

**JASPER COUNTY COUNCIL
EMERGENCY SERVICES COMMITTEE
MARY GORDON ELLIS EXECUTIVE BUILDING
CONFERENCE ROOM
JULY 15, 2008
1:00 P.M.**

MINUTES

OFFICIALS PRESENT:

HUBERT TYLER, COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN
FRED TUTEN, COUNCIL VICE CHAIRMAN

STAFF PRESENT:

ANDREW FULGHUM, ADMINISTRATOR
WILBUR DALEY, DEP. ADM. EMERGENCY SERVICES
STEVEN MALPHRUS, DEP. DIRECTOR EMERGENCY SERVICES
RONNIE MALPHRUS, DEP. ADM. ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES
MARVIN JONES, ATTORNEY
JUDITH FRANK, CLERK TO COUNCIL

IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT THE ELECTRONIC AND PRINT MEDIA WERE NOTIFIED.

DURING PERIODS OF DISCUSSION AND/OR PRESENTATIONS MINUTES ARE TYPICALLY CONDENSED AND PARAPHRASED.

CALL TO ORDER:

COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN TYLER CALLED THE MEETING TO ORDER AT 1:00 P.M.

INVOCATION:

COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN TYLER GAVE THE INVOCATION.

BARBARA CLARK – LEVY FIRE DEPARTMENT:

MS. CLARK AND CHIEF GRAHAM WERE PRESENT TO DISCUSS THE LEVY FIRE CONTRACT. MS. CLARK SAID THAT SHE AND CHIEF GRAHAM WERE CONCERNED ABOUT THE FUNDING FOR THE LEVY FIRE DEPARTMENT AND THEY WANTED TO KNOW WHY LEVY FIRE DEPARTMENT WAS BEING TREATED DIFFERENTLY FROM THE OTHER FIRE DEPARTMENTS. MS. CLARK ASKED WHY LEVY FIRE DEPARTMENT WAS OFFERED A SIX MONTH FIRE CONTRACT WHEN HARDEEVILLE, CHERRY POINT, AND RIDGELAND WERE GIVEN ONE YEAR CONTRACTS. MS. CLARK SAID THAT LEVY WAS BEING GIVEN \$195,000.00 FOR FIRE PROTECTION AND THE ANIMAL SHELTER WAS GIVEN \$157,000.00. MS. CLARK SAID SHE FELT IT WAS A SHAME AND A DISGRACE THE WAY LEVY WAS BEING TREATED. MS.

