



**Fire Rescue Advisory Committee
 City of Fort Lauderdale
 March 10, 2025, 3:00 P.M.
 Fire Station #2
 528 NW 2 Street
 Fort Lauderdale, FL 33311**

Committee Members	Attendance	Cumulative Attendance	
		3/2025-2/2026	
		Present	Absent
William Brown, Chair	P	1	0
Dr. Amanda Chalfant	A	0	1
Frederick Nesbitt	P	1	0
Dennis Ulmer, Vice Chair	P	1	0

City Staff

Stephen Gollan, Fire Chief
 Garrett Pingol, Deputy Fire Chief
 Robert Bacic, Deputy Fire Chief, Liaison
 Jason Miller, Fire Marshal

Others

Scott Bayne
 K. Cruitt, Prototype, Recording Secretary

ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Ulmer at 3:02 p.m. Roll was called, and a quorum was determined to be present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES - February 10, 2025

Motion made by Mr. Nesbitt, seconded by Vice Chair Ulmer, to approve the February 10, 2025 minutes as distributed. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

o Strategic Plan for the FRAC in 2025-2026

In light of the decision by the City Commission to extend the term of the Committee for another 2 years, Chair Brown informed Members that the objective was to establish high level strategic goals. Potential new stations and the importance of community outreach as well as input were highlighted.

Deputy Chief Bacic opened the discussion by referencing the management implementation section of the Fire Rescue Strategic Plan which had been shared at the last meeting.

Dialogue ensued on training facilities and specific uses for new as well as in-service fire fighters. Deputy Chiefs Bacic and Pingol clarified that locations include classroom training at Mills Pond Park; EMS training in the medical simulation lab at HCA Hospital; the Wellfield Training Facility; Fire Academies at Broward College and Coral Springs; the Broward Academy facility at McFatter College; and the Executive Airport. Chief Bacic clarified which cities had their own fire academies. He noted that a full build-out of an academy at the Wellfield facility is not likely; they would be unable to do simulated burns with the surrounding density and space limitations. Certification offerings at the Fire Academy were also discussed. Chief Pingol highlighted that the Broward Sheriff's Fire Rescue Department does not have their own fire training facility.

Chair Brown recommended the Committee include the following objective: Assess and provide advisory recommendations on community and resources:

- Future fire station locations
- Potential training academy

Deputy Chief Pingol affirmed that acquiring and modifying a facility is a priority for the future, and cautioned it would be the expansion or repurposing an existing facility.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Nesbitt, Deputy Chiefs Bacic and Pingol provided an overview of the mentoring program. Lateral, as well as officer development initiatives, and the modules that had been developed to ensure success were outlined. Chief St. Fleur is charged with oversight and success of the mentorship program.

Staff resources, the use of media and other ideas to increase public education were discussed. Deputy Chief Bacic clarified that Objective 5.1 in the strategic plan would address that challenge. Deputy Chief Pingol added that the new PIO is doing a great job, is more forward facing, and that initiatives such as reunifications had been beneficial. Mr. Nesbitt felt it was a very impressive plan. Chief Gollan noted that the biggest challenge is funding, and the Department has been running "incredibly lean for a very long time;" they are forced to make difficult decisions being limited to addressing the necessities. Chief Pingol highlighted that 95% of the Department is in the field handling 911 responses. Chief Gollan outlined the challenges inherent in considering retired fire fighters as an option.

Discussion returned to the objectives. Chair Brown noted that the purpose of the FRAC had evolved over the last two years. He initiated discussion by suggesting the following additional objectives:

- Provide input, feedback and guidance to Fort Lauderdale Fire Rescue staff and the City Commission on issues critical to developing a strong relationship between the community and Fort Lauderdale Fire Rescue.

- Communicate Fort Lauderdale Fire Rescue purpose and programs to the community.
- Assist in increasing Department visibility and credibility; also, the importance to the community.
- Assess and provide advisory recommendations on community needs and resources, such as fire stations, training facilities, and blood program; highlight the benefits when they outweigh the cost.
- Provide feedback from the citizen perspective, and provide another open forum for the public to discuss Fire Rescue issues (as an alternative to appearing before the City Commission).

Chief Gollan acknowledged value in the continuity of expectation through the Committee for the districts represented; Members have the ability to align the needs and desires of their districts through interaction with their elected officials and the Department. He added that the Committee can play a role in presenting the areas being explored to help determine the appetite of the public. Chair Brown added that the Committee had the ability to look at problems holistically.

Deputy Chief Bacic affirmed he would draft a plan to include five bullet points based on the discussions, for review and approval at the next meeting.

The following matters were also discussed:

Chief Gollan shared that the 35 fire fighters started the prior week; the sizeable class will make a dramatic difference in the ability of the agency to respond. Deputy Chief Bacic highlighted upcoming events that include the graduation of new cadets; annual Medals Day on May 17, 2025; and lieutenant promotions from the SAFER grant.

Chair Brown inquired whether the EMS transport refusal rate was within the national average of 19%-20%. Chief Gollan indicated that it varies due to a number of factors; they historically average 20%. Discussion ensued on refusal scenarios and Chief Gollan outlined the protocols for handling them. Chair Brown provided context for the question. Chief Gollan indicated that approximately 7.8% of their runs are related to the homeless; that population typically has a high refusal rate.

The preparation timeline for the Budget Advisory Board was also discussed. Chief Gollan shared insight on key components of the business plan intended to aid the Department in getting ahead of the anticipated increase in density. Concern was expressed about the steadily increasing costs for building the additional stations needed to meet demand in the next five years.

Chief Gollan provided a general update that included the estimated timeline for completion of FS 117; they are actively working on relocating Ocean Rescue headquarters; added units for Spring Break; and are facing substantial challenges with cap counts in bars, as well as traffic congestion.

Deputy Chief Bacic provided the YOY emergency response times for Fire (ERF) and EMS, as had been previously requested by the Committee. Copies of those reports are available in the public record. Deputy Chief Pingol presented agency data for the period FY19/20 through FY23/24. Highlights included call processing time for the 90 percentile baseline performance which improved over the last four and a half years by 1 minute 4 seconds; in January, turnout times for high priority calls were under 2 minutes over 200 times. The significant improvement in Moderate Risk Fire Category ERF 16 (residential fires) from 14:17 minutes in FY 22/23 to 11:44 minutes in FY 23/24 was explained as the result of a strategic change to the operational profile which put additional lieutenants on rescue trucks, enabling them to operate independently. The variances in ERF22 (commercial fires) and ERF 3 (general fires) were also explained. With regards to medical calls, he advised there was a data point reporting and recording issue with call processing times by dispatch; this affected that data as well as turnout times. The Department will have a full year of clean data in FY 24/25, and expects to see better measurements.

Chair Brown inquired whether the gradual increase in travel times was due to traffic. Deputy Chief Pingol clarified that traffic flow exceeds the population tremendously during the work week, and on weekends due to entertainment. Construction and train movements also add congestion. Discussion ensued around the variables and challenges anticipated with future expansion of commuter rail; it is expected to present greater challenges than faced with the opening and closing of bridges. Chief Pingol was pleased that the YOY data shows the Department is trending in the right direction; he reiterated that he was looking forward to seeing full year data points this fiscal year. Chair Brown affirmed they are on the right track.

The importance of operator training in further improving service was also acknowledged.

NEW BUSINESS

The next meeting will be held on April 14, 2025. Chair Brown reiterated that the goal is to have everything packaged so the Committee can present it to the City Commission in May.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 4:21 p.m.
