



**Fire Rescue Advisory Committee**  
**City of Fort Lauderdale**  
**January 12, 2026, 1:00 P.M.**  
**Fire Station #2**  
**528 NW 2 Street**  
**Fort Lauderdale, FL 33311**

**Cumulative Attendance**  
**As of 01/12/26**

<b>Committee Members</b>	<b>Attendance</b>	<b>Present</b>	<b>Absent</b>
William Brown, Chair	P	1	0
Frederick Nesbitt	P	1	0
Dennis Ulmer, Vice Chair	P	1	0
Irene Costa	P	1	0

**City Staff**

Robert Bacic, Deputy Fire Chief (Liaison)  
 Jason Miller, Assistant Chief, Fire Marshal  
 Mike Owen, Assistant Fire Chief  
 Frank Guzman, Public Information Officer

**Others**

Keith Costa, Union President  
 Karen Cruitt, Prototype Inc.

**ROLL CALL**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Brown at 1:01 p.m. Roll was called, and a quorum was determined to be present.

Chair Brown conveyed his appreciation to Union President, Keith Costa, for hosting the holiday lunch at the last meeting.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES – December 8, 2025**

**Motion** made by Vice Chair Ulmer, seconded by Mr. Nesbitt, to approve the December 8, 2025 minutes as distributed. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

**OLD BUSINESS**

○ **Planning for Future Infrastructure**

Chair Brown commended Fire Marshal Miller and his team as he had received very positive feedback from the community, and community leaders, on their work and the fire safety inspections.

Pursuant to a request for periodic updates, Fire Marshall Miller highlighted the following data points:

- There are 12,284 inspectable buildings
- BDA and AED Violations. 560 or 5% were cited for AEDs since 2023; 168 or 1% met the NFPA minimum radio signal strength when tested between 2020 and 2025.
- BDA Team Radio Test Results. A total of 73 in-house tests were conducted; 45 failed whereas 28 were in compliance with the Code as currently written.
- Sprinkler Statistics. Of the 625 high rise structures that include garages, 46 still needed to be sprinklered after two were brought into compliance; 11 had pulled permits for ELSS retrofits as of that morning. He clarified that 967 were fully sprinklered, and none had refused to comply. Compliance would be pursued this year as permits should have been pulled by January 1, 2026.

Discussion ensued regarding key infrastructure developments, and included the following highlights:

- **FS117.** Deputy Fire Chief Bacic noted that they are still working on the P3.
- **FS13 & FS88.** Assistant Fire Chief Owen noted that both projects were out for bid in Phase Two of the RFP process which was extended by two weeks to January 26, 2026. Both stations will be built concurrently from the previous 30% design criteria package; build should start as soon as possible. Chief Bacic explained the efficiencies expected by having one firm complete the design and build; they hoped it would be done 18 months after breaking ground.

Chiefs Owen and Bacic fielded questions on emergency evacuation scenarios in the event of a hurricane. Chief Owen clarified that the station designs would have to vary based on elevation requirements and size restrictions. Chief Bacic clarified that the firefighters that worked out of FS 13 were moved to a temporary facility behind Bonnet House several months ago; this was to be able to maintain response times in that coverage area. Chief Owen added that while Ocean Rescue was occupying part of the FS13 structure temporarily, their new headquarters at the Swimming Hall of Fame was expected to be completed in two months.

- **Emergency Operations Center (EOC).** The project was out for design bid through January 28, 2026; funding is through a FEMA grant. The proposed structure would be a standalone building near FS53 and the current EOC station.
- **New Parking Garage at Holiday Park.** Chair Brown noted that a vendor had been selected for those facilities, and should open in 2028, if not in 2027. He stressed the importance of the community being aware it would include a Fire Rescue station, as opposed to an EMS substation.

○ **Enhancing Community Engagement**

Public Information Officer Frank Guzman provided an overview of media metrics for calendar year 2025, as compared to the prior year:

- There were 785 posts across X, Facebook and Instagram, vs 391 in 2024.
- Those posts generated almost 4.79M impressions, which represented a 900% increase over the prior year.

- The 785 posts were shared almost 10,000 times.
- 15,000 followers were added in 2025, bringing to total to over 55,000 across the three social media networks.
- Media coverage garnered positive feedback; this included stories on the whole blood program, drowning prevention efforts and patient reunions.

Members were invited to participate in the Push-In ceremony at FS53 on January 21, 2026 at 10:00am. The event will be open to the public to celebrate the arrival of the new HazMat truck and state-of-the art airport firefighting truck.

Discussion returned to the 55,000 social media followers metric; Chair Brown inquired how many were Fort Lauderdale residents. Mr. Guzman believed that 70-80% were from South Florida, and stated he would provide media market data at the next meeting.

○ **Strengthening Community Relations**

○ **Assessing and Recommending Community Needs**

Chair Brown stated that he believed that the Fire and EMS departments were meeting the needs of the community, given the budget and resources available. Chief Bacic noted that the Department was preparing for the budget process; needs were being assessed in every aspect of the organization; and the re-accreditation was in process in preparation for the next fiscal year.

Discussion ensued on staffing levels and training. Chief Bacic clarified there was no current recruit class in place; two classes had yet to complete their probationary periods. Chief Bacic and Chief Owen shared insight on strategy and resources needed to fill vacancies. The next class was slated for nine to eleven recruits in the coming year, and the hiring period had just begun. Two weeks of EMS officer development training was slated to begin in about a month; classes for new lieutenants and captains were planned for later this year. The importance of retaining the institutional knowledge of senior leadership was acknowledged.

Chief Owen clarified that the Department was planning the curriculum for high rise training which would be funded by the grant received through October 2027. They hoped to be able to occupy the vacated Seagull school property near FS3; this was pending the release of final recommendations by the school superintendent and being able to reach an agreement.

Chair Brown observed that with the amount of training and increases in run loads, there was not much down time for staff. Chief Bacic highlighted that unit availability was key, and resources are constrained due to sheer volume.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Chair Brown requested that arrangements be made for the medical director to provide an update on the future of EMS and SWAT medics.

Mr. Nesbitt opened discussion on current legislation around property taxes. He observed that there were seven House Joint Resolution (HJR) bills; while law enforcement would not be reduced, they did not mention Fire Rescue. The exception was HJR 209 which had amendments added in Committee to increase the exemption to \$200,000 for insured properties, and replaced law enforcement with 'public safety' to include law enforcement, fire fighters, and other first responders. Mr. Nesbit noted that the bill was on the House calendar but without a Senate companion bill. He believed a special session would be needed to address property taxes, and stated he would continue to monitor the issue in conjunction with Chip LaMarca.

Chair Brown asked Chief Bacic to reach out to Daphne Sainvil to determine whether any other bills pertaining to the Fire Department were in session.

Chief Bacic clarified that while the Department had an overwhelming recommendation for 'award' during the accreditation process, the formal status was still pending.

Discussion returned to the SWAT medic program. Chief Bacic agreed to try to have a representative come and explain how they integrate with FLFR and Police. He clarified that the Department provides the medics for the PD SWAT team. Chair Brown expressed concern about the weathered appearance of the TRT storage trailers, and noted that the branding appeared to be faded.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no additional business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 2:07 p.m.