CLARK ASKED WHAT THE PROBLEM WAS. MS. CLARK STATED THAT LEVY HAS GOOD MANPOWER AND A GOOD ISO RATING. MS. CLARK SAID THAT THE REQUEST FROM LEVY WAS \$350,000.00 AND THEY WERE GIVEN \$195,000.00 AND A 6 MONTH CONTRACT. MS. CLARK ASKED WHY LEVY WAS TREATED DIFFERENTLY THAN THE OTHER FIRE DEPARTMENTS WITH CONTRACTS. COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN TYLER ASKED MR. FULGHUM TO ADDRESS THE ISSUES PRESENTED BY MS. CLARK. MR. FULGHUM SAID THAT THERE WAS \$330,000.00 IN THE BUDGET TO OPERATE THE LEVY FIRE DEPARTMENT AND THE COUNCIL AGREED TO OFFER LEVY A 6 MONTH CONTRACT BECAUSE THE COUNCIL MEMBERS WERE NOT SURE IF IT WAS BEST FOR THE COUNTY TO HAVE A CONTRACT WITH THE LEVY FIRE DEPARTMENT. MR. FULGHUM SAID THAT THE SIX MONTHS WILL GIVE THE COUNCIL TIME TO MAKE A POLICY DECISION. MS. CLARK ASKED WHY ONLY A SIX MONTH CONTRACT AND MR. FULGHUM SAID THAT A CONTRACT WITH LEVY FIRE DEPARTMENT MAY NOT BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE COUNTY AND IT IS HIS JOB TO FIND OUT WHAT IS BEST FOR THE COUNTY AND THE SIX MONTHS CONTRACT WOULD BUY TIME TO MAKE THAT DECISION. MS. CLARK SAID THE COUNCIL DOESN'T KNOW WHAT IS BEST FOR LEVY AND SHE SAID THE CONTRACT SHOULD BE FOR ONE YEAR AND THAT WOULD GIVE THE COUNCIL TIME TO SEE WHAT IS BEST FOR THE CITIZENS OF LEVY. MS. CLARK SAID THE CITIZENS OF LEVY DESERVE WHAT THE OTHERS GOT AND THAT LEVY SHOULD NOT BE PUT ON HOLD AND TO TAKE THE PEOPLE WHO ARE FIGHTING FOR LEVY OUT OF THE PICTURE AND TO THINK ABOUT THE CITIZENS OF LEVY. COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN TYLER ASKED ABOUT THE \$330,000.00 IN THE BUDGET FOR LEVY FIRE DEPARTMENT. MS. CLARK SAID THAT COUNCILWOMAN JONES MADE A MOTION AND COUNCILMAN TYLER SECONDED THE MOTION TO FUND THE LEVY FIRE DEPARTMENT CONTRACT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$330,000.00, BUT COUNCILMAN BLACKSHEAR, CHAIRMAN HOOD, AND VICE CHAIRMAN TUTEN VOTED AGAINST THE MOTION. MS. CLARK SAID THAT CHIEF GRAHAM LOOKED AT HIS BUDGET REQUEST AND MADE CUTS AND SAID THEY COULD RUN THE STATION FOR THE \$330,000.00. MS. CLARK SAID THAT THE CHIEF IN LEVY CANNOT RUN THE TRUCKS LIKE THEY NEED TO BE RUN BECAUSE HE IS CONCERNED HE WILL RUN OUT OF FUNDS TO OPERATE THE STATION. MS. CLARK SAID SHE HEARS VICE CHAIRMAN TUTEN PRAYING AND ASKING FOR DIRECTIONS TO DO WHAT IS BEST FOR THE CITIZENS OF JASPER COUNTY AND SHE WANTED TO KNOW IF FUNDING THE FIRE STATION IN LEVY WAS NOT WHAT WAS BEST. COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN TYLER ASKED HOW THE SIX MONTH CONTRACT WAS WORKING AND MR. FULGHUM SAID THAT LEVY HAS NOT SIGNED THE CONTRACT AND HE SENT LEVY A LETTER HONORING THE TERMS OF THE LAST CONTRACT AND HE ASKED IF LEVY IS GOING TO ENTER INTO A SIX MONTH CONTRACT. DOUG GRAHAM, LEVY FIRE DEPARTMENT CHIEF, SAID THAT THERE WAS SOME PROBLEM WITH THE WORDING IN THE LETTER AND THAT THEY HAD NO PROBLEM WITH A CONTRACT FOR ONE YEAR, BUT

THE LAST OFFER FROM THE ADMINISTRATOR WAS \$150,000.00 AND COUNCIL HAD APPROVED \$195,000.00. CHIEF GRAHAM SAID HE DID NOT KNOW WHY THEY WANTED A 6 MONTH CONTRACT WHEN ONE YEAR CONTRACT WAS OKAY LAST YEAR AND THEY CAN'T RUN THE TRUCKS AND THEY COULDN'T HEAT THE FIRE STATION LAST YEAR AND THEY DID NOT COME BACK AND REQUEST ANY MORE MONEY. CHIEF GRAHAM SAID THAT HE PRESENTED A REQUEST FOR \$371,800.00. CHIEF GRAHAM SAID HE TRIED TO CUT IT AND THE ADMINISTRATOR AND RONNIE MALPHRUS LOOKED AT IT AND THEY TRIED TO CUT IT AND NOTHING HAPPENED AND HE WAS ASKED IF HE COULD SURVIVE WITH \$330,000.00 AND HE SAID THAT HE COULD DO IT. CHIEF GRAHAM SAID THE ADMINISTRATOR KNOWS THEY CANNOT OPERATE THE STATION ON \$195,000.00. CHIEF GRAHAM SAID THE STATIONS RUN BY THE COUNTY, THEIR TOTAL BUDGET IS OVER FOUR MILLION DOLLARS AND THEY DO NOT HAVE AS MANY VOLUNTEERS AS LEVY. COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN TYLER SAID HE KNEW THE COUNCIL VOTED DOWN THE \$330,000.00 AND HE ASKED WHERE THE COUNCIL CAN GO FROM HERE. MR. FULGHUM SAID THAT THE CONTRACT IS FOR \$195,000.00 AND THERE ARE OTHER FUNDS IN ANOTHER LINE IN THE BUDGET THAT WILL TOTAL \$330,000.00 TO OPERATE THE LEVY FIRE STATION. MR. FULGHUM SAID THAT THE COUNCIL NEEDS TO DECIDE WHAT THEY WANT TO DO REGARDING THE CONTRACT WITH LEVY. MR. FULGHUM SAID THAT HE AGREED THAT IT WOULD COST \$330,000.00 TO OPERATE THE LEVY FIRE STATION.

