

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
BREVARD COUNTY, FLORIDA

1:00 PM

The Board of County Commissioners of Brevard County, Florida, met in special session on March 13, 2014 at 1:00 PM in the Government Center Commission Room, Building C, 2725 Judge Fran Jamieson Way, Viera, Florida.

**CALL TO ORDER**

1:00 PM Meeting called to order on March 13, 2014 at Florida Room, Florida Room, Viera, FL.

<b>Attendee Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Arrived</b>
Robin Fisher	Commissioner District 1	Present	
Chuck Nelson	Commissioner District 2	Present	
Trudie Infantini	Commissioner District 3	Present	
Mary Bolin Lewis	Vice Chairman/Commissioner District 4	Present	
Andy Anderson	Chairman/Commissioner District 5	Present	

**FIRE RESCUE PRESENTATION**

Howard Tipton, County Manager, stated in this room last summer it was talked about a number of issues that the County would need to address over the coming years; the issues in total kind of took the size of an elephant; they are very big and in many cases very complex; there has been a number of discussions over the months over those big items, including Utilities and their aging infrastructure in the Capitol Plan to address that, and discussions on the Lagoon, which will continue; and staff now is before the Board to discuss Fire Rescue. He went on to say when talking about this issue today Chief Larry Collins and Deputy Chief Dennis Neterer, Fire Rescue, will walk the Board through the PowerPoint presentation; the Board is familiar with this issue; and he thinks staff has done a very good job in following the Board's plan. He noted in addition to Chief Collins and Deputy Chief Neterer, Burton and Associates performed the rate analysis in 2008 and 2009; they are back with them today having done a update to that; representing them today is Andy Burnham, Senior Vice President, and Eric Rowell, Manager; and both of the gentleman have extensive experience in rate studies and financial analysis.

Chief Collins stated they are the largest fire department and best prepared in the County; they frequently provide a backstop for local cities through mutual aid; and they have a total of 831 members serving the community. He went on to say the basic services provided by them are fire suppression, Emergency Medical Services (EMS), ocean rescue, haz/mat, 911 dispatch, fire prevention, and public safety; and the Department responds from 33 Fire/EMS station located throughout Brevard County, which is 72 smiles end to end, covers 1,017 square miles of land, and 539 square miles of water. He pointed out collaboration/shared facilities are Cities of Cape Canaveral, Palm Bay, and Rockledge; they have co-staffed partnerships with Satellite Beach; they have auto aid partnerships, in whole or in part, in seven cities; and they have mutual aid with six additional cities, five counties, Patrick Air Force Base, Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, and NASA. He noted they are the second largest Fire Department in Central Florida, servicing 550,000 citizens overall, plus six million visitors annually; and 230,234 in the unincorporated area and contract areas. He advised the Board there were a total of 69,922 Fire and EMS calls for assistance; there was a total EMS patient transports was 46,115; the there were a total dispatch of 140,687 emergency vehicles to handle these calls. He pointed out the Brevard County Fire Rescue responds to tankers transporting fuel from fuel farm at Port Canaveral, countless vehicles that traverse I-95, railways, wildfires, high-rises, and mega super stores. He stated EMS calls consist of cardiac, trauma and stroke; fire calls consist of typically

