



# Pinellas County EMS Authority & St. Petersburg City Council Joint Meeting Real Time Record

Andrea Henning, Collaborative Labs  
October 31, 2011

In attendance:

## Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners

Susan Latvala, Chair  
Nancy Bostock  
Neil Brickfield  
John Morroni  
Norm Roche  
Karen Seel  
Ken Welch

## City of St. Petersburg Council

Bill Foster, Mayor  
Jim Kennedy, Chair  
Leslie Curran  
Jeff Danner  
Bill Dudley  
Steve Kornell  
Wengay "Newt" Newton  
Karl Nurse  
Herbert Polson

## Appendices

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>Appendix #1 Facilitator Session Notes-----</b> | <b>33</b> |
| <b>Appendix #2 Meeting Evaluation-----</b>        | <b>49</b> |
| <b>Appendix #3 Public Comment Forms-----</b>      | <b>51</b> |
| <b>Appendix #4 Public Sign In Sheets-----</b>     | <b>53</b> |

## Welcome and Opening Remarks:

**Susan Latvala:** I am very excited about the opportunity this brings. This is a complicated issue. I hope to come to an understanding of the financial situation and the challenges we have in order to meet our service obligations. I look forward to some great understanding by the end of the day.



**Jim Kennedy:** I am also optimistic that we can get to some understandings in meeting our service expectations of our citizens. I'd like to list some of the successes we have had by working together:

Pinellas Hope, Pinellas Safe Harbor, Job Corps, Pinellas Trail, 118<sup>th</sup> Ave Project, Dali Funding – these are examples of how the County

and City have worked together to reach resolution on important things. I hope this leads to more collaboration.

**Bob Jones:** My colleague, Hal Beardhall, and I are from Florida State University. We have been asked previously by the State to facilitate understanding in group meetings. We're here to do what we can to allow you to have an engaged and constructive conversation. This is your opportunity for a dialog. The City and County have done a lot of preparation. We'll use that to provide a little bit of structure. You have 16 elected members of the City and County here today. We'll talk a little bit about how to have this conversation so that everyone has a chance to be heard. There is an enormous amount of material you've been asked to pour over.

Two things will be up on the screen. On one screen, we'll follow the agenda packet. Hal will be capturing some high-level thoughts and ideas as we proceed. This is more for our use in the meeting. There are several other record keeping individuals here as well.

*There were two documents used in the meeting: The "briefing" prepared by the staff of the County and City and the meeting agenda packet.*

On page 2 of the meeting packet is a table of contents for the packet. Page 3 is a set of guidelines and roles for today's meeting.

*Bob Jones reviewed the procedures for today's meeting.*

This is a joint meeting of the members of St. Petersburg Council and Pinellas County Commission. This is a conversation of the members and it is not meant to be a voting session.

As an opening step, I'd like you to introduce yourselves and offer one thing, from your perspective, which would make today's meeting a success:

**Leslie Curran:** I hope that it's more than a conversation, but we have a direction for EMS.

**Bill Dudley:** We get the issues resolved to the satisfaction of both groups.

**Steve Kornell:** Going from our positions to a single position that meets both needs.

**Norm Roche:** Improved bus times for PSTA.

**Jeff Danner:** A clear understanding of one set of facts.

**Karen Seel:** To hear each other's perspectives and agree on the next steps.

**Karl Nurse:** Bend the cost downward without compromising service.

**Susan Latvala:** We understand the positions of the others and recognizing that nobody is going to be happy, but we find the level of service that our citizens expect. With the economic state right now, the willingness to do what's right.

**Jim Kennedy:** It's the foundation of a long-term sustainable EMS system for the County.

**John Morroni:** That we understand each other's perspective and be able to change to come up with an agreement.

**Nancy Bostock:** A new system that protects the safety needs of our community.

**Neil Brickfield:** If we left and said, "Yes, this is the direction we're going for the next 25 years."

**Newt Newton:** We will be able to keep doing what we're doing so people won't be dying before they get emergency assistance.

**Herbert Polson:** This current system is not workable. That is the key trigger that we can agree on.

**Ken Welch:** To say that we got together and solved the problem.

**Bill Foster:** Developing a program which preserves the reasonable and customary services to the citizens of St. Petersburg.

**Bob Jones:** The agenda has a set of topical items that corresponds with your briefing book material. We have six options, that aren't being raised as solutions, but as guidelines to solve the problem you have in front of you. These are ways of going forward. We're here to understand the issues in perhaps a different way than you have previously.

*Bob reviewed the objectives on the front page of the packet.*

We have two entities at the table today, but there are many entities in Pinellas County who are affected by this problem. This is a problem that is bigger than just the two entities here today. EMS is a very tough public issue. There are lives that are stake. This system has been working very well for 20-30 years. It's an important conversation. You are the policy-drivers of this system. You have had your experts put together the briefing book.

There was a City and County team that put together the briefing book. Page five of the packet lists the members of that team. There are some very clear differences expressed in some areas of this. Your job is to try to bridge those. We want to help you understand the "why" of those differences and look for a way of perhaps reframing those differences.

Page 6 is an information worksheet where you can rate the foundational information provided in the briefing book. We'll ask you on a four-point scale how acceptable this baseline information is. I want to treat this like a "consent" item in a normal meeting.

The group took a preliminary survey of their opinions as to the acceptability of the baseline information:

| 4 – Acceptable | 3 – Minor reservation | 2 – Major reservation | 1 – Unacceptable |
|----------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| 7              | 9                     |                       |                  |

**Bill Foster:** Let me change to a minor reservation.

**Jim Kennedy:** My reservation is about where the 7.5 minutes standard comes from.

**Karl Nurse:** Cost assumptions at 2.1%, 5% in aid, 3% personnel costs. Assuming that costs are rising significantly faster than the consumer price index and our reduced pension costs going forward.

**Herbert Polson:** Is 1 not included? OK, move mine to Acceptable.

**Bill Dudley:** Mine was the same as Jim Kennedy's.

**Newt Newton:** Moving the cap money around is not being done the way it could be. (Millage rate)

**Steve Kornell:** This is a big topic, and I always seek out additional information. I could talk to another city. I am fine with the discussion.

**Bob Jones:** For purposes of today's discussion, we didn't want to be debating the established facts in the briefing book. Up to section 5, they were very much on the same page.

*The final count was 8 – acceptable, 8 minor reservations.*

| 4 – Acceptable | 3 – Minor reservation | 2 – Major reservation | 1 – Unacceptable |
|----------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| 8              | 8                     |                       |                  |

**Bob Jones:** On page nine, you will see the City and County staff perspectives. We'd first like to identify ideas that are unique to each perspective and which ideas appear to be in conflict. What are the common points? Finally, what are some ideas you have for a common problem statement?

#### **Perspectives on the problem:**

**Karl Nurse:** The high cost of salary, pension and benefits for the city. For the pension, that will change over the next few years. That part of the problem, the benefits cost, the average will be down to the same level as the rest of the folks in eight years.

**Herbert Polson:** If I read these three primary principles, one that is missing is to create a sustainable system. Are there four or are there three?

**Bob Jones:** My understanding was these were the principles to guide efficiencies and that sustainable was a part of these goals.

**Susan Latvala:** I want to address Karl's statement. Is your assumption that you continue to pay until that eight years is up?

**Karl Nurse:** I think we can talk about that.

**Jim Kennedy:** When I look at the abc's on each, I think the City's are self-explanatory. The County's basic level of service is a concern. B – see equity in funding. It appears to compare St. Petersburg with the smaller entities. I think this comparison lacks foundation. Fire comes from our general revenue. EMS comes from an entirely different funding mechanism in our city. I think shifting costs (b) becomes misleading.

**Karen Seel:** I think the pension is an issue and a question. My question is that the pension is amortized over 40 years – why haven't we finished paying this obligation past 2010?

**Steve Kornell:** 1970 was when the plan was changed and I'm not sure that's when we identified when that was...

**Staff:** That's the information that has been given to us over the years by actuaries and HR. The data in the document is from the actuaries. Go with the information that's in the document. The 40 years is probably less reliable information.

**Karen Seel:** EMS Funding?

**Jim Kennedy:** Only the percentage relating to EMS. On page 133 and 135 of the briefing book. The prior plan city contribution and the 29.6% related to EMS. I believe that is the division that is correct.



**Jeff Danner:** Response time and level of service are two different things. I think that's a definite conflict in this discussion. In the fairness and equity – if you are comparing a small city and a large city, we need to see how we compare those.

**John Morroni:** To understand Karl's comments about the reform on the pension, I think it would be good for the County Commission to understand this reform.

**Karl Nurse:** On page 129 is a listing of the changes. Employee contributions, retirement age went up, reduction for early retirement, covered salary. Essentially dialed down the costs.

**John Morroni:** And this can't be changed?

**Karl Nurse:** Maybe with the unfunded.

**Newt Newton:** Fairness and equity on funding. We are 11 to 12 firefighters short. That's per their own plan. I don't see how we would have a problem. Prior to this meeting, the County plan is down 11-12 paramedics. We've been subsidizing that from the Fire. Does that mean we'll get funding for 12 more people?

**Steve Kornell:** They also increased their employee contribution from 4 – 7% (firefighters). For fairness and equity – I live near the barrier islands. There are bridges all over that fire trucks can't fly

over. We need to consider this. Some of the conflicts that come up are the level of service, high cost of benefits – I think that compares to small and large cities. For example, if you look at the city attorney's salary in our city versus Kenneth City – there is no comparison. On two of the three standards we come out very well. Per capita, calls for service, there are differences in some of the standards. It says the IPO rating will go down, but there is no evidence to back that up. What are the IPO standards? I also have a big concern about privatizing EMS for a lot of reasons. I think it's a negative trend for the community. There has to be some discussion about that.

**Susan Latvala:** Privatizing – we've used a private provider for years without complaints. There are penalties that can cause them to be dismissed. I think it is irrelevant to put that on the table. I don't think any of us disagree that the system works. To Mr. Newton's question on funding - we are currently funding two trucks and one paramedic unit in the rest of the county.

**Jim Kennedy:** In the briefing, 1.07. The County reimburses for 78 of the 89 positions. The difference of the multiplier is the higher side of the EMS side. The City is contributing from general revenue.

**Bob Jones:** There is an agenda item later on that addresses that proposal.

**Steve Kornell:** There's another multiplier of 1.07? Could we ask the staff to clarify that?

Craig Hare: 1.07 is the paid time off pattern for the city. We pay for a 3.55 which is comparable to the County multiplier, which is 3.6.

**Steve Knight:** I agree with Craig. According to the County's budget formula.

**Steve Kornell:** We have agreement between the staffs?

**Bob Jones:** So it sounds like one of the differences is how many paramedics are funded.

**Newt Newton:** We have to fund those 11 or 12 positions from the general fund.

**Karen Seel:** Isn't this based on the 1989 lawsuit?

**Jim Kennedy:** Yes, reasonable and customary.

**Bill Foster:** Unique or conflict – I'll let you decide. I've had a hard time with what I perceived to be the County's arbitrary decision of a cap on millage. It's the idea that the system is not sustainable within those parameters, because I think it is. There is no arbitrary cap. We have a cap of 1.5. The second thing is this illusion throughout the material that somehow you can cut \$11M out of the system and that there would be no diminution of service.

**Ken Welch:** In the funding issue, any concept that we can go to 1.5 is not going to happen. No other jurisdiction has raised the millage without going to business processes first. I have a question on contractor funded units in St. Petersburg. If you go to the map, there are several units that St. Petersburg pays for. (page 19).

**Steve Knight:** We worked it out with the County and City as a collaboration. The reason they are in service is because the rescue trucks were so busy. We put in the ALS engines as a backup unit. We've improved from 65% to 75% which is moving closer to the 95%. We didn't add any cost to the County and it was minimal cost to the City. It's really not a significant cost to either party.



**Ken Welch:** The response time seems to be a continuous point. We need to come to agreement on this.

**Nancy Bostock:** The arbitray cap we have – we increased the millage rate 46%. Do we just keep increasing it? How would that work?

**Bill Foster:** I think you are honest with the public you serve about the level of service. You define the level of service you want, look at the cost reductions and define what you can do. Simply tell the public. We can do a lot of reductions, but in the general fund reductions, nobody dies. We have a great system, but we can no longer afford it so we're going to diminish it to save money. What do people want and how much do they want to pay for it?

**Nancy Bostock:** Do we raise the millage rate? On all the citizens?

**Bill Foster:** It is required to be on all citizens. If it's just St. Petersburg citizens, then we would need to be out of the system.

**Jim Kennedy:** Page 75 and 84 – one could argue that if we look at the historical millage rate and continue to reduce it through 2011... There was almost a plan of decreasing the reserves and the tax base so that those prior millage rates substantially contribute to the problem we have here. We have to look back at how this was funded and how the choice was to underfund. We've used internal reserves to pay and we're out of that reserve. It is more accurate to look at the dollar value per \$100K because the millage rate was artificially low.

**Ken Welch:** Jim, to say there was a plan – there was not. Property rates were skyrocketing and we had adequate reserves. That budget has doubled. We had not planned for a disaster. There was no plan to suppress the millage rate.



**Leslie Curran:** The 46% increase – what is the dollar value of that per taxpayer? Also, the level of service versus response time, which I think go hand in hand. What about the smaller communities?

**Bill Dudley:** It's very difficult for me to understand how you can defund something and not affect the level of service.

**Ken Welch:** They said there would be no change in the average response time. You'd have to operationalize that to test that the assumption would be correct.

**Bill Dudley:** You asked your consultant, but somebody failed to ask our consultant. If you want a true indication, you need to consult both of ours.

**Ken Welch:** We do want to hear both sides.

**Bob Jones:** This meeting was to look at the County's proposal, with experts from both sides to explore this. There was input from both consultants and the respective staffs.

**Bill Dudley:** I just want to make clear that throughout this process we've felt ignored. There are differences.

**Steve Kornell:** As I see it, there are three issues that need clarification. On the response time, Mr. Welch is referring to a 7.5 minute standard. Total actual response is 6.23 in St. Petersburg. If I understand this, there would be a reduction.

**Susan Latvala:** That's a contract response time. We have to have language that we can hold them to. Every single day, they meet or exceed that standard. Occasionally, they don't and they pay a penalty. Their average is 4.30.

