

MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF LUFKIN, TEXAS, HELD ON THE 27TH DAY OF MAY, 1986, AT 5:00 P.M.

On the 27th day of May, 1986, the City Commission of the City of Lufkin, Texas, convened in special meeting in the Council Chambers of City Hall with the following members thereof, to-wit:

Pitser H. Garrison	Mayor
Percy Simond, Jr.	Commissioner, Ward No. 1
Don Boyd	Commissioner, Ward No. 2
Danny Roper	Commissioner, Ward No. 3
Pat Foley	Commissioner, Ward No. 4
Jack Gorden, Jr.	Commissioner, Ward No. 5
Louis Bronaugh	Commissioner, Ward No. 6
Harvey Westerholm	City Manager
Brian Boudreaux	Assistant City Manager
Tommy Deaton	Assistant City Attorney
Atha Stokes	City Secretary

being present when the following business was transacted:

Mayor Garrison stated that the Regional Director of the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development of Fort Worth, Director of Region 6, had a representative in Lufkin today to present a citation to Mr. Percy Simond, but because of the time involvement they were not able to stay. Mayor Garrison stated that the Director had requested that he present the citation to Mr. Simond at this meeting. Mayor Garrison stated that the plaque certified that Mr. Percy Simond was awarded the Certificate of Appreciation for outstanding service and contributions to further Fair Housing. Mayor Garrison stated that Mr. Simond had been very active in the Pinewood Park Apartments on Lake Street, and had also been very active in the development and operation of the Chestnut Street Apartments. Mayor Garrison stated that it is because of the service to public housing developments that the citation was being given. Mayor Garrison stated that it was his personal pleasure for himself and on behalf of the City Commission representing the Department of Housing and Urban Development to be able to present the plaque to Mr. Simond.

1. Meeting was called to order by Mayor Garrison.

2. Mayor Garrison stated that this was a special meeting of the Commission, and in effect a workshop to review with the staff of the City some proposed suggestions to determine whether or not a sensible solution could be found to the problems that have developed in the Fire Department from the operation of the ambulance system. Mayor Garrison stated when he used the term problems, he was not talking about problems in the operation of the Fire Department because the City was proud of the Fire Department for the splendid job that they do in the protection of our properties in addition to the operation of the ambulance service that provides emergency care to people who are involved in various types of health problems. Mayor Garrison stated that the Commission was grateful to the staff of the Fire Department for the operation of the department and the operation of the ambulance service. Mayor Garrison stated that the meeting this evening was to determine if a way could be found to better utilize the personnel of the department in order to comply with some of the criticism that has been made by the Fire Insurance Commission. Mayor Garrison stated that it had been determined that the Fire Department was utilizing too many man hours in the operation of the ambulance service and that this would potentially detract from the firefighting service of the City. Mayor Garrison stated that he had never seen anywhere that anybody had cited an example of where the fire suppression part of the business had been neglected. Mayor Garrison stated that in his opinion, most of this is theoretical and the Fire Insurance Commission is dealing more in theories and what they consider probabilities. Mayor Garrison stated that the Fire Insurance Commis-

sion had suggested that the Fire Department was spreading itself too thin by utilizing the staff in the ambulance service, and would raise the key rate to higher levels which would be charged back to our insurance policies. Mayor Garrison stated that the Fire Management Study, which was made by Long Associates of Florida, had come up with several possible avenues of better utilizing the personnel of the Fire Department. Mayor Garrison stated that a number of alternatives had been considered by the City staff and Fire Department staff, and the City Manager had a recommendation to present to the Commission.

City Manager Westerholm stated that after the Fire Management Study was completed, the Commission had requested that the staff make recommendations on options to be considered. City Manager Westerholm stated that eight options had been prepared for consideration and selection by the Commission. City Manager Westerholm stated that the first five options basically had to do with adding additional personnel. City Manager Westerholm stated that one of the recommendations by the Fire Management Study was that if the City is going to have the fire service that is needed for a City the size of Lufkin and keep the key rate down, 12 to 20 additional men would need to be hired. City Manager Westerholm stated that in some of the options personnel has been added, but some duties had been taken away so that the present personnel will have more time for fire fighting activities and training.

