



**Regular Meeting, Fire District #1, March 12, 2003**

**VOTE**

Commissioner David M. Unruh	Aye
Commissioner Thomas Winters	Aye
Commissioner Carolyn McGinn	Aye
Commissioner Ben Sciortino	Aye
Chairman Tim Norton	Aye

**Chairman Norton** said, "Next item."

**NEW BUSINESS**

**A. RECOGNITION OF SEDGWICK COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT #1 BEING NATIONALLY ACCREDITED BY THE COMMISSION ON FIRE ACCREDITATION INTERNATIONAL.**

**Chief Gary Curmode**, Fire Department, greeted the Commissioners and said, "In October, 2000 our department received approval from Public Safety Director Bob Lamkey and County Manager Bill Buchanan to pursue accreditation by the Commission on Fire Accreditation International. On August 21<sup>st</sup> of this year, two years nine months later, the diligent work and dedication of the men and women of Sedgwick County Fire District #1 was met with successful conclusion, we received our accreditation.

I want to emphasize that this work was done by the men and women of our department, it wasn't done by our top chiefs. The men and women where the rubber hits the road, they did the work on this, and I really want to pat them on the back.

A committee chaired and coordinated this effort. They are Captain Larry Tagney, he was the Chair, he's on vacation, Division Chief Rick Williams and Lieutenant Layne Carter, they're working today but they're in a burn and rescue trailer right now, they couldn't come up and Lieutenant Dan Millsbaugh who recently had open-heart surgery last week, and Dr. John Leslie, who was our re-write on our final revision, retired from Wichita State University.

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Then we had 10 other firefighters that became what we call category leaders. The category leaders basically take ten different areas that are critically reviewed by the assessment team, which there were four chiefs from around the nation that came here. Areas that were covered were: governance and administration, assessment and planning, goals and objections, financial resources, programs, physical resources, human resources, training and competency, essential resources, that deals with water departments and other interface, and external system relationships, which is your interface with other mutual aid, automatic aid agreements and so forth.

Basically, just a couple of things on what accreditation is. The purpose of it, it provides a comprehensive system of fire and emergency service evaluation. It's an ongoing process for continuous improvement. In December of 1996, the ICCMA, the International City and County Managers Association and the IFC, the International Association of Fire Chiefs did a memorandum of understanding and agreement to make this come to pass. Again, it was their vision that made this happen.

It's so critical, particularly in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, that fire and emergency service agencies have well defined performance measurement tools. Basically, what I've always heard from Mr. Buchanan since I've been here, Gary if you can't measure it, you can't do it and that's right on the money because we should be able to measure it and if we aren't we should ask our questions why should we re-modify the operation so we can measure our performance for the citizens.

There are basically four reasons why you go through accreditation. One, when an agency is trying to cope with change. Two, to provide for periodic organization evaluation. Three, when there's a change in leadership in either commission, manager or fire chiefs. Four, to raise the level of professionalism within the organization and ultimately within the profession.

The self-assessment process that we went through before the team came basically answered three basic questions. One, is the organization effective. Two, are the goals and objectives and mission of the organization being achieved and three, what are the reasons for success of the organization.

Just to share a few things with you how this benefits the department, the county organization and particularly the citizens. It promotes excellence within the fire and emergency services, it encourages quality improvement, it provides assurance to our peers, our citizens and the public that the organization has definite missions, goals and objectives and we know where we're going and we do that through our strategic plan.

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It provides a detailed evaluation of the department and the services that we provide to the community. It identifies strengths and weaknesses within our department. It provides a method or system for addressing these deficiencies, how to improve. It results in growth for our department, as well as personal professional growth. It provides a forum for the communication of management philosophies and basically, it fosters pride in the organization from department members, community leaders and citizens.

Again, I want to thank the Commissioners for supporting our efforts this past two years and nine months. Again, Chair Norton, thank you for coming to Dallas to accept the award with us. And again, I can't say how proud I am of the men and women of our district who have done a tremendous job and I'm available for any questions or comments."