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structures, wild land, and vehicles; and haz/mat calls consist of gas leaks, fuel spills/leaks, and meth labs. He spoke to the Board about the number of emergency activities comparison from 2011 total incidents at 67,475 with the total unit responses at 134,111; in 2012 the incidents were at 69,677, which the unit responses at 136,397; and in 2013, the incidents were 69,922, with the total unit responses at 140,687. He presented slides regarding how the revenue for Fire Rescue is broken up and by operating revenue; he explained the assessment pays for compensation and benefits, operating expenses, capital and CIP, and transfers; and the fire assessment pays for 188 frontline firefighting personnel out of the 313 in fire operations, fire stations, engines, trucks, tankers, and many other things, fire prevention services, dispatch services, volunteer fire service operations, fire logistics and support, business overhead, and fire certifications for EMS personnel. He stated the fire service special assessment (fire assessment) was first instituted in 2006; six years ago, the Board adopted a new methodology and financial plan; and it called for a 15 percent reduction in fire assessment revenue starting in 2009, spending down the reserves, and then implementing modest annual increases to keep pace with projected inflationary costs. He went on to say projections approved by the Board at the time had annual assessment rate adjustment at 3.4 percent starting in 2011; the recession and sluggish economy forced Fire Rescue to make due by stretching even further the existing reserves until things turned around and the economy recovered and strengthened, and the 3.4 percent increase did not occur. He pointed out the dollars have been made to last beyond expectations in these tough times; this was done primarily through deferment of capital equipment and CIP needs; deferred replacing fire stations from 2010 through 2014 at an estimated savings of \$3.9 million; and some stations are 30-50 years old, many undersized for today apparatus, not designed for full-time personnel, and locations may be improved. He advised they deferred purchase of estimated \$140K smaller fleet vehicles over the same period; fire employees took voluntary step and COLA freeze in 2009, 2010, and 2012, valued at \$2.3 million. He pointed out Fire Rescue procured almost \$7 million in State and Federal grants to purchase needed equipment and personnel; instituted automatic aid agreements, station and apparatus sharing, and joint staffing models, saving \$425,000 annually, keeping costs down while improving service delivery for both communities involved; modified type of apparatus purchased for fleet management by purchasing Quints, a multi-purpose unit that can do the job of both an Engine and a Truck, instead of Fire Engines; and put existing Engines replaced by Quints back into the fleet instead of buying new ones. He went on to add through fleet management strategies, the Department reduced overall number of fire apparatus scheduled to be purchased; the original replacement plan (2010-2014) was 10 units, six engines and four ladder trucks totaling \$4.92 million; reduced overall number of fire apparatus scheduled to be purchased to seven units, two Engines, three Quints, and two Ladder Trucks, totaling \$4.64 million; and by purchasing Quints, it saved them from having to purchase four new engines at \$380,000 each. He noted fleet services personnel built 10 brush fire trucks to reduce costs, saving \$1.6 million; they implemented Fleet Rotation Strategy, which added two additional years to fire apparatus and EMS vehicle service life, by rotating tires on a car, and moving busy units to slower location to lessen wear and tear on them; and they implemented computerized fleet evaluation tool that told them when the cost of repairs and maintenance exceed the value of the vehicle. He provided to the Board slides showing Fire Operations reserve fund balance for 2009 and 2015. He pointed out the Emergency 911 Dispatch Center is an urgent need; it was built in the 1960's, has undergone significant deterioration, and technology has outgrown the building; fire station replacements need to be back on scheduled; they need to move forward with fleet replacement plan; and a centrally located training center needs to be built. He stated there has been an unprecedented turnover in the uniform ranks; nearly 130 personnel have left the BCFR since 2011; and on average, the cost is about \$33,000 to train a new recruit. He went on to say they have provided the Board with three options; and Option 1 is no increase to the fire assessment. He pointed out that option will require significant service adjustments, and will likely impact some home and business fire insurance rates; not all stations will remain open, response times in some instances go up, and city partners will probably not continue to honor the Auto Aid agreements; 72 percent of fire operation costs are for compensation and benefits,

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and there must be a balance between personnel costs and materials and supplies needed to accomplish the mission; and it takes fuel, equipment, etc. to support the firefighters, and without it, they are ineffective. He added, there may or may not be a negative impact to morbidity and mortality and economic impact from the fire loss within the community; and they will continue to lose personnel and suffer continued deterioration of existing capital assets that will at some point still require replacement, probably at an even greater cost. He stated Option 2 is a minimal increase to the assessment; it will provide the community with the level of fire and EMS protection and readiness it has grown comfortable with and demanded over the years, one that is responsive, efficient, and effective; it will allow for scheduled modernization of eight to 10 fire stations over the next 10 years to keep long term costs in line; and it will provide for fire emergency fleet equipment modernization over the next 10 years. He noted it would also replace the dated 9-1-1 emergency dispatch facility, which is a critical need; and it will provide the training facilities and program necessary to insure the firefighters and paramedics are highly qualified, well equipped with appropriate life saving equipment and reasonably compensated so they continue to want to be part of and service this community. He advised the Board that Option 3 is policy operations as directed by the Board. He provided the Board examples of annual impacts to residential properties. He stated the Board decides the level of risk the community accepts with its vote and the dollars it brings forward for them.

