

**LOUDOUN COUNTY GOVERNMENT REFORM COMMISSION (GRC)
SUB-COMMITTEE #2
FEBRUARY 7, 2013
MEETING SUMMARY**

Participants:

The following Sub-committee #2 members were in attendance: Bob Gordon, Tom Julia, Tanya Matthews, Mark Nelis and Woody Turner. Barbara Munsey arrived 8:05pm. Bill Soltesz and Don Walker were absent.

Also present were Julie Grandfield, Assistant County Administrator; John Sandy, Assistant County Administrator; Chief Keith Brower, Fire and Rescue Management Services; Chairman Doug Rambo, Fire-Rescue Commission; and Fire and Rescue volunteers.

Approval of January 15, 2013 Meeting Summary: The Commissioners reviewed the meeting summary of January 15, 2013. Ms. Matthews made a motion to approve the January 15, 2013 meeting summary. Mr. Turner seconded the motion. The meeting summary was approved 5-0-3 (Barbara Munsey, Bill Soltesz and Don Walker absent.)

Update on Economic Development Committee (EDC) January 30, 2013 Action on GRC Recommendation of an EDA: Chairman Julia provided an update on the EDC's discussions on the EDA. The Board of Supervisors (BOS) will vote on the recommendation at their February 20th meeting. The role of the EDC is undetermined. The EDA will have no staff and there may be more than just a name change. Mr. Gordon noted that the GRC did recommend the conversion of the Industrial Development Authority (IDA) to an EDA.

Update on Board of Supervisors February 6, 2013 Actions on GRC Recommendations: The Commissioners discussed the BOS actions on the GRC's Adult Day Care, Fire & Rescue and Loudoun Water recommendations. Most of these recommendations were passed as recommended.

Funding to Fire and Rescue Volunteer Companies: Mr. Gordon noted that funding to volunteer companies is very complex and he is at a loss to come up with a specific recommendation.

Mr. Rambo noted there were three major stressors over the last six years:

- additional cost of staffing facilities that were previously volunteer facilities
- the County underestimated the cost of operating facilities
- the combination of increased new members and increase in call volume

David Short, President-Sterling Volunteer Fire Company, asked that instead of saying "call volume" say "demand for service".

Mr. Rambo discussed the managing of 17 different organizations which each have their own infrastructure. He noted that the budget is approved in mid-April and each company has only until July 1 to set their budgets.

Assistant Chief Michael O'Brien, Purcellville Volunteer Fire Company, recommended the establishment of a stakeholder group to plan for FY2015 and a make-shift plan FY2014. He noted a need to look far ahead.

Mr. Gordon asked if all companies set a budget. Mr. Rambo and Chief Brower acknowledge that most do, especially the big ones.

Rescue Chief Cheryl Aycock of Round Hill Volunteer Fire Department noted that they will never be able to normalize budgets due to too many variables. She also noted that contributions have dropped off.

Mr. Sandy stated that each of the company's assets needs to be looked at.

There were discussions on entering into occupancy agreements.

Mr. Gordon also noted that fundraising does not keep things going.

Assistant Chief O'Brien noted that during the day, there were 80-90% staff working and at night it is the reverse with volunteers mainly staffing the station.

Mr. Rambo discussed the basis of Mr. Hemstreet's recommendation and noted that this year's funding formula is simple. He added there are many different models to choose from.

Ms. Matthews recommended staying at funding levels now and allocate \$500,000 as needs arise.

Mr. Julia noted that there is \$200,000 from Neersville funding that is available for distribution. Mr. Rambo noted that \$500,000 will stay year after year and that \$200,000 is one-time funding.

Mr. Gordon asked Mr. Sandy if there is enough knowledge of the different companies to do a back of envelope recommendation. Mr. Sandy answered to some extent. A volunteer representative from the Hamilton Fire stated that these people never come to see us and doesn't know where they get their dollar figures. A representative from Philomont noted that each company is very unique. Mr. Sandy noted that they have been to the Hamilton company several times and provided further explanation. A Hamilton representative noted that they come when there is a crisis but not just to talk to us.

Mr. Julia noted that they have stated and restated that there are problems and that they should come up with guidance for the BOS. Mr. Rambo said they should ask the companies what the needs are and then come back to the GRC. Mr. Gordon replied they should not come back to the GRC.

Mr. Sandy noted that the BOS had \$1M extra but it only covered crisis costs. Chief Brower suggested as an option that it be divided up equally as a funding increase to all. Mr. Julia noted that is not reform. There were discussions on asking for needs-based lists and that the companies have to meet the deadlines. Mr. Julia asked who will get the money.

Mr. Rambo discussed having trouble getting a response to “let us give you free Wi-Fi”. There was agreement from others on this statement.

Carolyn, Leesburg Rescue, stated that the group was going in circles for 90 minutes. She discussed an even split for one year only and then look at other ways for long-term solution. Mr. Nelis noted that it is not the GRC’s role to decide how to allocate one year’s funding.

Mr. Rambo noted there could be reform and ask the companies – they are responsive.

Chairman Tom Julia noted that \$500,000 funding allocation is an issue. He stated that questions for the volunteer companies are -- is it better to take all the 2014 money and divide it on a percentage basis or divide it in equal amounts or is there a third mechanism and what the principals of that mechanism are.

Mr. Gordon added that the GRC understands that money is available and that it should be kept in the system and the GRC supports the reallocation of funds left from the Neersville and that money should be included in the distribution of money. Chairman Julia added providing the volunteer companies with examples of funding allocations.

Mr. Turner made a motion for the GRC, with the assistance of Mr. Sandy, to prepare a letter that will be sent to each of the individual companies, outlining the fact that there are additional funds from this FY2014 of approximately \$700,000 and the GRC would like the presidents of the volunteer companies input on how the money is allocated among the various companies. Some of the choices are equal allocations to each of the serving companies or allocation based upon a review of what was the company’s net loss in the most recent fiscal year and per the most recent filed tax return year, or some other needs based approach, or via the current formula that is in the \$5.3M status quo now. The GRC requests that responses be submitted within six weeks and that the letter is signed by the president of the volunteer companies. The motion passed 6-0-3 (Bill Soltesz and Don Walker absent.)

Mr. Gordon will draft the letter for the Sub-committee members’ review.

Mr. Rambo invited GRC members to speak to the volunteer presidents and vice-presidents at the Fire-Rescue Commission’s orientation/president’s meeting on February 25th. The meeting will start at 6:00pm and will be held at the Emergency Operation Center (EOC) located at 801 Sycolin.

The Commissioners thanked the volunteers for their time and input.

Inspector General Update: Mr. Gordon discussed his discussions with Jack Roberts, County Attorney, Mr. Hemstreet and Julie Grandfield regarding the IG. The

Commissioners also discussed the former County IG position. Chairman Julia recommended that research be conducted on what worked and didn't work with the former IG's role. He also stated he would like to see a legal opinion on paper regarding an IG's authority to investigate the Schools. Statutes also need to be reviewed. The following Commissioners will assist Mr. Soltesz in further research:

- Ms. Munsey will research the prior IG's function via contact with staff.
- Mr. Nelis will research IG positions in other Virginia jurisdictions and determine how they are structured and their form of government.

Mr. Nelis recommended that the IG should be appointed by the Circuit Court judges.

Ms. Grandfield will send Ms. Munsey a list of staff members who worked with the former IG and a recommended form of questions to query those staff members. Staff note – This has already occurred.

Ms. Matthews made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Gordon seconded the meeting. The meeting was adjourned.