

# FIRE COMMITTEE MINUTES

September 25, 2000

The Fire Committee of the City of Mesa met in the lower level meeting room of the Council Chambers, 57 East 1st Street, on September 25, 2000 at 3:30 p.m.

**COMMITTEE PRESENT**

Pat Pomeroy, Chairman  
Bill Jaffa  
Dennis Kavanaugh

**COMMITTEE ABSENT**

None

**OFFICERS PRESENT**

Mike Hutchinson  
Neal Beets  
Barbara Jones

Chairman Pomeroy welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Fire Chief Dennis Compton introduced Assistant Chief Paul Wilson, Battalion Chief Gary Bradbury and Management Assistant Dorinda Larsen to the Committee and audience and thanked them for their efforts in developing the following presentation.

1. Hear a presentation concerning the Metropolitan Medical Response System (MMRS) which will focus on multiple casualty management and the treatment of patients exposed to biological and/or chemical weapons.

Chief Bradbury presented the members of the Committee with a brief overview of the Metropolitan Medical Response System (MMRS) and explained that the program is a satellite component of the greater Domestic Preparedness Program sponsored by the Department of Defense and the Department of Justice. Chief Bradbury stated that the Mesa Fire Department has been approved to participate in the MMRS grant program with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Chief Bradbury noted that the program will focus on multiple casualty management and the treatment of patients exposed to biological and/or chemical weapons and added that grant funds in the amount of \$400,000 have been awarded to the City of Mesa in support of this program.

Chief Bradbury informed the Committee that the City must have the ability to treat large numbers of exposed victims and responders, and stressed the importance of availability and readiness of local medical facilities. Chief Bradbury noted that hospitals, which are mostly "for profit" organizations, do not tend to prepare for major community disasters and said that there is funding in this program to benefit the hospitals in areas where they would not ordinarily expend those funds. Chief Bradbury advised that the biggest improvement that can be made to our hospitals is decontamination facilities at the hospitals for focusing on large numbers of patients.

Discussion ensued relative to the coordination of activities with the public health agencies (County and State) and the importance of developing and maintaining a tracking system of serious events involving large numbers of patients, lab enhancements to allow the State to quickly determine what is involved in the various cases, program requirements and the fact that the program will last 18 months, the fact that development of an MMRS plan is on track at the current time and the fact that equipment and pharmaceutical requests will occur at the end of the 18-month period.

Chief Bradbury commented that at the completion of the training, a joint operations disaster drill will occur which will involve all of the response agencies, the hospitals, and County/State public health providers.

In response to a question from Committeemember Kavanaugh, Chief Bradbury stated that all of the hospitals in Mesa will participate in the program in addition to the trauma centers at Scottsdale Memorial Hospital.

Chief Bradbury informed the Council that the top 125 largest cities across the nation have been included in the program and added that the dollar amount of funding provided each city has been consistent.

Chairman Pomeroy stated that in the event a need occurs for this type of emergency response in the future, it is crucial that the City be prepared and trained to come to the aid of our citizens. Chairman Pomeroy added that the fact that funds are being made available to assist in meeting program costs/needs is an added benefit and thanked staff for their presentation on this important issue.

2. Hear an update on the progress of Fire Department accreditation.

Assistant Chief Paul Wilson provided the Council with an update on the status of the Fire Department's accreditation and noted that in February 1999, the Fire Committee voted unanimously in support of allowing the Department to begin the accreditation process. Chief Wilson commented that the International City/County Management Association and the International Association of Fire Chiefs developed the fire service accreditation system. Chief Wilson noted that over 250 agencies are active in the accreditation process. Chief Wilson stated that the accreditation of the Department will result in an on-going evaluation system based upon a set of nationally recognized standards that serve as performance measurements and comparisons.

Chief Wilson informed the members of the Committee that the accreditation process began with an evaluation targeting every program and service provided by the Mesa Fire Department. Chief Wilson added that an on-site assessment is scheduled to be conducted in the Fall of 2001, with accreditation projected to be obtained in the Spring of 2002. Chief Wilson said that the entire process will take 18 months to complete. Chief Wilson noted that as an accredited fire department, Mesa will be in a stronger position to evaluate and benchmark programs and activities in the areas of quality, quantity, efficiency and overall effectiveness. Chief Wilson stated the opinion that accreditation is a valuable tool that ties in directly with the Department's Five Year Strategic Management Plan. Chief Wilson pointed out that only 38 fire departments have achieved accreditation in the United States and added that of those 38, only 4 are larger than the City of Mesa. Chief Wilson informed the Committee that only two communities in Arizona are accredited, Chandler and Tempe, and said that Mesa and Glendale are applicants at this time. Chief Wilson stated that an 18-person team is working on the accreditation process and pointed out that the process also helps departments to identify weaknesses that need to be improved upon.

Chairman Pomeroy commented on the importance and advantages of achieving accreditation and noted that he was involved in similar processes during his career in the education field. Chairman Pomeroy congratulated the Department on their efforts to achieve this status and said that it will greatly benefit the Department and the City as a whole.

3. Hear an update on the relocation plan for Fire Station 201 from West 1st Street to the northwest corner of East 1st Street and North Mesa Drive.

Chairman Pomeroy announced that this agenda item is for informational purposes only and noted that this is not a public hearing. Chairman Pomeroy added that citizens will not be called upon today to provide input or ask questions but informed the citizens that they will be provided an opportunity at a future neighborhood meeting and Council meeting to address this matter. Chairman Pomeroy also assured the members of the audience that the members of the Fire Committee are available to meet with them on an individual or group basis and encouraged the residents to contact the Committeemembers at their office should they wish to schedule a meeting.