MS. CLARK ASKED VICE CHAIRMAN TUTEN WHY LEVY SHOULD GET A SIX MONTH CONTRACT. VICE CHAIRMAN TUTEN RESPONDED THAT HE DID NOT COME TO THE MEETING TO ANSWER QUESTIONS, HE JUST CAME TO LISTEN. COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN TYLER SAID THAT HE WAS CONCERNED THAT THERE WOULD BE ENOUGH MONEY TO GET THE SERVICES TO THE PEOPLE AND HE WAS NOT CONCERNED ABOUT INDIVIDUALS. CHIEF GRAHAM ASKED HOW HE COULD GET SOMEONE TO WORK IF HE COULD ONLY GUARANTEE HIM A JOB FOR SIX MONTHS. CHIEF GRAHAM SAID HE DID NOT UNDERSTAND THE SIX MONTH CONTRACT AND HE FELT THERE WAS SOMETHING BEHIND IT THAT STINKS. CHIEF GRAHAM SAID MAYBE LEVY IS BEING OFFERED A SIX MONTH CONTRACT SO THAT IT WILL TURN IT DOWN. COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN TYLER SAID THAT THIS GROUP NEEDED TO WORK THINGS OUT AND THAT \$330,000.00 IS IN THE BUDGET TO OPERATE THE STATION FOR ONE YEAR. CHIEF GRAHAM SAID THAT SOME THINGS WILL HAVE TO BE CUT AND REDUCED TO DO IT FOR THE \$330,000.00. CHIEF GRAHAM SAID HE FELT THE ISSUE WAS THE 6 MONTH CONTRACT INSTEAD OF A ONE YEAR CONTRACT. MR. FULGHUM ASKED CHIEF GRAHAM TO LOOK AT THE LANGUAGE AND NOT THE TERMS AND AMOUNT OF THE CONTRACT. MR. FULGHUM SAID HE WANTS TO GIVE THE COUNCIL THE OPTION TO DO A CONTRACT FOR ANY AMOUNT, FOR ANY LENGTH OF TIME OR NO CONTRACT AT ALL OR FROM LEVY RUNNING IT TO THE COUNTY RUNNING IT AND BUILDING A NEW FIRE STATION. CHIEF GRAHAM SAID HE WOULD LOOK AT THE CONTRACT. MS. CLARK SAID

