



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

<b>Committee Members</b>	<b>Attendance</b>	<b>Cumulative Attendance 3/2024-2/2025</b>	
		<b>Present</b>	<b>Absent</b>
William Brown, Chair (via Zoom)	P	8	0
Dr. Amanda Chalfant	P	2	0
Frederick Nesbitt	P	3	0
Dennis Ulmer, Vice Chair	P	7	1

### **City Staff**

Stephen Gollan, Fire Chief  
Garrett Pingol, Deputy Fire Chief  
Robert Bacic, Deputy Fire Chief, Liaison  
Jason Miller, Acting Fire Marshal  
Mike Owen, Assistant Fire Chief

### **Others**

K. Cruitt, Prototype, Recording Secretary

### **ROLL CALL**

The meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Ulmer at 3:06 p.m. Roll was called, and a quorum was determined to be present.

**Motion** made by Dr. Chalfant, seconded by Mr. Nesbitt, to permit Chair Brown to participate in the meeting via Zoom. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES – January 13, 2025**

**Motion** made by Dr. Chalfant, seconded by Mr. Nesbitt, to approve the January 13, 2025 minutes as distributed. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

- **Goal Setting and Strategic Plan for the FRAC in 2025-2026**

Deputy Fire Chief Bacic shared the draft of the 2025-2030 Fire Rescue Strategic Plan; he recommended it be used as a template for the Committee to work from when formulating

the FRAC goals and strategic plan as would ensure close alignment of efforts to support the Department.

Chair Brown agreed, and provided perspective for new members on the need for a two-year plan following the decision by the Commission in December to extend the term of the Committee. Vice Mayor Glassman had requested a list of goals, objectives, and the strategic plan for the next two years.

Chair Brown made clear that the Committee needed to ensure good community outreach and public input for the Fire Rescue initiatives. He added that a lesson had been learned on the importance of clear communications with the EMS Fire taxing district. The challenge with the media conveying only half of the information was referenced. It had not been made clear that it would have been phased in; that it was intended to build a funding mechanism to address significant budgetary concerns in the next three years when SAFER grant funding expires; and there would be a need to maintain proper funding for the 28 new positions. Members expressed unanimous agreement.

Chair Brown stated that while he had not had an opportunity to thoroughly review the draft, there was a need for additional stations with the increased volume from Flagler Village and other areas.

Deputy Chief Bacic estimated that the final version of the Strategic Plan would be released to the public the following week; the draft needed only minor formatting and layout adjustments. He added that the Department is finalizing a separate document with specific initiatives that would be implemented to achieve the main goals.

Chair Brown highlighted that one of the primary reasons the Committee was formed two years ago was to address a high increase in Fire and EMS response times, and that needed to continue being an area of focus. Chief Bacic agreed and said that would relate to station coverage; he referenced the section containing community feedback as it showed that timely 911 response times was the top priority. Firefighter training to serve the diverse population was second; meeting infrastructure needs comparable to top tier agencies around the country was third. Chief Bacic added that the process of developing the strategic initiatives considered all of the information gathered from the Chief, Staff and included feedback from [the public](#).

Assistant Fire Chief Owen shared the additional document previously referenced by Chief Bacic; it was entitled 2025-2030 Strategic Plan, Management and Implementation Guide to the Committee.

Chair Brown opened a discussion on whether there was an immediate need for community outreach and education to explain why the Department moved to three-person rescues. It was unanimously agreed that would be beneficial, especially with the anticipated funding restraints in three years when the City would have to fund 100% of the cost of the 28 new positions that support the three-person rescue. Chair Brown noted that those positions are cross-trained as fire fighters. Dr. Chalfant suggested this education be integrated with the current training plan for AEDs, however, Chief Bacic

clarified that the scope of those education and community outreach programs is not large enough due to funding and staff limitations. Chief Pingol confirmed that was the case.

The Committee discussed the potential of social media platforms as a cost-effective and far-reaching tool for greater community engagement.

Dr. Chalfant observed that one of the Fire Rescue objectives was to improve morale. Chief Gollan explained the rationale and highlighted the importance of initiatives such as reunifications when there are positive outcomes. He added that the addition of three-person rescues would slow suppression units sufficiently to facilitate more community outreach, including beneficial programming in partnership with schools to reach kids. Chief Gollan then outlined the various media channels currently being utilized by the Department and the benefits of transparent accounting.

Discussion continued on the topic of the EMS taxing district. Chief Gollan conveyed that the key was Fire Rescue not having to compete with other departments in the general fund; it would facilitate financial transparency. He offered examples which included the reduction in fire assessment fees by almost \$20 per household last year, and the \$1.5 million savings in overtime with additional staff funded by the SAFER grant; those funds had gone back into general fund. He highlighted that in three years, when the Department requests continued funding of the 28 firefighters, it could cost approximately \$5 million per year, and coincide with an additional \$30 million needed for other general fund projects. Chief Gollan stated that in the event the community does not approve raising millage after 18 years, Fire Rescue overtime and response times will increase once again and outcomes will be compromised. He added that the taxing district and \$35 million would have to be addressed in 2027 and clarified that the EMS taxing district would not provide more funding for this organization "in any way, shape or form"; it would simply provide transparency on the funding; the end goal was raising money for the general fund.

Chair Brown indicated that the Committee had been hearing that residents did not fully understand these issues; he reiterated the importance of beginning a community awareness campaign now.

In preparation for the next meeting, Chair Brown requested that Members communicate their input on FRAC goals and objectives for the next two years via email to Chief Bacic after digesting the key strategic initiatives so that they could be consolidated. Chief Gollan advised that a SWOT analysis would also be available soon for further reference by the Committee.

Chair Brown requested historical data on response time trends since the Committee was first seated in December 2022; this should include the time between stations being first alerted and apparatus going out the door, as well as arrival times; he acknowledged that some factors are in the control of the Broward Sheriff's Office. It was agreed that would be presented at the next meeting; Chief Pingol stated he previously requested some of that information, and found that the improvements had been measurable since 2019. Discussion followed on the current communication system and it was agreed that the key is the number of units.

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The Committee determined that the primary focus of the next meeting would be goal setting. Chair Brown added that the intent is a communication to the Commission by April.

Chair Brown commended the Department on the recent successful rescue involving a near drowning. Chief Gollan shared that a reunification was scheduled with the victim and involved agencies. Chief Pingol added that was a prime example of a secondary benefit of three-person rescues.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

No additional items were discussed.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

[Prepared by : K. Cruitt, Prototype, Inc.]