

**SUMMARY MINUTES
TOWN OF MONTVERDE
TOWN COUNCIL WORKSHOP**

April 2, 2015

The Town of Montverde met in for a Council Workshop on Wednesday, April 2, 2015 at 7:00 PM in the Town Hall Auditorium.

Council Present:

President Glenn Burns
Billy Bates
Jim Pierce
Joe Wynkoop

Council Absent:

Arthur Nix

Staff Present:

Graham Wells, Town Clerk
Kevin Rausch, Fire Chief

Mayor Bennett called the meeting to order at 7:01 and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll call was performed, and it was determined that a quorum was present.

Mayor Bennett explained that the Town had employed Government Services Group to determine the appropriate level of funding that should be in place for the Fire Department to make the Fire Department 100% funded by Fire Assessments.

Mayor Bennett then turned the floor over to the representative from GSG to explain their findings.

The GSG representative stated that they performed their study by looking at historical call data, the makeup of the Town, the Town's current budget needs, and the Town's proposed budget needs. Her study uses a historical demand methodology, which has been Court-tested in Florida.

She said that in looking at future budget needs, they had identified maximum yearly funding of about \$224,000. This would include the hiring of two full-time fire officers at \$35,000 each, as well as adding \$20,000 each year in Reserves. She stated that they prepared varying levels of funding up to \$224,000, so Council could chose the level of funding that they want.

She stated that in looking at call data, they identified four types of calls: residential, education, vacant land, and non-residential (everything else). The capability of the Town's equipment would cover a building with a maximum square footage of 17,500 feet. The Academy's Auditorium is bigger than that, and if that building ever needed fire services, the Auto-Aid agreements with neighboring municipalities would have to kick in. The Town could increase their gallons per minute by bettering their equipment, which would increase the maximum square footage to 46,000.

Mayor Bennett told Council that of the 2.83 mills the Town charges its residents for service, about .7 mills goes to funding the Fire Department.

The GSG representative strongly suggested creating an educational category so that an educational institution is paying their proportionate fair share. She also stated that they do not consider whether the education building is sprinkled or not, in the same way that they do not consider what the building is constructed of. The requirement to sprinkle a building is an NFPA requirement.

Five budget options were presented: the highest budget showed a budget that would require a fire assessment of \$247 per residential unit. Currently, the Town charges \$40 per residential unit, but the ad valorem tax dollars in the General Fund subsidizes the Fire Department with about \$65,000 in funding.

Bella Collina has indicated that they may want fire protection services from the Town in the future, which could possibly impact this study.

The Academy is currently paying \$300 in ad valorem taxes for fire service and about \$17,000 in fire assessments for fire services.

With the Town currently trying to collect its own fire assessments, there is always around \$5,000 that is difficult to collect. If the Town puts the assessment on the tax bill, the Tax Collector would charge 2% for this service.

Council discussed the five different funding levels, including keeping the funding at the same amount as this year. Whatever level of funding Council decided on, GSG could back-in to what the annual charges would be for each of the four categories.

The County currently charges \$181 per residential unit. If the Town simply charged what the County charged, it could operate under its current budget, and add one paid full-time firefighter.


The procedures for implementing the fire assessment, and including it on the property tax bill were discussed. Public hearings are required. Similar to adopting the millage rate, once the Town advertises a fire assessment amount, they can always adopt a lesser amount, but can never adopt a higher amount.

Discussion ensued as to whether to lower the Town's millage rate for the increase in fire assessment fees. Discussion also ensued as to whether to forgive this year's fire assessment.

Consensus was to move forward with the 64% funding option, which would mean a fire assessment fee of \$13.33 per month to each homeowner. This funding would allow the fire department to operate under its current level, with additional money for capital purchases and creating reserves.

Meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Troy A. Bennett, Mayor



Glenn Burns, Council President

ATTEST:



Graham Wells, Town Clerk