

**MANAGER'S BRIEFING SESSION
MARCH 5, 2015 – 9:00 A.M
3rd FLOOR LOBBY CONFERENCE ROOM (FISHBOWL)**

MINUTES

PRESENT:

Mayor William Bencini; Cynthia Davis (At-Large); Jeffrey Golden (Ward 1); Christopher Williams (Ward 2); Alyce Hill (Ward 3); Jay Wagner (Ward 4); Mayor Pro-Tem James Davis (Ward 5); and Jason Ewing (Ward 6).

ABSENT:

Council Member Latimer Alexander (At-Large)

STAFF PRESENT:

Greg Demko, City Manager; Randy McCaslin, Assistant City Manager; Tommy Reid, Fire Chief; Tim Wright, Deputy Fire Chief; Ryan Evans, Assistant Fire Chief; Eric Olmedo, Budget and Performance Manager; Jeron Hollis, Public Information; JoAnne Carlyle, City Attorney; Lisa Vierling, City Clerk; Tom Vincent, Deputy City Clerk.

MEDIA PRESENT:

Pat Kimbrough, *High Point Enterprise*

MINUTES

[Note: all handouts and presentations will be attached as a permanent part of these proceedings.]

Non-Profit Applications Update

Eric Olmedo, Budget and Performance Manager, said non-profit organizations that received funds from the City were asked to submit a mid-year report. He handed out copies of the reports. Mr. Olmedo informed the Council he had received nine applications for funding and staff was evaluating the applications. He said in a Finance Committee meeting next month (April) he would bring the applications for the Committee's consideration. Mayor Pro-Tem Jim Davis asked if Theatre Art Galleries (TAG) had negotiated a lease with the High Point Theatre. Mr. Olmedo said the City had given TAG a lease agreement and the TAG Board was evaluating it. City Attorney Joanne Carlyle added that there were conversations about making the funds contingent on TAG entering into an acceptable lease agreement, however, these were only conversations and there was nothing in writing. Council Member Ewing said even if there was nothing in writing, TAG was in a city-owned building without a lease agreement and they should not be allowed there without the agreement. Mr. Olmedo pointed out that the payments were made on a quarterly basis and TAG had one more quarterly payment due. City Manager Greg Demko said the City would not pay it until the lease agreement was in place. Council Member Cynthia Davis state that enough time had passed without the agreement. [Later in the meeting City Attorney Joanne Carlyle reported she had heard from TAG and they said are going to execute the agreement at their next meeting.]

Mayor Pro-Tem Jim Davis said when City Project was eliminated as a Department and they were a non-profit, Council specified they would not receive any allocations unless they had their own checking

account in place. He asked if the City Project was handling their funds on their own. Eric Olmedo, Budget and Performance Manager, said it was his understanding they were doing it all on their own. Council Member Cynthia Davis asked if City Project had anything listed in the budget currently. Mr. Olmedo said they did not.

Fire Department Presentation

Fire Chief Tommy Reid introduced Deputy Chief Tim Wright and Assistant Chief Ryan Evans. Chief Reid said there was another Assistant Chief, Mike Levins, who could not be present. He explained that the High Point Fire Department does much more than put out fires. The Department does a lot of emergency medical services working in conjunction with EMS. He said the City of High Point has a top-notch Hazardous Materials Team which won a state-wide competition. The Department also has a Water Response Team with a fully equipped dive team and a Technical Rescue Team that does trench rescues and building collapses. Chief Reid stressed the efforts the Fire Department makes in the areas of Public Education and Citizen Interaction. He said the Department teaches children about fire safety. The Vehicle Injury Prevention (VIP) Program has a three year waiting list of High Schools waiting for the program. Chief Reid noted the Pink Heals Fire Truck is very popular and brings the community together. Theater students from High Point University made superhero capes the Fire Departments gives to young children.

Chief Reid showed an organizational chart that reflected changes made since 2009 and 2010. The Department has a total of 234 personnel with 210 in operations and 24 in administration, inspection and maintenance. The Chief mentioned the Fire Department Chaplain does a great job and he noted the Department is being more proactive in dealing with issues of stress. Council Member Cynthia Davis asked if there was a way to have round table exercises with Council Members that relate to their jobs and what they do. Ms. Davis said as elected officials there are a number of emergency scenarios they could find themselves in. Chief Reid said the City Manager has tasked his Department with coming up with an Emergency Disaster Plan for the City. The City has an Emergency Operations Plan. The Chief added the Department has round tables with the Police Department prior to Furniture Market and Council Members were welcome to come to those.

Chief Reid explained the Operations Division are the people who run the line and are on the trucks. He said there are three shifts with 70 personnel on each shift and there are two Battalion Chiefs on each shift. Each Battalion Chief is responsible for seven fire stations and has ten captains directly reporting. Chief Reid said the Battalion Chiefs are responsible running fire scenes, running fire stations and special duties they are tasked with such as honor guard. Council Member Ewing asked if there are certifications that go with the specialties the Battalion Chiefs are tasked with. The Chief said Michael Foster, the head of the HAZMAT team, is the liaison between the team and administration is a Certified Hazmat Technician. Ricky Shelton is over the Technical Rescue Team and might not be as high-level as some of the team members but he does have background in it and the person over the Water Rescue Team is a diver himself. He noted the Battalion Chiefs work 24 hour shifts but often work on their days off.

