



Legislation Text

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GFR Firefighter Staffing and Equipment Policies (B)

The Public Safety Committee discussed this July 7, 2005 referral from the City Commission to "review the broad policy issue of firefighter staffing and equipment". The GFR presented an extensive report that comprised discussions on firefighter staffing, overtime impacts, ISO scores and peer city surveys.

The primary focus of the referral was to review budget, overtime, equipment and staffing funding levels specifically, the number of years the fire department has been staffing with overtime, the expansion of missions and services for the community especially post 9-11, and the resulting training needs generated by the service demands. No new fire stations have been added since Station 7 was built in 1980, shift staffing levels have been reduced by 11 positions since 1992 and GFR reduced the number of engines by one. The department also experienced additional staff support position cuts, shifting daily responsibilities to some administrative/support functions.

Several studies were performed over several years reflected a need for staffing, equipment and level of services through the:

- ICMA
- Insurance Office Services,
- the Alachua County Fire and EMS Services Consultant Report
- IAFF 2004 GIS Fire Suppression Capability Analysis
- NFPA standards
- Florida Statute requirements

Staff presented fire station and coverage area maps for consideration of the addition of an eighth fire station in the NW 34th Street NW 39th Avenue area. Adding this station could improve the overall NFPA compliance with the four-minute response time by increasing the number of parcels that are within 2 road miles from a fire unit by almost 12%. Maps on coverage areas, that include county fire station locations, and response times are included in this report.

GFR presented several recommendations for the Public Safety Committee's consideration during the discussions on September 15 and October 20, 2005.

Alternatives include: 1) No Change. This would provide the current level of service to this area. The impacts would be continued growth of residences and impacts to response times caused by increases in traffic; and 2) Re-evaluate all station locations to realign coverage areas. The cost of this would far exceed the addition of one station and could result in a reduced level of coverage in the densely built areas of downtown.

The City Commission 1) authorize the City Manager to fund the station paging through the bond issuance to maintain an Insurance Services Office class 3 rating for approximately \$300,000; 2) direct the City Manager to consider funding options to: a) conduct an analysis of fire and rescue overtime and minimum staffing levels to determine the necessary level of funding for FY 07-08, and b) analyze the feasibility of adding a fire station in northwest Gainesville; and 3) the Public Safety Committee continue to review service delivery levels to report back to the City Commission as appropriate.

