

FIRE COMMITTEE MINUTES

March 28, 2002

The Fire Committee of the City of Mesa met in the lower level meeting room of the Council Chambers, 57 East 1st Street, on March 28, 2002 at 9:50 a.m.

COMMITTEE PRESENT

Pat Pomeroy, Chairman
Bill Jaffa
Dennis Kavanaugh

COMMITTEE ABSENT

None

OFFICERS PRESENT

Mike Hutchinson

1. Hear an update on the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Fire Act grant status.

Fire Chief Dennis Compton, Assistant Fire Chief Bob DeLeon and Fire Management Assistant Dorinda Larsen addressed the Committee relative to this agenda item.

Chief DeLeon reported that the Mesa Fire Department was recently awarded over \$64,000 in grant funds through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Fire Act to implement a fire prevention and education program which will target high-risk families (low income, multigenerational and limited English speaking) in the community through the distribution of smoke detectors. He explained that the grant funds have been used to purchase 10,000 smoke detectors which will be distributed at 13 elementary schools in Mesa.

Chief DeLeon advised that the Fire Department will select Title 1 schools to participate in the project based on the criteria that 50% of the students take part in a reduced or free lunch program, and stated that the grant funds will provide the Fire Department with the opportunity to attend open houses, carnivals and community meetings at the schools and to distribute the smoke detectors and educational materials to the parents. He added that the teachers at the respective schools will conduct lessons in fire education and the importance of smoke detectors. Chief DeLeon also said that the parents would be requested to fill out a form to provide the Fire Department with suggestions/feedback relative to the fire prevention program. He emphasized that the goals of the grant project support the Fire Department's mission to protect life and property.

Committeemember Kavanaugh thanked staff for their presentation and voiced support for the program.

In response to a series of questions from Committeemember Kavanaugh, Chief DeLeon clarified that although the Fire Department has not selected the schools which will participate in the project, it is staff's intention to distribute the smoke detectors and present the educational materials to six schools prior to the end of this school year and to conduct the program at the seven remaining schools at the beginning of the following school year.

Committeemember Jaffa expressed support for the project and noted that in discussions with staff, he received assurances that the educational component of the grant project, in conjunction with the distribution of the smoke detectors, will strengthen the possibility that the recipients will actually install and utilize the detectors as opposed to selling or disposing of them.

Discussion ensued relative to the fact that when the Fire Act was passed, \$100 million was allocated for the current year for funding nationwide and that FEMA received over \$3 billion in requests from fire departments, and the fact that after an extensive review by FEMA on each grant request, the City of Mesa was selected to receive its requested funding.

Chairman Pomeroy thanked staff for their presentation.

2. Discuss and consider the location of a future Fire Station (#218) at 5950 East Adobe.

Fire Chief Dennis Compton, Assistant Fire Chief Paul Wilson and Fire Management Assistant Dorinda Larsen addressed the Committee relative to this agenda item.

Chief Wilson reported that it is the recommendation of staff that the Committee approve the location of a future Fire Station (#218) at the northwest corner of East Adobe and North Recker Road. He explained that at a previous Committee meeting, staff outlined its five-year operational plan and recommended a site in the area of Pecos and Mountain Roads for the construction of the Fire Department's next fire station. Chief Wilson advised that the location was initially selected based on anticipated growth in the area; however, due to a lack of current development, staff has now modified its recommendation to the site at Adobe and Recker. Chief Wilson commented that in 1984, the City purchased the 2.5 acre site for a future fire station and said that the location was strategically selected to serve the residents, businesses and visitors in the area.

In response to a question from Chairman Pomeroy, Chief Wilson clarified that the selection of a fire station location is based on an annual analysis of response times, the geographic distance and the volume of calls. He explained that in the City of Mesa, the Fire Department responds to calls in identified time frames, and that Citywide, staff is meeting that standard approximately 64% of the time. Chief Wilson stated that in the area of proposed Fire Station # 218, which is bounded by Greenfield Road and Sossaman Road and from McKellips Road to Broadway Road, the standard response time is achieved only 44% of the time.

In response to a question from Chairman Pomeroy regarding current development in southeast Mesa, Chief Wilson advised that although there are many land use plans currently on the books, including the General Motors (GM) property and the Williams Gateway Airport (WGA) redevelopment area, the rate of development has not kept pace with the original projections. He added that despite the fact there will be a need for a fire station in this area of the community in the future, at this time, it is staff's recommendation to place it in northwest Mesa to reduce response times and to provide life safety and fire protection to area residents.

Committeemember Kavanaugh expressed support for staff's recommendations and stated that the necessity for fire stations in southeast Mesa will accelerate pending completion of the freeway system. He noted that it will also trigger not only commercial and industrial development to the area, but will also provide the impetus for the commencement of previously approved residential developments. Committeemember Kavanaugh added that it is important to monitor the level of growth and development in southeast Mesa to ensure that the City keeps pace with the placement of future fire stations.

It was moved by Committeemember Kavanaugh, seconded by Committeemember Jaffa, to recommend to the Council that the proposed location of a future Fire Station (# 218) at 5950 East Adobe, be approved.

Committeemember Jaffa voiced support for the motion and thanked staff for their ongoing analysis of emergency response data to ensure that the needs of Mesa residents are met.

Committeemember Kavanaugh stated the opinion that staff's foresight in acquiring property for future fire stations is a testament to City planning and also demonstrates the City's ability to stay ahead of current trends relative to the areas of future development within the community.

Chairman Pomeroy concurred with Committeemember Kavanaugh's comments and stressed that the City demonstrates great flexibility in recognizing that a particular area of Mesa may have a greater need for a fire station than another.

Chief Compton expressed appreciation to the members of the Committee for their comments.

In response to a question from City Manager Mike Hutchinson, Chief Wilson referred to a map which outlined locations for future fire stations. (See Attachment.) He reported that with regard to a future site at Ellsworth Road and Williams Field Road, staff has reached an agreement with the Williams Gateway Airport Authority to locate a fire station at the airport which would respond to emergency calls not only at the facility, but the surrounding area as well; the fact that the Real Estate Services Division is currently in negotiations regarding property located at the northeast corner of Elliot Road and Sossaman Road; the fact that staff has yet to acquire a site on the east side of the GM property, but stated that when the GM plan is more thoroughly developed, it is the preference of staff to relocate a fire station further to the northwest of the property to more adequately service the area, and the fact that staff is currently in negotiations to acquire a site at Crismon Road and Brown Road, but has not identified a suitable location near Crismon Road and Broadway Road.

In response to a question from Chairman Pomeroy, Chief Wilson stated that a site near 32nd Street and McDowell Road is the proposed location of future Fire Station # 219.

In response to a question from Committeemember Kavanaugh, Mr. Hutchinson commented that staff will explore whether the developers of the GM property would be willing to donate land for a future fire station.

Chief Compton clarified that staff's recommendation relative to the location of Fire Station #219 will be presented to the Committee at a future meeting.

Carried unanimously.

Chairman Pomeroy thanked staff for their presentation.

3. Adjournment.

Without objection, the Fire Committee Meeting adjourned at 10:15 a.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 28th day of March 2002. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

Dated this ____ day of _____ 2002.

BARBARA JONES, CITY CLERK

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Attachment