

BOARD MINUTES FOR 08/20/09

AUGUST 20, 2009

THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS, IN AND FOR WASHINGTON COUNTY, MET ON THE ABOVE DATE AT 6:00 P.M. AT THE WASHINGTON COUNTY ANNEX, BOARD MEETING ROOM, 1331 SOUTH BOULEVARD, CHIPLEY, FLORIDA WITH COMMISSIONERS BROCK, HOLMAN, HOWELL, PATE AND STRICKLAND PRESENT.

CHAIRMAN HOWELL CALLED THE MEETING TO ORDER, OFFERED PRAYER AND LED IN THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.

CHAIRMAN HOWELL INFORMED THOSE PRESENT THE MEETING WAS TO HAVE A WORKSHOP CONCERNING THE FIRE SERVICES COMMITTEE REPORT. HE REQUESTED ALL COMMENTS BE ADDRESSED TOWARD THE REPORT AND NOT AN INDIVIDUAL FIRE DEPARTMENT, FIREMAN OR FIREWOMAN, ETC.

CHAIRMAN HOWELL REQUESTED THE FIRECHIEFS ADDRESS THE BOARD FIRST ON THEIR COMMENTS PERTAINING TO THE FIRE SERVICES COMMITTEE REPORT.

CALVIN STEVERSON, HINSON CROSSROADS VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT AND PRESIDENT OF THE WCFA, SAID HE HAD READ THE FIRE SERVICES COMMITTEE REPORT SEVERAL TIMES AND HE WOULD RATHER JUST CUT THROUGH THE CHASE. IN HIS OPINION, HE WOULD MUCH RATHER REFER TO SIT DOWN WITH ONE OR TWO OF THE BOARD MEMBERS AS HE DOESN'T KNOW WHAT THE BOARD WANTS. WHEN THIS CAME ABOUT, HE THOUGHT HE TOOK OFFENSE TO IT BECAUSE HE FELT LIKE MAYBE THE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS FELT LIKE THE FIRE DEPARTMENTS WERE NOT DOING SOMETHING RIGHT AND HE DIDN'T KNOW WHAT THAT WAS AND HE DIDN'T UNDERSTAND IT RIGHT OFF. HE REALLY FEELS LIKE CHANGE NEEDS TO BE MADE AS YOU NEVER MAKE PROGRESS IF YOU DON'T MAKE CHANGE. HE WOULD LIKE TO SIT DOWN AND TALK ABOUT IT AS HE IS NOT SURE WHAT THE BOARD VISIONS. HE FELT LIKE THEY NEEDED TO HAVE SOME KIND OF LIASON FOLKS WORKING TOGETHER TO BE SURE THIS IS WHAT THE BOARD ENVISIONS AND TO FIND OUT WHERE THE BOARD SEES THE FIRE SERVICES GOING AND WHERE DO THEY WANT IT TO GO.

COMMISSIONER HOWELL STATED HE WANTED TO IMPROVE THE FIRE DEPARTMENTS; IMPROVE THE OVERALL FIRE PROTECTION FOR THE CITIZENS OF WASHINGTON COUNTY. HE THINKS THE FIRE DEPARTMENTS ARE DOING A GOOD JOB. HE DOESN'T PRETEND TO UNDERSTAND HOW THEY DO OR WHAT THEY DO AS HE IS NOT A VOLUNTEER FIREMAN; BUT, HE RELIES ON THE FIRE DEPARTMENTS AND STAFF TO TELL THE BOARD WHERE THEY NEED TO GO WITH THE FIRE SERVICES. THAT IS THE REASON FOR THE MEETING TONIGHT; TO MEET WITH THE CHIEFS, ALL OF US TOGETHER, SO WE CAN ALL HEAR. WE CAN'T JUST SIT DOWN AND DISCUSS THIS OVER COFFEE BECAUSE OF THE SUNSHINE LAWS. THAT IS WHY WE MADE THIS MEETING TONIGHT A WORKSHOP; IT IS VERY INFORMAL AND ANYBODY CAN ASK ANY QUESTIONS THEY WANT ABOUT THE REPORT. THE BOARD WILL ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS THEY POSSIBLY CAN; IF THEY CAN'T, THEY MAY CALL ON THE FIRE SERVICES COMMITTEE. IF THEY DON'T HAVE THE ANSWER TONIGHT, THEY WILL CERTAINLY GET THAT ANSWER. HE STATED HIS INTENT IS TO BETTER ORGANIZE THE FIRE DEPART- MENTS, BETTER EQUIP THE FIRE DEPARTMENTS AND OVERALL GET A BETTER QUALITY FIRE PROTECTION FOR THE CITIZENS OF WASHINGTON COUNTY.

COMMISSIONER PATE STATED HE WAS THE ONE THAT ORIGINALLY KICKED OFF THIS FIRE SERVICES COMMITTEE TO DO A REPORT. WHEN HE WAS RUNNING FOR COUNTY COMMISSIONER ABOUT THREE OR FOUR YEARS AGO, MOST EVERYBODY OUT THERE WAS CONCERNED ABOUT FIRE PROTECTION AND EMS PROTECTION. IT WAS NOT THAT THEY WEREN'T GETTING GOOD FIRE PROTECTION; BUT, THEY WANTED BETTER FIRE PROTECTION. IN SOME AREAS OF THE COUNTY, THEY HAVE FIRE PROTECTION

BUT IT IS NOT REALLY VERY GOOD BECAUSE THEY AREN'T REAL CLOSE TO THEM OR THEY ARE BAD ROADS. AFTER HE GOT TO BE CHAIRMAN, HE GOT TO THINKING ABOUT THIS AND THE REASON THEY DIDN'T HAVE ALL THE FIRECHIEFS INVOLVED, THERE ARE DIFFERENT FUNDING GROUPS THAT ARE INVOLVED WITH THIS SO HE WANTED THEM, PLUS REPRESENTATIVES OF THE FIRE DEPARTMENTS, EMS, ETC. TO COME UP AND GIVE THE BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS TO ACHIEVE BETTER FIRE PROTECTION, BETTER EMS, ETC. THE BOARD HAS NO IDEA HOW TO GET THERE; YOU GUYS ARE EXPERTS. THIS IS THE FIRST SHOVEL OF CONCRETE FOR THE FOUNDATION TO WHATEVER THEY GET TO. ONE OF THE QUESTIONS HE WAS ASKED WAS "WHY DO YOU WANT A PLAN, YOU DON'T HAVE THE MONEY?" EVERYTHING HE HAS DONE SINCE HE WAS NINETEEN YEARS OLD WHEN HE WENT TO GET MONEY FROM SOMEBODY, THE FIRST THING THEY ASKED WAS WHATS YOUR PLAN.

COMMISSIONER BROCK COMMENTED OVER THE LAST SEVERAL MONTHS SINCE HE HAS BEEN ON THE COUNTY COMMISSION, IT HAS KIND OF BEEN LIKE A TURNMOIL IN A WAY AT EVERY BOARD MEETING AND ONE POINT A FIRE DEPARTMENT INVOLVED AND BASICALLY IT HAS BEEN AIMED TOWARD ONE FIRE DEPARTMENT. IT CAME UP, WHICH MOST PEOPLE IN THE COUNTY DON'T REALLY REALIZE, THERE IS A HALF MIL WHICH IS BASICALLY AROUND \$600,000 GOING TOWARD FIRE DEPARTMENT SERVICES IN THIS COUNTY. THE BOARD IS LOOKING FOR ACCOUNTABILITY. IT IS TIME FOR NEW CONTRACTS AND THE BOARD WANTS A CONTRACT THAT WILL PROTECT THE PEOPLE; GOOD FIRE DEPARTMENTS, GOOD EQUIPMENT BUT ON THE OTHER HAND RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE FIRE DEPARTMENTS. HE DOESN'T KNOW HOW TO GET THERE AND THAT IS WHERE THEY NEED ALL THE FIRE DEPARTMENTS HELP AND INVOLVEMENT. IT IS A START FOR RIGHT NOW. WITH THAT SAID, HE IS SURE THE COUNTY CAN GET THERE; IT IS JUST A MATTER OF TIME.

CALVIN RESPONDED ONE ITEM THEY NEED TO ADDRESS IS THE MANNER THE FIRE DEPARTMENTS REPORT THEIR EXPENDITURES SO THE BOARD KNOWS WHERE THEIR MONEY GOES; THE FIRE DEPARTMENTS NEED INVOICES TO BACK UP THE MONEY THEY SPEND. HE SAID THE FIRE DEPARTMENTS CAN DO THAT WITH THE WCFA THEMSELVES WITHOUT HAVING TO INVOLVE A WHOLE BUNCH OF OTHER FOLKS. THEY HAVE GOOD PEOPLE IN THE FIRE DEPARTMENTS AND HE THINKS EVERYBODY UNDERSTANDS THE FIRE DEPARTMENTS ARE GETTING A LOT MORE MONEY THAN THEY USE TO GET AND THEY DO NEED TO BE ACCOUNTABLE FOR IT. THEY WILL COME UP WITH A WAY TO DO THAT.

COMMISSIONER BROCK SAID THEY HAVE COME A LONG WAY SINCE THE LAST TWENTY YEARS; THEY HAVE A WHOLE LOT BETTER EQUIPMENT, GOOD FIRE DEPARTMENTS AND THE COUNTY IS GOING TO DO BETTER AND INCREASE. IT HAS COME TIME NOW FOR ALL DEPARTMENTS AND ALL THE DOLLARS HAVE TO BE ACCOUNTABLE.

COMMISSIONER STRICKLAND SAID WHEN THE BOARD CAME HERE BEFORE WITH THE FIRE SERVICES COMMITTEE, THEY ASKED FOR A COMMISSIONER TO BE ON IT; BUT, NOBODY WANTED A COMMISSIONER ON IT BECAUSE THEY WOULD THREATEN FIRE COMMISSIONERS SITTING ON IT. EVER SINCE HE HAS BEEN ELECTED FIVE YEARS AGO, HE WANTED TO HELP THE FIRE DEPARTMENTS, AMBULANCE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT. HE HAS BEEN WORKING ON TRYING TO GET AN AMBULANCE STATION IN THE SOUTH END OF THE COUNTY EVER SINCE HE HAS BEEN IN OFFICE. WAUSAU HAS A NEW FIRETRUCK AND EBRO HAS JUST GOT A NEW ONE THROUGH A GRANT. IF THEY HAD SOMEBODY THAT WOULD WRITE GRANTS FOR THE COUNTY AND DO NOTHING BUT STUFF FOR THE FIRE DEPARTMENTS AND AMBULANCE, THAT WOULD HELP THEM OUT ALOT. IT SEEMS LIKE WE ARE GOING BACKWARDS INSTEAD OF FORWARD.

CALVIN SAID ONE OF THE THINGS THEY HAD AT ONE POINT SINCE HE HAS BEEN IN THE FIRE DEPARTMENT, THEY HAD A LIASON PERSON, COUNTY COMMISSIONER, WHO WOULD COME AND ATTEND THEIR FIRE DEPARTMENT MEETINGS AT THE FIRECHIEFS MEETING. THAT MAY BE SOMETHING THE BOARD COULD TALK ABOUT

AND IF ONE OF THEM WOULD BE WILLING TO COME IN AND SIT ON THEIR ONCE A MONTH MEETING ON THURSDAY NIGHT, THEY WOULD LOVE TO HAVE THEM. MAYBE THAT WAY, THEY COULD HAVE BETTER DIALOGUE BETWEEN EVERYBODY AND MAYBE THE BOARD CAN UNDERSTAND HOW MUCH TRAINING ACTUALLY DOES GO INTO ALL THESE FIRE DEPARTMENTS. HE TOLD THE BOARD THAT MAY BE SOMETHING FOR THEM TO CONSIDER.

CALVIN SAID PROBABLY THE FIRST FOUR OR FIVE PAGES OF THE REPORT IS VERY ACCURATE; BUT, ANYTIME YOU GO TO MAKE A CHANGE, THERE IS GOING TO BE RESISTANCE. ALL THE REASONS THAT WERE LISTED WERE PRETTY ACCURATE. HE ALMOST FEELS LIKE THEY ARE FURTHER OFF FROM GETTING REALLY WHAT HE THINKS THE BOARD WANTS AS FAR AS COST FUNDING. THIS ISN'T REAL GOOD TIMING TO BE ADDING POSITIONS IN HIS OPINION. IF THERE IS A WAY THEY CAN SOLVE SOME OF THESE LIKE THE BUDGET PROBLEMS, LIKE REPORTING PROBLEMS, MAYBE THEY CAN DO THIS. IT IS GOING TO COME AT SOME POINT IN WASHINGTON COUNTY WHEN THEY HAVE TO PAY FIRE DEPARTMENTS ALL OVER THIS COUNTY OR CLOSE ENOUGH THEY CAN RESPOND AS QUICKLY AS THEY ARE WHERE THEY HAVE VOLUNTEERS.

CALVIN TOLD THE BOARD TO BE REMINDED THE FIREMEN ARE VOLUNTEERS AND ABOUT 90% OF THEM HAVE A JOB; THEY GET UP ALL TIME OF THE NIGHT AND RESPOND ANYTIME THEIR PAGERS GO OFF BECAUSE THEY WANT TO SERVE THEIR COUNTY JUST LIKE THE COMMISSIONERS. BUT, A LOT OF THEM DON'T HAVE THE TIME TO DO EXTENDED HOURS OF TRAINING DUE TO HAVING A FAMILY TO TAKE CARE OF. THE TRAINING PART IS GOING TO BE TOUGH; SOMEHOW THEY ARE GOING TO HAVE TO FIGURE OUT A WAY TO TAKE CARE OF THE PEOPLE WHO WANT TO SERVE AND ARE WILLING TO GIVE OF THEIR TIME. THERE IS A JOB FOR EVERYBODY; IT IS GETTING A LITTLE BIT HARDER NOW TO GET VOLUNTEERS TO SERVE. HINSON CROSSROADS MET WITH CARYVILLE, FIVE- POINTS, VERNON AND HINSON CROSSROADS AND THEY ARE WORKING UP A MUTUAL AID GROUP WHERE THEY WILL ALL COME IF THERE IS A STRUCTURE FIRE. THEY WON'T BE WAITING ON ONE DEPARTMENT; THEY CAN'T BECAUSE THEY JUST DON'T HAVE THE PERSONNEL. HE STATED THEY ARE DOING THINGS TO TRY TO MAKE THINGS BETTER AND HAVE A QUICK RESPONSE.

COMMISSIONER STRICKLAND COMMENTED THE FIRE DEPARTMENTS ARE DOING A GOOD JOB AND IT IS HARD TO WORK ALL DAY LONG, THEN GO TO SCHOOL FROM SIX TO TEN.

CALVIN SAID IT IS IMPOSSIBLE IF A VOLUNTEER FIREMAN'S JOB IS A NIGHT JOB; THEY CAN'T DO IT.

COMMISSIONER HOWELL INFORMED CALVIN THE BOARD WAS LOOKING AT SOME THINGS LIKE WEEK-END TRAINING; IF SOMEBODY WANTS TO DO THAT, MAYBE A CLASS COULD BE SCHEDULED FOR THE WEEK-END. HE KNOWS THIS TAKES TIME AWAY FROM THEIR FAMILY; BUT, WE ALL KNOW WE DO THINGS WE WANT TO DO AND FIND A TIME TO DO THOSE THINGS. HOWEVER, THE STATE IS TELLING THE COUNTY, THEY HAVE TO HAVE QUALIFIED FIREMEN. THAT IS WHAT THEY ARE GOING TO HAVE TO DO. HE SAID HE UNDERSTANDS THE FIREMEN ARE VOLUNTEERS AND THE COUNTY IS WILLING TO PAY FOR THEIR TRAINING, PAY FOR THEIR EQUIPMENT; THEY HAVE TO FIND A BETTER FUNDING MECHANISM AND BETTER EQUIPMENT.

CALVIN SAID WCFA IS WORKING ON AN ADDITIONAL 16 HOUR TRAINING PERIOD FOR ALL FIREMEN; PART OF IT, THEY HOPE CAN BE DONE AT THE VOCATIONAL SCHOOL WITH THE REMAINING HOURS BEING DONE AFTERWARDS WITH THE FIRE DEPARTMENTS TRAINING ON THEIR OWN EQUIPMENT AND LEARNING THE INS AND OUTS OF THAT FIRE DEPARTMENT.

COMMISSIONER HOWELL ASKED CALVIN IF HE THOUGHT THE FIRE SERVICE COMMITTEE REPORT WAS HEADING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION. CALVIN AGREED IT WAS HEADING THEM IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION.

COMMISSIONER HOWELL SAID THE BOARD DIDN'T KNOW WHAT THE TIME TABLE WAS GOING TO BE; BUT, IF THEY DON'T EVER START SOME KIND OF PLAN, THEY WON'T EVER HAVE A PLAN.

COMMISSIONER PATE SAID HE HAD ASKED QUESTIONS AROUND DIFFERENT PLACES, ETC. AND HE HAS ALWAYS SUPPORTED THE VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENTS AND ALWAYS WILL. THERE IS MORE THAT GOES INTO THIS WHOLE PLANING ON A LONG RANGE; A HALF MIL OF THE COUNTY'S TAX BASE ONLY RAISES BETWEEN \$500,000 AND \$600,000. THERE ARE ELEVEN FIRE DEPARTMENTS OUT THERE NOW SHARING THE HALF MIL. THEY PROBABLY NEED MORE OR PROBABLY NEED LESS, DEPENDING ON HOW THINGS ARE SET UP. WHAT GOES IN TO THE EFFICIENCY OF THE REPORT IS NOT ONLY BETTER FIRETRUCKS AND BETTER TRAINING; BUT, BETTER INFRASTRUCTURE SO THE DEPARTMENTS CAN GET THEIR FIRE TRUCKS FROM THE FIRE STATION TO A PERSON'S HOUSE, WHICH RIGHT NOW, MAY BE FIVE TO SIX MILES THROUGH DIRT ROADS AND SOME OF THEM SANDY. THE REPORT WAS FOR LONG RANGE PLANNING; THEY DON'T HAVE THE FUNDS TO DO WHAT IS NEEDED NOW. HOWEVER, THEY CAN TAKE THIS FUND, IF YOU SET IT UP RIGHT, AND START BUILDING A BASIS. HE BELIEVES THE PEOPLE IN THE COUNTY WANT IT BAD ENOUGH THEY PROBABLY WOULD BE WILLING TO PAY EXTRA.

CALVIN SAID EVERYBODY KNOWS HOW LONG IT WOULD TAKE TO GET FROM CHIPLEY TO HINSON CROSSROADS IF THEY GOT A DISPATCH CALL; BUT, IF THERE WAS A MAN ALREADY THERE WHO COULD START ROLLING THE EQUIPMENT, THIS WOULD IMPROVE THEIR RESPONSE TIME.

COMMISSIONER PATE ADDRESSED THIS MAY BE SOMETHING THAT MAY HAPPEN IF THEY CAN GET THE FUNDING; THAT IS WHAT IT ALL BOILS DOWN TO.

CALVIN SAID, IN HIS OPINION, WHAT IT IS GOING TO TAKE TO IMPROVE FIRE SERVICES IS RESPONSE TIME; THE WAY TO IMPROVE RESPONSE TIME IS HAVE SOMEBODY THERE READY TO GO AND THAT IS WHAT HE THINKS THE COUNTY IS HEADING FOR.

COMMISSIONER PATE SAID THEY ARE LOOKING AT BETTER RESPONSE TIME, BETTER EQUIPMENT AND BETTER TRAINED PEOPLE.

COMMISSIONER STRICKLAND SAID RIGHT NOW THE COUNTY CAN'T AFFORD TO PAY SOMEONE TO STAY AT THE FIRE DEPARTMENTS.

COMMISSIONER PATE SAID IF THEY COULD COME UP WITH A PLAN, THEY COULD PROBABLY FIND THE MONEY SOMEWHERE OR ANOTHER.

COMMISSIONER HOWELL SAID IN THIS YEAR'S BUDGET, THEY DON'T HAVE MONEY; BUT, THEY MAY HAVE IN TWO YEARS.

CALVIN SAID HE DIDN'T THINK IT WAS GOING TO TAKE AS MUCH MONEY AS THEY THINK. HE SAID IF THEY ARE A LITTLE BIT MORE ACCOUNTABLE FOR HOW THEY SPEND THEIR MONEY, THEY MAY BE SURPRISED HOW QUICKLY THEY CAN GET SOMEBODY. THEY MAINLY ONLY NEED TO GET A COUPLE OF THE FIRE DEPARTMENTS MANNED TO START WITH. THEY CAN'T SIT BACK AND NOT DO ANYTHING. HE SAID HE WOULD MUCH RATHER SEE WHAT HE PREDICTS THIS COORDINATOR'S SALARY, FRINGES, VEHICLE IS GOING TO COST USED TO HAVE SOMEBODY AT A FIRE DEPARTMENT.

COMMISSIONER PATE SAID HE THOUGHT EVERYBODY THOUGHT THE FIRE COORDINATOR POSITION WAS GOING TO HAPPEN NOW; THAT WAS NEVER HIS INTENTION.

CALVIN SAID HE KNOWS THE FIRECHIEFS, KNOWING THIS IS SOMETHING ON THE BOARD'S PLATE, ARE WILLING TO SIT DOWN TOGETHER AND SAY "WE HAVE GOT TO MAKE SOMETHING BETTER HAPPEN." HE SAID THEY HAVE THE FIRE SERVICES COMMITTEE REPORT AND MAYBE HE NEEDS TO MEET WITH THE WCFA FIRECHIEFS AND ASK THEM HOW THE FIRE DEPARTMENTS CAN IMPROVE.

COMMISSIONER BROCK SAID SEVERAL, SEVERAL YEARS AGO, WALTON COUNTY WAS RIGHT WHERE WASHINGTON COUNTY IS AT DISCUSSING FIRE PROTECTION. AS

TIME WENT ON, THEY CAME UP WITH A BASE IN THE SOUTH END OF WALTON COUNTY. THE WAY THEY DID A LOT OF THIS WAS WORK THE PARAMEDICS IN WITH THE FIRE DEPARTMENTS. THEY HIRED FULL TIME PEOPLE USING EMS COMBINED WITH FIRE DEPARTMENTS IN A WAY THAT ALL OF THE DEPARTMENTS DOWN THERE NOW ARE FULL TIME FUNDED FOR EMS AND FIRE PROTECTION. THE COUNTY HAS GOT TO THE POINT THEY CAN TAKE THAT MIL AND HAVE TRAINED EMPLOYEES FOR BOTH EMS AND FIRE AND POSSIBLY HAVE PAID STAFF. IT IS SOMETHING TO LOOK AT.

CALVIN SAID HE KNEW WHAT COMMISSIONER BROCK WAS SAYING AND HE AGREES BECAUSE HE WOULD LOVE TO HAVE SOMEBODY CLOSE TO VERNON, HINSON CROSSROADS, FIVE POINTS AND CARYVILLE THAT COULD GET TO HIM WHEN HE WAS FIXING TO HAVE A HEART ATTACK THAT IS TRAINED.

COMMISSIONER PATE ADDRESSED THEY HAD GONE TO SOUTH WALTON TO SEE HOW THEY WERE SET UP AND HOW THEY WERE FUNDED; THEY ALSO WENT TO BAY COUNTY, ETC. THEY WERE TRYING TO FIND SOME IDEA OF HOW IT WOULD LOOK IN THE FUTURE AND WHERE WASHINGTON COUNTY WOULD HAVE TO GO. HE ADDRESSED WALTON COUNTY HAS A LOT BIGGER TAX BASE THAN WASHINGTON COUNTY.

CALVIN SAID HE THOUGHT IF THEY START WITH ONE OR TWO FIRE DEPARTMENTS AND MAN THEM JUST DURING THE DAY AS MOST OF THEIR VOLUNTEERS ARE HOME AT NIGHT.

BRYAN PIERCE, FIVE POINTS FIRE DEPARTMENT, SAID HE HAD NO DOUBT THAT PERHAPS THE BOARD MAY WANT TO TWEAK THE CONTRACT; IF THEY WANT TO SAY WHAT THE MONEY CAN BE SPENT ON, HE WOULD UNDERSTAND THAT COMPLETELY. AS FAR AS PUTTING ALL THE FIRE DEPARTMENTS TOGETHER, ONE THING THE BOARD NEEDS TO CONSIDER IS GENERALLY YOU ARE ELIMINATING THEIR GRANTS TO ONE GRANT PER DEPARTMENT. ONCE YOU GET A GRANT FOR A NEW ENGINE, YOU CAN FORGET PUTTING IN FOR ANOTHER ENGINE FOR YEARS DOWN THE ROAD. RIGHT NOW, THEY HAVE ELEVEN DEPARTMENTS AND THEY CAN HAVE ELEVEN GRANTS.

COMMISSIONER HOWELL SAID HE DIDN'T THINK THEY HAD MENTIONED COMBINING ALL THE DEPARTMENTS INTO ONE; IF WE HAVE ELEVEN FIRE DEPARTMENTS TODAY, THEY WILL STILL HAVE ELEVEN FIRE DEPARTMENTS TOMORROW.

PIERCE AGREED WITH CALVIN, IF THE BOARD EVER DOES HIRE, HE WOULD RECOMMEND 40 HOURS A WEEK, 8 TO 5, MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY FIREFIGHTERS BECAUSE THE VOLUNTEERS CAN FILL IN AT NIGHTS AND THE WEEK-ENDS. IF YOU DO WHAT WALTON COUNTY DID, IT IS A TWENTY FOUR HOUR ON AND FORTY EIGHT HOUR OFF, WHICH WOULD BE A 56 HOUR WEEK. YOU WOULD HAVE TO HAVE THREE TO COVER IT; HE THINKS IT WOULD BE BETTER TO HAVE FORTY HOUR WEEK PEOPLE. THEY COULD HAVE TWO PEOPLE IN THE DAY FOR EIGHTY HOURS RATHER THAN HAVE ONE EVERY DAY THAT IS GOING TO BE 56 HOURS TIMES THREE.

COMMISSIONER PATE SAID AGAIN THAT IS SOME TIME IN THE FUTURE BECAUSE THE COUNTY BARELY HAS ENOUGH MONEY TO EQUIP THE FIRE DEPARTMENTS NOW. THEY WANT TO PLAN FOR THAT SO IF THERE IS MONEY OUT THERE OR THERE IS SOME WAY OF RAISING THE MONEY; THAT IS WHAT THEY ARE GOING TO HAVE TO DO IS HAVE A PLAN TO TRY AND RAISE MONEY.

PIERCE SAID THE FIVE POINTS FIRE DEPARTMENT COULD USE SOME EQUIPMENT.

COMMISSIONER BROCK ASKED PIERCE IF POPLAR HEAD WAS A FEEDER OFF OF FIVE POINTS FIRE DEPARTMENT. PIERCE SAID POPLAR HEAD WAS A SUB-STATION OF FIVE POINTS. HE REFERRED TO A STUDY THE COUNTY HAD DONE A FEW YEARS AGO RECOMMENDED SPLITTING UP THE ENGINES; RATHER THAN HAVING TWO ENGINES BY EACH OTHER, SPLIT THEM APART AND THEN THEIR FIVE MILE CIRCLE WOULD COVER A LOT MORE AREA.

PIERCE THANKED THE BOARD FOR THEIR TIME.

ED PELLETIER, COUNTRY OAKS FIRE DEPARTMENT, ADDRESSED IT BEING IN THE BACK OF HIS MIND THERE ARE FIRE DEPARTMENTS IN FOUR OF THE CITIES AND

THE COUNTY IS NOT GOING TO BE ABLE TO DICTATE TO THE CITIES WHAT THEY ARE GOING TO DO EXCEPT WITH THE MONEY THEY GET FROM THE COUNTY. HE SAID HIS DEPARTMENT IS VERY ACCOUNTABLE FOR ALL THEIR MONEY AND FILL OUT ALL THE NECESSARY FORMS EVERY YEAR.

MR. MYRON PIERCE, FIVE POINTS FIRE DEPARTMENT, REFERRED TO COMMISSIONER BROCK HAVING MENTIONED POPLAR HEAD. POPLAR HEAD IS IN AN ISO 10 AREA ALMOST FIVE MILES IN DIAMETER OF WHERE POPLAR HEAD IS AND WHAT ORIGINALLY WAS WHAT THEY THOUGHT THEY WERE GOING WITH BECAUSE THEY WOULD ONLY TAKE THE AREA THAT WAS MORE THAN FIVE MILES FROM ANYONE ELSE SO THEY WERE TRYING TO HELP THEIR ISO. TO GET AN ISO NINE, ALL IT TAKES IS A CLASS A PUMPER; THEY HAVE AN ENGINE, A BRUSH TRUCK AND A TANKER IS IN THE SHOP BEING BUILT TO SPECS. POPLAR HEAD COULD BE PART OF FIVE POINTS; FIVE POINTS HAS ASKED FOR NO MONEY FOR POPLAR HEAD OUTSIDE THE MONEY THEY GET FOR FIVE POINTS. THEY ARE CAREFUL HOW THEY USE THE MONEY.

MR. PIERCE SAID FIVE POINTS SUBMITS A COPY OF EVERY CHECK THAT WAS WRITTEN THAT GOES FROM THE COUNTY MONEY. HE WAS TOLD BY SOMEBODY, THEY COULD WRITE ANYTHING THEY WANT ON A COMPUTER WHICH HE WASN'T TOO HAPPY ABOUT. A COPY OF IT GOES TO THE COUNTY OFFICE AND AGREES ON ACCOUNTABILITY. THE COUNTY IS PAYING THE FIRE DEPARTMENTS FOR A SERVICE AND THEY SHOULD BE ABLE TO SEE WHERE THE FIRE DEPARTMENTS SPEND THEIR MONEY. POPLAR HEAD COULD BE READY; IT IS ON THE MAP BUT THEY ARE NOT BEING PAGED UNTIL THEY CHANGE THEIR ISO TO A NINE.

COMMISSIONER PATE SAID THAT WOULD EXPAND FIVE POINTS COVERAGE A LITTLE TO THE EAST WITH PIERCE AGREEING.

MR. PIERCE REFERRED TO HIM HAVING AN INSURANCE COMPANY CALL HIM ASKING IF SOMEONE WAS IN HIS FIRE AREA; THE INSURANCE COMPANY SAID THE PERSON WAS 6.3 MILES FROM FIVE POINTS FIRE STATION AND THEY WOULDN'T WRITE HIM ANY INSURANCE. HE LOOKED INTO IT AND ASKED THE INSURANCE COMPANY IF THEY HAD A CLASS A PUMPER THERE, WOULD THEY WRITE INSURANCE IN THAT AREA. THAT WAS THE START OF GETTING POPLAR HEAD AS A SUBSTATION. THE POPLAR HEAD BUILDING IS NOT COMPLETE BUT THEY ARE STILL WORKING ON IT; THE TANKER FOR POPLAR HEAD IS BEING BUILT AT THIS TIME. WHEN THE COUNTY IS READY, POPLAR HEAD IS READY.

COMMISSIONER HOWELL ASKED WHAT IS A CLASS A PUMPER. MR. PIERCE SAYS IT HAS TO RUN, IT HAS TO CARRY LADDERS, IT HAS TO HAVE AT LEAST 300 TO 400 GALLONS OF WATER AND HAS TO BE ABLE TO PUMP 500 GALLONS OF WATER A MINUTE. ACTUALLY, IF YOU THROUGH LADDERS ON A BRUSH TRUCK, YOU COULD ALMOST GET BY WITH A BRUSH TRUCK WITH LADDERS FOR A CLASS A PUMPER. THERE IS NOTHING ABOUT AGE; THEIR MAIN ENGINE IS A 1974 AND IS CONSIDERED AN ANTIQUE.

COMMISSIONER STRICKLAND ADDRESSED EBRO'S NEW VEHICLE IS A FINE FIRETRUCK.

SAM SAID WHAT HE IS HEARING IS THE BOARD NEEDS A REPORT FROM THE DEPARTMENT ON WHAT ALL THE EQUIPMENT IS, WHAT THEY NEED AND WHY THEY NEED IT.

COMMISSIONER HOWELL SAID HE WASN'T SURE IF THEY NEED TO KNOW ALL OF THAT. WHAT HE WANTS TO HEAR FROM THE FIRE DEPARTMENTS IS WHERE DO THEY NEED TO GO WITH FIRE SERVICES IN WASHINGTON COUNTY. THE BOARD DOESN'T PRETEND TO UNDERSTAND OR KNOW ALL THERE IS TO KNOW ABOUT A FIRE DEPARTMENT. BASED ON THE INFORMATION THE FIRE DEPARTMENT GIVES THE BOARD, THEY WILL MAKE SOME KIND OF DECISION AND ASK THE PUBLIC TO FUND SOMETHING.

GLEN ZANETIC, SUNNY HILLS FIRE DEPARTMENT, SAID THERE IS A LOT OF PROCEDURAL THINGS YOU CAN DO TO START WITH THAT DOESN'T COST ANYTHING,

WHICH DEFINITELY IMPROVES YOUR SERVICE. UNFORTUNATELY, MAKING LITTLE CHANGES LIKE THAT TAKES A LONG TIME. HE REFERRED TO BAY COUNTY LOOKING PRETTY GOOD TODAY; HOWEVER, THEY STARTED THIS PROCESS TWENTY YEARS AGO AND IT HAS TAKEN THEM THIS LONG TO GET WHERE THEY ARE AT TODAY. THEY SOLVED A LOT OF THEIR FIGHTING WHEN THEY BROUGHT IN PROFESSIONAL PEOPLE; HOWEVER, THE PROBLEM IS THEY MADE A MISTAKE BECAUSE THEY BASICALLY GOT RID OF ALL THEIR VOLUNTEERS AT THIS POINT. THE BOARD COULD START WITH THE BASIC REPORT THEY HAD WRITTEN AND START WITH THAT AS A PLAN AND UPGRADE IT AND THEY ARE ABOUT SIX YEARS PAST WHEN THAT WAS WRITTEN BUT IT IS STILL VERY ACCURATE. WHAT WAS SAID ABOUT INFRASTRUCTURE IS VERY TRUE. EVERYBODY HAS TO FIT INTO A TOTAL SYSTEM; THEY HAVE THE SHERIFF DEPARTMENT INVOLVED, ROAD AND BRIDGE INVOLVED, DEVELOPMENT GOING ON. IF YOU DON'T PLAN FOR THE DEVELOPMENT GOING ON, AND HE REFERRED TO THEM NEEDING A CENTRAL WATER SYSTEM IN THE COUNTY. COMMISSIONER HOWELL SAID A CENTRAL WATER AND SEWER SYSTEM IS NEEDED.

COMMISSIONER PATE SAID IT MIGHT SURPRISE ZANETIC; BUT, THE COUNTY IS TRYING TO LOOK AT JUST ABOUT ALL OF THAT. HOWEVER, THEY DON'T HAVE THE MONEY. IN TALKING ABOUT BAY COUNTY OR SOUTH WALTON COUNTY, THEY HAVE DONE A GREAT JOB; BUT, THEY HAD THE RESOURCES THERE. WASHINGTON COUNTY HAS TO FIND THE RESOURCES.

ZANETIC AGREED THOSE COUNTIES DO HAVE A HUGE BENEFIT; THEY HAVE MONEY. HOWEVER, HE WAS SAYING THAT REPORT THAT WAS WRITTEN WAS A LOT OF PROCEDURAL CHANGES THEY MADE FOR FREE THAT WOULD GIVE THEM A LARGER INCREASE IN FIRE DEPARTMENT SERVICES.

COMMISSIONER PATE REFERRED TO A LADY LIVING CLOSER TO CHIPLEY THAN TO ORANGE HILL FIRE DEPARTMENT; BUT, YET SHE IS LISTED IN THE ORANGE HILL DISTRICT AND IT IS NOT AS GOOD OF AN ISO RATING AS SHE COULD GET IN CHIPLEY IF HE UNDERSTOOD THE LADY RIGHT.

ZANETIC ADDRESSED A LOT OF THIS NEEDS TO BE LOOKED AT AGAIN; SINCE THEY HAVE PUT NEW ROADS IN SUNNY HILLS, SOME OF THE GREENHEAD DISTRICT IS ONLY TWO MILES FROM THE SUNNY HILLS STATION AND SEVEN MILES FROM THEM. THEY HAVE TO CONSTANTLY REVIEW THESE THINGS. UNFORTUNATELY YOU HAVE FUNDING BASIS FOR THE DEPARTMENTS THAT ARE TIED TO BOUNDARIES AND 911 ADDRESSES AND IT IS TOUGH TO GIVE AWAY 100 HOMES BECAUSE THEY ARE GOING TO GET MONEY. FROM AN INDIVIDUAL FIRE DEPARTMENTS STANDPOINT, THEY COULD SEE WHY THEY WOULD WANT TO KEEP IT BECAUSE WE GET TO KEEP THE MONEY. THE FUNDING FORMULA IS REALLY NOT VERY GOOD.

COMMISSIONER HOWELL ADDRESSED THIS BEING ONE OF THE REASONS THEY HAD DISCUSSED HAVING A FULL TIME FIRE COORDINATOR; IT WOULD BE SOME- BODY THAT COULD BE LOOKING AT THOSE DISTRICTS AND WORKING ON THESE THINGS FOR US RATHER THAN RELYING ON THE FIRE DEPARTMENTS TO DO THAT KIND OF WORK.

COMMISSIONER PATE SAID THE BOARD NEEDS TO KNOW WHAT A BASIC FIRE DEPARTMENT WOULD BE FOR THE COUNTY, THE MINIMUM YOU WOULD HAVE TO HAVE, WHAT KIND OF EQUIPMENT AND WHAT KIND OF SHAPE IT SHOULD BE IN. WHEN THEY COME UP WITH A PLAN, THEY NEED SOME BASIC DETAILS; IF THEY ARE TALKING ABOUT TAXES, THEY NEED TO BE SELLING THE PEOPLE ON TAXES AND IF YOU ARE TALKING ABOUT BONDS, ETC. YOU HAVE TO HAVE THAT PLANNED. IT COULD VERY WELL WORK INTO INFRASTRUCTURE; THERE ARE SOME AREAS OF THE COUNTY THAT HAVE PEOPLE LIVING THERE HE WOULD HATE TO BE LIVING THERE IF IT CAUGHT ON FIRE. WHERE IT GOES TO A COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT, THERE MAY BE ELEVEN INDIVIDUAL FIRE DEPARTMENTS BUT IT NEEDS TO BE COORDINATED UNDER ONE SET OF RULES SO EVERYBODY IS PLAYING ON A LEVEL PLAYING FIELD SO THEY CAN SELL THE PACKAGE WHEN THEY START LOOKING FOR FINANCING. IF THERE IS ANY- THING THE COUNTY NEEDS WORSE NOW IT IS FIRE PROTECTION AND EMS SERVICE.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO HAVE AN EMS UNIT EVERYWHERE YOU HAVE A FIRE DEPARTMENT; BUT, IT WOULDN'T BE BAD TO HAVE AT LEAST ONE EMT THERE.

AL MANNING, MAYOR OF VERNON, SAYS IT MAKES SENSE TO CONSOLIDATE ALL FIRE DEPARTMETNS. HE HAS HEARD THE BOARD MAY HAVE PROBLEMS WORKING WITH THE CITIES BECAUSE THEY DON'T WANT TO GIVE UP THEIR TRUCKS, ETC. HE DOESN'T THINK THAT IS GOING TO HAPPEN IN VERNON. VERNON IS HAPPY TO WORK WITH ALL. HE DOESN'T SEE ANYTHING BAD ABOUT GOING COUNTY WIDE. HE APPROVES OF HAVING A PAID FIRE DEPART- MENT. ALL OF THEIR FIREMEN ARE VOLUNTEERS AND THEY GOT FIVE NEW VOLUNTEERS LAST MONTH. THE COUNTY PROBABLY NEEDS SOME KIND OF INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT. IT ALWAYS COST MONEY AND PEOPLE DON'T MIND PAYING THEIR SHARE; BUT, DON'T WANT TO PAY ANYBODY ELSE'S SHARE. HE THINKS THE REPORT IS A GREAT IDEA. HE ASKED THE BOARD IF THERE WAS ANYTHING THEY WOULD LIKE TO HEAR FROM THE CITIES.

COMMISSIONER PATE ADDRESSED EVERY CITY IN THE COUNTY WAS SUPPOSE TO HAVE A REPRESENTATIVE ON THE FIRE SERVICES COMMITTEE TO PUT THEIR INPUT IN. HE REITERATED THIS IS THE FIRST STEP; IT THEY BUILD IT RIGHT, THEY COULD VERY POSSIBLY FUND IT. IF THEY DON'T AND THEY GET IN A SQUABBLE OR TURF PROBLEMS, THEY WILL BE RIGHT WHERE THEY ARE AT AND ONE OF THESE DAYS WE ARE GOING TO PAY FOR IT.

COMMISSIONER BROCK ADDRESSED EQUIPMENT AND THE TITLES; HE IS COMING BACK TO SOMETHING TO THE FIRE DEPARTMENTS THAT HAS WORKED HARD OUT HERE AND FINALLY GOT SOMETHING THEY ARE PROUD OF IN THE CITY AND THEY HAVE THE TITLES. HE WOULD HATE TO TAKE THAT AWAY FROM THEM BECAUSE THEY WORKED FOR IT AND GOT IT, NOT THE COUNTY. HE SAID HE WAS TALKING ABOUT EBRO; THEY HAVE ONE OF THE NICEST TRUCKS IN THE COUNTY AND DON'T HAVE MUCH IN IT. FOR THEM TO COME IN TO THE COUNTY TO BE ASKED TO GIVE THE TITLE UP FOR THEIR TRUCK, HE HAS A PROBLEM WITH THIS. HE SAID HE WAS AWARE VERNON HAD AGREED TO GIVE THEIR TITLES.

MR. MANNING SAID THAT IS WHAT VERNON GOT THEIR TRUCKS FOR WAS FOR FIRE PROTECTION; PERSONALLY, HE DOESN'T CARE WHOSE NAME IS ON THE TITLE.

COMMISSIONER BROCK SAID THESE LITTLE FIRE DEPARTMENTS THAT ARE OUTSIDE IN THE RURAL AREAS WORKED HARD AND IT IS HARD TO COME BY IT; BUT, WHEN THEY DO COME BY IT, THEY FEEL PROUD AS OWNERS OF THE VEHICLES. HE ADMIRES THEM. HE HAD HEARD IT MENTION ABOUT CHANGING THE TITLES AND THEY OUGHT TO HAVE TO COME UNDER THE COUNTY.

COMMISSIONER HOWELL ADDRESSED IT WAS DISCUSSED THE TRUCKS THAT WERE PURCHASED WITH TAX MONIES SHOULD BE TITLED TO THE COUNTY.

COMMISSIONER HOWELL SAID HE DIDN'T THINK THE BOARD WANTED TO DICTATE HOW VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENTS USE THEIR FUND RAISING MONIES; BUT, THEY ARE GOING TO DICTATE TO THEM HOW THEY USE THEIR TAX MONEY. HE FELT THE CITIES WOULD BE HANDLED DIFFERENTLY BECAUSE THEY ARE A LITTLE DIFFERENT ANIMAL; THEY ARE GOING TO HAVE CITY DEPARTMENTS AND THEY ARE GOING TO HAVE RURAL DEPARTMENTS. DOES THE COUNTY TAKE OVER THEIR FIRE DEPARTMENTS? IF THE DEPARTMENTS WANT THEM TO THEY WILL; BUT, THE BOARD DOESN'T WANT TO TAKE OVER ANYBODY'S FIRE DEPARTMENT. IF A FIRE DEPARTMENT COMES TO THE BOARD AND WANTS THEM TO TAKE THEIR DEPARTMENT AND RUN IT, THE COUNTY WILL. HE THINKS THE DEPARTMENTS ARE GOING TO RUN JUST LIKE THEY ARE UNDER THE UMBRELLA OF THE COUNTY. IT WILL BE A UNIFIED FIRE DEPARTMENT WITH A FIRE COORDINATOR; THE COORDINATOR WILL BE SOMEBODY WELL QUALIFIED.

COMMISSIONER PATE SAYS THE BOARD IS LOOKING FOR SOLUTIONS TO MAKE FIRE SERVICES BETTER IN THE COUNTY.

COMMISSIONER BROCK SAYS HIS CONCERN IS SUPPOSE VERNON BECOMES A COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT AND VERNON DELETES THEIR FIRE DEPARTMENT; DOES THE

COUNCIL KEEP THE FUNDING THE PERCENTAGE OF THE FIRE DEPARTMENT IS GETTING NOW. MR. MANNING SAID IF THE COUNTY TOOK OVER, THEY WOULDN'T GIVE THEM ANY FUNDING AND THE CITY WOULD HAVE TO GIVE THE COUNTY THE FUNDING THEY PUT IN FOR FIRE PROTECTION AS THEIR SHARE. THEY WOULD END UP WITH "WE ARE PROTECTED FROM FIRE." THAT IS WHAT THEY WOULD BE PAYING FOR. THAT IS HOW HE WOULD THINK IT WOULD WORK.

COMMISSIONER PATE EXPLAINED YOU CAN'T NEGOTIATE THAT UNTIL YOU HAVE A PLAN AND KNOW WHAT YOU ARE GOING TO BE DOING. HE SAID THE COUNTY DOESN'T KNOW WHAT NOR HOW THE FUNDING WILL COME OUT IN THE FUTURE BECAUSE THEY DON'T KNOW WHAT THEY ARE GOING TO COME UP WITH. BUT, IF THEY GET A PLAN, SOMEWHERE DOWN THE LINE THEY WILL HAVE TO RAISE ADDITIONAL MONIES TO APPROVE THE UNIFIED FIRE DEPARTMENT.

COMMISSIONER HOWELL SAYS THE COUNTY WOULD HAVE TO ENTER INTO AN INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT WITH THE CITIES ON FIRE SERVICES.

COMMISSIONER PATE SAYS IT IS ALL COMPLICATED; BUT, IF THEY ALL WORK TOGETHER AND ARE REAL SERIOUS ABOUT IT, THEY CAN OVERCOME IT.

COMMISSIONER HOWELL INFORMED THOSE PRESENT THAT COMMISSIONER HOLMAN HAD CALLED HIM EARLIER AND SAID HE HAD AN EMERGENCY TO DEAL WITH AND COULDN'T BE HERE TONIGHT.

RAY MORAN, SUNNY HILLS RESIDENT, ADDRESSED THE BOARD ON HOW TO GET STARTED. HE THOUGHT THEY SHOULD EMPHASIZE THE FIREMEN GET CERTIFICATION THROUGH TRAINING ONCE A MONTH.

COMMISSIONER HOWELL INFORMED MORAN THIS IS SOMETHING THAT IS ALREADY BEING DONE.

MORAN ASKED WHY CALL THIS A COUNTY WIDE FIRE SERVICE; WHY NOT CALL IT AN ASSOCIATION BECAUSE THEY ARE NOT GOING TO MERGE ALL THE FIRE DEPARTMENTS, THEY ARE GOING TO BE SEPARATE.

MORAN SAID BASICALLY THE COUNTY SHOULD STRESS VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT BECAUSE HE IS HEARING PAID FIREMEN. THE COUNTY CAN'T AFFORD PAID FIREMEN.

EARL STEWART, SUNNY HILLS FIRE DEPARTMENT, ADDRESSED THE BOARD ON THE MAIN TWO THINGS OF A FIRE DEPARTMENT IS LIFE AND PROPERTY; THE WAY TO DO IT IN THAT ORDER IS QUICK RESPONSE. THAT IS WHY THE COUNTY NEEDS SOMEBODY AT THESE FIRE STATIONS. I KNOW IT WILL COST A LOT OF FUNDS; BUT, IF THE COUNTY CHECKS INTO IT, IT WON'T BE AS BAD AS THEY THINK. IT IS JUST RE-ESTABLISHING THEMSELVES. THEY CAN GET PEOPLE TO WORK IN DIFFERENT FIRE DEPARTMENTS IN DIFFERENT PLACES; THEY WOULD VOLUNTEER AND WORK TO AT THE SAME TIME. AT LEAST THEY WOULD HAVE SOMEBODY THERE THAT COULD RESPOND AND MIGHT SAVE A LIFE. THAT IS THE WAY IT SHOULD BE.

JIM PALMER, GREENHEAD VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT, ADDED HE WAS NOT SPEAKING FOR ANY OF THE OTHER CHIEFS AS THEY HAVE NOT HAD A CHANCE TO SIT DOWN AT THE ASSOCIATION AND TRY AND WORK TOGETHER TO TRY AND FIGURE OUT WHAT ALL THIS MEANS. HIS PERSONAL OPINION IS THE FIRE COMMITTEE REPORT IS THE COUNTY IS TAKING A GREAT STEP FORWARD. THEY NEED TO IMMEDIATELY, AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, GET A FIRE SERVICES COORDINATOR AND THEN ALL THE OTHER THINGS WILL FALL IN LINE WHEN YOU HAVE SOMEBODY IN CHARGE. RIGHT NOW THEY HAVE ELEVEN CHIEFS, FIVE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS AND HE DOESN'T KNOW HOW MANY OTHER PEOPLE THAT ALL HAVE AT LEAST SIXTEEN DIFFERENT IDEAS OF WHERE THEY WANT TO GO WITH THIS. HIS OPINION WAS TO GET THE FIRE SERVICES COORDINATOR IN PLACE TO WORK WITH THE BOARD AND THE FIRE CHIEFS ASSOCIATION AND MOVE FORWARD. FROM A PERSONAL STANDPOINT, HE WOULD LOVE TO SEE THE COUNTY TAKE OVER AS THERE IS A LIABILITY OVER HIS HEAD AS A PRIVATE NONPROFIT CORPORATION AND HE DOESN'T WANT TO BE SUED.

CALVIN SAID WCFA WILL MEET AND IF THE GUYS ARE WILLING, ROGER SAID THEY WOULD MEET IN THE EOC WHEN THIS MEETING IS OVER WITH. HE SAID THEY WOULD LOVE TO HAVE A LIASON PERSON SIT IN THERE WITH THEM.

COMMISSIONER HOWELL TOLD CALVIN THE BOARD WILL HAVE A WORKSHOP ON MONDAY AND THEY WILL DISCUSS WHICH COMMISSIONER WILL BE A LIASON WITH THE FIRE SERVICES COMMITTEE.

COMMISSIONER BROCK SAID HE WOULD LIKE TO SEE A RECOMMENDATION FROM THE FIRE DEPARTMENTS FOR A FIRE COORDINATOR.

COMMISSIONER HOWELL SAID THAT IS SOMETHING THAT REALLY HASN'T BEEN ADDRESSED MUCH TONIGHT. HE THINKS WHAT MR. PALMER BROUGHT UP WAS VALID; THE COORDINATOR WOULD BE SOMEBODY THAT WOULD BE A RESOURCE TO THE FIRE DEPARTMENTS TO HELP THEM ON A DAILY BASIS.

SHERRI TAYLOR, MAYOR OF EBRO, SAYS THERE ARE PROS AND CONS AND SHE IS NOT READY TO SIGN ON YET AS SHE IS STILL DEBATING AND THINKING ABOUT EVERYTHING. SHE THINKS THE COORDINATOR MAY BE A GOOD IDEA; BUT, SHE WOULD ALSO LIKE TO SEE SOME PAID PEOPLE IN THE FIRE DEPARTMENT. SHE THOUGHT WHEN BAY COUNTY DID AWAY WITH THEIR VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENTS, THEY WERE AT A POINT TO PAY PEOPLE IN THEIR DEPARTMENTS WHICH SHE THINKS SHOULD BE A GOAL FOR WASHINGTON COUNTY. THE LIABILITY ISSUE IS A BIG ISSUE FOR THE PEOPLE IN HER POSITION AND THAT IS SOMETHING TO CONSIDER. SHE ASKED IF THE MUNICIPALITIES ENTER INTO NEW CONTRACTS WITH THE COUNTY, HOW LONG WOULD THEY BE FOR. SHE DOESN'T FEEL COMFORTABLE BEING IN HER POSITION SIGNING UP FOR SOMETHING THAT IS GOING TO COMMIT HER TOWN FOREVER AS SHE MAY NOT ALWAYS BE THERE; THERE IS GOING TO BE SOMEBODY THAT COMES BEHIND HER THAT MAY NOT BE COMFORTABLE WITH THE CONTRACT. ANOTHER REASON SHE IS HAVING THAT THOUGHT IS BECAUSE SHE IS A PERSON OF GREAT FAITH AND IT IS A LITTLE DIFFERENT FOR HER SITTING IN EBRO BECAUSE SHE IS EXPECTING GREAT AMOUNT OF THINGS TO HAPPEN IN EBRO AND SHE IS EXPECTING IN THE NEXT FEW YEARS FOR EBRO TO BE GETTING THEIR OWN FIRE DEPARTMENT LIKE CHIPLEY. IF SHE HAS TO SIGN ON FOR TWO YEARS OR FIVE YEARS AND THAT IS WHAT THE MAJORITY OF EVERYBODY IN THE COUNTY'S WISHES AND DESIRES, THAT MAY BE SOMETHING EBRO WILL TALK ABOUT DOING; BUT, SHE DOESN'T WANT TO BE THERE PROBABLY FOREVER.

SHERRI SAID IT STATED IN THE REPORT THERE WAS GOING TO BE RESISTANCE ABOUT TURNING OVER THE EQUIPMENT, ETC.; THAT IS A BIG THING THAT IS WEIGHING HEAVY ON HER HEART. THE WAY SHE LOOKS AT THIS IS THE WAY EBRO RECEIVED THAT GRANT WAS IT WAS JUST A BLESSING FROM THE LORD. IT IS GOING TO BE MIGHTY HARD FOR THE COUNTY TO TAKE HER BLESSING AWAY FROM HER.

CALVIN SAID MOST CONTRACTS WILL HAVE A TERMINATION CLAUSE IN IT. COMMISSIONER HOWELL SAID THEY HAVEN'T LOOKED AT HOW LONG THE CONTRACT WOULD BE FOR; BUT, HE THINKS IT WOULD NEED TO BE A COMMITMENT LONGER THAN A YEAR TO GIVE IT A FAIR CHANCE TO WORK.

COMMISSIONER PATE SAID THE FIRE SERVICES REPORT HAS BEEN IN PROCESS FOR ABOUT A YEAR SO HAMMERING OUT THE RESULT OF THIS REPORT MAY TAKE A YEAR OR MORE.

CALVIN THANKED THE BOARD FOR ALLOWING THE FIRE DEPARTMENTS TO BE A PART OF IT AND THE BOARD TAKING THEIR TIME TONIGHT TO MEET.

COMMISSIONER HOWELL EXPRESSED THAT IS WHAT THE BOARD IS HERE FOR; THEY DO CARE AND TRY TO DO THE RIGHT THING AND THEY DO TRY AND SEEK THE THE FIRE DEPARTMENT'S ADVICE ABOUT ISSUES.

COMMISSIONER BROCK SAID THERE HAS BEEN DISCUSSION BEFORE PRIOR TO PREVIOUS BOARDS ABOUT FUNDING FOR FIRE DEPARTMENTS AND IT HAS BEEN WALKED AROUND. HE HAS BEEN SITTING HERE THINKING ABOUT ALL THE CELL PHONES THAT

ARE IN THE COUNTY; IF IT IS JUST A LITTLE AMOUNT EACH MONTH ON EACH ONE OF THESE WOULD BE A BIG BENEFIT TO THE FIRE DEPARTMENTS OR THE AMBULANCE. AT ONE TIME THE BOARD DID SOMETHING ON 911 TO ADD \$.50 TO THE PHONE BILL FOR ADDRESSING AND IT IS STILL THERE TODAY. THAT LITTLE BIT CAN TURN INTO A BIG BIT. MAYBE THE DEPARTMENTS NEED TO GET TOGETHER AND DISCUSS THESE ISSUES AND BRING THEM TO THE BOARD. THERE ARE WAYS OUT THERE TO BRING IN REVENUE AND YOU HAVE TO LOOK AT THEM; SOMEBODY HAS GOT TO CARE ENOUGH TO GET INVOLVED TO DO THIS. HE REQUESTED THE FIRE DEPARTMENTS DO THEIR HOMEWORK AND BRING BACK INFORMATION TO THE BOARD.

CHAIRMAN HOWELL THANKED EVERYONE FOR COMING TO THE MEETING TONIGHT AND EXPRESSED THE BOARD'S APPRECIATION FOR THEIR INPUT.

THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED. ATTEST: _____

CLERK

CHAIRMAN

END OF MINUTES FOR 08/20/09