**Steve Kornell:** On the millage increase, what was the dollar amount under the two millage rates? Between 89 and 78 paramedics, I understand the staff agrees on the numbers. From the lawsuit, would the county be required to pay for 89 and the city is allowing them to pay for 78?

**Jim Kennedy:** The 46% increase is an annual \$26.70 per \$100K. Monthly – it's a \$2.20 increase per \$100k.

**Bob Jones:** Both are reflected in the materials. What you are suggesting (Steve) is that framing it as 46% is less helpful.

**Steve Kornell:** My point is that we need to be as accurate as possible. We've had a significant reduction in property values. To say 46% increase doesn't equal a 46% dollar increase.

**Nancy Bostock:** if we say 38 to 40% - this is about what we're talking about.

**Herbert Polson:** This is so easy to manipulate. We've gotten bogged down in minutiae. I went from \$4.51 to \$6.73 per month. That's a cup of coffee. It sounds huge when you say 46%. It is cheap insurance for our citizens of Pinellas County. This is a deal. We shouldn't get hung up on 46% versus \$2 per month and we're stuck.



**Bob Jones:** We're not stuck. There have been a lot of comments about it and I think we can proceed from here.

**Susan Latvala:** Herb, put yourself in our position of the elected officials who raised that rate. We're the ones who get the phone calls about how that millage has almost doubled. We had to do it. We had to keep

the system running. We have the responsibility to provide the most cost effective services we can. This is not about hurting St. Petersburg.

**Herbert Polson:** You are no different than we are. That's what makes this forum so interesting. That's our job. If it requires to raise and lower millage, that's ok. But, over time, you didn't adjust. When it got to where it was deficit time, you pulled out of reserves.



**Susan Latvala:** Big mistake.

**Herbert Polson:** Big mistake.

**Susan Latvala:** We must know before we raise that millage that the system is as efficient as it can be and that's why we're here. That's why we're talking.

**Karl Nurse:** On page 20, it goes to the heart of our anxiety. We have a contract of 7.5 minutes at the 90 percentile. The actual performance is 6.93. The core of our anxiety is if we will change it.

**Leslie Curran:** Changing that response time is the level of service. There is a lot of anxiety about that.

**Bob Jones:** There is question about the level of service, if the proposal doesn't affect the actual performance. Part of it is trying to sort through the terms being used. We need to clarify where the anxiety lies and where are the ways the County can address those anxieties.

**Ken Welch:** Average response time of 4.18 – will that change? The answer was “no.” It needs to be operationalized. The increase was \$11M and that was substantial. For PSTA, we did everything before we did this. We did a lot to cut costs down. The one thing that hasn't come down is the cost of first response for the past 10 years.

**Newt Newton:** I know the importance of having good EMS services. I traveled to Tallahassee and I took my son there and it took them 15 minutes to get to him. The system here is working well. Can we agree on that? The millage funding tool we have cannot sustain the system and our prior pension drops off. With the increase in response time, there will be fatalities. I don't think people will have a problem paying for the services they have. The apples to apples comparison, for the small cities, none of them provides for ladder trucks because St. Petersburg got them.

**Susan Latvala:** I respectfully request that you stop using the phrase, “people are going to die.” Our goal is response time. People are not going to die. We will not let that happen.

*The group took a 15-minute break.*

**Bob Jones:** We've heard different perspectives about equity, fairness. There was some helpful information shared about pension information. Timing about this is something to consider going forward. The proposal for changes includes some understanding and changes about cost control especially in light of considering raising millage rates. There was also a city commissioner speaking about the anxiety around changes to the actual response time. Are there ways to address that anxiety in the conversations going forward? Hold off the thought of trying to solve any of that because we need to consider all the pieces of the system. The impact of revenue is significant and real. We'll ask you for some take-away thoughts from the financial issue.

First, we're going to look at section 4.0 – the **Financial Worksheet implications** on page 11. There are three categories:

- EMS Cost Issues and Implications
- EMS Governance Issues and Implications
- EMS Operations Issues and Implications

*Bob Jones asked for input from the board members about these three items.*

**Karen Seel:** One of the more interesting sections is page 87, comparison of EMS services. By far, County-wide EMS funding is funding in St. Petersburg. That has been the big elephant in the room when we talk to the other cities about whether we are being fair. My question to the City is that you can have an independent taxing district and fund this the way you wish. Is that of interest to you to become an independent taxing district to fund these services?

**Jim Kennedy:** I believe our City's first priority and choice would be to leave in play the existing funding mechanism that has been established by the statute and the court order. The County Commission is trying to modify the existing, the established court order. An independent taxing district would be a secondary funding system. If we're going to provide a service, we're going to provide a service to our citizens' expectations. We probably could be self-sufficient, but we would probably have a lot of ramifications from the smaller cities in the neighboring area. They would suffer drastically.

**Newt Newton:** I would be interested in an independent fire district if you provided transport.

**Karl Nurse:** Depending upon what service you look at, what St. Petersburg gets is different. The average income in my district is \$26,000. I'm not sure it's fair to isolate by category. In some categories, we get more than our share and in others, we get far less.

**Steve Kornell:** Per capita, the facts don't bear that out. Per call, they don't bear that out. I think that's a point of discussion for us. There are two metrics that are not borne out.

**Ken Welch:** I am a St. Petersburg resident. A separate millage is certainly not a path we should take. Separation means we've gone backwards. There are enough solutions in this book that we wouldn't have to go there. On page 64, we're on deficit every year. On page 63, those assumptions are not realistic. The data is probably worse than we're seeing on page 64.

**Bill Dudley:** Is this our first choice? - probably not. The key word is unity. Personally, I don't always feel like that's an accurate statement. I don't always feel we're on the same page. We want to make the old status quo work.

**Karen Seel:** If we looked at maintaining level of service, fairness and equity funding for 18 fire districts and cost efficiencies employed, would going to a County-wide fire and funding get us there? That would relieve your funding burden. If you wanted to exceed that standard of service, you'd have to fund them independently. All the cities and fire districts are providing the basic infrastructure. We add on the EMS and that's a small portion of the total cost.

**Nancy Bostock:** I think there are merits and pitfalls. If we can hammer out those for both EMS and Fire...

**Susan Latvala:** It is not a simple task. We have a bigger issue before us. We would have to work out agreements with the 18 districts. Some of them would see substantial millage rate increases. We don't have authority over fire. I don't think it's appropriate to take it up at this time. It would take years and years.

**Karen Seel:** I think however we resolve this would point the way for the whole system. I just want to offer up some other possibilities. Instead of millage, we could also look at fees.

**Neil Brickfield:** I think this is a great time to look at both fire and EMS services County-wide. Our citizens don't look at this separately. I think we should explore it.

**Newt Newton:** There is no problem with the fire side, it's with EMS. I don't know how you set aside a lawsuit. This has nothing to do with fire. It doesn't allow the County to interfere with our fire services at all.

**Herbert Polson:** Two County charter commissions ago, everybody came unglued. Every meeting was filled with fire fighters and local officials. This discussion has been out there for many years. When we're brainstorming, there is no such thing as a bad idea. But, this is a big deal. It was very complicated when we looked at it before. We have disparities for the good of the order.

**Karl Nurse:** I'd like to propose some cost savings. Our folks are suggesting that we could save \$3.5M by having them take on the 8:00am to 8:00pm shift.

**Ken Welch:** Going forward, we're going to have to deal with these issues as elected officials. These problems are not going away.

**John Morroni:** I am open to all solutions. I don't want to turn this into Pinellas County's 9-9-9 plan. The 46% increase that we had was fair because it went over everyone. If we went that route, it wouldn't be fair because some would get an increase, others a decrease.

**Steve Kornell:** Thank you (Karen) for bringing that issue up. I'm willing to look not at fire consolidation at this point, but maybe we want to look at other areas that we could consolidate. I don't think fire is one we can agree on, but maybe there are other areas. I am in agreement to have discussion about other areas. We also have to consider that when we talk about St. Petersburg as a "donor city," one of the factors is that many in the City live below the poverty level.

**Bob Jones:** I think it was recognized by all of you that there are revenue challenges that may even be more difficult going forward. Any other financial issues we need to consider?

**Jeff Danner:** It seems like it's always an all or nothing. Of the 18 fire districts, what if we went to 10, and then maybe 4. Why can't we have a discussion about taking baby-steps instead of all or nothing?

**Norm Roche:** I agree 100% with Commissioner Seel on this. We're looking at multiple projections that run to 2021 and I don't think anyone has an idea what 2021 looks like. I think we need to consider consolidation.

**Newt Newton:** What do you think will happen to St. Petersburg?



**Norm Roche:** I don't think we should be talking about blood and gore and suffering.

**Newt Newton:** I think cutting \$7M from the budget will hurt the end user.

## Section 5.0 Firefighter and Paramedic Cost Comparisons

**Bob Jones:** We've deleted the pension information (in section 5) because there are some issues on this between the City and County. What thoughts do you want to address here?

**Jim Kennedy:** In 5.1, we get back to a basic question about an agreement that larger communities pay more than smaller communities. Does St. Petersburg get treated differently than a barrier island or do we cost more?

**Susan Latvala:** You keep talking about the average wage. What exactly costs more?

**Jim Kennedy:** We have more fire fighters, equipment, etc. If you turn to page 122, you have the comparison to the larger cities. Maybe that's something we need to talk about. Do we expect St. Petersburg's Fire Chief to be paid at the same rate as Treasure Island's Fire Chief? *Staff pointed out page 119.* On page 123, it talks about fire fighters leaving our district because of the load. The operation of our prior system should cost the same as the smallest system.

**Susan Latvala:** You've lost 2 firefighters a year over a 10-year period. Is it over salary?

**Jim Kennedy:** The larger the community, the more expense because we have a bigger operation to run.

**Bob Jones:** It sounds like we have to be careful when making those comparisons based on size.

**Jim Kennedy:** Size, complexity and I would use the Weedon Island incident as an example of why our system costs more because we are prepared to do more.

**Leslie Curran:** When you add the County's position in terms of equity, what isn't taken into consideration is size, complexity and activities. There are differences in activities and volume. We live in an area with the largest complexities and activities.

**Susan Latvala:** There are others with close numbers.

**Steve Kornell:** If you have equity across the system, people will clearly want to work in lower-volume areas. It happens in the school system. I think the more valid comparison – when you look at call volume per person, we're not at the top. If we looked at all of our operations, I think other areas would make lower wages as well. I don't think it's completely unreasonable.

**Newt Newton:** When you benchmark, you have to have similar or exact population or amount of activity. The barrier islands don't need high ladders or hazmat. We have the interstate. We have a bunch of people coming through. We service more people with more equipment. We have a prior plan going to zero. It's sustainable for 10 years.

**Bob Jones:** That cost comparison is an issue that the City is concerned about.

**Herbert Polson:** I don't want to speak from a City perspective. I want to talk about a County-wide perspective. I believe that there is a lack of standardized methodology is the compilation of these costs. I think everybody should compute the same way. I'm pretty sure there is a State statute that sets salary levels by population. Does the County have unions? It's a different situation when you

have to negotiate with unions. You have to have competitive packages to attract the best and brightest.

**Karl Nurse:** Our pension costs will be reducing the costs. Also, we need to look at what we can do to flatten our organizations.

**Nancy Bostock:** On page 119, the administrative positions funded, they come out even. One of the advantages of running a large system is finding the economies of scale.

**Karen Seel:** I have a question on page 119. Is St. Petersburg the only fire district where the staff multiplier is different? I had asked for all the fire district budgets and personnel. There is more administration – there may be a point to cost savings available. I would like to have a definitive answer to the 40-year question I had earlier. Is your plan sound at this point? Are we making up for the deficits in the funding?

**Jim Kennedy:** We recently did do an actuarial study on the pension, police/fire and blue/white collar. All of them came in sound. The studies showed that we were more sound than most municipalities and governments.

**Bob Jones:** Are their differences between Fire and First Responder?

**Jim Kennedy:** They are funded differently.



**Susan Latvala:** The funding for the fire trucks is from fire. In your system, you also have first responders in separate transport.

**Karl Nurse:** I think we ought to consider penalties for false alarms. For people who abuse the system, there should be a penalty. I have no feel for what percentage that is.

**Susan Latvala:** That is what priority dispatch will do.

**Karl Nurse:** I'm not talking about who you send – it's about people abusing either one.

**Herbert Polson:** Have we passed 5.0? Is the County's concern that we are too expensive in total or in pieces?

**Karen Seel:** For me, it's in total.

**Herbert Polson:** What if pieces changed? What if cost pieces changed and the price went down? Hypothetically, what if pension costs were absorbed by non-fire funds and it was reduced until 2021. How does that affect your cost concerns?

**Ken Welch:** We have a cost issue – how we get there is not really my concern. Is that a non-starter for you all or would you integrate EMS and Fire to alleviate that?

**Jim Kennedy:** Where does transport come into that?

Ken Welch: My question to you is, "Are you willing to change your system to address that? Do you want to maintain that separation?" The other districts do have a dependency because they are integrated.

**Newt Newton:** What's the turnover rate at Sunstar?

**Director of SunStar:** It's 23% per year.

**Steve Kornell:** It's not as simple as fire or transport. It's not as simple a solution as putting paramedics on your fire trucks. I'm willing to look at it both ways. It has some merit. I never said the company doesn't do a good job. I think you have to look at the effect on the system over the years. We're talking about salary and benefits. When you pay less or give less benefits...Mr. LaSala said there would be significant pension savings...people do make decisions based on this. I think it's fair to consider both.

**Bill Foster:** When we come back from lunch, I hope we get back to EMS and try to keep the fire service out of it. In St. Petersburg, taking EMTs and engines out of service is not a model we can agree with. Wait until you sent an engine to put an EMT and a paramedic. We still fight structure fires; if the engine is on a service, that engine is out of service. We're lacking in available responders. Our delivery model works. I hope we focus on EMS because fire is another day.

*The meeting stopped for lunch until 1:00pm.*





**Bob Jones:** Here's a quick review of the agenda items for this afternoon. First, we'll look at the IPS study and proposal for changes. Then, we'll take up Priority Dispatch. Then we'll walk through the six alternative scenarios that the staff proposed for discussion. This will hopefully spark some conversations by the two local governing bodies to address and resolve around the EMS issues. We'll revisit what time we want to adjourn when we get to about 4:00pm.