Andy Burnham, Burton and Associates, provided the Board an overview of the FY 2014 Fire Assessment Revenue Sufficiency Analysis Update. He stated on July 29, 2008, the Board adopted the current assessment rate that reflected a 15 percent reduction; the Fire Assessment rates have not changed since reduction in FY 2009; the County retained Burton and Associates to review the sufficiency of the Fire Assessment revenue to fund the projected requirements of the Fire Assessment Fund over a 10 year projection period to satisfy projected annual operating and capital cost requirements, maintain adequate operating reserves, and ensure compliance with the terms of any potential future debt; and their presentation will provide the Board the results of the analysis. He went on to say it indicated a future plan of increases of 3.4 percent starting in the year 2011 continuing on thereafter to address inflationary increases in both operating and capital costs; since that time what has happened, there has not been any adjustments to the Fire Assessment since 2009; in light of the current cost analysis and capital analysis that the fire department goes through annual as part of the budget process, they brought them in to update an analysis of the sufficiency of the revenues provided by the assessment against many of the cost requirements that the Chief has enumerated to the Board, both operating costs as well as capital equipment and station improvement costs. He pointed out they began with the County's cash balances over the recently completed fiscal year 2013; from that they made a projection of revenues based on the FY 14 budget amount, adjusted for assumed growth going forward; it is a very modest growth assumption of 0.50 percent in FY 2014 and FY 2015, and then 1.0 percent per year in FY 16 going forward; and that is the basis of the original revenue projections for this assessment. He went on to say the expenditure side is based on the FY 14 operating budget, but they did review historical spending performance against that budget to ensure that going forward that they had adequate spending assumptions; and while they forecasted the expenses off of that budget using cost escalation factors, they then recognized actually spending would be slightly less than those budgets given past performance, for example on salaries; and there are position vacancies that are out there most of the year so they will not spend every dollar of budgeted salaries. He noted in personnel services they factored 95 percent spending of forecast amounts; other operations and maintenance expenses, they also reflect 95 percent of the budget; some of the intra-fund transfers for the fire certifications, EMS, and some of the internal allocations of fire preventions costs, those transfers have been assumed at 97 percent; and then inter-fund transfers would be to the Property Appraiser and Tax Collectors office for the

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maintenance of the assessment were assumed at 100 percent. He stated on average, using the cost escalation factors they reviewed with the County and past trends, there is an annual increase of operating cost of approximately 4.3 percent per year going forward. He stated the final piece of the projection is the integration of the Capital Improvement Program that was mentioned; it includes a number of different items, and they included that for a 10-year time projection; on average as far as station rehabilitation as well as equipment items, there is about \$3.9 million of average annual expense over the 10-year forecast period; in addition to that, they do have funding of the training and dispatch centers; on those two items, the training center they have included an \$8 million total project costs in the period of three years of \$3 million in FY 2015 through 2017; and the dispatch center there will be \$7.5 million, distributed over the same three years. He went on to say they assumed those two capital improvements would be debt funded, utilizing a 20-year bank loan; they reviewed those terms with the Finance Department to get their sign off and comfort with the assumptions they have used for the financing of these projects.

Commissioner Infantini stated she knows when the County was first planning to build the training center, it was mentioned that a lot of people would be using the training facility, and the County would actually be making money from that. She inquired what was the assumption for the revenue to be generated to offset the training costs. Mr. Burnham advised he does not believe any was included. Commissioner Infantini stated so the County is not going to be making any money on it. She inquired if that would be relevant and bring down the costs a little bit. Mr. Burnham responded it would reduce the amount of revenue that would come from the assessment, and he is not sure what the magnitude of that might be.

Chief Collins advised the Board they have not finished discussions with Eastern Florida and those kinds of things so he does not know at this time. Commissioner Infantini inquired if they have made any money so far on that training facility. Chief Collins responded not on the one down there.

Mr. Burnham stated going forward that is why a person looks at these things radically so when there is new additional information, it can be factored into the forecast and plans can be adjusted accordingly; he would presume once that is a more known item it can be integrated into the financial forecast for the system. He stated the total amount of capital of \$15.5 million for the 20-year term, and an interest rate identified is about \$1.1 million of annual debt service of principal and interest; and that is the real impact of these two facilities to the County rates in terms of annual costs requirements for the capital. He stated they did a diagnostic evaluation; and he included in the presentation some screen captures of their financial model they did interactively with County staff to go through and evaluation different assumptions and sensitivity test. He presented screen captures to the Board regarding revenue sufficiency forecast results for no additional adjustments, three percent adjustments, and the recommended plan of adjustments; and he provided the Board with a Fire Assessment Fee Survey. He summarized by saying they have recommended and identified an increase of 11 percent in FY 15 through FY 18, followed by inflationary increases that would allow the system to meet those requirements with operating and capital, as well as reserves, and debt service coverage ratios; in the current fire assessment is very comparable what is seen and what a person will expect to see moving forward over time based on levels of increases they have identified for the County's system. He went on to say one item they included in the PowerPoint presentation is an alternative plan that if the Board was not comfortable with those reserves in the out years being slightly below those target levels they discussed with staff, they identified an alternative plan that would have