City Manager Westerholm stated that Option 6, in his opinion, would have the least impact in regard to cost to the City. City Manager Westerholm stated that this option would eliminate long distance routine transfers, discontinue long distance emergency, close one fire station and staff fire station number 5 with the same level of personnel as in sub-stations 2, 3, and 4 (three men per shift).

City Manager Westerholm stated that a map prepared by the Fire Department staff had been placed before the Commissioners showing the City with concentric circles around the remaining four stations, a 1 1/2 mile radius or a 3 mile diameter of the circles. City Manager Westerholm stated that the Central Fire Station will cover the central part of the City from east to west using Lufkin and Frank for access. City Manager Westerholm stated that the station on Kurth Drive will serve northwest Lufkin, the station on Atkinson will serve the northeast, and the station on the South Loop will serve the southern part of the City.

Fire Chief Billy Stephens stated that there was a five minute response time from the time a call comes in.

City Manager Westerholm stated that in the event of a major fire or accident, more than one station would respond. City Manager Westerholm stated that it might be difficult getting into Crown Colony, but Crown Colony has limited itself by having only one or two ways to enter the subdivision.

Commissioner Percy Simond stated that he would agree with the Mayor that the City of Lufkin had a very capable Fire Department. Commissioner Simond stated that in his opinion one of the best things about the Fire Department is their good attitude and that is a credit to Chief Stephens.

Commissioner Simond stated that in his opinion the Fire Department should have a plan where there is easy access to all sections of the City. Commissioner Simond stated that Fire Station #3 has the best fire protection in the City as there is nothing to stop them from getting to any area of town.

Commissioner Don Boyd stated that his main concern with Option 6 was that if long distance emergency runs are discontinued who determines the emergency. Commissioner Boyd stated that he was also concerned about people on a fixed income having to call Houston on a long distance routine run. Commissioner Boyd stated that in his opinion the poor people should be given consideration. Commissioner Boyd stated

that a fourth man at each station would enable two men to go on an ambulance run leaving two men to man the station. Commissioner Boyd stated that in his opinion one man could not adequately man a station.

In response to question by Commissioner Jack Gorden, City Manager Westerholm stated that there are charges and credits on the key rate and they are based on the amount of fire fighting protection that the City has. City Manager Westerholm stated that the City's key rate is currently 21¢. City Manager Westerholm stated that the key rate had changed because of deficiencies which came out in the Fire Management Study.

In response to question by Commissioner Jack Gorden, Fire Marshal Roy Carrell stated that in his opinion the only way the key rate will improve is if more men are hired.

Commissioner Pat Foley stated that he was not entirely satisfied with any of the options the staff had recommended and perhaps the City would consider doing some other things. Commissioner Foley stated that he would like to see the City phase out service to the County and routine transfers. Commissioner Foley stated that he would like to see the City have a good Fire Department and EMS and perhaps one way to accomplish this would be to create a taxing district or hospital district to fund a good EMS and let everyone in the County pay their fair share. Commissioner Foley stated that in his opinion the City should visit with the County one more time in hopes of working something out. Commissioner Foley stated that substations in Diboll and Zavalla had been brought up in the Fire Management Study and he would like to see this given some consideration. Commissioner Foley stated that in his opinion the only way the City will have a good EMS is to subsidize it to a certain extent and the County should share in the burden. Commissioner Foley stated that the solution might not be realized over night and it might take six months, nine months or even a year to work out but definitely should be given consideration.

Commissioner Simond stated that one of the things that had perturbed him during the Fire Management Workshop was the statement that off-duty firemen sometimes followed a fire truck to the fire. Commissioner Simond stated that in his opinion there should be enough men on duty to take care of a fire. Commissioner Simond stated that a first class City such as Lufkin should have adequate protection at all times.

