

**MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
SITTING AS THE GOVERNING BODY OF FIRE DISTRICT #1**

REGULAR MEETING

AUGUST 6, 1997

The Regular Meeting of the Board of County Commissioners of Sedgwick County, Kansas, Sitting as the Governing Body of Fire District #1, was called to order at 9:23 a.m., Wednesday, August 6, 1997, in the County Commission Meeting Room in the Courthouse in Wichita, Kansas, by Chairman Thomas G. Winters, with the following present: Chair Pro Tem Paul W. Hancock; Commissioner Betsy Gwin; Commissioner Melody C. Miller; Commissioner Mark F. Schroeder; Mr. William P. Buchanan, County Manager; Mr. Rich Euson, Acting County Counselor; Mr. Gary Curmode, Fire Chief; Mr. David C. Spears, P.E., Director, Bureau of Public Services; Mr. Fred Ervin, Public Affairs Officer; and Ms. Linda M. Leggett, Deputy County Clerk.

ROLL CALL

The Clerk reported, after calling roll, that all Commissioners were present.

Chairman Winters said, "Would you call Item B please?"

PUBLIC HEARING

B. PUBLIC HEARING REGARDING THE 1998 FIRE DISTRICT #1 BUDGET.

Mr. William Buchanan, County Manager, said, "Commissioners, you have that budget before you and this would be the appropriate time for the public to speak."

Chairman Winters said, "Thank you. At this time I will open the public meeting. Is there anyone here this morning who would like to address the Commissioners concerning Fire District #1 1998 Budget? Anyone in the room who would like to address the Commissioners concerning Fire District #1 1998 Budget? I see no one, we'll close the public hearing and at this time, we'll recess the meeting of Fire District #1."

The Board of Sedgwick County Commissioners recessed to the Regular Meeting of the Board of County Commissioners at 9:24 a.m. and returned at 10:25 a.m.

Regular Meeting, Fire District #1, August 6, 1997

Chairman Winters said, "At this time, I will call back to order the meeting of the Fire District #1. We have previously had a public hearing in the Fire District, but we are now at the consideration of minutes. Madam Clerk, would you call that item."

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES: Regular Meeting, July 2, 1997

The Clerk reported that all Commissioners were present at the Regular Meeting of July 2, 1997.

Chairman Winters said, "Commissioners, you've had an opportunity to review the Minutes, what's the will of the Board?"

MOTION

Commissioner Hancock moved to adopt the Minutes of July 2, 1997.

Commissioner Gwin seconded the Motion.

There was no discussion on the Motion, the vote was called.

VOTE

Commissioner Betsy Gwin	Aye
Commissioner Paul W. Hancock	Aye
Commissioner Melody C. Miller	Aye
Commissioner Mark F. Schroeder	Aye
Chairman Thomas G. Winters	Aye

Chairman Winters said, "Next item."

DONATION

A. DONATION OF \$500 FROM CENTRAL GAS SERVICES.

Mr. Gary Curmode, Sedgwick County Fire Chief, greeted the Commissioners and said, "We have a donation of \$500 from Central Gas Services in Cheney. I recommend that we accept the donation and authorize the Chairman to sign a letter of appreciation."

Regular Meeting, Fire District #1, August 6, 1997

MOTION

Commissioner Schroeder moved to accept the donation and authorize the Chairman to sign a letter of appreciation.

Commissioner Hancock seconded the Motion.

There was no discussion on the Motion, the vote was called.

VOTE

Commissioner Betsy Gwin	Aye
Commissioner Paul W. Hancock	Aye
Commissioner Melody C. Miller	Aye
Commissioner Mark F. Schroeder	Aye
Chairman Thomas G. Winters	Aye

Chairman Winters said, "Thank you very much Chief. The next item on the agenda was the public hearing, which was at nine o'clock or shortly after time certain. We have had that public hearing concerning the Fire District. Madam Clerk, would you call Item D."

