911 system is developed to accommodate location information, the Oversight Committee will explore the expansion of the CENS into the cell phone arena as well. Chief Beck added that it is anticipated the system will be able to call approximately 2,000 phone numbers per minute.

Further discussion ensued relative to the fact that the MAG Management Committee met on November 5, 2003 and approved the Stakeholder Work Group's above-referenced policy initiatives, which will be forwarded on to the MAG Regional Council for approval on December 3, 2003; that the position of the CENS Program Manager has been established by the City of Phoenix's 911 Administration Office; that the CENS Program Manager will administer the system, including the training of all personnel and the facilitation of an extensive community awareness campaign; that it is anticipated that the CENS will be fully operational on January 1, 2004, and various State funding mechanisms earmarked to support the 911 system.

In response to a question from Chairman Walters regarding potential liability issues that the City could encounter as a result of the non-implementation of the CENS in certain instances, Chief Beck stated that the legal advice the Oversight Committee has received thus far indicates that as long as a policy is in place that dictates the use of the system and Mesa adheres to that policy, the City should not anticipate any problems. He also stated that because MAG will administer the system and would be the recipient of potential lawsuits, the decision would rest with that entity concerning the manner in which liability would be passed on to a specific community.

Chairman Walters thanked staff for the informative presentation and noted that this agenda item requires no action by the Committee at this time.

2. Discuss and consider a recommendation concerning the disposal of three surplus fire vehicles.

(Councilmember Griswold arrived at the meeting at 3:10 p.m.)

Fire Chief Harry Beck and Assistant Fire Chief Bob DeLeon addressed the members of the Committee relative to this agenda item.

Chief DeLeon reported that it is the recommendation of the Fire Department that two fire pumper trucks and one air/light unit be donated to the Mesa Community College (MCC) Fire Service Program, the East Valley Institute of Technology (EVIT) and the Apache Junction Fire District respectively rather than auctioned. He explained that while the two pumper trucks, which have already been replaced, are no longer serviceable to meet the City's emergency response needs, they would be suitable in a training mode to both EVIT and MCC. Chief DeLeon advised that the Apache Junction Fire District has expressed interest in the reuse of the air/light unit, including its light tower to illuminate emergency scenes and the use of the

compressor to fill the firefighters' self-contained breathing apparatus. He also stated that the primary criteria the Fire Department takes into consideration when assessing the appropriateness of donating vehicles includes mileage, obsolescence, age and the cost of repairs. Chief DeLeon added that in a routine maintenance check of the vehicles, it was determined that one of the pumper trucks had a cracked head which would cost approximately \$3000 to \$6000 to repair and noted that both EVIT and MCC have been informed of this fact.

Committeemember Kavanaugh expressed support for staff's recommendation. He commented that several years ago, the City donated an outdated fire vehicle to its Sister City of Guaymas and noted that at that time, there was some sentiment by certain Councilmembers that the vehicle should have been sold instead. Committeemember Kavanaugh requested input from staff relative to this matter.

In response to Committeemember Kavanaugh's inquiry, Chief DeLeon clarified that in conducting research relative to this issue, in 1998 the Fire Department sent out more than 175 bids for the purchase of some older fire apparatus and that it did not receive a single response. He also stated that he is aware of instances where individuals have purchased surplus fire vehicles only to "part them out" rather than use them in any community service capacity. Chief DeLeon added that with reference to the air/light unit, Mesa has an automatic aid agreement with the Apache Junction Fire District, and that in the event one of the City's air/light units was unavailable, Mesa firefighters would still be able to use the compressor on the donated vehicle to fill their self-contained breathing apparatus.

In response to a question from Chairman Walters, Chief DeLeon assured the members of the Committee that the vehicles would be donated to the entities "as is" and would also include a record of their respective repairs and maintenance.

Chief Beck emphasized the importance of keeping the equipment in service to support Fire and EMS safety within the community.

It was moved by Committeemember Kavanaugh, seconded by Committeemember Whalen, to recommend to the full Council that three surplus Fire Department vehicles (two fire pumper trucks and one air/light unit) be donated to the Mesa Community College Fire Service Program, the East Valley Institute of Technology, and the Apache Junction Fire District.

