



**Fire Rescue Advisory Committee  
City of Fort Lauderdale  
February 5, 2024 - 3 P.M.  
Fire Station #2  
528 NW 2 Street  
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33311**

<b>Committee Members</b>	<b>Attendance</b>	<b>Cumulative Attendance 3/2023-2/2024</b>	
		<b>Present</b>	<b>Absent</b>
William Brown, Chair	P	9	0
George Farrell	P	7	2
Carlos Lang	P	9	0
Jacquelyn Scott	A	6	3
Dennis Ulmer, Vice Chair	P	3	0

**City Staff**

Robert Bacic, Deputy Fire Chief, Liaison  
Garrett Pingol, Administrative Chief  
Eric Knowles, Battalion Chief  
Scott Bayne, Union President  
Carla Blair, Prototype, Recording Secretary

**COMMUNICATION TO THE CITY COMMISSION**

None

**ROLL CALL/DETERMINATION OF QUORUM**

The meeting was called to order at 3:01 PM. Roll was called and a quorum was determined to be present.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES – December 18, 2023**

**Motion** made by Mr. Farrell, seconded by Mr. Lang to approve the December 18, 2023 minutes. In a voice vote, motion passed unanimously.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

- **Regional Dispatch**

Chief Pingol stated oversight would be passed to Fort Lauderdale. He said they were in the process of a project to help Fort Lauderdale Hollywood International Airport meet a higher standard for communications.

Chief Pingol said they had reviewed data on the calls and noted a positive downward trend in call processing time, with an average of less than 60 seconds. He said they were still working with other municipalities on the Fastest Unit Response to get them online. He hoped to have talks with agencies near Fort Lauderdale Executive Airport in the next month. He added that dispatch was back to full staffing and would be fully trained and certified by next month. Chief Pingol discussed the challenges of using an AVL-based system to determine the closest response.

Mr. Lang asked Chief Pingol which was more beneficial: the regional dispatch or when Fort Lauderdale had its own dispatch. Chief Pingol said operationally, the City-based dispatch had been superior, but the calls were first answered at a call center and then sent to the City. Under the BSO platform, they controlled it from when the call was picked up until pressing the tone. The issue was that this system lacked operational control because the system included different things for each municipality.

Chair Brown asked about call volume for the year so far. Chief Pingol said call volume for the 2023 calendar year showed a slight increase from the previous year. He reminded the Committee that the flood in April had skewed things a bit.

- **Recommendations**

Mr. Farrell had drafted a document describing the Committee's Marine Team recommendations, which is attached to these minutes for the public record. He said Station 49 should be manned during peak hours. Chief Pingol confirmed that the fire boat sometimes responded to structural fires, including at residential buildings. He noted that the crew that responded via land-based units was the same crew required to man the boat, so when this happened, the fire boat was not available to be the portable water source.

Chief Knowles noted this was not just a fire boat, this was also the only dive team in the area, and they need five divers. The boat was also a transport unit. Chief Knowles explained their training schedule, noting divers needed extensive training to maintain proficiency. Chief Pingol pointed out how much faster response time was when the fire boat responded to a call on the water, instead of trying to get a boat carrying an injured person to land to be met by a rescue unit. Chief Knowles said Miami had a fully staffed fire boat 24/7.

Mr. Lang acknowledged the low call volume for the Marine Team but noted that it covered a large area but it was vital they be able to respond when needed. The Committee had

consensus to recommend full staffing of the Marine Team. Mr. Lang noted there were budgetary impacts and suggested Chief Knowles create a phased approach.

Chief Pingol said the “Gold Standard” goal was 24/7/365 five-person staffing of the fire boat. They should determine the minimum staffing format for phase 1. Regarding the low call volume, he explained that the boat only responded to calls it was capable of handling. If it were available more, patrolling the waterways, its scope of responsibility would look different. If it were fully staffed, they would have work all day.

Mr. Farrell said it was the Committee’s mandate to inform the City Commission of deficiencies in the Fire Department. So they should inform the City Commission of the need to fully staff the Marine Team and the City and Fire Chief would determine how to accomplish that. Chair Brown said they should be proactive and work with staff.

Chair Brown provided a recap of the Committee’s recommendations:

- Keep working on the staffing model for the rescues
- Work toward full staffing of the Marine Team
- Continue working with County dispatch
- Consider the need for two additional fire stations in the next five years in the old area of Station 46 and in the Sears Town/Flagler Village area

Chief Bacic agreed to draft a document with the Committee’s recommendations and distribute it for their input. Chair Brown stated after they agreed on the recommendations document, they would send a Communication to the City Commission in April so the Fire Chief would have it for the May budget presentation.

Mr. Farrell would like to see the Fire Department’s 10-year plan, which may already call for some of the Committee’s recommendations. Chief Bacic said they were approaching the end of the current strategic plan and would begin the strategic planning process again this budget year. Chief Bacic said it would also be useful to rank the Committee’s recommendations.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

- **Station 47 Mold Problem**

Chief Bacic said Station 54’s mold was an air conditioning design issue and had been addressed through a re-vamp of the air conditioning system. Station 47’s mold problem was due to a roof leak, which had been identified by a contractor. The mold remediation work was complete and he was optimistic they could move back in by the end of the week. The facilities team was reviewing all of the stations now to identify past roof leaks.

## **OTHER ITEMS AND COMMITTEE DISCUSSION**

None

## **COMMUNICATION TO THE CITY COMMISSION**

None

## **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 PM.

Any written public comments made 48 hours prior to the meeting regarding items discussed during the proceedings have been attached hereto.