City Manager Westerholm stated that the off-duty firemen were no longer following the trucks to a fire. City Manager Westerholm stated that overtime had been lowered and routine transfers are being scheduled as a results of the Fire Management Study.

Commissioner Simond stated that he was still very concerned about hazardous materials passing through Lufkin. Commissioner Simond stated that he had obtained a computer printout from a scientist at SFA in Nacogdoches of 40 different toxic wastes that pass through Lufkin and wanted the lists distributed to the Commissioners and staff.

Fire Marshal Roy Carrell stated that in his opinion the list contained only a small amount of wastes coming through the City.

Mayor Garrison stated that some thought should be given to discontinuing the long distance routine transfers. Mayor Garrison stated that the Fire Management Study revealed that the long distance transfers were taking most of the manpower away from the local stations. Mayor Garrison stated that it takes two men away from their duties for seven hours if the transfer is to Houston and for nine hours if the transfer is to Galveston. Mayor Garrison stated that if routine long distance transfer service is available from private firms in Houston they could come here and pick up the person and would be making the same number of trips that Lufkin firemen are making. Mayor Garrison stated that if the charges from a Houston

firm are more than what Lufkin is charging then perhaps Lufkin should raise their rates or else let the person who needs the service pay the additional costs.

Mayor Garrison stated that the Commission needs to determine how much of the service should be discontinued that the City is currently providing and if one of the stations could be closed and adequate coverage still be provided to the City. Mayor Garrison stated that he was concerned that Fire Station #5 only had one man on duty. Mayor Garrison stated that the City could have four stations and still have adequate coverage from ambulance and fire suppression. Mayor Garrison stated that the Commission needs to look at what the City wants the ambulance system to do and whether or not the City is justified in retrenching and pulling back and closing one station at this time.

Commissioner Pat Foley stated that the figure of \$6,780 on Option #6 was not exactly accurate if the property on Ellis was to be sold. Commissioner Foley stated that the sale of the property would be a one time addition to the budget. Mayor Garrison stated that the City might not prefer to sell any of the properties but just to pull back at this time and have them available and make that determination at a later time. Mayor Garrison stated that the Commission is presently looking at operating costs as opposed to capital recovery by sale of property.

In response to question by Commissioner Louis Bronaugh, Chief Stephens stated that ambulance rates had been changed in October of 1985 and went from \$45 to \$75 in the City and County, plus \$2.25 per mile. Chief Stephens stated that the emergency fee is \$30 and \$25 per hour was being charged for waiting time. Commissioner Bronaugh stated that in his opinion the fee charged to County residents and out of County residents should be increased drastically. Commissioner Bronaugh stated that in studies on what other counties charged he had noticed that Nacogdoches and several other counties charged larger fees for out of county runs.

In response to question by Commissioner Bronaugh, Chief Stephens stated that Station #5 does not have an ambulance and if Station #2 is closed the ambulance used at that station will go to Station #5.

In response to question by Mayor Garrison, Chief Stephens stated that all calls are received at the central station and trained personnel will know where to dispatch firefighters and ambulance calls.

In response to question by Commissioner Gorden, Commissioner Simond stated that by not doing anything it will continue to cost the City a lot of money and the people would not be getting adequate fire protection and that parts of the City are getting no fire protection at all.

Commissioner Gorden stated that he was in favor of working out a better deal with the County on having some type of hospital district where funding for emergency medical services is designated and spread fairly over the whole County. Commissioner Gorden stated that in his opinion the City was obligated to give the best service available. Commissioner Gorden stated that perhaps the Company that has the contract for emergency room services at the hospitals could operate an EMS to the whole County. City Manager Westerholm stated that he had talked with both hospitals about the possibility of taking over the ambulance service and they were both reluctant because of the liability.

Mayor Garrison stated that in his opinion the ambulance service fits the Fire Department better than any other entity.

Commissioner Simond stated that he wanted to get back to the hazardous materials and in his opinion he might be somewhat over concerned but didn't think the City could afford to be 'blase' about the danger involved.