THAT THEY WERE NOT HERE TO WORK AGAINST THE COUNCIL; THEY JUST WANTED FAIR TREATMENT FOR THE PEOPLE OF LEVY. MS. CLARK SAID THAT THE ISO RATING WOULD GO UP IF THE COUNTY TOOK IT BACK AND PUT TWO FIREMEN IN A NEW STATION. COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN TYLER SAID THAT THE COMMITTEE WOULD HAVE TO GO BACK TO THE COUNCIL AND DISCUSS IT AS A CONTRACTUAL MATTER. MR. FULGHUM SAID THERE WERE A FEW ISSUES THAT NEEDED TO BE CHANGED AND MR. GRAHAM SAID HE WOULD LOOK AT THE CONTRACT. COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN TYLER SAID THEY WOULD GO BACK TO THE COUNCIL AND SEE IF THEY COULD MEET THE NEEDS OF THE PEOPLE OF LEVY. MS. CLARK THANKED COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN TYLER FOR WHAT HE WAS TRYING TO DO. ATTORNEY JONES SAID THAT LEVY COULD REVIEW THE CONTRACT, OTHER THAN THE AMOUNT AND THE TERMS, AND SEE IF IT IS SATISFACTORY. MR. JONES SAID THE COUNCIL HAS A VARIETY OF OPTIONS AS TO WHAT THEY CAN DO AND COUNCIL NEEDS TO DECIDE WHAT IS IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CITIZENS THERE. CHIEF GRAHAM SAID THE VOLUNTEERS IN LEVY DO NOT WANT TO GO BACK UNDER THE COUNTY. CHIEF GRAHAM SAID THAT THE LEVY FIRE DEPARTMENT ONLY HAS TWO OPTIONS – A SIX MONTH CONTRACT OR A TWELVE MONTH CONTRACT. CHIEF GRAHAM SAID THAT THE COUNTY HAS NO LIABILITY WITH LEVY, THE VOLUNTEERS MAKE THE DECISIONS, AND THEY DECIDE IF THEY DO NOT WANT TO GO BACK UNDER THE COUNTY’S OPERATIONS OR HAVING THE COUNTY PAY THE EMPLOYEES. MR FULGHUM SAID THAT IF THE COUNTY WANTED TO OPERATE THEIR OWN FIRE STATION AND ENHANCE THE COVERAGE, LIKE PUTTING AN AMBULANCE IN LEVY, WOULD THE LEVY VOLUNTEERS SELL THE BUILDING TO THE COUNTY. CHIEF GRAHAM SAID THEY WOULD NOT SELL THE STATION. MS. CLARK ASKED IF THE ONLY WAY LEVY COULD GET AN AMBULANCE IS TO SELL THE STATION TO THE COUNTY. CHIEF GRAHAM SAID THAT THE COUNTY SEEMS TO THINK THAT THEY HAVE TOO MUCH LEVERAGE ON THEM AND THERE HAS NEVER BEEN A COMPLAINT FROM THE FIREMEN OR THE CITIZENS OF LEVY. CHIEF GRAHAM ASKED WHAT THE COUNTY EXPECTS FROM THEM. CHIEF GRAHAM SAID THEY HAVE A GOOD WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH THE OTHER FIRE DEPARTMENTS AND THEY ALL WORK TOGETHER AND HELP EACH OTHER. CHIEF GRAHAM SAID THE TENSION IS HERE, NOT IN LEVY OR HARDEEVILLE. CHIEF GRAHAM SAID THE PEOPLE ARE DEDICATED TO LEVY AND ARE THERE BECAUSE THEY WANT TO BE. CHIEF GRAHAM SAID THE VOLUNTEERS ARE NOT PAID AND THEY USE THEIR OWN MONEY FOR GAS TO GO TO THE FIRES. CHIEF GRAHAM ASKED MR. FULGHUM TO GIVE THEM WHAT THEY NEEDED TO DO THE JOB AND TO LET THEM ALONE. CHIEF GRAHAM SAID THEY ARE DOING A GOOD JOB AND THEY ARE DOING WHAT THEY ARE SUPPOSED TO DO. COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN TYLER SAID THEY NEED TO WORK TOGETHER AS A UNIT WITH LEVY AND THAT NO ONE CAN DO IT ALONE THEY NEED TO WORK TOGETHER AS A UNIT TO TAKE CARE OF THE GROWTH. CHIEF GRAHAM SAID THAT LEVY IS THE ONLY ONE TREATED