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those reserves be exactly equal to the bar; but the increases in doing that would be 12 percent for two years, which could then be reduced down to a lower number of about 9.5 percent per year. He stated the recommendation from them and County staff would be to go with the more level plan of increases.

## **BOARD DISCUSSION**

Chairman Bolin Lewis inquired regarding the revenue forecast, did they run one of these charts if the Board did not have the debt service and it not want to do training and were going to do the 9-1-1 center. Mr. Burnham replied if those two projects were not to be completed, then the level plan scenario they would be able to take the increases down from 11 percent to nine percent; and they would remove the capital expenses as well as the operating expenses for those facilities to allow that increase to be reduced by two percent.

Commissioner Fisher inquired if that will be 11 percent in FY 15 through FY 18. Mr. Burnham responded affirmatively; stated when looking at the cost requirements of the system today, they do not have adequate assessment revenue for roughly \$4 million a year of capital that is needed, nor the \$1 million of debt service for the training and dispatch center; and over that same four to five-year time period, the projected operating cost would go up about \$3 to \$4 million as well.

Chairman Bolin Lewis stated in the County's reserves, there is \$14.2 million; and she inquired what was there in 2013, and how much revenue has declined. Mr. Burnham advised the ending 2013 balance they have for just the Fire Rescue operations, absent funds dedicated for capital, there was \$2.8 million earmarked specifically for capital improvements in FY 14, and the ending reserve number in total for 2013 was about \$11 million.

Deputy County Manager Stockton Whitten stated the fund balance is that saved amount that is in the budget, and that is where the confusion is.

Mr. Burnham stated the \$14 million was the ending FY 09 balance; the number he gave her was the ending FY 13 balance; and four years later the County has gone from \$14 million to \$11 million, and if the funds are deducted for restricted capital, that takes it down to \$8 million.

Commissioner Fisher inquired of much of the \$14 million was capital.

Assistant Fire Chief Dennis Neterer advised the Board there are some budget changes in the process, and those reserves were affected \$400,000 for the two percent pay increase that occurred as approved by the Board; and then the balance forward was adjusted down \$500,000. He stated there should be approximately for FY 14 about \$6 million.

Commissioner Infantini stated the ambulances are housed with the fire trucks; it seems like all of the capital improvements were coming out of fire assessment and MSTU; and she inquired where the cost were pulled to house the ambulances out of the general fund. Assistant Chief Neterer responded within Fire Rescue's budget there is what is called a support fund; it pays for utilities, station maintenance, and improvements; it is an inter-fund transfer that a percentage comes out of fire and a percentage comes out of MSTU, and then a percentage comes out of EMS to help that. Commissioner Infantini inquired what percentage of the support costs comes from the EMS cost center. Assistant Chief Neterer replied 40 percent. Commissioner Infantini stated her constituents told her often times fire personnel will accompany EMS personnel to help them actually to do the lifting; perhaps the County should be rededicating and not be charring so much service to the fire department as it should to the Emergency Medical Service; it seems when she went over the calls that were presented, most of the calls are really EMS not

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really fire in nature; and she inquired if it would be better to have three people in an ambulance rather than three people on a truck. Assistant Chief Neterer replied it is called a two-tiered system; the municipalities help in that regard; the reason the fire engines go with the ambulances is that the goal is to get a paramedic or advanced life support on scene quickest; he worked to two person fire engines back in the day and it was dangerous; and the national standards do not allow a fireman to enter the building without four people at the scene.

Chief Collins stated the way their system is set up is the ALS unit or medic unit that arrives on the scene is actually part of the fire attack group; and that is how they get by running three and not four on an engine because they go together and work together as a team. He advised the Board the two person engine is a thing of the past.