D. ADOPTION OF THE 1998 FIRE DISTRICT #1 BUDGET.

Mr. Buchanan said, "Commissioners, you have reviewed that budget and I would recommend you adopt the 1998 Sedgwick County Fire District Budget of \$8,729,320 with \$6,752,763 in budgeted ad valorem taxes, which is approximately equivalent to 14.5 mills subject to review and technical adjustments."

Chairman Winters said, "Commissioner Schroeder."

Commissioner Schroeder said, "I'm not sure who to address this to, but the Andale station staffing, can somebody tell me how that is going to be staffed? Isn't that partially staffed in 1998? Isn't that scheduled to be completed?"

Regular Meeting, Fire District #1, August 6, 1997

Chief Curmode said, “Yes Commissioner. Basically, how we are doing this, we are going to reassign some of our personnel. We’re continuing our vacation personnel that fill in when people are on vacation. We’re taking one person from Station 32, which is up on North I-135, that has six staff people and it will go to five. We have a station in Haysville, Station 34, we’re taking that from six to five people, which we’ll still be able to have our vacation personnel. We’re taking one person from Station 33, which is near Colwich. That will make three stations that will be staffed with a Captain and two fire fighters. When that responds on any area other than medical and vehicle fires, it will respond in tandem with Station 33 and instead of getting five people at the scene, we’ll have seven. So it will actually improve our response. If we have a structure fire in the Andale area or Colwich or anything towards Kellogg off of 247th Street, we’ll actually get people quicker. I think an important thing here to realize is a fire doubles in size every 30 to 45 seconds. What happens now if we have a fire in that area, it is seven miles from the Colwich station, eight miles from Station 35 on 247th. It just gives enough time after people discover that fire, that when the firemen get there, there is a chance a fireman could go through a floor because the fire is continuing to burn. By having that station in that area, we get there quicker. It increases safety and we’ll also have two additional people there quicker on the initial call and still have a backup station from Station 32 coming out to assist us.”

Commissioner Schroeder said, “I don’t disagree with that theory at all, that you can respond quicker. My concern is thinning the staff of other stations and creating a new station. When you say you move a person, how many positions . . . that’s one position right?”

Chief Curmode said, “Yes sir,”

Commissioner Schroeder said, “But how many people in a position?”

Chief Curmode said, “We have a Captain, Lieutenant, and three fire fighters at every station and the reason there is an additional person at those two stations, we have an additional apparatus to staff.”

Commissioner Schroeder said, “One position takes how many people to fill?”

Chief Curmode said, “One position takes three people.”

Commissioner Schroeder said, “So you will be moving twelve people or nine?”

Regular Meeting, Fire District #1, August 6, 1997

Chief Curmode said, “Be moving three people per shift, so it will be a total of nine people.”

Commissioner Schroeder said, “Nine people. Is that enough to cover full time staffing of that station or do you have extra board for that?”

Chief Curmode said, “We have a staffing plan in our department and if I may, I’ll just go over it briefly with you.”

Commissioner Schroeder said, “Okay.”

Chief Curmode said, “The first thing we do is we have certain staff, and the staff at our stations handle our staffing needs adequately. We utilize extra board personnel, which is our temporary program that you supported for us two years ago and budgeted to get. Then we look at our administrative staff to utilize them. We look at the two Lieutenants in Fire Prevention. We look at our Medical Officer and Division Chief in Fire Prevention. Then we reassign our Safety Training Officers at that point as a fourth option. When that occurs, the Deputy Chiefs and the Fire Chief assume their safety training response, not the regular duties, but the response activities. We respond as a safety training officer. Our fifth is call back of full time personnel.”

Commissioner Schroeder said, “Okay, so if you are to use nine people from other departments, how many will you be short in staffing that 24 hours a day? How many extra board people do you use?”

Chief Curmode said, “In January, with the new station opening hopefully by January 1, there will be two people off on vacation per day. The extra board will be called immediately and we give them a calendar in monthly increments so we know pretty much when we can staff them.”

