

City of Franklin

Minutes of the Board of Works and Safety

City Hall
55 W. Madison St.
Franklin Indiana 46131

Thursday March 21, 2002 @ 6:30 P.M.

Presiding Officer: Mayor Norman P. Blankenship

Members Present: Mr. Stephen D. Hougland

Non-Voting Members Present:	Mr. Michael Herron	Fire Chief
	Mrs. Janet P. Alexander	Clerk Treasurer

Mrs. Karen Bridges a correspondent for the Indianapolis Star was present at this meeting.

After the Invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance, Mayor Blankenship opened the meeting and explained that the purpose of this meeting was to discuss the possibility of constructing a third fire station. The key issues are the 1. Location of one or more stations 2. Staffing required 3. Equipment needs. The Mayor said that Chief Michael Herron would give an overview of the studies and then he will open the floor to the public. The Mayor concluded his statement by explaining that the ultimate objective of these meetings is to gather enough information for the Board of Works to develop a plan to present to the Common Council in the form of a conceptual resolution.

NEW BUSINESS

Discussion of Fire Station Location - The Mayor introduced Fire Chief Michael Herron. Chief Herron summarized the conclusions of American Consulting, Inc. otherwise known as ACE Consulting, an architectural / engineering firm, hired by the City to research the fire station question. The first study titled Proposed Franklin Fire Station: Building Program and Area Location Study was submitted April 9, 2001 and a second study titled Proposed Franklin Fire Station: Additional Area Location Study submitted November 9, 2001. Chief Herron summarized the reports highlighting the following points:

The Chief said that the City of Franklin currently has two fire stations with equal response times from either station in and around central Franklin because the areas overlap. The railroad tracks run north and south sometimes cutting off access to areas of the City presenting a significant problem logistically for the department. The Fire Department divided the City into two districts one on either side of the railroad tracks. District One responds to the north and south sides of Franklin (divided along Main Street and / or Graham Street) and is served by Station 21 / Headquarters, located on North Main Street. Jefferson Street is the north / south dividing road. The equipment at this facility includes an ambulance, an aerial truck, and an Advanced Life Support (ALS) fire engine (this is a multiple purpose vehicle). Station 22, located at 999 Hamilton Avenue, serves District Two, the areas east of the railroad tracks. The equipment at this facility includes an ambulance and a fire engine.

The Chief also stated that the Franklin Fire Department is the only career fire department in Johnson County. The department has three (3) shift assignments identified as A, B, & C. Each shift has 13 – 14 officers assigned. Each shift is 24 hours from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 a.m. with 48 hours off following.

Response time, staffing, and equipment were the factors used to determine the best location for a third fire station. The ideal response time is 3 - 4 minutes from receipt of a call. The study has also considered the anticipated growth of Franklin in all directions. The area of greatest concern at this time is the northern part of Franklin – the Knollwood Farms addition to which the current response time is 5 - 10 minutes due to heavy traffic along U.S. 31. There is also anticipated future growth to the east. The majority of the fire / medic runs made by the department are made to the Franklin North Village, Northpointe, and Knollwood Farms addition, and the older downtown area. The ACE Proposals gave multiple options for locating a station to the north. They used a diamond pattern to show coverage and response times from the existing stations and the proposed third additional facility. They also mapped the City and attempted to place two stations in new locations in an effort to provide full coverage and quick response times to all areas of the City.

Chief Herron reviewed some of the options outlined by ACE. One proposal placed a new station in the area of Earlywood Drive, keeping the Hamilton Street Station - # 22, and closing Headquarters. This option reduced protection to some of our industrial areas. A second option placed a station again in the area of Earlywood Drive and a second station on South Street downtown near the cemetery. Chief Herron pointed out how this might increase the response times to the eastside of town. Also if implemented this would place two stations on the west side of the railroad tracks. A third proposal suggested building a station north and maintaining the two existing stations. This is the Chief's preferred proposal for the reason that all areas of the City would be accessible within 3 – 4 minutes, which is his and the department's objective.

Chief Herron stated that he thinks that the City should have three (3) fire stations. He supports maintaining the Fire Headquarters on North Main that serves both downtown and the southern end of town and believes the City should build a new station to serve the areas located at the northern edge of Franklin. He suggested that the City might want to look at relocating a fire station on the east side to replace the station at the corner of Hamilton & Forsythe Street, some time in the near future due to the growth in that area.

As for equipment, the Chief stated that one aerial platform, three ambulances, and three engines would meet all the City's needs. He recommends that the any new engines purchased should be multi -purpose, which reduces staffing problems.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mayor Blankenship invited the public to comment on what they had heard and / or to state their opinion or preference as to a location for a fire station. No one approached the podium. The Mayor then asked if there were any questions from the public. Initially no one asked to speak. The Mayor stated that this would not be the last opportunity for public input. The Mayor stated that copies of the Minutes of this meeting would be available upon request of the Clerk Treasurer.

Following these comments a woman who did not identify herself asked a general question about the potential for growth to the south. The Chief responded that at this time he believes that the Department can competently respond to the south for now. In addition to our department, we have mutual aid agreements with the Amity Volunteer Fire Department and Whiteland to the north. Mr. Hougland commented that we anticipate growth on the south side. He also said that the Planning Department is considering this growth as a part of the Comprehensive Master Plan project. She then asked how long it takes to respond to Knollwood Farms. Mr. Herron replied that it could take 6 – 8 minutes to respond to these calls. She asked about the number of runs made to this addition. Chief Herron stated that he could research the question and get her an answer. She stated that the City should keep in mind the large number of families and elderly people living in that area as well as the residents' of Christina House (an assisted living facility). This same person stated that she is a resident of Knollwood, a firefighter and an EMT and that "seven (7) minutes is brain dead". She also stated that medics have a saying, "time is tissue".

Firefighter Larry Tames shared that he too lives in the Knollwood Farms addition and that he monitors calls when he is home and is generally the first on the scene. He agreed that this effort alone would not fix the problem.

Chief Herron asked Mrs. Katherine Poynter, a City Council Member about her opinion about financing this project. Mrs. Poynter stated that the ability of the City to finance and construct one or more stations is still an unanswered question. According to both Mrs. Poynter and Mayor Blankenship, the City will need to consider the financial issues. Mayor Blankenship and Board Member Stephen Hougland stated the various problems faced by the City – lack of economic development in the last five years (manufacturing & industrial), state funding issues, and the state's property reassessment.

The Mayor thanked everyone for coming to this meeting and as there was no further business to come before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Janet P. Alexander, Clerk-Treasurer
Secretary to the Board of Works and Safety
Enrolled Date: 4-3-02

Approved by Board of Works:

Date

Norman P. Blankenship, Jr. Mayor

Date