

**GOLDEN TRIANGLE SUMMIT MEETING
JANUARY 30, 2012
EUSTIS WOMAN'S CLUB**

IN ATTENDANCE

City of Eustis

Susan Hooper, Mayor
Kress Muenzmay, Vice Mayor
Linda Bob, Commissioner
Bill Ferree, Commissioner
Michael Holland, Commissioner
Paul Berg, City Manager
Mary Montez, City Clerk
Rex Winn, Fire Chief

City of Mount Dora

Robert Thielhelm, Mayor
Robert Maraio, Councilmember
Michael Tedder, Councilmember
Vasco Watters, Councilmember
Dennis Wood, Councilmember
James Yatsuk, Councilmember
Michael Quinn, City Manager
Skip Kerkhof, Fire Chief

City of Tavares

Robert Wolfe, Mayor
Bob Grenier, Vice Mayor
Kirby Smith, Councilmember
John Drury, City Administrator
Richard Keith, Fire Chief

Call to Order

Mayor Hooper called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m. and asked each member to introduce themselves.

Announce that the Meeting is Posted and Advertised for all Three Cities

Ms. Montez confirmed that the meeting had been properly posted.

Introduction

Mr. Berg reviewed the agenda for the evening.

Update on the Fire Services Project

Mr. Berg reviewed the history and purpose of the fire service project. He and Eustis Fire Chief Rex Winn gave a brief Powerpoint presentation on the project and asked for input from the other city representatives. He explained that the County would like to move personnel to Astatula and the City of Eustis needs a station in the area of Station 27.

The proposal was summarized as follows: 1) Divide Lake County Station 27's current coverage area – Eustis is the only City with one station and they need to provide better coverage in that area. Eustis would move an engine company from their current station which would free up the County personnel to be moved to a station in Astatula. 2) Redefine the three service areas - Each City would assume first response responsibility for an area. 3) Eustis would occupy the Station 27 facility with an anticipated 1200 calls for service from the facility – 800 within City of Eustis, 400 in the unincorporated area. Results are expected to significantly reduce response times for eastern Eustis, the County enclaves within City limits, northern parts of Mount Dora and somewhat to northern Eustis. He noted the station would be manned with three ALS-trained firefighters instead of just two.

Mr. Berg reviewed the coverage issues and the current fees/taxes the County receives from the Lake EMS Ambulance MSTU, Fire MSTU and Fire Residential. He reviewed the additional costs anticipated noting additional positions that would be required. He stated the reimbursement should provide sufficient revenue to fund Tavares' ALS. He reviewed the total fire fees from within the defined service area and the taxable value within the area for a \$587,364 total. He summarized the proposed costs resulting in an increase in costs of \$253,000. He explained the proposed County reimbursement and the amount the County currently pays to the Villages for a similar agreement. He summarized the anticipated range of costs as \$253,000 to \$316,667 per year.

He concluded noting that if the County is willing to pay half its collected fire fees that should be sufficient revenue cover the additional costs to the cities. He cited the desire for a multi-year contract with higher costs initially. He stated that the costs and number of residents affected are similar for Mount Dora.

Mr. Quinn agreed the numbers are similar for Mount Dora, and they can make adjustments to cover. He emphasized it relies on getting the reimbursable funds from the County. He stated Mount Dora could currently cover the area as the County does and noted they have discussed adding a lieutenant with the reimbursement funds.

Mr. Drury complimented staff and the Fire Chiefs on their work on the project. He stated they are ready to hear the thoughts of the elected officials so they can move forward.

Mayor Hooper asked the Fire Chiefs to introduce themselves.

Chief Keith, Chief Kerkoff, and Chief Winn introduced themselves and expressed support for the three departments working together.

Mr. Quinn commented on the possibility of the agreement providing a model for the County to get other cities to work together and cited the possibility of eventually having a unified fire department. He cited savings to the taxpayers due a reduction in the duplication of equipment.

Mayor Wolfe commented on the process necessary for Tavares to attain ALS status.

Councilmember Smith stated the main goal is to reduce taxes for the citizens. He cited the requirements for being ALS and suggested borrowing Eustis/Mount Dora paramedic staff to assist Tavares in providing ALS response until they reach ALS status.