The Chief said there are two battalions in the City: North and South. He listed each station in each battalion and any specialties that are at the station. Assistant Chief Mike Levins is in charge of the Standards Division, Inspections-Investigations Division and the Training Division. Assistant Chief Ryan Evans is in charge of the Administrative Support and Logistics Division. The Chief said unlike some cities the Fire Department has their own Fleet Maintenance Division. The Department also has an IT expert on staff and an administrative support employee that handles payroll and administrative duties

Chief Reid assured the Council the Department was doing everything they could to promote diversity in the Fire Department. He said the average years of service are 14.3 years. The current recruiting class

has two African-American males and one female in it. The Chief emphasized recruiting is very difficult and the standards are very high to get in the Academy. He said the employee has to have at least an associate's degree to move up in the Department.

The Chief displayed a map of the areas the Fire Department has to cover. He noted doughnut holes within the City and areas outside the City limits that the Department covers. The County pays the City approximately \$230,000 a year for fire protection in those areas. The Chief also pointed out the Colfax area which the City receives approximately \$80,000 for fire coverage. Council Member Ewing asked what percentage the County pays of what the actual cost is. Chief Reid said those areas received better fire protection for their dollar than they would normally receive. Assistant City Manager Randy McCaslin point out it would not be a dollar for dollar reimbursement since the City has fixed costs such as stations, trucks and personnel. Mr. Ewing asked if we could not annex those areas is there any way to create some special taxation for those areas. Chief Reid said the amount is set by the County and the State.

Chief Reid pointed out the locations of the Fire Stations and stated the average response time is 3 minutes and 57 seconds from the time of dispatch. 85.7% of the time the High Point Fire Department beats the national standard of five minutes. The Chief said last year crews went out 23,292 times. The call volume grows every year and the Department is trying to combat that through fire prevention and education. Council Member Ewing asked how many of that number were medical calls. Chief Reid said the medical calls were approximately 60%. He said the total number of calls included house fires, building fires, fire alarms, medical calls and water cut-offs. Council Member Ewing asked if there was any structure to deal with habitual calls. The Chief said the second or third time an alarm malfunctions they will send the Fire Marshall who will try and remedy the issue. The Department works with alarm installers to get problems solved. Council Member Golden asked if there had ever been a conversation about establishing a County Fire Department. Chief Reid said there have been conversations but he does not expect anything to happen. He added the County does not have the funding.

Chief Reid displayed a map showing the volume of calls by location. Calls were highly concentrated in the College Drive/Green corridor. He said this was because of a concentration of low-income housing and rental properties. Council Member Williams asked if the Market Buildings were a factor in the areas of high concentration. The Chief said the Market Buildings were a very small part of the total calls for those areas.

The Chief showed slides of all the fire stations and pointed out maintenance issues with some of them. Council Member Ewing asked why so many stations had been built around 1963. Chief Reid said he thought there were a lot of annexations around that time. City Manager Greg Demko pointed out Station #12 had problems with the septic tank and would need to be connected to the sewer system. The Chief said the new maintenance facility was a great benefit to the Department. The new training tower is having some concrete work done and will be dedicated in April.

Chief Reid said the 11 recruits currently being trained were selected from a pool of 624 applications. The applicants go through a physical agility test. Many applicants are weeded out immediately because of felony convictions or any illegal activity in the last ten years. The Department also does oral interviews, background checks, polygraph tests and medical tests. The Chief noted in 2014 the 234 people in the Fire Department attended 64,749 hours of training.

The Chief pointed out the Inspections Division does 500 – 600 plan reviews a year. Mike Levins of Fire Investigations is a sworn law enforcement officer. The Chief said last year 29 arson cases were closed, 6 ended in arrests and most of the 23 were caused by juveniles. He said the juveniles go through a program and there have only been three repeat offenders since 2001. The Chief pointed out red X's

painted on buildings that indicate the buildings are vacant and unsafe. Emergency Management takes care of the City Coordination Center, the Mobile Command Post and special events in the City. The Chief said OSHA keeps track of the number of people off of work because of injuries. Prior to Chief Reid's tenure the average was 3.02, it is now down to 1.6. Chief Reid pointed out the Department emphasizes safety, wellness and fitness to help prevent injuries before they happen.

Chief Reid said the Department's goals were to maintain or improve their Insurance Services Organization (ISO) rating. The Department expects to be a strong Class 2 Department, almost a Class 1. The ratings have an effect on insurance rates for homeowners and business owners. The Department is going to implement an Emergency Disaster Plan. The Chief said the Department's future and pressing needs include replacement of unreliable apparatus, implementation of a fleet replacement plan and the renovation or replacement of inefficient facilities. The Department has a plan to present to the City Manager and the Budget Department to remedy this over the next several years. He said the Department will also need future stations and personnel to account for growth. The Chief stressed the importance of getting land for fire stations when land is annexed and before it is developed. Council Member Cynthia Davis asked if the aging facilities and apparatus affected the OSHA or ISO ratings. The Chief said it might, the apparatus still works and is safe but is out of compliance with national standards. Ms. Davis said the previous Council had put a plan in place to replace aging trucks. Chief Reid said the problem was that the Department is so far behind. Council Member Ewing commented on the effectiveness of the Fire Department's social media efforts.

City Manager Greg Demko said the next Manager's Briefing (March 16, 2015) will be on the Electric Department. The next two will be 1.5 hours each to cover Public Services and Code Enforcement.

Council Member Cynthia Davis said she received an email about dog tethering and would like to see the City Attorney draft something. Council Member Golden agreed that the dog tethering issue could be handled in the Community Housing and Neighborhood Development Committee. Mr. Golden added that CHND would not meet on Tuesday, March 10, but were hoping to meet on March 23. City Attorney Joanne Carlyle advised Council if they had discussions about official business while in Washington D.C. minutes needed to be kept. Council Member Cynthia Davis said that if anything needs a vote the Council should bring it back during a regular meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 10:35 a.m. on a motion duly made and seconded.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tom Vincent
Deputy City Clerk