Commissioner Fisher stated in 2008 the reserves got to \$14 million and that is when they made the adjustment on the rate on the fire structure; and inquired if prior to 2008 was the revenue so out of whack that it created this reserve.

Assistant Chief Neterer stated at one time the whole fire operations was funded out of the MSTU, which is ad valorem; depending on what occurred in terms of property values it would affect the revenue; in 2005, 2006, and 2007, they switched over to the fire assessment; at the end of the day, the accumulation of reserves was as a result of increase of revenue in terms of the affects of increased ad valorem property taxes; and they kept those reserve dollars, which has helped them over the last six years to not touch the assessment.

Mr. Tipton stated a portion of the budget is funded through property taxes still, the MSTU; because it is doing better on that side an values are going up, they have accounted for those revenues in these models; the charter cap in place says the revenues can go up three percent or the CPI, whichever is less; and for this year it is 1.46 percent. He went on to say impact fees to provide on the fire side, it is approximately \$35,000 a year; and on the EMS side it is about \$65,000.

Commissioner Fisher inquired if there were numbers ran with just extending, remodeling, or adding square footage to the fire station to accommodate the truck. Chief Collins replied no. He went on to say the buildings are old, and it would not be cost effective; that can be looked at if the Board would like; the other problem they have is the location of some of the stations; and there has been population shifts in those locations.

Mr. Tipton stated they will rehabilitate stations where they can; some of the stations were not built well in the first place; they are now 30 and 40 years old; and it will be putting good money after the bad. He pointed out more money will be saved in the long run to rebuild.

Commissioner Nelson stated with his experience with old buildings, they do not meet Code, and the cost to actually bring it up to Code often exceeds the value; and it is typically better off to start over. He went on to say there are buildings that do not meet the operational needs. He stated on the EMS side there are some projections going forward for increases in salaries; and inquired to what extent EMS plays in that. Mr. Tipton advised it is part of the larger budget discussion; staff programmed in three percent every other year as a starting point for a five-year forecast; and that has a negative impact on the general fund transfer to a number of places, including EMS. Commissioner Nelson stated he does not know how the Board can have a good conversation if it does not know what that looks like, because the Board could make a decision on the fire side that has ramification on the EMS side; and that plays in to the ultimate decision of what the Board does. He advised he is disappointed that the Board has been getting this information real time; it has been hard to get answers; the firefighters and their salary issues are first; second is the equipment; third is the station; and fourth is everything else. He stated the

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training center is a big ticket item. He stated it looks like the County will be funding the 9-1-1 center fully out of the fire assessment.

Mr. Tipton replied yes, in the short term it would be; there is no way to get there with the general fund right now; while the County might be able to wait a little while longer the emergency management portion of that, the 9-1-1 side is much like the 800MGh radio situation; and they need to be moved to another location.

Commissioner Fisher inquired when staff projects out of three percent increase over the next five years, the normal operating costs that goes up, does it always stay at 72 percent. Mr. Burnham stated that number will fluctuate from year to year; that was an actual number from FY 2013; going forward when integrating with the station replacement program, the portion of the assessments that go to capital is going to increase pretty substantially; and on a percentage basis, that salary amount would be less than what the total assessment goes for. He pointed out while the dollars will adjust; capital is going to be a bigger part of what the assessment is for going forward.

Commissioner Infantini stated the fire assessment dropped by 12 percent last year; she has seen changes in the fire assessment; and in SAP it shows the County only collected \$18 million in fire assessments. Assistant Chief Neterer advised when they budget, they cannot budget 100 percent of revenue because of the statutory law; there is a five percent statutory reduction. Commissioner Infantini stated in the past that numbers only fluctuated by a few percentage points, from one year over the next, in 2010 it was \$21 million, 2011 \$21 million, 2012 \$20, and then \$18 million; and inquired how that dropped so substantially. Assistant Chief Neterer replied he will research that.

Mr. Whitten stated that is not a projection for this year. Mr. Burnham stated it may have been an anomaly for FY 13, but FY 14 it is at the \$20 million level, when net off the five percent, it makes \$20 million for assessment revenue.

Mr. Whitten advised the Board they in 2014 right now; when looking at what was budgeted, it is the \$21 million; the actuals are still coming in; there may be something that is still in arrears, but not through the 2014 year; and 2013 was \$28 million, which are consistent. He stated what is assigned may not be an indication of what ultimately is going to be recorded.

