

City of Franklin Minutes of the Board of Works and Safety

City Hall
55 W. Madison St.
Franklin Indiana 46131

Tuesday March 13, 2002 @ 6:30 P.M.

Presiding Officer: Mayor Norman P. Blankenship

Members Present:	Joseph R. Ault	
	Stephen D. Hougland	
Non-Members Present	Mr. Michael Herron	Fire Chief
	Mrs. Janet P. Alexander	Clerk Treasurer

Mrs. Karen Bridges a correspondent for the Indianapolis Star and Mrs. Holly Yoakum a staff reporter for the Daily Journal were present at this meeting.

After the Invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance, Mayor Blankenship opened the meeting and explained that the sole purpose of this meeting was to discuss the issues surrounding the City's investigation into the construction and placement of one or more fire stations and to gather the related thoughts and opinions of those members and of the public attending. A second special public meeting is scheduled Thursday March 21, 2002 at 6:30 p.m. The Mayor outlined the planned format of this meeting. Chief Herron will give an overview of the professional studies prepared for the City, and he will summarize the question from his and the Fire Department's perspective, and finally the public will be asked to share their thoughts. The Mayor closed his comments 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 resolution adopting a concept – and then asking the City Council to study funding mechanisms.

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 was submitted November 9, 2001. ACE looked at various scenarios including: 1. Build and relocate the two existing stations, 2. Building one station further north; 3. Build a station further north and a second station to the east (vacating Hamilton Street station).

Chief Herron summarized the reports provided by ACE highlighting the following points: The preferred locations for a third fire station were identified based on response time, staffing, equipment. The ideal response time is 3 - 4 minutes from receipt of the call. The study's 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 addition to which the current response time is five (5) to - ten (10) minutes due to heavy traffic along U.S. 31.

The initial ACE Proposal mapped the City using – 3 stations

1. Proposed new station north of Wal-Mart
2. East-side existing – Hamilton Street and Forsythe Street
3. North Main Street - existing

The Chief said that response times from either station are about the same in and around central Franklin because the areas overlap. The old down town area is considered to be a high-risk fire area, as are the industrial parks, such as those along Industrial Drive.

The second Ace Study – looked at two stations only

1. Proposed new station north of Wal-Mart
2. Locate a station near the downtown area – closing both existing stations

Chief Herron stated that he believes that the City should have three (3) fire stations. He supports maintaining the Fire Headquarters on North Main that serves both downtown and the south end of town and believes the City should build a new station to serve the areas located at the northern edge of the City. 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.

The Chief also provided an overview of the Fire Department today. He stated that the Franklin Fire Department is the only career fire department in Johnson County. The Department has Tactical Team including rope, confined space rescue, hazardous material, water rescue equipment, paramedic services (9 paramedics), and most firefighters working now are EMT's with a few exceptions. As for equipment, the fire fighting and rescue equipment at the two existing stations are nearly mirrored. According to the Chief the "La France" aerial truck is in service and has passed the required tests but it has recurring problems in spite of numerous repairs and parts seem difficult to obtain. Currently the City is purchasing an ambulance this year and may well purchase another as early as next year.

Six (6) – nine (9) additional firemen would be needed to man a third fire station. The current base pay of a firefighter is \$34,000 not including benefits. The station would also have equipment needs including an ambulance, an engine and / or a Quint – (a specialized engine that includes, ALS rescue, a bucket, a ladder and water) and a Squad vehicle– which is a heavier rescue vehicle.

PUBLIC COMMENTS PERIOD

Mayor invited the public to comment on what they heard and / or to state their opinion or preference as to a location for a fire station.

Retired Fireman and former Fire Chief Jack Matthews of 1040 Northpointe Drive, Franklin asked to speak: Mr. Matthews stated that he supports everything that Chief Herron said. He also wanted to make a comment about the La France Aerial Truck – he agrees that it needs to be replaced. Mr. Matthews also agreed that a third fire station should be built. He also wanted the Board to be mindful of the location- he recalled that on one occasion there was a fire on Jefferson Street across the railroad tracks and due to a train running at that time the firemen could not get to the fire quickly. Mr. Matthews suggested that the new station could be a dedicated engine house as all firemen hired now are EMT's. Reducing the immediate need for a dedicated ambulance. He also recommended that the new station should be well built by using concrete block and better quality materials, rather than pole barn construction, which was used to build the "temporary" station, located on Hamilton Street. He stated that the Hamilton Street station (Station # 2) could be enlarged at some point or transferred to the Street Department after building another station on that side of town.

Retired Fireman and former Fire Chief Bill Cantwell of 320 King Arthur Drive Franklin volunteered to speak: Mr. Cantwell stated that he could tell that Chief Herron has done his homework on this project – but he would have preferred that they use a 2-mile radius rather than the "diamond" pattern for the study. Mr. Cantwell also stated that he did not think that the City could afford three stations at this time. He stated suggested that a station be built to the north and purchase the land for two others be to be built later. He also said we definitely should keep one station east of the railroad tracks.

Franklin Fire Fighter Mr. Sean Harper, 1210 N. Lakeview Circle, Franklin: Mr. Harper stated that he agrees with Chief Herron, he supports the construction of a northern fire station, and a station around Interstate 65 on the east side. He does agree that Fire Headquarters should stay put on North Main Street. He related how unnerving the Christmas Day fire in Knollwood was – knowing that if they had gotten there sooner they could have saved the property. He also stated that he believes that every station should be equipped to provide EMS service - using either an ambulance or an engine equipped for ALS (Advanced Life Support).

The Mayor asked if anyone else would care to speak. No one approached the podium. The Mayor then asked if there were any questions from the public. A woman who did not identify herself asked whether the addition of a third station would improve the City's ISO Rating. Chief Herron deferred this question to Former Chief Matthews who explained that an ISO Rating is an insurance industry grade based on the number of fire fighters, EMS, paramedics, water supply, equipment such as ladders, and staff training. Chief Herron stated that our rating is not likely to change with the construction of a third station. The City's current rating is a 5 on a scale of 1 – 10 (1 being the best – 10 the worst).

Mayor Blankenship stated that the financial questions are still unanswered. He also said that there is a possibility that land could be donated to the City for this purpose. The Mayor reminded everyone that the next special Board of Works meeting to discuss this issue is scheduled March 21, 2002 at 6:30 p.m.

As there was no further business to come before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Janet P. Alexander, Clerk-Treasurer
Secretary to the Board of Works and Safety
Enrolled Date: 4-1-02

Approved by Board of Works:

Date

Norman P. Blankenship, Jr. Mayor

Date