Commissioner Pat Foley stated that he was concerned about hazardous waste material passing through Lufkin but in his opinion the Fire Department could take care of an emergency with hazardous materials.

Fire Marshal Roy Carrell stated that in his opinion the older men of the Fire Department had been well trained in this area and they all knew not to run up on an accident until they knew what the hazardous material was. Fire Marshal Carrell stated that the first thing they do is to evacuate the area and then try to find out through books the Fire Department has or by calling a national hotline number to find out how to go about taking care of the spill. Fire Marshal Carrell stated that the Fire Department has unlimited access to any number of resources for help.

Commissioner Simond stated that one of his concerns was how many people would die while the Fire Department is calling all over the country for information. Commissioner Simond stated that he had been concerned about the situation since he had read in Newsweek that 75% of Fire Departments did not know how to handle this type of emergency.

In response to question by Commissioner Simond, City Manager Westerholm stated that the budget last year for the Fire Department had been \$1.8 million. City Manager Westerholm stated that ambulance service was listed separately and that no salaries were charged to ambulance but overtime was charged to ambulance. Commissioner Simond stated that in Axley & Rode's audit last year the ambulance service showed a loss of \$200,000. City Manager Westerholm stated that collections run about \$450,000 and that 80-82% of this amount is collected with 18% being uncollected.

Commissioner Jack Gorden stated that he and Commissioners Foley and Roper would like to propose that four people be hired, Fire Station #2 be closed, have a rate increase, stop routine transfers and appoint a delegation headed by Commissioner Foley to go to the County supported by a Resolution passed by this Commission saying that the City has to have some more support from them or the City will have to take a serious look at discontinuing some of the services to the County.

Mayor Garrison stated that in going to the County perhaps an up-to-date study could be made on collections showing how much is billed and how much is collected and showing what is going on with the new rates. Mayor Garrison stated that in his opinion the rates for the County should be based on the City's estimated cost of the time of the people involved, the cost of the equipment in making the run, depreciation, and fully cost it out. Mayor Garrison stated that the County could subsidize the out of City runs on the basis of what the City does not collect.

In response to question by Commissioner Boyd, City Manager Westerholm stated that the \$12,000 savings on each option would be realized from taking away the long distance routine transfers. City Manager Westerholm stated that the two oldest trucks in the system would be retired at a savings of \$10,000.

In response to question by Commissioner Boyd, Chief Stephens stated that the Fire Management Study had recommended four to five men per station. Commissioner Boyd stated that in his opinion the stations should be adequately staffed and he wondered what price could be put on a person's life.

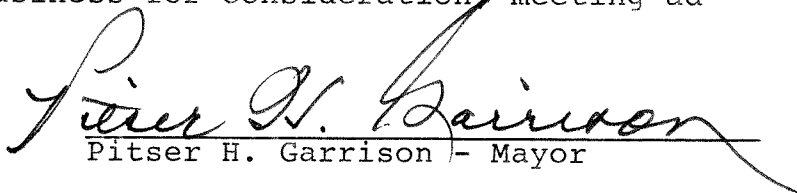
In response to question by Commissioner Simond as to action being taken at tonight's meeting, Mayor Garrison stated that he was under the impression that this was a Workshop meeting but in looking at the agenda it was listed as a Special Meeting and he would rule from the chair that action could be taken.

Motion was made by Commissioner Percy Simond and seconded by Commissioner Jack Gorden to hire four people, close Fire Station #2, do

something with the rates, stop routine long distance transfers, pass a Resolution sending Mayor Garrison and Commissioner Pat Foley as representatives from the City in conjunction with the cost study to negotiate with the County. A unanimous affirmative vote was recorded.

Commissioner Jack Gorden stated that the Commission will meet again before the representatives visit the County and perhaps the cost study will have been completed and the Resolution ready to be voted on.

3. There being no further business for consideration, meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m.


Pitser H. Garrison - Mayor

ATTEST:


Atha Stokes - City Secretary