Commissioner Infantini stated that would increase the number in reserves.

Commissioner Nelson stated Commissioner Infantini is looking at an imaginary number for this year.

Mr. Whitten stated when looking at the model projection, it states they are going to recognize \$21 million at the end of this fiscal year; and what Mr. Burnham went over 20 minutes ago was a projection the County is going to receive roughly the same amount of assessment this year as it has in the past.

Mr. Tipton stated staff is looking for Board direction as they get ready for budget development; they are hoping to get additional Board direction and questions; and then to come back to the Board in late April or early May and have a final budget direction on this particular item.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

Commissioner Fisher stated he did have a meeting with the Washington Nationals personally; it was a positive conversation; one thing he indicated to them was it was important to have a community day in support of the Washington Nationals; he asked Chairman Bolin Lewis if she

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would throw the first pitch on the community day event on March 22nd, which would bring the community together in support of the Washington Nationals; and he requested the Board approve up to a \$5,000 expenditure taken out of Tourist Development funding to promote a community event in support of the Washington Nationals.

Commissioner Nelson stated Commissioner Fisher should notify all of the Chambers of Commerce in the County to get them involved.

The Board approved up to a \$5,000 expenditure taken out of the Tourist Development funding to promote a community event on March 22, 2014, in support of the Washington Nationals, and for Commissioner Fisher to contact all of the Chambers of Commerce in Brevard County to get them involved with the event.

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	Robin Fisher, Commissioner District 1
<b>SECONDER:</b>	Andy Anderson, Chairman/Commissioner District 5
<b>AYES:</b>	Fisher, Nelson, Infantini, Bolin Lewis, Anderson

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Steve Royer, President of the Local Brevard County Professional Firefighter's Union, stated they stand together as an organization and they support public safety; their expectation of the Board is to do the same; the cost for doing business has steadily increased over the years; and they have taken hard hits to the budget. He went on to say they have now reached the point where they can no longer live off of Reserves and expect to have a prosperous fire department; they are losing highly qualified members at an alarming rate; one of the major reasons for this is due to the stagnant wages that plagues all Brevard County employees; Marion County is facing a similar financial situation; and they too are unable to retain veteran employees. He pointed out they cannot begin to be comparable with other surrounding organizations, but they at least need to try to be competitive; the fire assessment is important and crucial if they are to continue to replace badly needed equipment; they have foregone replacement of vehicles, stations, and other equipment; and they even voluntarily too several years of wage freezes to assist the County in this tough economic time. He advised putting this off any longer will lead to more costly endeavors. He noted they understand this is a difficult situation. He stated the hard decisions have to be based off of the importance of the County's future and not on what is popular here and now; the Board is the elected officials and with that comes hard decisions; he feels like many others do that the Board sits it character by doing what is right and not always what is popular; and he requested the Board remember that public safety is in its hands and its duty to make the hard decisions that impact its citizens. He urged the Board to pass this unanimously at the April Board meeting.

Jamie Weiss stated she stands here today in unison with her brother and sister firefighters to ask for the Board's support; they go to work every day to put the citizens first; they too are citizens of Brevard County; and they ask the Board to consider them in its decision. She went on to say they call Brevard County their home, their families live here, children go to school here, and all support the local community. She stated they are asking for fair adjustments to help the department from failing and falling deeper into despair.

Christina Madsen stated she has treated and cared for many of the public in the County; she has helped train new firefighter/paramedics and firefighter/EMT's that have come to Brevard County Fire Rescue; and it is disappointing to see the constant flow of employees leaving. She

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inquired who wants to receive a phone call at 6:30 in the morning after running three calls after midnight to be told he or she is mandated to work another 24-hour shift because there is no one else to work due to low staffing levels; this is the reality of her fellow employees and her; mandatory overtime is created for different reasons; and one of the biggest reasons for mandatory overtime is the lack of competitive wages resulting in high turnover and low staffing levels. She went on to add outside of her job as a firefighter/paramedic, she is a wife and a mother of a five year old girl; when she is mandated to work another shift, she is forced to find last minute child care for her daughter and explain to her why her mother cannot come home for another night; after completing a 48-hour tour with Brevard County Fire Rescue, she goes home to recover and spend what time she has left before leaving the next morning to begin another 24-hour shift; and all too frequently has she been put in this difficult position and be expected to treat every citizen with the best of care. She noted even though it is mandatory to work, the pay has been frozen three year and benefits reduced, and the department continues to place customer service to the citizens first. She ponders the effect of the mandatory shifts on her family, if it is worth staying; she factors in the non-competitive wages, excessively high turnover, and low staffing levels; and what she comes up with is the most experienced firefighters that has provided the best care for the County are leaving to be providers outside of this department. She recommended to the Board that the fire assessment be approved for the sake of the most invested, experienced, firefighter/paramedics.