Commissioner Schroeder said, “But opening a new station and not hiring any new personnel for the new station.”

Chief Curmode said, “Right.”

Commissioner Schroeder said, “Okay, we have plans to open another station someday south and west, is that right?”

Regular Meeting, Fire District #1, August 6, 1997

Chief Curmode said, "That was in the budget the last two years with people and the budget couldn't meet that, it was cut out."

Commissioner Schroeder said, "If that station comes to reality, how are we going to staff it?"

Chief Curmode said, "Well, the recommendation from our Fire Department staff to management was to hire people for that station."

Commissioner Schroeder said, "All the people needed?"

Chief Curmode said, "We wouldn't be able to transfer any others from other stations, we would have to hire."

Commissioner Schroeder said, "I'm really concerned that we're cutting the stations back. I agree with the response times being quicker by having a new station, but I don't know if I necessarily agree with not hiring new people to fill some of those positions at that station. I really have a problem with that and I think you and I talked about that, the Manager and I, and I think Jerry Harrison and I have had a chance to talk about that. Basically, you are losing me. No matter how I vote on this budget, I support the Fire Department, but I'm not sure I support that concept of pulling other people in for a new station. Obviously, you see it as being the correct way of doing it and you feel comfortable with it, but I'm not sure I do. With some of the things that have happened in the past, I'm just worried about us threading ourselves out kind of thin."

Chief Curmode said, "Commissioner, what we're doing is we're utilizing our administrative staff I think more efficiently than we ever have. All of them are commissioned staff. They all are still able to fight a fire, even myself, and command positions and by utilizing them in this fashion and still having the option of call back as our fifth option, I think we can meet the needs."

Commissioner Schroeder said, "Thanks Chief."

Chairman Winters said, "Commissioner Hancock."

Commissioner Hancock said, "Just a question. Would it be better then to put folks on for the 1998 Budget?"

Regular Meeting, Fire District #1, August 6, 1997

Commissioner Schroeder said, "Well, I've had that discussion on and off for the last year about hiring additional people instead of just taking them from other places. I would feel more comfortable if we hired a couple of people to fill some needs in that station rather than to pull from others. I mean it much like the same thing with EMS that we just discussed. Instead of closing down a shift in one station, we decided to put it back in because it does spread it thinner. You've got as many people working but you've got to spread it out over a bigger area. That is what concerns me a little bit and I'm just having problems with that. I don't know if we are prepared to do anything budget wise at this point."

Commissioner Hancock said, "Probably move it out of the equipment budget to the personnel budget."

Commissioner Schroeder said, "I don't know if there is any support to do it, but I would sure like to see us look at hiring some new people to fill some of those positions rather than to pull them from other stations."

Commissioner Gwin said, "If the staff can give me the cost of that, I'd talk about that today as an addition."

Commissioner Hancock said, "Me too."

Commissioner Schroeder said, "Okay, if you want to discuss it Mr. Chairman."

Chairman Winters said, "I think I do. I want to ask a question first though, concerning the extra board. Is there, as I understand it, once a replacement person is needed you call the extra board and if that is deleted you can do a call back. Is it possible to expand the pool of that extra board? Is that possible?"

Chief Curmode said, "Yes Commissioner. Right now, the Commission has authorized ten additions for extra board. Yes, it would be very advantageous to expand that pool to about thirty people because we utilize them when they're not at their full time job. We send calendars out to them for a two month period and they let us know when they are available. Some days when they are working, they can't come in until seven at night or vice-versa, and we use this as our hiring pool to come on full time and it works well. So the pool would definitely be an increase that we could use. We've been talking that at the management level now."

Regular Meeting, Fire District #1, August 6, 1997

Chairman Winters said, "Thanks Chief. Commissioner Miller."

Commissioner Miller said, "Yes Chief, from a basic managerial perspective, is it your, from your expertise perspective, is it most advantageous to pull personnel from the other sites and utilize the extra board than it is to bring on new personnel?"

