

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
UNION COUNTY, FLORIDA
EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES WORKSHOP
JULY 19, 2021

NOTE: If any person decides to appeal any decision made with respect to any matter considered at this meeting or hearing, he or she will need a record for the proceedings and may need to ensure that a verbatim record is made.

PRESIDING: James Tallman, Chair

RECORDING: Kellie Hendricks Rhoades, Clerk of Courts & Comptroller

ATTENDING: Commissioner Lacey Cannon; Commissioner Channing Dobbs; Commissioner Ryan Perez; James Williams, County Coordinator; Dianne Hannon, Board Secretary; Russ Wade, County Attorney; Pamela Woodington, Finance Director

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

Chair Tallman called the meeting to order at 4:15 pm. Commissioner Dobbs offered the invocation and led Pledge of Allegiance.

Chair Tallman turned the floor over to Attorney Wade to provide a legal background of the Special Assessment. He explained an ordinance was adopted in the late 1980's which provides for the Board to set the amounts by resolution. He noted that one year after adoption, the amounts were reduced for residential, and were completely eliminated for commercial properties.

Chair Tallman asked how to reimplement the commercial assessment, and Attorney Wade answered that is it set annually by resolution. Chair Tallman indicated that he believes it needs to change. Commissioner Dobbs agrees with the current residential amount, but believes that the commercial amount needs to increase. Mr. Williams informed the Board that a neighboring county hired a consultant to study the issue, and found that square footage does not work for all businesses. Chair Tallman asked Mr. Williams to research Baker County's structure for commercial assessments. Mr. Williams added that this will not go into effect this year, but we should continue the discussion for next year.

Chair Tallman asked Wayne Clemons, EMS Director, about the status of personnel in the EMS Department. Mr. Clemons answered that he has two new hires, and from conversations with staff, they like the idea of an ALS1 truck, and thinks it will boost morale. He has worked with Mr. Williams to correct several issues in the department. Chair Tallman called for discussion from the Board. Commissioner Cannon said ALS1 is not a good option because there isn't enough staff, and that the Director can respond directly for now, but it may be an option for the future. He also added ideas for other ways to boost morale, including improvements to the living conditions in the station, as employees spend about 30% of their time there. Commissioner Cannon also added that the county needs to take all Department of Corrections and Lake Butler Hospital transfers when possible. Mr. Clemons answered that they are already taking alerts from those facilities, but that he has concerns of more prison runs lowering morale and leaving citizens with no ambulance in the County. Chair Tallman said he believes that being a fire-fighter is a desire for young employees, and hopes to continue moving in that direction, adding that our starting pay is more than Bradford County's. Mr. Clemons responded that the EMS Department is adding more trainings that are combined with the Fire Department. Commissioner Perez asked Tim Allen and Mark Hughes how the volunteer fire fighters feel about the situation, and Mr. Hughes answered that there is a positive attitude.

Mr. Clemons told the Board that he has prints from Baker County on their fire station, and is asking for input from employees. Chair Tallman expressed that the situation is critical, and he is happy everyone is working together. Commissioner Perez added that he realized there is a shortage of employees everywhere, but that is very important that no staff is leaving due to something that is the County's fault and is controllable. He believes that one left due

July 19, 2021

Emergency Medical Services Workshop

to not receiving good attention during trainings. Commissioner Dobbs said he believes an issue is that there is no room for advancement, and Mr. Clemons agreed that was an issue. Commissioner Cannon pointed out the small size of Union County's service. Chair Tallman called for any further comments, and Tim Allen provided suggestions of things he does in the 911 Department, such as allowing employees to attend school during down time while working. Mr. Clemons added that staff is fresh out of school and able to do ten times the medicine than if they had went to work in a larger county, which is a great perk.

Chair Tallman adjourned the meeting at 5:01 pm.

Adopted by vote of the Board of County Commissioners on August 16, 2021.