Josh Madsen stated to help sustain operations, they voluntarily accepted pay freezes; this was meant to be a short-term solution to help the Board and County in tough economic times; however, the economy has improved, times are better, but they sadly stay among one of the lowest paid departments in the State, and one of the largest that exists; they are losing highly-trained professionals every month to other departments because of wages and compensation; and they are currently losing an average of six people every month at a cost of \$33,000 to train and replace each one of these, not to mention the money spent to send them to paramedic school. He went on to say they were able to maintain employees when times are tough because no one else was hiring; now times are better, and the highly trained and qualified members are all looking to go elsewhere because all of the other departments are hiring paying an average of \$10,000 to \$15,000 more to start; many of these are topping out at 10 years at \$15,000 to \$20,000 more than the County's 18-year employees are; and on top of that they work 408 hours less than Brevard County firefighters do. He asked the Board to please give them some of the resources to improve; the personnel shortage causes mandatory overtime; and what that means is there is no one to fill a position. He advised they often go unnoticed because they perform their jobs professionally. He stated they spend every day at work protecting the citizens; when they call for their help, they answer the call; they provide the best service possible; and all they ask is the Board answers their call.

Commissioner Infantini stated her problem is she feels the money is being mismanaged; she has a problem with spending \$925,000 on a 100-foot ladder truck which is sitting in Satellite Beach; that million dollars could go towards salaries; only seven percent of the calls are for fires; and to only require the mandatory overtime when it would make it where there were two people per truck.

Mr. Madsen stated they have mandatory staffing levels of three on an engine and two on the rescue.

Commissioner Infantini suggested that be altered; there is a limited pool of money; and she wonders why fire trucks are responding to car accidents.

Mr. Madsen stated many times a 9-1-1 call is placed by a passer byer; they dispatch them out according to whatever information they receive; many of the falls are cardiac arrests; they do

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not know that until they arrive; and there are many facets to taking care of a call such as that. He added their job is life safety as the number one priority.

Chad Cawby stated they are citizens and live in the County; they pay taxes; and they see the benefit of both sides. He went on to state this is an important topic for them; their costs are continuing to rise even with the costs savings that the department has undertaken; and he would like to know they matter. He noted many of the employees are out the door; they have gone for better salaries and benefits; he personally trained a lot of the employees; and there is nothing as frustrating after he spends hours, weeks, months away from his family to train better employees for Brevard County Fire Rescue, just to hear them thank them for the training and move somewhere else. He pointed out the assessment was scheduled to be adjusted in 2011 to keep off with the projected costs; obviously that was not done; if it is not handled this year, they will face higher increases in the future; this is the appropriate time to address this issue; and it is the responsibility of the Board to do so.

Richard Greco stated as a retiree, if he had to make a 9-1-1 call he would appreciate a quick response and all of the professionalism to save his life; in the City of Titusville they have excellent fire department; the City of Titusville and County fire departments are one in purpose, goals, and objectives, and that is to save lives. He stated when there is a 9-1-1 call, the EMS is dispatched; they are not allowed to take anyone to the hospital; they have to wait on the County to arrive to take the patient to the hospital; and sometimes precious minutes are wasted waiting for the two. He would like both fire chiefs to discuss if there is a way that the fire department, EMS, and City of Titusville can take their patients directly to the hospital. He advised it would save personnel to be used for other calls in the County.

Ed Brown stated he lives in the Great Outdoors; it is an amazing community and covers a lot of area; it is over 3,000 acres with 1,500 home sites, and 3,000 residents; he is here to support Brevard County Fire Rescue; he is aware of the budget problems; and he supports a community assessment to increase their budget. He stated there are a lot of burnable materials; they are in a wildlife corridor; but it also a great fire corridor. He stated the Great Outdoors residents are a great fan of the County Fire Rescue; they have gone beyond their mission statement; and they are a fire-wise community. He stated they rely on Brevard County Fire Rescue for daily calls and also for wildfire and mitigation prevention; and they support an increase in their budget.