Chief Curmode said, "Commissioner, ideally yes it is nice to be able to hire additional people. We're trying as was mentioned by the Commissioners and Manager, working as a team to look at ways to be the most cost effective on a finite budget without trying to get any increases. If you were able to expand and raise the . . . if money wasn't an issue, yes, it is great to get that. We looked at more cost effective ways to get us those bodies, men and women, that could assist us and have yet a hiring pool that we've never had before so we get to try them before we hire them basically to speak. So that pool of ten, it fluctuates as people get offers to other fire departments, they leave. We had one person get transferred to Bosnia. He's back now, working for us again, so that fluctuates. So the larger pool would definitely go a long way to assisting us."

Commissioner Miller said, "So you are still it sounds as though advocating for the extra board and in fact an increase in the extra board, is that what I'm hearing?"

Chief Curmode said, "We would like to increase the pool to a larger number so we have people to call."

Commissioner Miller said, "And if we are going to entertain talking about additional personnel, are we talking about straight full time personnel or are we talking about extra board personnel?"

Commissioner Schroeder said, "That's what I'm referring to, full time."

Commissioner Miller said, "Full time."

Chief Curmode said, "That would be a policy decision."

Commissioner Miller said, "Thank you Mr. Chairman."

Regular Meeting, Fire District #1, August 6, 1997

Chairman Winters said, "I'd like to think about this for a moment. In increasing personnel, it takes three people to fill one slot 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Thinking about this in increments of three and thinking about it in slots, can somebody give us the numbers of what one slot or one position, which would include three firefighters, what that one slot cost would entail?"

Mr. Buchanan said, "Yes. Becky is calculating that right now."

Commissioner Gwin said, "Chief, I have a question while they are calculating. The extra board, would there be a cost to expand that?"

Chief Curmode said, "There is no additional cost to expand the pool. We have \$75,000 we're able to use for extra board and we could expand it to a hundred, there just would be less time for each person to work but we'd have more people to call from."

Commissioner Gwin said, "So if I didn't want to hire full time people at this time, but I wanted to expand your extra board pool, I could put additional monies into your budget to give you more money to go out and expand the pool, could I not?"

Chief Curmode said, "Yes, that is your option Commissioner."

Commissioner Gwin said, "Okay. I didn't know what you had available now. You work off of \$75,000. Thank you."

Mr. Buchanan said, "There are alternatives to that Commissioner. Depending upon how much you need, we could always transfer money from equipment reserve, we can always do those sorts of things depending upon our needs. So that is one way of doing it."

Commissioner Gwin said, "And I could add more money to the budget and raise the mill levy."

Mr. Buchanan said, "Absolutely, and raise taxes."

Chairman Winters said, "Commissioners, while the staff goes about trying to calculate these numbers we are requesting on personnel, we've been at it an hour and forty five minutes or more, I'd suggest that we take a quick break. Let them have some time to calculate. Let's take a ten minute break."

Regular Meeting, Fire District #1, August 6, 1997

The Board of Sedgwick County Commissioners recessed at 10:39 a.m. and returned at 10:49 a.m.

Chairman Winters said, "We've been in recess in the Fire District Budget to allow the staff to calculate. I'll call the meeting of the Fire District back to order. Mr. Manager."

Mr. Buchanan said, "We've done the calculations but they are not so important now because of where we are in the process. If you recall, two weeks ago, we had a last update which set the limit of expenditures for the Fire District Budget. Therefore, if we are to increase the number of employees, or if we are going to increase the expenditures and transfer money into the Fire District Fund from the Equipment Reserve Fund, we will have to amend a budget. It is my recommendation that we adopt this budget as we have indicated, that you instruct us to come back tomorrow or in a week or in a month with a plan to hear from the Chief to see how this will work and then if it is your desire to do things differently we will go through a process of amending the budget January 1 or we can do it before that."

Chairman Winters said, "Okay. Commissioner Schroeder."