THIS WAY AND WHEN THE COUNTY GIVES THE MONEY TO THE OTHER STATIONS THEY LEAVE THEM ALONE. CHIEF GRAHAM SAID THAT WHEN SOMETHING HAPPENS THEY ALL GO TOGETHER AND WORK TOGETHER AND WHEN THEY NEED EACH OTHER, THEY ARE THERE FOR EACH OTHER. CHIEF GRAHAM ASKED THAT THE COUNTY GIVE LEVY THE YEAR LEASE AND THE \$330,000.00 FUNDING AND THEN THE COUNCIL CAN WORK ON SOMETHING ELSE FOR NEXT YEAR. CHIEF GRAHAM SAID THIS NEEDS TO BE WORKED ON THROUGH THE YEAR, NOT AT BUDGET TIME. COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN TYLER ASKED DEP. ADMINISTRATOR OF EMERGENCY SERVICES DALEY IF THEY WERE WORKING TOGETHER AS A UNIT AND MR. DALEY SAID THEY HAVE NOT HAD ANY PROBLEMS WORKING TOGETHER. BARBARA CLARK SAID THAT WHAT CHIEF GRAHAM HAS REQUESTED IS WHAT IS DONE WITH HARDEEVILLE AND RIDGELAND. BARBARA CLARK SAID THE COUNTY KNOWS WHAT IS DONE WITH THE FUNDS BECAUSE OF THE BUDGET REQUEST. VICE CHAIRMAN TUTEN ASKED HOW MUCH MONEY WAS GIVEN TO HARDEEVILLE AND MR. FULGHUM RESPONDED \$195,000.00 PLUS THE PAYMENT OF \$95,000.00 FOR A TRUCK; RIDGELAND GETS \$195,000.00 PLUS A TANKER TRUCK; AND HARDEEVILLE GETS THE FUNDS FROM THE CHERRY POINT FIRE DISTRICT WHICH IS ABOUT \$250,000.00. VICE CHAIRMAN TUTEN SAID THE FUNDS FROM THE CHERRY POINT FIRE DISTRICT WILL DECLINE AS HARDEEVILLE ANNEXES LAND INTO HARDEEVILLE. MR. FULGHUM SAID AN AMBULANCE IS STATIONED AT CHERRY POINT, BUT THAT IS PAID FOR BY THE COUNTY. VICE CHAIRMAN TUTEN ASKED HOW MANY TRUCKS IN LEVY. CHIEF GRAHAM SAID THE FIRE DEPARTMENT OWNED A PICK-UP TRUCK AND A RESCUE TRUCK AND THERE WERE 3 COUNTY TRUCKS STATIONED THERE. VICE CHAIRMAN TUTEN SAID THAT THERE WERE THREE COUNTY TRUCKS IN LEVY AND TWO TRUCKS IN THE OTHER STATIONS AND THE OTHER STATIONS WERE GIVEN \$195,000.00. VICE CHAIRMAN TUTEN SAID THAT LEVY WAS USING THE VOLUNTEERS AS LEVERAGE AGAINST THE COUNTY BY SAYING THEY WILL NOT VOLUNTEER IF THE COUNTY TAKES THE STATION OVER. COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN TYLER SAID THEY WERE NOT AT THE MEETING TO SPLIT UP THE FIRE SERVICE; THEY WERE MEETING TO TRY AND UNITE IT. BARBARA CLARK SAID THEY WERE REQUESTING A THIRD PAID FIREMEN LIKE THE OTHER STATIONS. MS. CLARK SAID THE LETTER FROM THE INSURANCE PEOPLE SAID THAT LEVY WOULD NEED FOUR PAID PEOPLE TO GET A SUITABLE RATING IF THE COUNTY TOOK IT OVER. BARBARA CLARK SAID THAT TO HEAR A COUNCIL MEMBER SAY "I DON'T CARE" IS INSULTING AND DISGUSTING. VICE CHAIRMAN TUTEN SAID HE SAID HE DID NOT CARE TO ANSWER THE QUESTION, NOT THAT HE DID NOT CARE ABOUT THE PEOPLE. COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN TYLER SAID THAT EVERYONE NEEDS TO WORK TOGETHER TO UNITE THE FIRE PROTECTION OF THE COUNTY. COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN TYLER SAID THAT THEY NEEDED TO WORK AS A UNIT AND HE WISHED HE HAD THE ANSWER TO THIS, BUT HE WAS GOING TO SEE IF THE COUNCIL AND THE ADMINISTRATION COULD UNITE THIS SITUATION AND COMMITTEE