Vice Mayor Grenier commented on the benefit of reduced response times.

Mr. Drury reported that the Tavares City Council voted unanimously to move forward with ALS.

Commissioner Holland expressed support for the proposal and the benefit to all of the residents. He thanked Mount Dora for assisting with ALS training for the Eustis personnel.

Councilmember Wood expressed support and noted the close proximity of his neighborhood to the station and the benefit to the reduced response times.

Mayor Thielhelm cited the remarkable results by the ALS personnel. He expressed willingness to work with Tavares to assist with personnel training.

Commissioner Holland asked Chief Winn to review the EMS incidence that occurred the previous week.

Chief Winn noted in October the Eustis Department went ALS. He explained a new protocol that was put in place about 14 days prior to the incident. The new protocol was used to revive two patients – one survived, one didn't. The surviving patient is now doing well.

Chief Kerkoff noted the paramedic involved was also a brand new paramedic. He stated the patient is doing very well and complimented the personnel.

Councilmember Maraio expressed support and asked how much the County will reimburse the cities for taking over the station and the unincorporated areas

Mr. Berg stated that Eustis is asking a minimum of \$250,000. He added that 50% of the revenue the County receives in that area for fire service is \$316,000.

Councilmember Maraio confirmed that the County is not willing to pay the cities 100% from the area.

Mr. Berg and Mr. Drury explained the blended rate that the County uses to collect its fire fees.

Councilmember Yatsuk commented on the cost to cover fire service in rural areas.

Councilmember Smith commented that it sounds as if the majority are in agreement with moving forward. He asked for the group to give direction to the City Administrators/Managers to proceed with bringing resolutions to the Councils to move forward.

Mr. Berg stated that the cities could individually pass resolutions to negotiate a contract with County. He stated staff could also work with the County to negotiate an interlocal agreement.

Mayor Thielhelm suggested directing all three managers to work together with the County and agree on a 50% reimbursement.

Mayor Wolfe agreed with the 50% reimbursement and moving forward.

Commissioner Ferree expressed support for moving forward.

It was a consensus of those present for the City Managers and Administrator to move forward with the negotiations with the County.

Mayor Hooper asked for any public comment. There was none.

UPDATE ON THE RAIL GRANT STATUS

Mr. Drury distributed information regarding the status of the rail grant. He reviewed the updated information and history of the project including the replacement of the Dora Canal Railroad Bridge, the Commuter Rail US 441 Corridor Alternative Analysis, and the Lake County Railroad Spine Track Upgrades. He cited the breakdown of funding for each project.

Mayor Thielhelm announced Mount Dora will consider the Corridor Analysis agreement on February 7th and Mr. Berg stated Eustis will consider the revised agreement on February 2nd.

Mr. Drury explained the spine track upgrade project and reviewed the breakdown of the local match. He stated it may or may not include bolted track from Eustis to Umatilla depending on the bid results.

Mr. Quinn referred to Note #1 in the report and stated the continuous weld track upgrade from Mount Dora to Tavares was not originally included in the project – they were just going to upgrade not do the continuous weld.

Mr. Drury stated that was correct and indicated he would correct the information before he redistributes the report.

Mayor Thielhelm cited the need to see the cost estimates first. He stated the important thing was to get continuous weld to Eustis' industrial area.

Mr. Quinn commented on the area east of Mount Dora on the Sorrento spur and stated it is pretty much abandoned and does not go beyond Sorrento. He expressed support for asking CSX if they can give access to that track for a trail system. He stated it is a chance to leverage the private rail system due to the amount of public funds going into the project. He indicated the spur is only used for the storage of rail cars and suggested they could put in a side line for car storage and open up the track for a trail system. He indicated they do not want the proposal to be an obstacle for the entire project but it's an opportunity to work with railroad. He noted the close proximity to the Wekiva Trail.

Mr. Drury stated he would update Note #1 and re-send the report to all of the City Managers.

Councilmember Tedder questioned the effect on boaters from the Dora Canal bridge work.

Mr. Drury stated his understanding they will do everything they can to keep the Dora Canal open. He added he will get an update on the schedule and send it out to the other managers for distribution.