Commissioner Schroeder said, "Thank you Mr. Manager, but it is my desire today to do it and I would just like the Chief to come back and tell us what it will take, not decide in a couple of weeks. I don't think we need a Commission item or anything like that. I would like to instruct staff that as of the first meeting of January, if you need to republish the budget to do it at that time. Are you wanting to come back?"

Commissioner Gwin said, "What are you wanting them do to? Add four positions, five positions, one?"

Commissioner Schroeder said, "Add one position, which is three people, and do that the first part of January."

Chairman Winters said, "Let me ask the Manager. Maybe I didn't quite understand. But if it was the decision of the Board that we wanted to add one position, how would we go about doing that now in the process? We know we're not going above this mill levy in the Fire District, how would we accomplish that?"

Regular Meeting, Fire District #1, August 6, 1997

Mr. Buchanan said, "You would adopt the budget and then you would instruct us to come back to republish the budget, to hold another public hearing, and to adopt the amended budget at some time in the future."

Chairman Winters said, "Would that have an effect on the mill levy of that district or could it be shifted within the funds."

Mr. Buchanan said, "We cannot raise the mill levy, it is set. You move the money out of the equipment reserve, out of the fund that we've established to purchase equipment, move the money from that fund to this and it will effect the budget in that way."

Chairman Winters said, "Okay. Commissioners, I'd like to propose we accept this budget and then we'll take some kind of Motion to have them bring this back in 60 days, which would be October, which would get us past solid waste maybe and revisit this issue to do that."

Mr. Buchanan said, "Excuse me, Chairman. I think you need to be in the budget year to amend the budget."

Chairman Winters said, "So it might be the first week in January."

Commissioner Schroeder said, "Yes, that's what I was getting at, need to bring it back the first week in January."

Chairman Winters said, "You confused me when you said you wanted to do it today."

Commissioner Schroeder said, "I'm sorry. What I'm saying and I think Bill understood was I know we have to adopt today's budget because we can't go any higher. We cannot move money between funds. I didn't realize the Fire District Fund and the equipment reserve fund by law are two separate funds we can't move money back and forth once we establish that level for each one. So what I'm saying, the first available Wednesday in January, then we bring that issue back to the Commission for approval for that one additional position, which is three people, am I right?"

Chairman Winters said, "Yes."

Mr. Buchanan said, "That's what the Chief said."

Regular Meeting, Fire District #1, August 6, 1997

Commissioner Schroeder said, “Chief, am I right? It is three people. And then if you want to talk about the extra board at the same time, that can be discussed then too. That’s fine.”

Chairman Winters said, “Commissioners, if there are no other questions or discussion, what’s the will of the Board?”

MOTION

Commissioner Gwin moved to adopt the 1998 Fire District #1 Budget of \$8,729,320 with \$6,752,763 in budgeted ad valorem taxes, which is approximately equivalent to 14.504 mills subject to review and technical adjustments.

Commissioner Hancock seconded the Motion.

There was no discussion on the Motion, the vote was called.

VOTE

Commissioner Betsy Gwin	Aye
Commissioner Paul W. Hancock	Aye
Commissioner Melody C. Miller	Aye
Commissioner Mark F. Schroeder	Aye
Chairman Thomas G. Winters	Aye

Chairman Winters said, “Is there other business to come before this Board? Seeing none, this meeting is adjourned.”

Regular Meeting, Fire District #1, August 6, 1997

There being no other business to come before the Board, the Meeting was adjourned at 11:00 a.m.

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF
SEDGWICK COUNTY, KANSAS**

THOMAS G. WINTERS, Chairman
Third District

PAUL W. HANCOCK, Chairman Pro Tem
Second District

BETSY GWIN, Commissioner
First District

MELODY C. MILLER, Commissioner
Fourth District

MARK F. SCHROEDER, Commissioner
Fifth District

ATTEST:

James Alford, County Clerk

APPROVED:

_____, 1997