### **County EMS Integral Performance Solutions – IPS Study Summary Points**

**Bob Jones:** In the agenda packet on page 10, there is a high-level set of findings and recommendations from the IPS study. Take a moment to review these and note whether you need any clarifications around the study.

**Karl Nurse:** Fire fighter transport is more expensive is true except between 8am and 8pm. We have excess personnel at night. You'd be subtracting SunStar. During the other 75% of the transports, yes, it costs more. A portion of that is the exception. It would save about \$2.5M.

**Neil Brickfield:** What are you basing these numbers on?

**Karl Nurse:** The firefighter model is a 24-hour model.

**Newt Newton:** If they are doing a third of the transport with St. Petersburg. The County is paying one-third of that.

**Newt Newton:** The unfair and unequal – I just wanted to note my agreement with that.

**Susan Latvala:** As Priority Dispatch is implemented, the number of calls will be reduced.

**Newt Newton:** You have a crystal ball?

**Susan Latvala:** The study has been done by professionals.

**Jim Kennedy:** On page 150, it looks fairly equal at this time. I want to make sure that silence doesn't mean agreement.

**Steve Kornell:** I think it's more fair to look at the entire revenue stream, not just a little slice of it. I want to reiterate that there are a lot of people who can't afford the emergency service.

**Jim Kennedy:** Add in the response time and level of service. When we talk about Priority Dispatch – when do we start the clock? Do we include the time in involving Priority Dispatch?

**Bob Jones:** It sounds like we're ready to move to the Priority Dispatch discussion. Take a minute to look at the history, findings and recommendations.

### **Priority Dispatch Worksheet**

**Jim Kennedy:** I note that "eliminates response that could be perceived as waste to the public." I know when I talk to our citizens, and they question why we send a red truck and EMS, I tell them it's so SunStar can do the transport and the truck can get back to the station in order to respond to the next call. The other issue is that this would effectively affect our ability to serve our citizens because

on certain calls, they wouldn't even know it's happening – they could be waiting 15 minutes waiting for SunStar to show up.

**Bob Jones:** So your concern is that communication is not going to the nearby location.

**Jim Kennedy:** Also, the unilateral way this is thrust upon us.

**Karl Nurse:** What causes me the most anxiety is by going through the vetting process and then deciding whom to send - that you inherently lengthen the process versus you send both and call one off in some cases. In the latter way, you're 45 seconds to a minute and a half faster. It seems like a better way to provide service.

**Jeff Danner:** How much cost savings is there? – salary would be the same. It will add to the response time on every call. Even with the training, you are depending on an injured person or a panicky person and the operator to make the decision. I just can't see the cost savings, but there's a diminution of services.

**Bill Foster:** I need some clarification. In the Priority Dispatch model being proposed, is the 15-minute acceptable response time only for Alpha calls? It has nothing to do with Bravo and Charlie?



**Susan Latvala:** Excuse me, but I think it would help to get some clarification of what it looks like.

**Bill Foster:** I'm thinking Alpha, Bravo and Charlie would be single response.

**Craig Hare:** Section 7 is the proposal that we are currently working on. It is to send an ambulance

only, non-life-threatening, with 15-minute response time. In section 8, we looked at full Priority Dispatch. We did not look at response times or level of service in that analysis.

**Susan Latvala:** That 15 minutes is contract language.

**Craig:** The current is 10 minutes, 90%. This is a cutoff point in which we would add a first-responder. A non-emergency is a 20-minute time.

**Bill Foster:** So Bravos and Charlies would be status quo.

**Craig Hare:** In section 8, we made various options just for your discussion. The only changes were 17a and 26a were proposed. There are two things worth reading at the bottom of 170 and top of 171. It describes the assignment of the unit and the time and tracking of that call. That's how it applies in the protocol. On page 182 and 185, 17a is a non-life-threatening fall, or a 26a a non-life threatening sick person.

**Jim Kennedy:** On page 171 – are you instructing the person calling in the emergency to call back if there are additional problems?

**Craig Hare:** Yes it is.

**Neil Brickfield:** I get asked why so many trucks go all the time. They understand it, but they are still not buying it. They want to know why five respond when we only need two. Under 17a, why do any of these need all these vehicles?

**Bob Jones:** There has been a request for clarification.

**Craig Hare:** Paramedics can't cure them in the field. Greater than 50% are transported to the hospital. If there is a low-likely chance of transport, they send an engine. If there is a high-probability of transport, we send an ambulance.

**Steve Kornell:** The call-back part really concerns me. The system is not based on the majority of the times, but also those times in extraordinary circumstances.

**Bill Dudley:** When you call 911 and you get someone on the other end of the call and they ask a whole litany of questions and it was a good 20 minutes before somebody showed up. My point is that I know they've been trained, but if a doctor doesn't want to diagnose in the field, how can people on the phone make a diagnosis? The other thing is that the EMS advisory board that met was made up of 20 members. One was from St. Petersburg. Why wasn't it equal? I keep bringing it up because it's what's fair and what's being told. When we talk about an advisory board, it wasn't a great advisory board because it wasn't equally distributed; it was kind of skewed one way.



**Bob Jones:** The medical control board did a review of that?

**Craig Hare:** The EMS advisory council by no means has a County majority at all.

**Bob Jones:** So there are different entities who have been involved in this.

**Ken Welch:** I will just echo on Neil's comments about what we hear from the community. On page 153, ALS first responder and projected call reduction. Estimated about 10% reduction in calls. That's a pretty substantial number. Those do add up. St. Petersburg does seem to be supporting Priority Dispatch if you are doing the transport.

**Bill Foster:** We would get paid for the transport.

**Bob Jones:** Some staff perspectives were asking the same question. They were done to stimulate this kind of conversation. Let's take that up in the scenario discussions.

**Bill Foster:** I think it is relevant now before we get to the scenarios because Karl Nurse has noted that if we do it non-peak, it reduces costs. Under the existing Priority Dispatch scenario, there is no cost savings to the EMS budget because they are still paying all my static medics. The only savings would be if we take a unit out of the budget.

**Ken Welch:** I agree. That gets to the real point. Unless you are willing to reduce labor costs, you are not going to realize savings.

**Bill Foster:** Who is that – SunStar or someone out of the fire budget?

**Ken Welch:** You're right; Priority Dispatch doesn't get to these issues, which is the labor line.

**Jeff Danner:** What is the cost savings and how long does it take to realize? With regard to the call back, what if the person is alone? What if they can't call back? Also, regarding the number of questions you get asked is irritating to them.

**Newt Newton:** I also have a problem with the call-back. Also, there are a lot of questions that get asked. I have another question about page 186. Alpha only calls – ambulance only? What does that mean?

**Craig Hare:** Under sick person, where you see 260 – we're proposing ambulance only, no lights or sirens. Let's start out with an overview of the process. We get a 911 call. We determine if there is a life-threatening condition. If there is, a unit is immediately dispatched.

**Neil Brickfield:** Two trucks are sent now?

**Craig Hare:** Yes.

**Susan Latvala:** I just want to remind everyone that Priority Dispatch is used all over the country successfully. Those are trained people who answer the telephone. They know when to send a vehicle.

**Craig Hare:** Let's talk about the nature of the injury – any time there is any doubt, they are trained to national standards, they follow national standards for the questions they are asked.

**Newt Newton:** What is the national standard to pushing the button?

**Craig Hare:** It's about a minute of questioning before they send the truck. If it's an unknown situation, we dispatch a vehicle immediately.

**Newt Newton:** Before you determine what is an alpha, what is the average time before they push the button?

**Craig Hare:** It depends on the nature of the call.

**Newt Newton:** That's part of the 7.5 minutes?

**Craig Hare:** Yes.

**Steve Knight:** The way the County is rolling it out initially, there is no cost savings. The 7.5 minutes from call to arrival. It takes about a minute now, there is another minute added to the 7.5 now. Is that a minute on the right side? Thirty-five percent of the calls are uncategorized. We don't have a clear direction of where they land. Also, for Mayor Foster, on page 207, the performance measure has not been clearly articulated.

**Leslie Curran:** On page 14 in the agenda and 154 in the briefing, the County talks about a public awareness campaign. It's not clear how. Also, it talks about working with physicians – I've not seen anything about that. The only thing I've heard is a billboard on US19. If we don't know, the public won't know what's going on.

**Nancy Bostock:** With the added questions, do we have the first 60 seconds of questioning, then the Priority Dispatch questioning after that?

**Craig Hare:** It's an integrated process. Once we've established the location, we dispatch as quickly as we do today for breathing problems, etc. It's only non-life-threatening that are further questioned.

**Nancy Bostock:** We're finding cost savings in all areas of our budget at Pinellas County. We're all looking for savings. We cannot afford to implement services that are cost effective and service effective. If it works across the County and in other places, we have to look at it.

**Karl Nurse:** I'm really struggling with the logic. You have a long list of sick implications, you would send an ambulance, which is less effective because you have a driver and a medic instead of two medics. If I were running a company that transports, I would transport anyone who even looks like it.

**Susan Latvala:** They don't get paid per trip.

**Karl Nurse:** Why wouldn't you send two vehicles?

**Susan Latvala:** To save costs.

**Jim Kennedy:** Those costs are being incurred whether they are sitting in the station or they are out on a call?

**John Morroni:** My question is what has been the result from the community? Have there been any major issues due to fewer transports? Are people complaining about it?

**Craig Hare:** The first two phases have been implemented without any difficulty. We have received very few, if any, complaints. A paramedic unit – they are all the same in terms of training and equipment. Crew configuration? For either one, they have to have a minimum of one paramedic. The paramedic doesn't get an incentive for transporting to the hospital. If you reduce the call volume to a reasonable level, then you can use paramedic engines. If the call volume were reduced, they could send trucks.

**John Morroni:** Do these numbers include St. Petersburg?

**Craig Hare:** That includes St. Petersburg. Ambulance reductions and skilled nursing reductions on a County-wide basis.

**Chief Knight:** What has been changed so far is on incidents where no transport was required, we stopped sending transport vehicles and there were no complaints on that. On people who just wanted transport, we stopped sending transport on that.

**John Morroni:** It's amazing that there is so little savings when 8,000 calls have been reduced.

**Norm Roche:** I don't think we can afford to dismiss any idea. With respect to Priority Dispatch, sometimes it's just about common sense. It doesn't make sense to send a transport if they have the hiccups or want a wedding ring cut off.

**Jeff Danner:** The intent or urgency on this. The only thing we've agreed on is that the system will look different. Why is there such a push to get this done if there is no cost savings?

**Susan Latvala:** Because we've been planning this for a long time to reduce savings.

**Jim Kennedy:** It would take St. Petersburg general revenue money to fill in the blanks. We would be using general funding to support fire and burden the citizens of St. Petersburg.

**Susan Latvala:** Like the rest of the County. That's the way it is done in the other 17 districts.

### **Clarifying Six Operational Scenarios to Highlight Perspectives and Issues**



**Bob Jones:** I think it's time to look at the scenarios on page 15. You have six scenarios that the County and City staffs have put together. These scenarios are only to help raise some of the issues. The two staffs had two different perspectives. We're not here to choose one of these. The staff also looked at additional legal steps to implement each scenario. At the end of walking through these, what are the ideas you want to take forward?

**Leslie Curran:** Paramedics Plus does not get paid by the County for transport?

**Craig Hare:** We pay a fixed amount for up to 113,500 transports and then get paid per transport after that. However, they have to follow medical protocol.

### **Scenario 1: Status Quo**

**Bob Jones:** So I think we understand the current scenario. Let's look at the second scenario.

### **Scenario 2: ALS First Responder Services Provided Only By ALS Engines**

**Jim Kennedy:** In looking at the County's position – it's shifting the County cost to the City.

**Herbert Polson:** Are these scenarios posed only for St. Petersburg or for any of the 18 service providers?

**Bob Jones:** When they were generated, my understanding is that they were generated for St. Petersburg.

**Herbert Polson:** Can these scenarios be used by the 18 service providers?

**Susan Latvala:** The intent is not to pick and choose. The intent is to have a consolidated system. We're the EMS authority and that is our intent – cost effective, sustainable and maintains level of service.

**Bob Jones:** I think it's useful to contemplate that they were developed for consideration with these two entities.

**Nancy Bostock:** My intention would be that if the response to one of the scenarios is really great, then we would approach the other entities as well.

**Mo Freaney:** We originally had them as options, but they are not options. They are for discussion.

**Newt Newton:** You said that you were working with St. Petersburg and then everyone else gets it?



**Nancy Bostock:** We would take it forward for discussions with the others.

**Newt Newton:** To waive the judgment and special act? How many services have this special act? Eight or nine?

**Bob Jones:** Again, I would ask you to look at what issues are raised and are of concern. They are offered up as a series of "what if's."

**Newt Newton:** Is giving up the special act a condition of adopting scenario two?

**Susan Latvala:** These are for discussion. Would this scenario work?

**Newt Newton:** Would we be giving up the judgment if we took scenario two?



**Bob Jones:** You might start with that scenario and craft from that.

**Bill Foster:** In response to the comment from Norm Roche about common sense. This is the scenario where we would use ALS services only. We have close to 40,000 calls where we are sending a truck and two EMTs for a medical incident. That's an example of using common sense. What happens if all our ALS engines are on a large fire call? Those are some of the issues and challenges that we have to face: taking engines out of service to deliver a medic and an EMT.

**Susan Latvala:** Every single day in 17 other fire districts, they take ALS engines to emergencies every day. The next closest engine would respond.

**Bill Foster:** Coming from a farther distance which would lengthen response time. I just want to be honest with the citizens.

**Steve Kornell:** We're not all the same. We all need to be taken care of. The next closest is Clearwater that has 50% of the calls we have. We have a lot more calls. If you are taking your vehicles to respond to other incidents, that's going to raise a concern. Are the ISO ratings on Fire alone?

**Craig Hare:** Yes

**Nancy Bostock:** Since joining the commission three years ago and talking to so many about efficiencies, the one cost efficiency that is found is the dual role of the fire fighter/paramedic. If we're not doing that in St. Petersburg, that other debate kind of pales in comparison. Are there other efficiencies to running EMS separately? All the numbers tell us that we have to provide this service for less.

**Norm Roche:** That's exactly where we are at – a common sense level. We have to look at this at a County-wide level. We cannot create 19 separate SunStars. I think that we can't do any of these scenarios without changing the special act. The only thing we can do within the special act is fire transport. This has to start with the legislation so we can have these discussions if we are going to reach agreement.

**Bill Foster:** I think we can do any of these scenarios without a special act because it would be done by agreement.

**Norm Roche:** In this economic climate, I don't think agree that this is the wisest thing to do. The agreement won't play a role.

**Steve Kornell:** I think it makes perfect sense to say that St. Petersburg and Treasure Island could be different. No other cities have our level of calls. Consistently, it's been ignored in the IPS study.

**Karl Nurse:** Let's assume we reduce the number of calls. Fire Station has 6800 calls a year. If you reduce the number of calls, the EMS calls, and then reduce the staffing... To send at least two people to a granted smaller number of people, I assume it's a fire fighter. Now the equipment is less. Now you have to go to another unit if there is a fire. On a station by station basis, dropping people gets pretty complicated and it ripples all the way back because you have to use a fire fighter. That's what makes the savings so difficult. I don't think you should understate how complicated reducing staffing is.

**Newt Newton:** We're trying to put a square peg into a round hole. St. Petersburg is a large city – no other city is like it. Trying to make it a model for the smaller municipalities is absurd. Carve us out. We can get by. It's not going to work, we're too big. SunStar loses a fourth of their people every year. I would urge you to benchmark us against a similar sized city.

**Neil Brickfield:** Earlier, members of your council were opposed to a millage rate increase, now you say you are in scenario 6.

**Newt Newton:** We can do it.



**Neil Brickfield:** We have the ability to carve St. Petersburg out with just a separate millage rate. How many ladder trucks/engines does St. Petersburg have?

**Chief (Large?):** Sixteen.

**Neil Brickfield:** That comes to one call a day.

**Chief (Large?):** You have to look at other things.

**Neil Brickfield:** So you have engines that can respond to first-calls. Are they working for both fire and ALS?

**Chief (Large?):** In isolated situations.

**Jim Kennedy:** You are missing the ramifications of second calls.

**Steve Kornell:** Could you clarify?

**Chief (Large?):** The average number of engines sent to a structure fire is 3. So add that to the number of calls and you'll be closer.

**Neil Brickfield:** How many are structure versus vehicle?

**Chief (Large?):** There are a lot more calls than that.

**Bob Jones:** Are we ready to go to the third scenario?

**Ken Welch:** I'm not going to be supportive of anything that carves St. Petersburg out. I think it's a backward step. The issue is funding. The current ad valorem is not going to carry the system forward. St. Petersburg is not a red-headed stepchild; it's a part of this county. Separating it out is not something I'm going to support.

**Herbert Polson:** Can the County throw us out?

**Susan Latvala:** No, we have to provide EMS services throughout the County. I'm not a lawyer.

**Jim Bennett:** The bottom line is that there needs to be expressed consent.

**Herbert Polson:** There are provisions in the special act that would allow us to contract our own services.

**Steve Kornell:** My issue is that this leads to more privatization. A 23% turnover concerns me. The only way to reduce cost is laying off some people, cutting salaries, cutting pensions. Long-run, I don't think that's in the best interest of the system. I think it's a legitimate issue to talk about.

**Ken Welch:** I have a question that a little bit relates to the previous scenario. Have you looked at something less than 10 rescues?

**Chief (Large?):** We looked at a whole host of plans. We did the analysis of all of these plans. At 17,000 calls, we felt that 9 stand-alone rescues were necessary.

**Bill Foster:** If we were to look at the status quo with the understanding that we commit to look at efficiencies. I've asked my staff to look at it on a per station basis. I'm ready to have those discussions.

**Ken Welch:** What can St. Petersburg bring to the table in terms of cost reductions and what are you looking at?

**Karl Nurse:** The pension cost differential, the transport at night, that's about \$3.5M. We have to look at ways to lower our overhead some more.

### **Scenario 3: ALS First Responder Services Provided Only by County**



**Bill Foster:** On scenario three, things we can bring to the table. Don't just tell us you are going to cut our budget by 7 and change. We can talk about a hybrid model. I would never agree to number 3. Special taxes and fire districts – we have a really special act now. We have a really good court order which defines reasonable and customary and level of service. We'd have to lose a lot of things before #3 would happen.

**Bob Jones:** Let's look at number 4, then.

**Scenario 4: Ambulance Services Provided by City (billing, medical direction, etc. to be maintained by Authority)**

**Norm Roche:** From my perspective, this is what I was alluding to earlier with respect to creating 18 little separate SunStar operations. If we do this in St. Petersburg, you have to give that same consideration to everyone else. It doesn't seem to be a long-range logical move.

**Newt Newton:** What is the medical direction – what does that cost?

**Craig Hare:** About \$1.1M. Twenty-four hours a day medical coverage. All fire departments plus SunStar. They handle all the medical conversations. The City's portion is about a third of that.

**Steve Kornell:** For discussion purposes, it would be a cost savings for the system.

**Karen Seel:** If you could use your existing staff, you might find a cost savings. If you had to add \$160,000 in personnel to do the transport and figure out how much time you have in between, then your savings could evaporate. I'm willing to look at a pilot and see how it works out. If you fell short, you'd need additional ad valorem revenue from the County.

**Steve Kornell:** I think this would result in savings for the rest of the system. I'm not saying I want us to do that. Financially, it would make people really happy.

**Nancy Bostock:** If you break even and don't come back to us for more money, then yes.

**Ken Welch:** I am concerned about the \$12M on the cost.

**Craig Hare:** On page 217, there is a \$21M expense compared to a \$24M expense in scenario in 3.1. By increasing the ambulance services by \$9M. The current rescue unit cost and applying to 13 ambulances 24/7. You would be using ad valorem tax to fund user-fee ambulance services. In order to make this work, the \$12.4M would be \$0.

**Chief Knight:** We would need 3 more rescue trucks to do all the 911 calls. Currently you pay SunStar \$6M. If you use existing services, you would net a \$3M savings. The County staff took all the first responder costs and moved that to the transport column. That's not what we suggested. Because we are only doing emergency transports, then there is less of an impact to the SunStar transports.

**Nancy Bostock:** If we were to proceed with a pilot program, is it structured as a guarantee?

**Chief Knight:** No one is holding any significant risk. The two-person rescue truck could take them to the hospital. Twenty-five years of history.

**Bill Foster:** Whatever we do, it's not going to have a \$7M impact on my ability to deliver services in St. Petersburg. I'm willing to do a pilot. I think that's a good direction.

**Karl Nurse:** I think as we move down the road to Priority Dispatch, you'll use only our guys. The logical thing would be to allow our guys to transport. That shouldn't be very often. I don't want to make the service worse for the citizens because we made a mistake when we were figuring out what they needed.

**Mo Freaney:** Actually, it looks good because you are using ALS engines and Priority Dispatch, but you are expanding ALS services.

**Nancy Bostock:** So scenario 4 tells us that St. Petersburg does the ALS.

**Chief Knight:** Our ALS are second. Our rescue trucks would be first responders. There is a significant difference between putting first due ALS engines on all the calls.

**Susan Latvala:** And it's not taking into consideration that Priority Dispatch would reduce the calls.

**Bob Jones:** So there are things that are different in Scenario 4 than we first understood. It's a tool to develop solutions.

**Mo Freaney:** This is not a misunderstanding, it's a difference of opinion.

**Newt Newton:** The ten boxes would go away?

**Craig Hare:** There are 10 rescues in St. Petersburg. In 8.4, first responder services would be provided by ALS engines. The city staff said it would be \$0 for first responder services. Ad valorem for fee.



**Newt Newton:** Hypothetically, if you did that, the lowest bidder would bid to do it all.

**Craig Hare:** Under the privatized model, it would be SunStar.

**Newt Newton:** How long do you think that would last?

**Craig Hare:** The average tenure is 6 years. Our fire fighters have 10-12 years tenure. SunStar is paid above the median. They are all trained and certified and operate in the same way.

**Chief Operating Officer for SunStar:** We're in the ambulance transport business, not fire fighting. We know that in our nation there is turnover. Our employee satisfaction is 84%. We have achieved Sterling rating in Malcomb Baldrige. Many of our people go to fire departments.

**Newt Newton:** Congratulations on your award. What kind of turnover do you think you would have if you did it for the city? If you pick up 42,000 calls for St. Petersburg, what would the impact be?

**Chief Operating Officer for SunStar:** We would have to change to 12-hour shifts instead of 24-hour shifts. We do 189,000 calls for Pinellas County now.

**Karen Seel:** One concern of going to a pilot at night, and they are on 24-hour shifts, how are they going to do it?

**Bob Jones:** Something that you'll have to consider. Scenario number 5 is for St. Petersburg to create a separate EMS district.

### **Scenario 5: Separate EMS Ad Valorem Millage for a St. Petersburg EMS District**

**Newt Newton:** If St. Petersburg is not different, why would we have a separate ad valorem?

**Nancy Bostock:** Because you are not using a more cost efficient model.

**Bill Foster:** That's not going to happen. The model we have is reasonable and customary. That goes all the way back to a special act, a referendum and a court order. We don't have to touch it.

**Neil Brickfield:** Do we have the authority to create a special act?

**Bill Foster:** If we consent.

**Susan Latvala:** You don't have to consent.

**Nancy Bostock:** I totally respect that we can't force the model for providing services. We do have responsibility to fund it. This isn't where I would want to go. Looking at cost efficiencies is much preferable.

**Jim Kennedy:** Looking at 8.5, I would be concerned about how it would affect low-income households. A system under 8.5 would potentially be based on economic status.

**Nancy Bostock:** We don't want to increase the tax burden on anyone, which is why we want to focus on efficiencies.

**Jim Kennedy:** As the Mayor has alluded to, the prior litigation, the results of that, the City could very easily have taken the position that this has been determined for the past 20 years. We are the ones coming to the table with different ideas. I start to feel that we're starting to get pushed into a corner. We would prefer to work things out amicably. We are not the ones to say unilaterally to change the system. The tenor of the conversation we're trying to have to work out the problem. If we can have things that we can work out. If we can bring \$3M to the table and that's not good enough?

**Susan Latvala:** We can no longer afford this problem without continuing to raise the millage. The seven of us have said we don't want to do that. Our citizens are up to here with taxes. We're trying to find another solution. We also have the responsibility to deliver the most cost effective system it can be. That's why we are going to Priority Dispatch. We are looking at everything we can. We are asking you to work with us.

**Bob Jones:** This is a scenario 5 discussion. Let's finish the scenario discussion.

**Ken Welch:** This is a non-starter for me. I cannot support another millage in this County. The County commission has not supported this. We did not create this problem. The problem happened – go back to the financial. All of our budgets have been cut – the first responder budget has not.

**Neil Brickfield:** I'm keeping my mind open to all of the scenarios. I've heard all day long about how different St. Petersburg is. OK, you're different, let's treat you differently, and now I hear, "Whoa, we're not different." This one could work.

**Bill Foster:** In hearing about the responsibility to the tax payer, we all have a responsibility to adhere to a regulation and a court order that defines the special act. All of the other stuff is kind of moot. I want to explore the pilot. Look at sustainability models based on a lot of things. If we are such a problem that we are bankrupting your system, then cut us out. That's not my first choice. I think we have an opportunity to explore possibilities.



**Newt Newton:** In 1989, somebody way smarter than me saw this day coming. It's a shame we are going down this road. We're different, but at the same time, we are charged with keeping our City safe. Nobody came with the same comparison to St. Petersburg. Who is going to pay the legal fees? You are going to institute Priority Dispatch without our consent. Then you'll find a way to run our fire department. We came to offer stuff up and it's a no brainer.



**Steve Kornell:** The IPS report said that we're different over and over again. If you are doing this, it's political. That's offensive. If you go by number of calls and per capita. That's not political, that's the fact. The only way to cut expenses is to cut benefits to our fire fighters and EMTs. I'm willing to talk about shift changes. I'm willing to look at other things. I'm not sure that this is the place to make those cuts. It's what the County has to do to take the action, and that's a tough position. When you're making \$8.8M in cuts and \$7M is coming from us, that's a tough position to be in as well. The barrier communities have to have services there. They can't be on the other side of the draw bridge. I'm not sure we've looked at a broader picture.

**Susan Latvala:** A couple of things that Steve mentioned: The millage rate – this is not the place to find cost savings. That doesn't help this. Saving money in public works, that doesn't help this. All of us are willing and desiring to look at every opportunity there is. Your provider model is more expensive. Why would we buy more services if you are the most expensive? You could lay them off. We can't tell you how to do that. We have to find a way to provide these services at a fair and consistent cost across the County. We need you to look at everything. The model that the other fire departments use across the system is efficient. What are some of the things they are doing that you can adopt that is more efficient? We have an excellent provider at a reasonable cost. Look at the other models. You are different; you obviously need more transport vehicles than Clearwater does.

**Bob Jones:** We really need to go around to each member to find out your thoughts on these. We haven't yet gotten to the sixth scenario.

#### **Scenario 6: Exit of City Entirely From Pinellas County EMS System**

**Bill Foster:** The Chair and I actually agree – if we are so expensive, why would you use us? Why wouldn't scenario 6 be your answer?

**Susan Latvala:** I didn't say I agreed with scenario 6.

**Newt Newton:** Why would you pay us more for a service you can get from somewhere else? I'm showing that you are paying more.

**Neil Brickfield:** If you go to the end of the column, we are paying more.

**Karen Seel:** I guess the big question would be what would you do with mutual aid?

**Bill Foster:** We would stay in. It's a wash. We're a donor in some communities.

**Karen Seel:** We've never talked about how mutual aid would be paid for.

**Craig Hare:** If you have two help zones, you could have erratic response times. That's an operational concern.

**Jim Kennedy:** Where we come fifty/fifty on mutual aid, that's probably geographically driven. Fire houses on the north end of the town. I guess I still haven't heard why 8.6 is not an acceptable solution to the County. It's not my preference, but I still don't understand why it's not acceptable to the County.

**Susan Latvala:** It's a County-wide system. Citizens should be able to expect the same service throughout the County. Having your own medical director is very costly. The whole concept scares me.

**Nancy Bostock:** In the Mayor's concept about the cost being too much, so why don't we cut you out? I think 3 and 6 are worth looking at if we can't get to another solution. If we want to shy away from 3 or 6, then we need to find the efficiencies. Let's find a way to make one of those options work.

**Neil Brickfield:** I want to address mutual aid on page 116. There is a difference. Six is acceptable to me as 5 is. If you want to be different, is it only certain types of different you want to be?

**Ken Welch:** 8.6 is not acceptable to me. It's not necessary. We have a job to do and not just to take the easy way out. The court order is a reality; it is something we have to work around. Has St. Petersburg done the numbers on this? Can you make it happen?



**Jim Kennedy:** This is not my first preference.

**Ken Welch:** It is not the right direction to me. Why can't this be over 3 or 5 years?

**Bill Foster:** We agree. I think it can be phased in. We've run the numbers. One thing I can guarantee you, it is not an immediate \$7M reduction. To accept a \$7M reduction is a deal killer.

**Norm Roche:** I think it's important to repeat what Ken Welch said at the closing. This is not the option we've given you. It's an option that is on the table and I'm open to all of them. Three, five and six are all the same – somebody has to provide a service and pay for it. The separate ad valorem – then there is 18 ad valorem. Breaking apart just doesn't work. It has to be working together. My question with 6 is who makes that call and what happens to the 1989 court order?

**Bill Foster:** It would have to be by contract.

**Norm Roche:** So we could go to seven and just start over.

**John Morroni:** I think this would set a terrible precedent. I know that the citizens want us to work together and I know they don't want us to sue each other. We cannot manage EMS by millage increases. I think it has to be a combination of some of the things Karl brought up and some cost cutting activities. I don't want to talk about you divorcing from us.

**Steve Kornell:** I appreciate your statement Commissioner Welch. Some issues came up. The next thing is that we see this in the St. Petersburg Times. If we do number 6, your own study says you would lose \$4.5M. I think there is some discussion that needs to happen there.

Everybody keeps saying that the City of St. Petersburg is out of whack. Our employees pay 7% into that. Some people pay 3%. Five doesn't make sense – double-taxing the citizens of St. Petersburg doesn't make sense. I don't think pulling out of the system makes sense. If we reacted strongly, there is a reason we reacted strongly. When you say 80% has to come out of St. Petersburg, that's a lot of cuts. I think we'll find some agreement on the pension issue. I'm willing to work with you, but understand that the \$7.1M coming out of St. Petersburg is difficult.

**Susan Latvala:** Thank you, Steve, for those words. I agree with Commissioner Morroni that we can't continue to manage by millage rates. We are trying to find ways to reduce the cost. In 2013, we're in a bad place. It puts you in a bad place, too. It's important to work together to find a solution. I urge you to look at what the other districts do. What other things can you put on the table?

**Jim Kennedy:** What Commissioner Welch said about this taking time to work into, is something that we as a city could work with. We've been told \$7.1 is being cut and learn to live with it. That's not an acceptable solution. The only response we can have is that we can't allow that to happen. It can't be that one-sided.

**Susan Latvala:** What do we do in 2013?

**Jim Kennedy:** If you don't raise your EMS millage, I think your obligation is to pay for reasonable and customary expenses for services from the City.

**Susan Latvala:** When we can pay less for those services? How is that customary?

**Jim Kennedy:** It's based on the history that we said we would help the County. It has to be presented in a different fashion than an ultimatum.

**Newt Newton:** I concur with my Chair. It is painfully obvious that the funding process will not be increased. It's also obvious that you won't let us cut out. There is not a lot left that we can do.

**Leslie Curran:** I also agree with the Chair. As far as history, we've looked at doing our own transport. If we had a very effective system, we wouldn't be here in the first place. The County does not want to allow us to leave, but why do they want us to stay? If we left the system, and did our own transport, as a resident of St. Petersburg, I would feel very comfortable with that because I know the type of services we provide. Being told we are ineffective and you're being cut \$7M, that doesn't sit well with me.

**Nancy Bostock:** I just want to clarify with our attorney and the court order. If we are not using the City, can we institute number 3 unilaterally?

**Jim Bennett:** No

**Karen Seel:** Each side is trying to use the hammer. I think we should identify the next step and try to work on this together. I appreciate Chairman Kennedy's listing all the ways we have worked together. In 8.6, you would have to raise your millage. That is an area of concern.



**Bob Jones:** At this point, I'd like to ask every member to offer thoughts about what they have heard and learned today.

### **Discussion of Possible Next Steps and Potential Options Discussion**

**Bill Dudley:** My first take is that I didn't like the idea of the ultimatum. Whether that was intended or not, it was the impression. I did gain a lot of information today. Today you actually heard it from our mouths. I think there is some common ground. I would propose that we stick with the status quo for the current year and give us time to work on the commonalities.

**Steve Kornell:** First, I certainly was not on Council during the history of how this came about. I know this goes back a long way. I'm willing to meet either individually or as a group to have further discussion on this topic or any other topic. Once we get this one settled, I would suggest that we schedule discussion. I am willing to look at ways to consolidate services for the good of our common citizens. I think, going forward, I want you to fully understand. I heard that there was a PR person hired. Then we read it in the paper the next day. I think, going forward, we stop the PR battle and have discussions. We have to be honest with each other.

**Norm Roche:** I mirror Steve's comments, particularly toward the end. The County didn't bring this to you. I have not made a decision about this. What is clear is that this system isn't sustainable. Everything should be on the table. It's the only way. I can't tell you the solution. We need to consider everything to help our citizens County-wide.

**Jeff Danner:** We knew this day was coming for years and now we're meeting at the 11<sup>th</sup> hour and that's a little frustrating. If we discuss this again, I'd like to see that what we pay in ad valorem is what you get. We have to factor the number of people covered. It's our services and fire districts that provide these services. Traffic counts, employment centers, all of these need to be factored in. If we are leaving these options on the table, defer Priority Dispatch until we know what the system looks like. That would be a gesture of good faith.

**Karen Seel:** I mentioned earlier that I hope we have the actuarial information. I listened to everyone's opinions about the costs and salaries, but it would be good to bring that more in line. The idea has been brought up to look at different ways to lower your overhead. The County Commission has already looked at issues that affect the cities. We started to talk about a council of governments so we could have full-blown discussions. There are 23 other cities that have opinions as well. We're trying to balance this throughout the County. Maybe we create an EMS council to discuss these issues. I do want to look at something more effective.

**Karl Nurse:** I think the focus should be cost control. We've talked about pensions and nighttime dispatch. We should both go back to our places and talk about how to drive down overhead costs. Frankly, could we move in the direction of a hybrid system? We ought to ponder some way of dealing with people who abuse the system.

**John Morroni:** We are getting together a little on the late side. When we talk about being out of money in 2013, it's really 2012 because that's when we have to vote on it. We're not going to get to that \$8M. As far as the millage rate, people see it as a 46% increase. We're in this together. If it's necessary, to get back together to see some progress on the idea Karl brought up.

**Nancy Bostock:** We talked about some of these options. There may be some dramatic things that may turn into issues of their own. How do we bring costs down and preserve levels of services? That's what we're really talking about. We can make some strides if we look at some of the ideas that came up today.

**Neil Brickfield:** I'm for trying anything except for the status quo. That includes am/pm shifts and a pilot on some of the ALS engines in St. Petersburg. Look at the pensions, I'd like to see where we could go for a fire-based transport and look at a SunStar pilot. Then we'd have a reasonable way of looking at these things.

**Newt Newton:** I'd like to thank everybody who came in. Fund fair and reasonable costs. The County sued the City of St. Petersburg and we have to deal with that. I want to look at the best practices of Miami, Tampa and St. Petersburg. We can say we can cut, cut, cut. Why can't we spread the cuts across the County? Everybody is saying one thing and doing another. We're here to try to figure out ways to provide savings. I support option 6. Hopefully, we can find a solution.



**Herbert Polson:** I would specifically like to thank Mr. LaSala who met with us on June 23<sup>rd</sup>. At that time, we suggested we get together. There has been an incredible amount of work. This notebook is a huge amount of work and we should applaud the people who worked on this.

We have spent 26 years saying yes. We've allowed a lot of things happen that don't make sense. We've allowed people to call 911 to get a ring removed. We've created that. I don't like any of these options. Karl mentioned a hybrid. I think that's more desirable. I think this is a prime subject for another County-wide referendum. I think the solution is for a referendum.

**Ken Welch:** I think this has been a great meeting as well. Being across the table from each other and talking things out is how to make things happen. This County Commission has not made a decision about this. We need to get to work. We need to scrub the numbers and see what that savings would be in real dollars. Cost containment is where we are. We've got a good start, but we need a sense of urgency. It was a positive day.

**Bill Foster:** I, too, think this was good. None of these scenarios were going to be acceptable. Carving us out – none of that was good for us. The dialog was good. The priority is starting with "what level of service to you want?" and looking for a way to pay for it. Don't beat yourself up about the millage. I think you have the obligation to provide reasonable and customary. You didn't have a choice. Nowhere does it say fair and equitable. Good dialog. We all had roles. We played good medic/bad medic. We are committed to working together to identify cost efficiencies. It's not all on the shoulders of the City of St. Petersburg. I'm glad the Council invited the County to the table. Thank you for agreeing to put the two legislatures together.

**Leslie Curran:** Just for the record that I agree with the Mayor wholeheartedly. One of the things the residents have not understood well is the redundancy in the system. I think some of the suggestions have been good – looking at a hybrid system. As far as a pilot program, there isn't sufficient time to get results from a pilot program. The Mayor brought up looking at the cost of Paramedics Plus. We should take a look at that. I would not take exiting the system out of the equation.

**Susan Latvala:** I want to begin by thanking Mo Freaney, Bob LaSala and others. It was many, many weekends and long hours. It made this easier to have good data. Herb, I don't agree on a referendum. We were elected to make tough decisions. Some of these decisions have to be made



soon. Bob has to give budget direction by mid-December. A contract has to be in place by January 1<sup>st</sup>. At some point, you reach the point where no more cuts can be made without sacrificing service. Paramedics Plus is funded by user fees, not by millage. We thank you sincerely for the willingness to meet with us and we look forward to a proposal coming back to us. We have to keep moving from this point forward. We can't let the service be jeopardized. I don't see raising the millage as happening. Thank you again for your willingness to spend the entire day with us.

**Jim Kennedy:** Thank you for being here and all the hard work on the report. One thing that hasn't been mentioned very much here is that I don't want to see anything in our system affect the severe emergencies. We've talked a lot about money, but I want to be sure that we come out with an effective system, especially with respect to these severe emergencies. We can talk about getting more time and doing pilots, but we need something different from "the City needs to cut \$7M next year." If we can't resolve this, we have no other option but to go to court. I think Priority Dispatch would be an olive branch of good faith. Maybe adding a commissioner or a council member to the teams would be a good approach. As you ask us for proposals, I would ask the County Commission for proposals other than a \$7M that we can't afford. As far a referendum is concerned, I think the citizens already voted on that with a limit of 1.5 mil. It would take us 6 months to put an injunction through the system. Don't be offended if we start that process. Hopefully, we can continue these discussions. I would also throw education in of the respective staffs. Maybe we should send our staff on road trips to present to the other entity. The clock is ticking and we need to do things quickly.

**Susan Latvala:** Have you, or are you willing to look at the other 18 models?

**Steve Kornell:** Our staff did extensive analysis.

**Bill Foster:** You have a legal obligation to provide services.

**Susan Latvala:** We have 18 other providers to be concerned about.

**Bob Jones:** Let me ask a question here. I think I heard that the cost is a timing question. You have to make a decision that between November 1 and the end of January there has to be a mechanism to make a decision. What does that mean? I haven't heard a plan to pursue these discussions. Either you commit to a time and commit the resources, or... If this is a really serious matter, I think you have to leave here and think through how this could be implemented.

**Nancy Bostock:** Is there an obligation to sign this for public record?

**Jim Bennett:** No.

**Bill Foster:** I think we can come up with something based on the County commissioners' suggestions. I'm willing to take this on.

**Karl Nurse:** I think we need to get together within a month.

**Jim Kennedy:** That's an agreement.

**Bob Jones:** Any yellow forms that are filled out and left on the tables out front will be included in the public record.

**Susan Latvala:** Happy Halloween. Thank you for your hard work.





## Appendix #1 Facilitator Session Notes



### PINELLAS COUNTY EMS AUTHORITY & ST. PETERSBURG CITY COUNCIL JOINT MEETING

October 31, 2011

Collaborative Labs at St. Petersburg College  
Largo, Florida

## FACILITATOR SESSION NOTES



### CONSENSUS CENTER

*"Consensus Solutions, Collaborative Action."*  
The Florida State University

#### A. MEMBER INTRODUCTIONS AND EXPECTATIONS FOR SUCCESS FOR THE JOINT MEETING

*From your own perspective, what is one (1) possible positive outcome that would make this Joint Meeting a success?*

- We have more than a conversation and gain a direction on EMS
- We get issues resolved to the satisfaction of both groups
- We know our positions and actually come up with a position that would meet all of our needs
- Understand one set of facts
- To hear each others perspectives and agree on next steps
- Shift conversation to how to bend cost curve downward without compromising service
- We understand each others positions and recognize no one may be happy, but still strive to provide service to citizens and do what is right for the citizens
- We create a foundation of long term, sustainable EMS for the County
- Have to understand each others position and change what we believe to get to solution
- New system that meets needs and is cost effective

- Hope we leave today agreeing on the direction of the system for next 25 years
- That we know our responsibility is the safety of citizens and maintain that system
- We get an agreement amongst us that current system is not workable in this economy
- That each one of us can say to people we got together and solved the problem without resort to court
- Develop a program that preserves an acceptable system to all citizens

## B. MEMBERS TESTING FOR CONSENT ON BRIEFING BOOK FOUNDATIONAL INFORMATION

As a factual basis for the discussion of the EMS challenges faced, a City-County staff Team developed the Briefing Book as a resource document. Members are asked to accept by consent Sections 2.0, Current EMS System; 3.0 Historical Information; and 4.0 Financial, and Subsections 5.1, 5.4 & 5.5, Firefighter and Paramedic Cost Comparisons, as background and foundational information for the Joint Meeting.

To test consent, please provide a rating that best represents your view of this information as an acceptable foundation upon which to engage in a dialogue on the EMS challenges.

### Joint Meeting Acceptability Rating Scale

| Acceptability Rating Scale | <i>4 = Acceptable, I agree.</i> | <i>3 = Acceptable, I agree with minor reservations.</i> | <i>2 = Not acceptable unless major reservations addressed.</i> | <i>1 = Not acceptable</i> | <i>Avg.</i> |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------|---|--|---------------------------|-------------|
|                            | <b>8</b>                        | <b>8</b>  | <b>0</b>   | <b>0</b>                  | <b>3.5</b>  |

#### *Acceptable with Minor Concerns (#3 ranking) Comments:*

- Where does the foundation of 7½ minutes come from?
- Cost assumptions of 2.1 percent increase and other cost increases are higher than consumer cost index – cost estimates are speculative
- Concern about response time
- Is the tool for funding the system sustainable?
- This is a big topic. We need multiple sources of information. We need to look at other systems too before saying this is an acceptable basis.

## C. CREATING A JOINT EMS CHALLENGE STATEMENT

### *Member Discussion Points on the EMS Problems and Challenges*

- Looking at the County's three stated principles (A, B and C). Is a fourth principle missing: "to create a sustainable system"? Is that a stated goal? or a principle?

### **Reducing Costs and Funding**

- We must know before raising the millage rate that the EMS system is as cost effective and efficient as possible
- County increased the millage and raised \$11 million dollars to keep the system going. Before we consider an further increase, we have to do everything possible to reduce costs before considering another millage increase –
- Good EMS service is important – system works well now – City is taking cost containment actions –

### **Pension Costs Containment.**

- High costs of salaries and benefits for the city – may disappear over time; eight years – will come down to county average
- Should county pay more over the next eight years until the cost come down to the average? Willing to talk about that.
- A, B and C of City's perspective are self explanatory. In the County's view the level of service is a concern – and B attempts to compare St. Pete to smaller communities and lacks foundation – issues: cost containment, the fire budget for St. Pete comes from separate source (general funds). Bringing in pensions funds is misleading since they are from a different fund source
- Pension is an issue and question. In the materials it appears to say it is amortized over 40 years. Why is it not paid by 2010?
- Is 1970 the correct base year for 40 year time period?
- Information provided to staff was based on actuarial data.
- Materials show the funding is from the same funding source.
- Good for county to understand the change or reform in pension system – what happened to reform the plan?
- We dialed down the benefits – cannot change unfunded, old plan
- Increases in employee contribution important part of reduction too

#### **Funding Equity.**

- Fire department subsidizes the EMS system shortfall in head count. The county funding plan went down in number of paramedics. We need to seek fairness and equity in current funding before moving forward
- Funding two paramedics per rescue trucks
- Using City model? Look at page 119 footnote B – multiplier of 1.7, the reimbursement is based on 1.55. City contributes from general fund to make up the difference
- Multiplier of 1.07? Paid time off pattern for the City. Agreement is for reimbursement of 1.55 and City makes up difference. Staffs agree.
- The City puts two paramedics on truck, rest of county puts on one. The City has to make up difference. Question of how many paramedics and how the system reimburses.
- Based on 1989 lawsuit? Yes, "reasonable and customary" is the standard for reimbursement.
- Ordinance requires service for all citizens and for reimbursement of "reasonable and customary" to the City.
- None of the barrier islands provide ladder trucks because the city does it

#### **Millage Rate.**

- Hard time with what I perceive as the County's arbitrary cap on millage rate. In light of reasonable and customary service the system is sustainable within that framework. Should not be an arbitrary cap of 1.5 millage. Reducing costs and maintain service? Reducing costs may lead to reduced service.
- Any concept that County can go to higher millage in this climate is not realistic at the current time. Just raised the rate 46%, more is not realistic
- Arbitrary cap on millage? We increased the rate 46% - do we keep increasing it, and on who, without the cap?
- Need to tell public we cannot maintain service without increase. Define service you want, cut costs, but then meet the need. This is emergency first response. If you increase the response times, then tell people you are diminishing service due to costs.
- Arbitrary cap? Do we raise millage rate on all citizens or just the City?
- Page 75 and 84 provide evidence that the system is sustainable with a 1.5 millage rate and historical rate. The reduction in millage rate in recent years contributed to current problem. The effects of

underfunding system need to be acknowledged and taken into account. City has used reserves to maintain the current response time

- The 46% increase is less accurate because millage rate was first lowered.
- To say there was a “plan” to suppress the millage rate is not accurate – the rate was brought down as property rates skyrocketed. There was no plan to suppress the rate
- Need to look at the real dollar value of the 46% rate – the rate appears to be overstated when compared to dollar value.
- Consultant said reduction in funding did not impact service? How do you reduce funding and not affect service?
- What is the dollar amount of the 46% increase?
- Also need to clarify the number of paramedics and the number reimbursed – by the lawsuit is the county responsible for 89
- Millage increase equals \$2.23 monthly, \$26+ annual – less dramatic than 46% increase
- Point is we need to be realistic and accurate with our numbers – significant drop in property values – 46% increase is not equal to a 46% increase in funds
- Easy to manipulate the data – bogged down in the minutia. The actual monthly increase (46%) for residents equaled a cup of Starbucks coffee. This is very cheap insurance for the level of service we get
- If residents knew the dollar amount they would agree to it in order to keep service. We need apple to apple comparisons/
- Elected officials who raised the rate are the ones getting the phone calls – we raised it because it was the right thing to do to keep the system running.
- However we all have a responsibility to make the system cost efficient and provide level of service citizens expect.
- The City and County are not different – all shoulder the burden of taxation. The County’s job is to review and adjust it-- decrease in time of plenty, but need to adjust in time of deficit.
- We must know before raising the rate that system is as cost effective and efficient as possible
- Millage increase raised 11 million dollars to keep the system going – have to do everything possible to reduce costs before considering another millage increase.
- Good EMS service is important – system works well now – are taking cost containment actions – increase response times will lead to fatalities –

#### **Clarity on Level of Services and Response Time Currently and Proposed by IPS.**

- The terminology for level of service and response time are used together but are not the same thing.
- Contractor funded units? Are those required to meet the agreement standard? Engine 7 as an example, page 19 – ALS engines in St. Pete. There is a collaborative arrangement between county and city. Without it would not be able meet the level of service without increase in cost to the County and minimal increase to the city
- County consultant says response time will not change – this remains an issue we need to come to agreement on
- The level of service and response time go hand in hand – also need to account for the density of the City
- The IPS suggests there will be no change in average response time but this still needs to be operationalized and the plan assumptions tested.
- We collectively need to use both sets of consultants to get full picture – The City is left with impression our consultant is not considered.
- We do want to hear both sides and the County Commission is still discussing and reviewing the study and any planned EMS system changes.
- For St. Pete the actual response time is 6:23 – not 7:30 – the county would mean a lower response time

- The counties time is a contract time – not changing the standard but establishing a contract time – they exceed the 7:30 time. We need a common definition
- The fourth meeting objective mentions County's IPS but not the City's study. The City is historically left with feeling they are being ignored – both arguments need to be "on the table."
- The City requested to meet with the County to discuss the IPS study.
- Page 20 presents the heart of City's anxiety. The current service is below the 7.30 minutes at 90% standard. The City needs to know whether we are going to lengthen the actual response results in the City or under the IPS plan will we maintain the actual level of service and actual response time we have now?
- The County's goal to maintain actual level of service
- Concerned about changing response time impacts level of service – question of actual service
- Consultant said the time of 4:18 would not change.
- County's goal is to maintain the response time

#### **Comparing EMS Districts.**

- Also fairness and equity of comparing different municipalities needs to be discussed. Better to compare to city of comparable size and call service.
- Barrier islands access needs to be included. Maintaining the level of service is important. The high cost approach of City needs to be put into perspective. There are differences in terms of workload for 4<sup>th</sup> largest city. On that basis the City is in the middle.

#### **EMS Privatization.**

- Concern about privatizing EMS for many reasons.
- County has used a private contractor for transport successfully for many years. Not cutting corners with current service. The system works and works well

### **D. COUNTY EMS INTEGRAL PERFORMANCE SOLUTIONS IPS STUDY SUMMARY**

#### **IPS Study Findings**

- The Pinellas County EMS System is financially unsustainable and will be bankrupt in 2013 if changes are not made.
- The current method of funding is unfair and unequal among the fire districts.
- Ambulance service is running well overall.
- County billing for ambulance services is doing well with no major changes needed.
- Firefighter transport of patients to hospital would be expensive and less efficient than the current system using Sunstar ambulances.
- Raising the County EMS tax "would not resolve underlying problems."

#### **IPS Study Recommendations**

- Leave the basic structure of the County EMS system as is.
- Implement Priority Dispatch.
- No major changes for Ambulance service and county billing for that service
- The County EMS tax should not be increased as the service can be provided within the existing bud.
- The County should pay for only 1 paramedic position in each of the 62 units it already funds. County should take over the funding of one paramedic on another 10 EMS units the districts now fund. Thus it would fund 72 paramedic positions countywide (*A paramedic position is 3.6 paramedics= Three 24 hr shifts plus supervision, etc.*)
- Savings are also possible from changes in the type of vehicle used and by standardizing the rate at which departments are reimbursed for such positions.
- Districts wanting a rescue vehicle with a 2<sup>nd</sup> paramedic would have to fund on their own.

- County would reduce the current \$38.2 million expenditure a year to \$27.1 million a year saving about \$11 million.
- County should implement the new funding October 1, 2012.
- County should take steps to increase consistency in reporting and accountability regarding the cost and extent of the EMS in the county.

#### ***Member Comments on IPS Study***

- Firefighter transport may be more expensive except certain time period when already staffed and can limit Sunstar – have excess capacity in certain period of the day – may be opportunity to cut costs
- Uses 10 existing transports, no additions? Yes
- Priority dispatch would reduce the number of calls
- Page 150 – workload and funding equity – each comes out about 30% - City silence does not mean agreement on the points in the study
- Need to look at entire revenue stream not just a slice – also many will need to EMS service who would not be able to pay or provide revenue
- Response time and level of service – when do we start clock running with priority dispatch

### **E. MEMBER COMMENTS ON THE FINANCIAL SECTION (4.0)**

#### **EMS Funding Issues and Implications:**

- Page 87 – County EMS funding of the City EMS – question of equitable and fair – changes with increase in taxes – City can have its own special tax district – is that an interest for the City? (*Will review in Scenario 5*)
- City priority would be to leave in the established funding mechanism – feel the county is trying to change the existing court ordered mechanism – the scenario above is secondary, if the court does not enforce the order, and if it is the only choice to maintain the level of service – but ramifications with other local communities – our City might be able to handle but other smaller communities would not
- Separate millage is not a good route to take – unified EMS is preferable – separate millage is a step back, other options to consider
- Page 64 – deficit every year – not sustainable under current millage rate – assumptions too optimistic, still in poor economy – fiscal reality is worse than shown on P. 64
- Separate is possible but not first choice – prefer unified approach – want to make current system work
- EMS solutions may point the way to future options – instead of millage could look at higher fees – offer points as options
- If all lives are important than why is the biggest cut to St. Pete?
- We need to stop “throwing each other under the bus.”
- Why say everything is on the table and suggest end user will not suffer? Misleading to say cuts will not impact service
- Depending on what service you look at – as central city, it comes with pluses and minuses – St. Pete does not get the same share of road funds – may not be fair to go category by category in terms of fair share
- Per capita and per call do not bear that out

#### **EMS Governance Issues and Implications:**

- Look at three principles of maintaining service – would county wide fire and EMS funding get there?



- Interesting idea with merit and pitfalls – explore carefully – many of the same issues follow into that model too
- Not a simple task – bigger issue on the table – would have to build agreement with 18 districts, many of whose millage would go up – we have authority over EMS, not over those – may take years to work out and we need to address EMS in the meantime
- Great time to look at County wide fire and EMS service – citizens don't understand why so many vehicles show up – we should explore it
- Idea was floated in the past – but could not resolve in time allotted – applaud you for raising the idea – asking communities to give up control and allocate resources is very difficult – page 87 look at whose ox is gored, we give more than our share at times to keep the system intact
- Consolidation – moving forward will have to deal with the issue – everything should be on the table even while we deal with the more immediate issue
- Open to all solutions but need to address immediate issue – 46% was fair across the board, would not be popular to add variation of burden
- Courage to offer option – looking at cost control of EMS but may need to look at other areas too that might save money – St. Pete is a donor city but also need to understand the City demographics and high percentage in poverty
- Is consolidation all or nothing? Is something less than full county consolidation possible? Need to look at wide range of factors and consider baby steps in that direction
- Think consolidation on the table in the long term – but we have an immediate issue to address and still difficult to predict even the near future – it is all about the safety of our citizens – consolidation, transport, etc, should all be on the table.
- Interested in fire district if we can transport in the City.
- Share the enthusiasm – but how do you set aside the lawsuit that goes to fair and reasonable cost of service? We get the most calls and the biggest cut

#### **EMS Operations Issues and Implications:**

- Firefighters are on 24 hour shifts. As a way of exploring cost cutting, the City staff think they can add transport during peak allowing Sunstar being dialed back for 12 hour period and saving some costs for the system.

#### **F. MEMBER COMMENTS ON THE FIREFIGHTER AND PARAMEDIC COST COMPARISON SECTION (5.0)**

##### **EMS Cost Issues and Implications:**

- County wide perspective – lack of standard methodology in computing the costs – problem in the system – state statute sets county salary by jurisdiction and population size – should be based on job size and other factors – does county have any employee unions? Have to have competitive packages to attract employees
- 5.1 – get back to basic question of larger communities paying more and costing more – does St. Pete get treated the same as a barrier island or that we cost more?
- What costs more in St. Pete?
- We have more equipment and supervisors
- That may be part of the problem
- Page 122 and 119– comparison of larger cities – St. Pete fire chief paid same rate as smaller communities?
- High percentage of costs are pensions – addressing the issue – looking at flattening our organizations too

- Turnover rate does not seem especially high
- Larger the community the more the expense to run an operation – size and complexity are factors
- Is it reasonable for county to look for equity across positions? It does not take into account complexity of service, volume and activity – we have the largest call activity
- One county wide system, people would look for low volume areas – call volume per person, the City is in the middle
- Page 119 – large systems can give you economy of scale – but these numbers do not seem to reflect that economy.
- Page 92 – multipliers – also more administration than others – as to actuary study, need clarification of 40 year period – is the plan going forward sound and is the county making up the City's deficit
- City did actuary study of pensions – all of them came in as sound, in appendix 5

#### **EMS Operations Issues and Implications:**

- If benchmark, then need similar volume and activity – how many of surrounding communities have ladder trucks or hazmat – depend on St. Pete – also address calls on interstate – more people and equipment to provide more service – unfair to compare City to smaller communities

### **G. MEMBER COMMENTS ON ALS FIRST RESPONDER COST COMPARISON SECTION (6.0)**

#### **EMS Cost Issues and Implications:**

- Fire is funded from general revenue and EMS is separate – bringing fire into calculations distorts the numbers.
- Others fund together as a means of cost savings – others run fire trucks as first responders rather than separate ALS.
- That is what priority dispatch will do
- Not who you send – some call who do not need either one
- Is county concern that the City is too expensive in total or in pieces? County response: In total
- What if pieces changed and price went down? If prior pension obligation were not absorbed by the County EMS? How would that affect county's cost concern? One to one? If that pension cost went away would it take County concerns away?
- For that portion, yes
- We have cost issue – if St. Pete EMS is separate, not integrated, would City allow them to be put together to save costs?
- Can the City transport? Not just simple as putting paramedics on fire apparatus – willing to consider if our people can transport – look at overall affect on system over period of years
- Hope we can get back to EMS and leave fire apparatus out of mix – we don't think that is a good delivery model – we still put a lot of water on structure fires – affect service if on a medic call – and lack responders if on a fire – our delivery model works

#### **EMS Governance Issues and Implications:**

- Cost per call gets to be half of others – proportionally more calls – also penalty for false alarms, should be a trigger to prevent abuse of the system

#### **EMS Operations Issues and Implications:**

- Others fund together as a means of cost savings – others run fire trucks as first responders rather than separate ALS.
- What is the turnover of the paramedics? 23% a year for Sunstar.
- That would devastate our fire department

## **H. MEMBER COMMENTS ON PRIORITY DISPATCH**

### **EMS Cost Issues and Implications:**

- Question how the cost savings are calculated and think it will add to response time – leaving it up to the operator on phone to determine rather than on scene determination
- It is more cost effective
- If we transport non-peak we can save money without reducing service or number of calls – priority dispatch does not provide cost savings in EMS, still fully staffed and paying Sunstar in alpha calls
- Unless willing to reduce labor costs then not solving long term issue – staffing issue – also need to be sure staffed on the fireside too – the labor line is the key.
- What is the cost savings and how long does it take?
- No cost saving to county in initial roll out of priority dispatch.
- Cost savings we can do now and things we can do to anticipate future savings – priority dispatch is looking toward cost savings beyond initial few years – we cannot afford not to look at possible savings
- They are not paid for transport – county is reimbursed if transported
- If the personnel are sitting in the station how are we saving costs?
- No unit would be taken out of service since it amounts to saving one call per unit
- Cannot dismiss any idea – sometimes it is about common sense – if less expensive to send ambulance, then send ambulance
- This takes St. Pete general revenue money to support – keeping fire and EMS separate because different funding sources
- Other 17 fire districts fund from one source

### **EMS Governance Issues and Implications:**

- Eliminating over-response is a dangerous premise to start with. Starting with high quality EMS is a better point of departure – once citizens understand dual response system they appreciate it – this system would affect City's ability to serve our citizens – and concerned about the unilateral way this is put forward
- EMS advisory committee with 20 members had one member from St. Pete – not equal representation of county population
- Different committees – EMS resource committee versus advisory committee
- We agree the system will look different in the future but why the rush to put in this system if it does not save?
- We have been planning this for a long time and it will save money long term

### **EMS Operations Issues and Implications:**

- Priority dispatch is used successfully all over the country – trained people answer the call and send right personnel while then asking additional questions as needed
- By going through vetting at beginning of the call inherently lengthen response to the call – rather than vet at the scene – may have wasted 90 seconds
- Need clarification in priority dispatch model – is 15 minute response only for alpha, not bravo or Charlie calls
- Need clarification on how priority dispatch work

- Section 7 currently working on – send ambulance only in less 15 minutes for fall, sick, non-life threatening calls – Section 8 looks at full dispatch, did not look at response time
- Current standard is 10 minute for 90% -
- Bravo and Charlies would be handled just like now
- Section 8 has various scenarios – 8.2 single response is for discussion
- Page 170-171 description of assignment of vehicle and the tracking of the call – page 182, & 185 describes 17a non-life threatening call, etc.
- In priority dispatch are they told to call again if condition becomes worse? Yes
- I am asked why so many trucks go – I explain but citizens do not understand why we send five if only two are needed
- Sending ambulances for unnecessary calls – send people with skills who do not need to transport
- Does protocol look at the probability for need for transport? Yes
- Going to get someone there quickly but asking them to call back if minor turns out to be major – system is not based on majority of times but on the extraordinary that is serious
- When you call 911 you don't want a whole litany of questions delaying response – talking to someone on the phone to make a diagnosis as to quality of care they need.
- Citizens understand times when you do and don't need multiple responses – page 153 suggests 10% reduction in St. Pete calls – St. Peter does seem to support transport under one scenario
- Also worried about caller who is alone who cannot call back – call center questions will aggravate those calling in in need of help
- Only an ambulance sent on alpha calls? Page 186 - Yes
- Units dispatched automatically as soon as it is clear it is life-threatening situation
- Dispatch with two trucks on list of issues
- May be up to two minute interval to front side of 7.5 minute standard in effort to weed out 10% of calls – pg. 207 full implementation does not make clear the standard of service to be met
- Page 14 on handout – public education system – not clear – yet to hear or see awareness campaign beyond one billboard
- Dispatch as quickly as today under emergency condition – ask more questions only in those circumstances appropriate
- Sympathetic to logic of priority dispatch – but struggle with how it is implemented – send an ambulance with less skills – if send vehicle that only gets paid if transported, then incentive is to transport whether needed or not
- What have been the results from fewer responses – have we lost anyone, are people asking questions – what have been the results?
- First two phases of priority dispatch implemented without problems – reduced 7-8,000 ambulance transports – reduced call levels, may result in lower equipment and personnel needs
- Ambulance reduction number is county wide with St. Pete included
- Stopped sending first responders to doctor's office too

## **I. SIX OPERATIONAL SCENARIOS TO HIGHLIGHT PERSPECTIVES AND ISSUES**

### **Member Comments on the Scenarios**

- Are these scenarios only for St. Pete or could they apply to other districts?
- Scenarios were created for this meeting and St. Pete, they may still apply to others
- Could they be utilized by other districts?
- Intent is not to pick and chose but to have everyone do the same approach to be cost effective – the County is the EMS authority
- If one worked better here, then we may approach others with the same approach
- Staff trying to capture the scenarios that have been thrown out there as an aid to discussing ideas today

- The County Commission is the EMS authority? Yes. If one scenario works for both of us then we can see if works for others too

### **1. Status Quo Scenario- Member Comments**

- This is unsustainable and that is why we are exploring cost containment strategies.

### **2. ALS First Responder Services provided only by ALS Engines Scenario- Member Comments**

- By shifting to ALS engines you are shifting County cost to the City.
- Is giving up the court order a precondition for accepting scenario 2?
- This uses ALS response by ALS engines only – 41,000 emergency calls, may be with priority dispatch reductions, with fully equipped fire engine for paramedic call.
- I hope working fire does not arise requiring 3 or 4 engines while engines already out on paramedic call – we are taking engines out of service to deliver a paramedic
- Every other one of the 17 districts sends engines to such calls – if your engine is out of service then your neighbor will help to fill the need.
- But that affects service and adds to response time – fire based transport occurs across the county all the time too.
- We are not all the same – next largest community has half the calls – we have more calls – are ISO ratings based on fire alone? Yes
- Greatest efficiency throughout district is dual role of firefighter paramedic – not capturing that most basic efficiency in St. Pete.
- If not there, then need to capture cost efficiency elsewhere, all the numbers show us we have to provide the service for less.
- We have to look at this from a county wide level or system – cannot create 17 different Sunstar-like transport operations – all of these scenarios may require changing the court order.
- I think we can do any of these scenarios by agreement without any special act of the legislature
- I think we will need standing established by the legislature for long term resolution
- I think you can have smaller districts meet their needs with firefighter paramedic, but given the call volume in St. Pete we have a different model.
- Assume you can reduce the number of calls – on station by station basis, dropping personnel gets complicated to avoid understaffing.
- St. Pete is a large city – none other in the county compares – trying to match models used by smaller municipalities does not work. Consider carving St. Pete out. We provide 25% of revenue and 30% of calls – benchmark us against a like-sized city
- Can carve out a separate millage rate for St Pete – also, St. Pete has 16 trucks,
- Not supportive of anything that carves St. Pete out – backward step for County and City – question is funding and the fact that millage will not carry us forward – St. Pete is a key part of the county

### **3. ALS First Responder Services provided only by County Scenario- Member Comments**

- Can the county throw St. Pete out?
- Why would we? We have to provide services.
- Special act does not impact provision of fire services. We can provide services with fiscal constraints – can terminate service agreements.
- Provisions would allow City to provide EMS services? Agreement with the County to provide the service.
- Concerned with more privatization – especially given the high turnover rate we heard earlier.
- Cost savings come from cutting personnel, pay and or benefits – concerned about being penny wise and pound foolish
- Has St Pete looked at some lesser combination of 10 rescues at smaller units?

- St. Pete has looked at whole host of plans
- If we are looking for efficiency – looking at per station basis – ready to have discussions
- What can St. Pete bring to table in terms of cost reductions?
- Pension cost differential, nighttime transport and looking at other possible overhead savings.
- Possibly consider a pilot program of fire transport – we have a good system now – we have a could special act now and good court order -

#### **4. Ambulance Services provided by City (billing, medical direction, etc. to be maintained by Authority) Scenario- Member Comments**

- Concerned about 18 separate Sunstars if we carve out St. Pete – have to give same consideration to every other district –
- What is “medical direction” per year? About \$1.1 million with St. Pete share 1/3.
- This could be a cost savings to the system
- Yes, if you could use existing staff. But if you had to add additional personnel then your savings would evaporate. Willing to look at a pilot and see how it works out for example in the overnight transport
- Concerned you might need additional millage from County if City falls short due to additional costs.
- But savings possible to system overall.
- But only if City breaks even and doesn’t come back to the County for additional funds
- Concerned about 12 million swing between the staffs analysis on page 216 – County says it costs 9 million more and City says saves 3 million?
- County staff perspective: Using ad valorem tax to support for what is now fee based
- City staff perspective – duty to fund system without legislative act – currently pay Sunstar a blended rate (\$6 million) – can save \$3 million but cutting Sunstar – but county staff took all first responder costs and moved them to transport
- Are you concerned it will take more than three additional units to meet need?
- We would adjust resources to meet the demand – willing to try either pilot project.
- On occasions you will send St. Pete guys in priority dispatch, may be more efficient to allow them to transport too – may not be often – need to be sure service for citizens is not worse.
- 8.4 looks good because you zeroed out first responder – but using ALS and expanding services at higher rate.
- Rescue trucks would respond first with ALS as backup relief
- Doesn’t account for reduced calls resulting from priority dispatch
- Only one a day reductions
- 23 rescue units now in the County with 10 in City –
- May need to look at alternative shift model if run pilot program

#### **5. Separate EMS Ad Valorem Millage for a St. Petersburg EMS District Scenario-Member Comments**

- If St. Pete is not different then why treat different?
- Because you are not using the more cost efficient model.
- This is not going to happen – the model we have is “reasonable and customary” by special act and confirmed by court order.
- Under proposed special act County could fund the EMS up to 1.5 mill.
- Responsible for funding portion of the service – this is not where I suggest we go. Much prefer trying to control costs.
- Concerned with impact on cities with higher percentage of low income. The EMS under scenario 8.5 could become based on socio economic status?
- We don’t want to increase taxes, that is why we want to reduce costs



- City could have taken position that County is obligated to pay under court order. Instead we are approaching this with options but feel like we are being pushed into a corner – we did not unilaterally change the system – we are trying to work out a problem – we can possibly bring \$3+ million in solutions.
- We came because we have a problem and cannot afford the current deliver system without raising the millage – responsible to citizens who do not want to raise taxes – we have to also be sure the service is the most cost effective it can be and it is not in St. Pete. Priority dispatch is designed to reduce calls and then costs.
- Non-starter – millage that is twice the rest of the county makes no sense. The County Commission has not blessed this – these are for discussion.
- The County did not create this problem – every part of our budgets have been cut except first responder – we need to look at cost cutting opportunities.
- Heard all day that you are different, but why not here?
- We all have a responsibility to comply with the special act and the court order that defined it – we are different but want to work together for a sustainable model.
- We want to help but if we are too big a problem for you then cut us out – don't bankrupt us – we did start talking about pilot programs and opportunity to explore mutual solutions to the cost issues.
- In 1989 the County sued the City and lost – transport is not on the table – we are charged with keeping people in our city safe – no one came in with a comparable to a like sized city – you are proposing to institute priority dispatch against our wish and still looking to run our fire department
- IPS report which said 8.8 million with 7 million from St. Pete, ignores service calls. IPS report says we are different – yes we want cost efficiency but doing by cutting benefits to our firefighters – we offered possible solutions today.
- Note this is a separate millage for EMS not general tax revenue.
- Consider cutting millage elsewhere to raise EMS millage?
- All of us willing to look at every opportunity but the St Pete provider model is the most expensive. You may need to layoff personnel but we cannot tell City where to make cuts while continuing to provide cost effective service to citizens.
- The model that everyone else in the County uses is working and cost effective, but you are choosing to do something else – we cannot pay more for services you provide – you have more calls and need more transport
- Agree – but if we are expensive and bogging down the system why would #6 not be county position?