CHAIRMAN TYLER ASKED MR DALEY, DEP. ADMINISTRATOR OF EMERGENCY SERVICES, TO WORK WITH THEM FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE CITIZENS OF JASPER COUNTY. CHIEF GRAHAM SAID THERE WAS A TIME WHEN PEOPLE HAD SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR FIRE COVERAGE AND IF PEOPLE DID NOT HAVE A SUBSCRIPTION, PEOPLE STOOD BY AND WATCHED A HOUSE BURN. CHIEF GRAHAM SAID NO ONE IN LEVY WOULD STAND BY AND WATCH A HOUSE BURN, THEY WOULD DO A GOOD JOB AND PUT THE FIRE OUT EVEN USING PEOPLE WHO CAME TO THE SCENE OF THE FIRE. VICE CHAIRMAN TUTEN SAID HE DID NOT THINK ANYONE SHOULD STAND BY AND WATCH A HOUSE BURN DOWN. CHIEF GRAHAM SAID THE VOLUNTEERS IN LEVY ARE THERE BECAUSE THEY WANT TO BE THERE. VICE CHAIRMAN TUTEN SAID HE WAS LED TO BELIEVE THAT THE VOLUNTEERS WON'T BE THERE. CHIEF GRAHAM SAID THAT THE VOLUNTEERS WERE MEETING TONIGHT AND HE INVITED VICE CHAIRMAN TUTEN TO ATTEND THE MEETING AND TALK TO THE VOLUNTEERS. VICE CHAIRMAN TUTEN SAID HE WAS IN LEVY YESTERDAY AND HE KNOWS WHAT IS GOING ON AND THE PEOPLE OF LEVY ARE FED UP AND TIRED OF BEING FOOTBALLS. COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN TYLER SAID HE FELT THAT EVERYONE COULD WORK TOGETHER AND SEE WHAT THEY CAN COME UP WITH AND THEY NEED TO COME TOGETHER, NOT PULL AWAY FROM EACH OTHER. COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN TYLER SAID IT WILL TAKE A WHILE TO RESOLVE THIS SITUATION. VICE CHAIRMAN TUTEN SAID THAT IF THEY ARE GIVEN \$195,000.00 FOR SIX MONTHS THAT WOULD ONLY LEAVE \$135,000.00 FOR THE BALANCE OF THE YEAR. MR. FULGHUM SAID THE \$195,000.00 IS FOR ONE YEAR AND THEY WOULD ONLY GET HALF OF THAT FOR THE SIX MONTHS, AS IT IS ANNUALIZED. CHIEF GRAHAM ASKED HOW DOES THE \$135,000.00 COME INTO THE EQUATIONS. MR. FULGHUM SAID IT ONLY GIVES THE COUNTY TIME. VICE CHAIRMAN TUTEN SAID THAT LEVY HAS ALREADY RECEIVED \$20,000.00 AND CHIEF GRAHAM SAID THAT WAS TO COVER WORKERS' COMPENSATION, WHICH HAD EXPIRED, SO THAT THE STATION COULD CONTINUE TO OPERATE. MR. FULGHUM SAID HE HOPED THE COUNCIL WOULD MAKE A DECISION QUICKLY. BARBARA CLARK ASKED THE COMMITTEE TO MAKE A RECOMMENDATION TO THE COUNCIL TO GIVE LEVY A ONE YEAR CONTRACT AND THE \$330,000.00 TO OPERATE THE FIRE STATION. MS. CLARK THANKED THE COMMITTEE. COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN TYLER SAID THAT THE COUNCIL WILL BE WORKING ON THIS.

THE MEETING ENDED AT 1:50 P.M.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED BY:

APPROVED BY:

JUDITH M. FRANK, CCC
CLERK TO COUNCIL

HUBERT TYLER
COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN