

Minutes  
Harris County Council of Fire Chiefs  
Meeting held September 3, 2020

In Attendance

**Fire Departments**

Antioch – Richard McKinney

Cataula – Bill Czukur

Ellerslie – Skip Wyatt

Hamilton – Ben Hood

Hopewell – Roger Duke

Northwest Harris – Curt Pechloff

Pine Mountain – Thomas Scott

Pine Mountain Valley – Jack McClung

Shiloh – Nick Terry

Waverly Hall – Alex Lawski

West Point – none

Secretary – Andy Kober

**Visitors**

Bobby Hood – Antioch FD

Monty Davis – HC 911

Adrian Shubert – Training Committee/ Ellerslie FD

Kelly Pechloff – Northwest Harris FD

Mike Cardwell – HC911/EMA

**Called to order at 1930 hours**

- 4) Treasurer's Report – No expenditures reported, balance of \$20,299.91. McClung reported on continuing problem with Wells Fargo bank. Is still attempting to schedule Saturday appointment to have Duke added to account. There remains a standing motion to place account with First Peoples Bank when issues with Wells Fargo are resolved.

5) A) Training

Shubert reported basic firefighting class has been scheduled with orientation meeting set for 7 pm Tuesday, Sept. 29, at Hamilton fire station. Indicated having 15 people in class with capacity of 30. Requested number of students from each department. Regular class dates to be determined during orientation meeting. Explained this likely to be traveling class with instruction conducted at different departments to give students idea of apparatus and equipment found around the county.

Shubert said bus extrication class scheduled for 8:30 am Saturday, Nov. 14, at the training center. Class is limited in size with two to three people from each department.

VFIS driving training set for Friday and Saturday, Sept. 18-19. Friday class to meet at 6 pm, Saturday at Cataula station two. Saturday driving course by appointment.

B) Training Center

Reported that upstairs windows in burn building should be repaired over next two weeks. Windows were welded but issues found in surrounding metal caused by heating and cooling cycles during live fire training programs.

C) Communications

Davis and Cardwell had new Hazardous Materials reference books that were

distributed after the meeting.

D) Wheels of Fire II

Czukor again requested donations of items to be used for raffles. Reported Knights of Solomon motorcycle club has disbanded, anticipating lower number of motorcyclists. Ride now opened to other vehicles in addition to motorcycles. Scheduled to start at Antioch main station about 10 am Saturday, Sept. 26. Anticipate event starting at Harley Davidson dealership in Columbus again in 2021.

E) SPLOST

McClung distributed checks of \$16,000 to each department from Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax revenue. Noted efforts of Commission Chair Becky Langston in having fire departments included in SPLOST. Advised funds subject to audit as part of annual county audit. Funds cannot be commingled with other funds and records must be kept on expenditures.

This was first disbursement of SPLOST with more to follow. Unanimous decision to request county disburse funds to fire departments on quarterly basis.

Scott recommended departments establish special checking accounts for SPLOST funds. Czukor asked about the \$150,000 set aside for the classroom/ restroom at training center. McClung reported those funds were withheld first.

6) Old Business

Building at Training Center – Lawski reported on developing proposal for location of building at training center. Reported on obtaining construction cost estimates from local contractors and construction firms. Prices too high. Will contact Arco Buildings. Other contractors and construction companies recommended. Reviewed current size as 60 feet x 40 feet. Discussed various builders along with height of building in effort to reduce projected cost.

Reference Books on Apparatus and Ancillary Equipment – Kober provided information that 70 books would be needed to have one in each fire apparatus in the county, plus 6 for the 911 Center and 7 for HC EMS. Cost estimates were: paper at \$25.71; 3-ring binders at \$197.82; dividers at \$371.00; and toner cartridge at 72.89. (See attachment for breakdown.) Total for first phase of project - \$667.42. All supplies to be ordered via Amazon Prime with no freight charges. Motion by Czukor to proceed not to exceed \$700. Pechloff second. Approved unanimously. Kober to order material and submit receipts to Duke. No books for HCSO as Sven Armbrust requested electronic files to be installed in computers in shift supervisor vehicles.

Primary Service Area Dispute – Continuing from the August meeting and prior to that, Antioch and Cataula fire departments have a disagreement on a specific area that both departments claim. Included in the dispute is that representatives of both departments approached the Harris County Commission before the Harris County Council of Fire Chiefs. Also included in the issue is Antioch being allowed to keep a fire truck in the

Mountain Hill EMS station. McKinney spoke at length on why Antioch should serve the area, but was unaware the Mountain Hill EMS station was never intended to be part fire station. Czukor spoke at length on why Cataula should serve the area in dispute. Both presented maps and documentation. Not available was a map that had previously been reviewed by all fire chiefs during a Council of Fire Chiefs meeting that denoted all service areas and that each fire chief had signed. That map had been kept in the 911 Center. Included in the documentation presented by Czukor was a letter from the late Danny Bridges as County Manager that noted when Cataula station #2 was completed and staffed, the Antioch fire truck would vacate the Mountain Hill EMS station. After considerable discussion, McClung established a committee consisting of Lawski, Scott, and Terry to hear both sides and make a recommendation to the council of fire chiefs. On question from McClung, both Czukor and McKinney said their respective departments would agree with decision made by Council of Fire Chiefs.

#### 7) New Business

Business Procedure - McClung expressed concern with fire chiefs circumventing Council of Fire Chiefs and taking issues to individual commissioners or to board of commissioners. Said that all fire department business, recommendations, criticisms, etc. should be brought before the council first. Council of Fire Chiefs should be making recommendations to commissioners. Fire chiefs agreed by consensus.

Increased Stipend – At issue was an alleged request made to Commissioner Susan Andrews from someone in Ellerslie FD that stipends be increased based on call volume. This had been discussed during August meeting. There was no vote and no recommendation. Scott motioned to maintain stipend as being paid equally to all departments. Czukor second. Passed unanimously.

#### 8) Round Robin

Antioch - Ladder truck back in service. Tanker has suffered pump failure, can haul water and dump water.

Cataula – Butt sale scheduled for first Saturday in November, should have tickets available soon.

Ellerslie – No report

Hamilton – Requested expenditure of \$10,075 from equipment funds to purchase MSA airpaks. Motion by Czukor to approve with Hamilton funding any amount over department's \$10,000 in equipment funds. Lawski second. Approved unanimous.

Hopewell – no report

Northwest Harris – Noted recent incident during which person drew individual's blood for drug/ alcohol testing at request of GSP Trooper, but person was not properly trained or certified to do so.

Pine Mountain – Being dispatched primarily to mutual aid calls. Noted Meriwether County has new fire chief and assistant chief.

Pine Mountain Valley – no report

Waverly Hall – Requested expenditure of \$5,385.40 from equipment funds to purchase various pieces of equipment. Czukor motion to approve with Waverly Hall to fund any amount over the department’s \$10,000 in equipment funds. Scott second. Unanimous approval.