Richard Woodling stated he supports the increase in the fire assessment; it is not about salaries and benefits alone, it is about the failing infrastructure; if the Board does not support the fire assessment increase, there will be an impact on the services and personnel; and he requested the Board not to delay this any longer.

Pat Pasley stated part of the problem is not what Fire Rescue does for the public, but it is how it is laid out; it is the mistrust that has been coming to the citizens; people do not understand what and how it is needed; and she is not sure Fire Rescue is presenting its case properly. She stated she wants to see where the fiscal responsibility comes from and she wants to see numbers; and she wants to see what is the business case between a Quint and a Ladder Truck. She stated there was \$67,000 that went through the EDC for a statue in Melbourne Beach; and she inquired why did that not go towards lifeguards. She advised the Board she is having a problem with how the money is being spent; and she is concerned about 130 personnel leaving.

Michael Hartman stated there are certain things that need funded first, police, fire, roads, water and sewer; he does not think it needs to be over funded; he only sees one piece with the presentation that is missing; and there is no detail of how the new assessment will be spent. He stated there are buildings already out there that can be utilized; as opposed to building a training center there could be joint training at the other centers that are there; and he inquired if it is a fixed loan for 20 years or is it where the money is borrowed for a year and then refinanced

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every year so the paper rolls over. He pointed out long term interest rates should be locked in or the County is taking a risk.

Commissioner Nelson stated Baxley Manor is still closed; it was closed because it was not cost effective to fix. Mr. Hartman advised it was closed because the funding from the State could not be found. Commissioner Nelsen inquired why it was not maintained and kept open. Mr. Hartman replied it was maintained but there was \$4 million of structural improvements needed; they closed it down; and then they sold it. He pointed out it was sold to a private developer who said he was going to refurbish it; and he has not come through on the promise.

Commissioner Fisher stated when taking the taxable value of \$41 billion being down to \$24 billion today; it has not been mismanaged; and the reality of where they are is there is less revenue to work. He inquired what if the Board would have taken the 3.4 percent in 2009. Mr. Burnham advised the Board it would have been approximately four percent annual increases per year. Commissioner Fisher stated it has been a rough four years. He inquired how many vacancies are not filled. Chief Collins stated there are 33 of the safer folks in right now, but they will not graduate for another eight weeks. He would like as part of the presentation the next time how the Fire Rescue compares with other agencies; and the Board and public need to know that. He pointed out if a person lives in a municipality, this will not affect them.

Mr. Whitten stated the Fire Assessment is approximately \$21 million each year; looking at a snapshot in time as of February, it will be \$18 million; last year they collected \$20.7 million; and the current fiscal year is \$18.3 million. He stated it is the revenues that have been corrected as of February 2014; he does not want anyone to think staff is playing with the numbers; the County does not book the revenues; and the revenues are booked in County Finance. He stated the \$18 million are the revenues that have been booked into the system as of the end of February, consistent with the \$18 million booked into the system as of last February; but generally the Fire Assessment is about \$21 million each year.

Commissioner Infantini stated that would provide an additional \$4.8 million for Reserves. Mr. Whitten stated it does not provide anything for Reserves, because when they run the model, they are running it with the collection of the \$21 million, expenditure of the \$21 million; and staff is not projecting based on the projection with the expenditure of \$18 million.

Commissioner Nelson inquired who books the numbers Commissioner Infantini is speaking about. Mr. Whitten replied County Finance personnel. Commissioner Nelson stated it is a projection that they will feel comfortable with and will be adjusted at a later date. Commissioner Nelson stated the Board has not looked at the MSTU over time.

Chief Collins stated it is in the model. Mr. Whitten stated the MSTU is collecting \$24 million.

Commissioner Fisher stated he would like to see a graft of what the piece of that was versus today. Mr. Whitten stated the MSTU rate was cut.

Chairman Bolin Lewis stated she wants staff to put together something regarding the questions that were raised today; and she inquired if the Board wants to have this discussion at a Board meeting for a regular or zoning meeting. She requested staff schedule a meeting regarding that.

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**ADJOURN**

Upon consensus of the Board, the meeting adjourned at 3:15 p.m.

ATTEST:  
MARY BOLIN LEWIS

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BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
BREVARD COUNTY, FLORIDA

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SCOTT ELLIS, CLERK