Carried unanimously.

Chairman Walters thanked everyone for the presentation.

3. Discuss and consider a recommendation regarding a new emergency medical services ambulance provider.

(Mayor Hawker arrived at the meeting at 3:25 p.m.)

Committeemember Whalen declared a potential conflict of interest and said he would refrain from discussion/participation in this agenda item.

Fire Chief Harry Beck, Assistant Fire Chief Gary Bradbury, Deputy Fire Chief Kenny King, Management Assistant Dorinda Larsen and Materials Management Director Sharon Seekins addressed the Committee relative to this agenda item.

Chief Bradbury provided a brief overview of the current standing of the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Transportation Services Request for Proposals (RFP) process. He explained that in the new contract, which is set to commence on March 1, 2004, the Fire Department is seeking a number of system enhancements including integrated deployment dispatch services (AVL unit tracking of dedicated ambulances and response time enhancements); public/private cooperation, including team liaison assignments for operations, and enhancements to public information/education in the community; staffing level stability; management and facilitation of consumable goods and pharmaceuticals to be handled by the private partner, and a Regional Medical Control funding mechanism.

Chief Bradbury informed the members of the Committee that although the amount of cost recovery will vary depending upon the final operational contract agreement, future cost recovery areas include: ALS support reimbursement for assistance during critical patient transportation; the private provider will supply and restock all consumable goods; Mesa's dispatch costs will be recovered, and the parties will work to develop a method for future reimbursement of medical control costs.

Chief Bradbury noted that an Evaluation Team was assembled to thoroughly review proposals in response to the RFP submitted by Professional Medical Transport (PMT) and Southwest Ambulance/Rural Metro and stated that it was the unanimous recommendation of the team to accept the proposal submitted by Southwest Ambulance. He also highlighted a timeline of key RFP events.

Committeemember Kavanaugh commented that this process began several years ago when he was Chairman of the Fire Committee and noted that there were concerns expressed at that time with regard to the nature of the model used by the City and the viability of the system. He also expressed appreciation to staff and Southwest Ambulance for their responsiveness to the community. Committeemember Kavanaugh stated that Southwest Ambulance's proposal contains advantages to citizens in terms of the timeliness/quality of service and will also assist the City in its cost recovery and improve response times.

It was moved by Committeemember Kavanaugh, seconded by Chairman Walters, to recommend to the Council that the proposal by Southwest Ambulance/Rural Metro to provide Emergency Medical Services Transportation for a three-year contract, subject to the successful negotiation of an operational contract based on the terms of the RFP and Southwest Ambulance's proposal, be approved.

Chairman Walters noted that this has been a long and arduous process for the City and expressed appreciation to Southwest Ambulance for offering to exceed the City's RFP requirements in several areas. She also thanked PMT for submitting its proposal.

Discussion ensued relative to the City of Mesa's RFP scoring procedure; the fact that the proposed contract is an initial three-year contract with the ability to extend twice for three additional years (a total of 9 years altogether); that pending Council approval of the Fire Committee's recommendations to proceed with contract negotiations between the parties, staff will present the Council with the final contract subsequent to a successful negotiation of an operational contract based on the terms of the RFP and Southwest's proposal, and various contract contingencies relative to default and the transfer of a contract from one entity to another.

Upon tabulation of votes, it showed:

AYES - Walters-Kavanaugh

NAYS - None

ABSTAIN - Whalen

Chairman Walters declared the motion carried unanimously by those voting.

Chief Beck thanked his staff, Ms. Seekins and Southwest Ambulance for their efforts and hard work relative to this important issue.

Chairman Walters concurred with Chief Beck's comments and added that the City has had a successful working relationship with Southwest Ambulance in the past and looks forward to an ongoing partnership in the future as well.

4. Adjournment.

Without objection, the Fire Committee Meeting adjourned at 3:40 p.m.

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Fire Committee Meeting of the City of Mesa, Arizona, held on the 17th day of November 2003. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

BARBARA JONES, CITY CLERK