Assistant Chief Paul Wilson addressed the Committee relative to this agenda item and stated that the Department has been diligently working on a relocation plan for Fire Station 201 from 13 West 1st Street to a proposed location on the northwest corner of East 1st Street and North Mesa Drive. Chief Wilson said that the purpose of the relocation is to provide better coverage to the center part of Mesa and added that this will enable the Department to meet their critical response time goals. Chief Wilson commented that the relocation of this station will also allow the Department to address the construction of an administration/operations center and a City emergency operations center at the present site of that station. Chief Wilson said that the bays would be removed from that station, the main part of the structure would remain, and the facilities would be built at that location.

Discussion ensued relative to search criteria used in determining sites for the new station, the fact that it is critical that the Department respond in three minutes or less or provide emergency service, the fact that the YMCA site was determined not to be a feasible site for a variety of reasons, and the fact that the Department's preferred location is at the northwest corner of East 1st Street and North Mesa Drive.

Chief Wilson informed the members of the Committee that the site is currently vacant and used as a wholesale car storage area. Chief Wilson added that an additional vacant lot is located across Pomeroy to the west and is available for resale. Chief Wilson noted that the site provides excellent egress to two major arterial streets (north/south along Mesa Drive and going east along 1st Street back towards Country Club Drive). Chief Wilson commented that the location meets the Department's response time criteria and provides a better response time than the current station.

Chief Wilson discussed neighborhood meetings that were held to discuss this issue and reported that the neighbors indicated a preference for the station to be located across the street on the south side of the 300 block of East 1st Street (south of the proposed site). Chief Wilson said that site plans were prepared and estimated property acquisition costs calculated for both the northwest corner and south side sites, on E. 1st and N. Mesa Drive. Chief Wilson reported that functionally both sites would serve the needs of the Fire Department but noted that the site preferred by the neighbors would involve significant land acquisition costs. Chief Wilson informed the Committee that in order to accommodate the neighbor's preference, the City would be required to acquire the entire block from Pepper to 1st Street and from Pomeroy to the Center Against Family Violence building.

Chief Wilson advised that a third meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 28, 2000 to discuss this issue. Chief Wilson said that a number of the neighbors from the Wilbur Historic District are present at this meeting and commended them for their efforts and their interest in this area. Chief Wilson stated the opinion that the station would serve as a good neighbor and added that fire stations belong in neighborhoods such as this.

Chief Wilson discussed the Department's willingness to develop the corner in an effort to achieve an historical appearance that will complement the neighborhood.

In response to a question from Committeemember Kavanaugh, Chief Wilson stated that based upon City of Mesa's Real Estate Services' calculations, the land acquisition and relocation costs associated with the south site (preferred by the neighbors) is approximately \$1,731,000 more than that the north site.

Committeemember Jaffa advised that he has had discussions with Chief Compton and other members of staff regarding the possibility of moving one or two historic buildings north of the site. Committeemember Jaffa said that there are currently buildings that must be relocated and stated the opinion that this location would be an appropriate site in view of the historic nature of the area. Committeemember Jaffa added that discussions also occurred relative to providing landscaping buffering, consisting of a small sit down, shaded area for residents to utilize.

Chief Wilson said that in meetings held with the neighbors, Fire Department staff informed the Wilbur Historic Neighborhood group that the City would be willing to purchase the northwest corner, which is the current location of the resale car lot, the adjacent lot west of Pomeroy, and the property that runs along Mesa Drive up to 2nd Street. Chief Wilson added that discussions occurred relative to developing a small neighborhood park that would complement the District. Chief Wilson commented that the group indicated that they would like to see residential infill occur in this area and historic preservation that would maintain the historic nature of the neighborhood. Chief Wilson said that it is his understanding that discussions have also occurred relative to relocating historic homes in the Town Center to the North Pomeroy location to complement the Wilbur Historic District.

Discussion ensued relative to noise mitigation, the fact that the location would allow the Department to control the traffic light at the intersection and proceed east or west on 1st Street or north or south on Mesa Drive, minimizing the noise that results from emergency lights and sirens, the fact that the neighbors believe the south side location is more appropriate for the station, and the fact that the business use at the south site would also have to be relocated and an alternative site has not been located for that use.

Committeemember Jaffa encouraged staff to continue to work with the residents to address their concerns and develop a partnership that will enhance the neighborhood. Committeemember Jaffa stated the opinion that the south site lends itself to a commercial use and indicated support for staff's recommendation.

Chairman Pomeroy stated that that he believes there are four important criteria that must be considered in selecting a site for the relocation of the station. Chairman Pomeroy said that the first criteria is to ensure that the property is adequate in size to accomplish all that the Department requires, currently and in the future; the second criteria involves the expenses and costs that are associated with acquiring the land, and the third criteria is the egress (response times and safety of the personnel and equipment utilizing that area).

In response to a question from Committeemember Kavanaugh, Chief Wilson said that the business located on the south side has indicated that they are not willing to relocate that business use.

Chairman Pomeroy thanked staff for their presentation.

Chief Compton thanked staff for their efforts and expressed appreciation to the members of the Committee for their ongoing support.

Chief Compton commented on activities that have been scheduled for Fire Prevention Week throughout the City and encouraged participation in those events.

Chairman Pomeroy thanked Chief Compton for his input and also expressed his appreciation to Christi Miller and Brad Schell for their written comments, which will be reviewed by the members of the Committee.

4. Adjournment.

Without objection, the Fire Committee Meeting adjourned at 4:06 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 25th day of September, 2000. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

Dated this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 2000

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BARBARA JONES, CITY CLERK

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