Councilmember Tedder expressed support for continuing the Summit meetings.

Mr. Quinn commented on other issues of mutual interest including renewal of gas tax, transfer of roads to cities, the revised gas tax distribution formula and the proposed pavement management system.

Mr. Berg indicated the pavement management system has been a part of Eustis' strategic plan and the previous week they signed a contract to have the system prepared for the City. He stated it will result in a predictable way for roads to be transferred from rural roads to City roads. He commented on the need to have a process for transferring maintenance from the County to cities when property is annexed.

Councilmember Maraio stated the issue is of funding and where are the cities going to get funds to maintain the roads and what actions is the County willing to take to insure there are sufficient funds. He emphasized if the cities are going to take over roads, they need to be compensated for it. He cited the County's reluctance to increase the tax on gasoline.

Mayor Thielhelm commented on how Sumter County handled the situation. He stated they educated their County Commission and their public about what was needed. He said it significantly increased the funding for their roads and cited the improvements to Sumter County's roads. He expressed support for a pavement management program.

Mr. Drury commented on Tavares' recent reflectivity project for signs and stated they incorporated into that project an update on the status of all the City roads for their ten-year plan.

Mayor Hooper asked for public comment. There was none.

Councilmember Smith stated the cities need to be thinking about economic development. He suggested a coordination of events with each City holding a different event at the same time. They could mutually advertise the events. He suggested trying one to see how it works and explained it would keep visitors in the area longer.

Councilmember Tedder commented on the need to improve transportation between three cities – trains, boats, etc. – in order to get visitors back and forth between the cities. He asked Tavares if their water taxis are working.

Mr. Drury explained they usually just run during big events. He stated they are finding because they are big and slow, they don't work well for small events. He commented on the cost to activate captains and for fuel.

Councilmember Kirby noted the water taxis can't get to Eustis due to the Hwy. 19 bridge being too low. He suggested the steam train might be one option.

Councilmember Tedder suggested some of the local tour boats might be willing to do taxi service during events.

Councilmember Wood expressed support for mutual events and suggested using the local Chambers or Merchants Associations to facilitate the project.

Vice Mayor Grenier recommended establishing a Golden Triangle signature event – one special event that would bring all three cities together.

Mayor Hooper commented on the upcoming GeorgeFest which has been celebrated for 110 years. She invited everyone to attend and expressed support for attending each other's events as well having a mutual signature event.

Mr. Berg expressed support for working with the other cities on other aspects of economic development. He stated that bringing more jobs to the area benefits all the cities and there is room for Golden Triangle business people to work together. He suggested they could join together to market the Golden Triangle area and added they can show other communities it pays to work together.

Commissioner Muenzmay reported that the Eustis Chamber is already working with Tavares and Mount Dora Chambers to do exactly what has been suggested. He then commented on the Eustis Chamber's new Lunch and Learn events.

INDIVIDUAL CITY UPDATES

Eustis

Mr. Berg commented on the support for the fire service project by rank and file personnel. He cited various activities in Eustis including GeorgeFest, African-American Heritage Festival, the downtown stormwater project, economic development incentive program, and new mixed used development in the downtown area.

Mayor Hooper noted the Harlem Globetrotters event with Mr. Berg explaining they will be playing with a team of 20 local residents. He noted the following day they will be holding a “stay in school stay off drugs” program at the Golden Triangle YMCA.

Mount Dora

Mr. Quinn cited the Mount Dora Arts Festival, Black Heritage Festival in Cauley Lott Park, upgrade to the Mount Dora website to improve communication with the public, and a new Public Communications Officer position. He commented on the possibility of the cities working together to obtain better financial software.

Tavares

Mr. Drury reported on a new assisted living facility being constructed across from the hospital which will be a multi-story Alzheimer’s facility. He stated they are recruiting locally with over 100 jobs. He then noted a 65,000 sq.ft. indoor sports facility being built by Chet Lemmon which will bring more youth sports to the area and which will lead to more hotels. He then noted Tavares’ new reclaimed water project with pipes to the Howey bridge.

SCHEDULING OF NEXT SUMMIT MEETING

It was agreed that Mount Dora would host the next meeting with a target date of June.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:10 pm.