**Chairman Norton** said, "I see none at this point. I have to tell you, I was moved by the accreditation ceremony because the audience we sat in was some of the best and brightest and hard working-est and with the longest tenure of service in the nation and your operation showed its true colors and got recognized by that organization and I think that's pretty powerful for the citizens of Sedgwick County to know that they're being served by an organization that has that kind of accreditation and I applaud you for that. Commissioner Winters."

**Commissioner Winters** said, "Just again, my congratulations again and thanks to all of the staff and all the team who put the project together. How many other departments in Kansas have received this accreditation?"

**Chief Curmode** said, "We are the second department. The first department was a year before us, Lenexa Fire Department. We are the second one. There are 84 in the world so far. Just to give you an idea, there's three hundred and approximately fifty air force, marine and naval and army air force bases all over the world. They will all be going through accreditation too in the next five years."

**Commissioner Winters** said, "Are there other departments here in Kansas that are starting the accreditation process?"

**Chief Curmode** said, "Yes there is. I've talked to some of the members of the Sedgwick County Chief's Association and a few of them are looking at it. They want to see our materials and what we had to go through. Also, we've been invited to join, on a quarterly basis, the Kansas City area. They have 20 departments that are looking at it and two that are accredited in the Kansas City, Missouri area. And so we've been asked to come up there and share our experiences.

And just to let you know, this is a five-year accreditation. Each year, we have to give a report to

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show we're showing ongoing, continuous improvement."

**Commissioner Winters** said, "All right. Well, congratulations again, Chief."

**Chairman Norton** said, "Commissioner Sciortino."

**Commissioner Sciortino** said, "Yeah, Chief, try to expand on how unique and how prestigious this is. There's 84 fire departments worldwide that are accredited, is that what you said?"

**Chief Curmode** said, "That's correct. In the nation, Commissioner, there's 31,000 fire departments."

**Commissioner Sciortino** said, "That's what I was going to ask, just in the United States alone there's 31,000, but worldwide, I have to think hundreds of thousands of fire departments and 84 of which are accredited and Sedgwick County fire department is one of those. So we're in the top one half of one percent . . . I don't even know how to do that, but we're the crème de la crème.

I don't know how we can properly cast the laurels that need to be put on by the hard work for you except to say good job and that seems almost impotent to say that, but good job."

**Chief Curmode** said, "Thank you very much and I'll convey that to the department. A lot of them are watching it right now. They're probably just getting on their lunch hour, so they're probably watching the TV to see these comments. But again, the men and women were tremendous."

**Commissioner Sciortino** said, "Well, makes me proud and it should make every citizen of Sedgwick County proud of the professionalism that we have, again, in an area of public safety. Thank you, that's all I had."

**Chairman Norton** said, "Commissioners, is there anything else to come before us today as the Governing Body of Fire District #1?"

**MOTION**

Commissioner Winters moved to receive and file.

Commissioner Sciortino seconded the Motion.

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

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**VOTE**

Commissioner David M. Unruh	Aye
Commissioner Thomas Winters	Aye
Commissioner Carolyn McGinn	Aye
Commissioner Ben Sciortino	Aye
Chairman Tim Norton	Aye

**Chairman Norton** said, “Anything else for Fire District #1? I’ll adjourn this meeting.”

**B. OTHER**

**C. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no other business to come before the Board, the Meeting was adjourned at 12: 06 p.m.

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

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**TIM NORTON**, Chairman  
Second District

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**THOMAS G. WINTERS**, Chair Pro Tem  
Third District

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**DAVID M. UNRUH**, Commissioner  
First District

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**CAROLYN McGINN**, Commissioner  
Fourth District

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**BEN SCIORTINO**, Commissioner  
Fifth District

ATTEST:

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**Don Brace**, County Clerk

APPROVED:

\_\_\_\_\_, 2003