#### **6. Exit of City entirely from Pinellas County EMS System Scenario- Member Comments**

- If we are too expensive why is this not the solution for the County?
- The County is asking the City to look at the other model and consider opportunities for cutting costs.
- Why pay us more than others? Page 119 – County paying more? No, the end of the column indicates County cost is less
- What would you do about mutual aid?
- In this scenario we would stay in – donor in some communities and recipient in others – reasonable and customary. Mutual aid is a given
- Some operational concerns
- Mutual aid geographically driven
- Still have not heard why 8.6 is not acceptable solution to the County – it is not my preference –
- Makes a fragmented system – County has oversight over EMS, it is also expensive.
- Same argument for number 3 – 3&6 are the biggest difference and are worth looking at if we cannot get to an joint agreement – if not either of those then we need to find efficiencies
- 6 is acceptable just as 5 would be – if you want to be different

- 8.6 is not acceptable – it is not necessary. We need to get the job done and not take easy way out – my concern is whether St. Pete has done the math and can make #6 work, make sure it could work
- I'm against breaking apart an effective system – address the problem over a period of years
- Not the City's first preference either.
- Can we agree it could be phased in and it is not a \$7 million immediate impact? Reduction at that level is unacceptable and involves privatizing functions as in #3.
- Important to not consider the County proposal or option – I remain open to reviewing all options – 3, 5 and 6 all involve someone providing and paying for the service – working together is the best model to serve citizens, breaking the system up is not the best way to go. Under scenario 6, who makes the call and what would happen to the court order?
- We would both have to agree to eliminate the court order.
- I do not support 8.6 either – takes us back to 1970's – bad precedent – people elected us to make smart rational decisions – they do not want us suing each other – we cannot manage EMS with millage increases – need a combination of efforts.
- Note that the County study says under scenario #6 the City would lose 4.5 million, which is less than 7 million cut from County.

## **J. NEXT STEPS AND CLOSING**

**In light of the perspectives shared today, are there any options or strategies going forward that should be considered?**

*Member perspectives on the meeting and next steps.*

- Did not like the idea of the ultimatum of cuts – gained positive things today – know each persons stance – common ground to build on – stick with status quo for this year and look for opportunities –
- Coming to this issue with fresh perspective, fresh eyes. Willing to meet as needed for further discussions – maybe on other issues once or twice a year have a dialogue – we have common citizens – look to future consolidation. I am concerned about what I read in the paper regarding County public relations work. Going forward need to stop p.r. battle and work together.
- County did not bring this to you, as an ultimatum – I have not made a decision on this – no vote on this yet – this system is not sustainable – everything should be on the table including consolidation and transport if we want a solution
- Good discussion – we are meeting at the eleventh hour with deadline next October – I would like to see comparisons with other Cities our size – including employment center, entertainment, etc. – if we agree system will not be the same, then wait on implementing priority dispatch if it will not save money initially – it would be an act of good faith as we try to work through options
- Need actuarial data – need to prevent spiraling costs – County commission talking about issues affecting the City – we are considering a council of governments – we respect you as biggest city but others need to be included too – want to move toward something different, 18 districts is not efficient
- Focus should be cost control – pensions, evening dispatch option, etc. – I would like to see priority dispatch in a pilot to help define savings – take a look at moving to a hybrid system to drive down costs – ponder dealing with those who abuse the system for their medical care – work on the issues to narrow the gap
- Issue has been around many years – we are getting together late – we have to vote in 2012 before system is bankrupt in 2013 – good ideas today that helps us but not all the way – have to change the way we think – any way you frame millage increase, people will still be unhappy with it – I would like to see St. Pete look for other options – tough decisions – we serve the same people

- There are things we can do to make our good system more cost effective – good, promising ideas on the table today – more steps toward the reduction needed
- Willing to try anything except status quo, including ideas on alternative transport in a pilot – where we can go in county to look at fire based pilot and a Sunstar pilot within the City for cost comparisons
- Fund fair reasonable costs – remember county sued the city – look for cost cutting measures but will look at best practices of comparable Florida cities – we can not be run the same as other small communities – why is 7 million all coming to St. Pete? Why file legislation? We are here to look at options including transport – I support option 6 – I represent the people of St. Pete
- It has taken us since June to schedule this meeting – yeoman effort by staff to put together this notebook – my take away: thirty years of saying yes created this problem – lack of common sense on list of what service has to respond to set an expectation to call 911 for any need – We need cost reductions but do not like any of these options – need more thinking on hybrid approach to service – partial divorces never work – I think this issue is a prime subject for another county wide referendum
- Good meeting – helps to be across the table from each other – IPS study is from a consultant – County commission has not come to grips with the issues – I think the solution is a combination of what is in here – scrub the numbers, including pension, cost containment is key to savings – need a sense of urgency
- This was good – none of the scenarios acceptable – carving us out or separate district is not good – cost containment is good – but start with level of service you want and then figure out how to pay for it – County has legal obligation to fund reasonable and customary, nowhere does it say fair and equitable – we need time, status quo is not acceptable – committed to work together – not all on the shoulders of St. Pete – renewed commitment to find efficiencies
- Citizens have never understood the redundancy – suggestions today for hybrid or pilots were good – but not adequate time to judge pilots before need to make decisions next year – need to look at costs of paramedics plus for example
- Thank staff for putting the book together – we could not have done today what we did without it – don't agree with the idea of a referendum, we were elected to make decisions, even tough ones, some soon – as soon as January – continue to look for cost cuts in County government – cutting paramedics plus is funded by user fees, not millage rate – thank you for meeting with us and putting ideas on the table – raising the millage is not viable option
- Staff did a great job and basis for future discussions – don't want to see what we do adversely affect service to our citizens – time is important to an effective emergency system – we have a world class system, it is the cost we are struggling with – need time, pilots, etc. but the city needs something different than 7 million cuts next year or then left with no choice but go to court – we cannot devastate our system by taking 7 million out – deferring priority dispatch would be olive branch of good faith – adding a commissioner or two to meet with teams to look at future – ask County for alternative approaches to devastating cuts – referendum? Had one and vote allowed up to 1.5 mills to support the system – we can make the system work for ten years under that cap – don't be offended if we use the courts to keep our system in place – ask commission to come back with alternative proposal – like the communication but time is of the essence to protect the system moving forward – consider asking each council/commission's experts to present to the other with opportunity for each set of elected officials to ask questions of the others experts
- St. Pete not willing to look at different delivery model
- Depends on what it does to our system – we have looked at other systems – including fire based transport
- Need to work together to establish a model that works for both under court definition of reasonable and customary
- Still have eighteen other providers we are responsible to

- Cost and timing are the key issues
- Based on what I heard we can dialogue about fire transport in the city
- Add chairs of each commission/council with group working on potential cost cutting options

#### **Next Step Ideas for Consideration**

- **Communication:** Continue to improve communication and build trust. Consider some regular joint meetings to brief each other on issues etc. Consider developing a Council of Governments in the County to deal with County wide issues.
- **Information.** Develop some information on comparisons of EMS with cities of St. Pete's size. Continue the work in creating the briefing book and update it periodically.
- **Jointly Engage.** Consider as an incentive to engage further in jointly finding solutions for the EMS, the deferral of the priority dispatch for phase 3 (which does not have significant short term cost containment benefits).
- Continue to jointly engage (at staff and elected levels) in assessing, exploring and committing to cost cutting measures (some identified in the joint meeting). Consider what hybrids can be created from the scenarios to help achieve cost containment.
- **Plan to Meet to Continue the Dialogue and Search for Solutions.** The Chairs should meet with the administrators to develop a path towards reconvening a joint meeting to seek to reach consensus on cost containment measures for EMS and other matters touched on during the Joint meeting. Possibly considering asking some electeds from each body to serve on the collaborative EMS staff team.

## Appendix # 2 Meeting Evaluation Summary



### PINELLAS COUNTY EMS AUTHORITY & ST. PETERSBURG CITY COUNCIL JOINT MEETING

#### MEMBER EVALUATION FORM SUMMARY

October 31, 2011

Collaborative Labs at St. Petersburg College  
Largo, Florida

**Pinellas County Commission Members responding:** Susan Latvala, Chair, John Morroni, Vice Chair, Nancy Bostock, Neil Brickfield, Norm Roche, Karen Seel, Ken Welch

**St. Petersburg City Council Members responding:** Jim Kennedy, Chair, Karl Nurse, Vice Chair, Leslie Curran, Jeff Danner, Bill Dudley, Steve Kornell, Wengay "Newt" Newton, Herbert Polson

*Members evaluated the meeting using a 10 to 0 rating scale, where 10 means totally agree and 0 means totally disagree with a set of statements regarding the Joint Meeting.*

| JOINT MEETING EVALUATION STATEMENTS  | City<br>Avg.         | County<br>Avg.         | Combined<br>Avg.         |
|--|----------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>1. Please assess the overall meeting.</b>   |                      |                        |                          |
| The agenda packet was very useful.   | 8.75                 | 9.0                    | 8.86                     |
| The objectives for the meeting were stated at the outset.  | 8.0                  | 8.8                    | 8.31                     |
| Overall, the objectives of the meeting were fully achieved.  | 6.13                 | 7.6                    | 6.69                     |
| <b>2. Do you agree that each of the following meeting objectives was achieved?</b>   | <i>City<br/>Avg.</i> | <i>County<br/>Avg.</i> | <i>Combined<br/>Avg.</i> |
| • To provide an opportunity for the elected Commissioners and Council Members to review and discuss the current EMS model and emergency medical service provision in the city and throughout the county; | 9.25                 | 8.50                   | 8.93                     |
| • To review city and county perspectives on a problem statement and discuss and seek a shared statement of the common EMS challenges currently faced by the County and the City;                         | 8.0                  | 8.40                   | 8.15                     |
| • To review, clarify and share perspectives on the questions implications and issues of various financial forecasts;   | 8.25                 | 8.00                   | 8.14                     |
| • To clarify the questions and issues with the County study and resulting proposal for changes to the EMS system;  | 7.38                 | 7.83                   | 7.57                     |
| • To clarify the questions and issues with the City's service delivery approach and comparative costs.   | 7.38                 | 8.00                   | 7.64                     |
| • To discuss and share perspectives on the questions, issues and concerns with various City service delivery operational scenarios; and  | 8.25                 | 8.50                   | 8.36                     |
| • To identify and discuss next steps and potential options going forward.  | 8.00                 | 7.33                   | 7.71                     |



|  |                      |                        |                          |
|--|----------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>3. Please tell us how well the facilitators helped the members engage in the meeting.</b> | <i>City<br/>Avg.</i> | <i>County<br/>Avg.</i> | <i>Combined<br/>Avg.</i> |
| The facilitators made sure the concerns of all members were heard.                           | 9.50                 | 8.50                   | 8.43                     |
| The facilitators helped us arrange our time well.  | 9.38                 | 8.20                   | 8.92                     |
| The members followed the direction of the Facilitators.                                      | 9.25                 | 8.20                   | 8.85                     |
| <b>4. Please tell us your level of satisfaction with the meeting?</b>                        | <i>City<br/>Avg.</i> | <i>County<br/>Avg.</i> | <i>Combined<br/>Avg.</i> |
| Overall, I am very satisfied with the meeting.   | 7.88                 | 7.60                   | 7.77                     |
| I was very satisfied with the services provided by the Facilitators.                         | 9.63                 | 8.60                   | 9.23                     |
| I am satisfied with the outcome of the meeting.  | 6.38                 | 7.40                   | 6.77                     |
| <b>5. Please tell us how well the next steps were explained?</b>                             | <i>City<br/>Avg.</i> | <i>County<br/>Avg.</i> | <i>Combined<br/>Avg.</i> |
| I know what the next steps following this meeting will be.                                   | 4.67                 | 6.60                   | 5.55                     |
| I know who is responsible for the next steps.  | 4.67                 | 6.0                    | 5.20                     |

**6. What did you like best about the meeting?**

- The fact that the County and City got together to discuss issue.
- Lunch.
- Independent facilitator.
- Orderly back and forth.
- The facilitators- they did a great job.
- Opportunity to “air” our feelings- face-to-face responses.
- Professional facilitators.
- Bob kept the meeting focused and pretty much on time. Breaks were long enough and lunch was not rushed either.
- Meeting face-to-face.

**7. How could the meeting have been improved?**

- Would have been good to have “experts” present the alternative scenarios.
- We could have gotten a better location.
- The next steps process was fussy.
- It was good.
- Should have done this 2-3 months ago.
- Cooler room (A/C)
- Overhead screens words can be larger- too hard to see from far away seats.
- The meeting was probably as good as it can be.

**8. Do you have any other comments that you would like to add?**

- Facilitators did a great job. Bold prep + in session.
- Hope we can get together again and have dialog.
- Good start! Need additional work on issues. (joint process)
- Follow up meeting is essential to success of this issue.
- Great job!



## Appendix # 3 Public Comment Forms



### **PINELLAS COUNTY EMS AUTHORITY & ST. PETERSBURG CITY COUNCIL JOINT MEETING**

**October 31, 2011**

Collaborative Labs at St. Petersburg College  
13805 58th Street N.  
Largo, Florida

### **PUBLIC COMMENT FORMS**

**Name:** Linda Hallas, City Attorney  
**Organization:** City of South Pasadena  
**Joint Meeting Date:** October 31, 2011

**Please make your comment/s as specific as possible. Feel free to offer suggestions to address your concerns.**

**COMMENT:** Level of Service involves more than response time, it also includes the number and skill level of the medics that respond. The County medical director requires the First Responders to send a minimum of 2 people to each call one paramedic and one EMT. Many calls require more medics. Why does the County propose to pay for 1 position on an ALS engine when the County requires 2 to respond?? Over 85% of the calls run by ALS engine are EMS not fire and the county EMS millage should pay for 2 positions not one.

Scenario 2: The only reason the County is claiming a fir fighter/medic efficiency is because they only want to pay for one medic on each ALS engine, yet the "authority" requires a 2 medic response. Just because they have forces this on some cities doesn't make it right.

The County should consider putting up some red light cameras and dedicate the process to EMS funding.

The County Commission announcing that they will not raise millage is unreasonable. They have the obligation to fully fund the system and they need to consider F.F. transport because the County can't afford to let Paramedics Plus continue to walk away with the profitable portion of the system.

The Chairman's statement regarding the Paramedics Plus users fees being a separate pot of money is inappropriate that is exactly the place the money needs to come from if she refuses to increase millage.

**Name:** Commissioner Norman Atherton  
**Organization:** Palm Harbor Fire District  
**Joint Meeting Date: October 31, 2011**

**COMMENT:** After much discussion, not much done, the big mistake was leaving 17 other responding with no voice in these discussions. You have left out of these discussion 62,000 residents in P.H. The system does not belong to the County or the Cities but to the taxpayer of Pinellas CTY.

# Appendix # 4 Public Observer Sign In Sheets

Observer Sign In

| Name (Please Print) | Agency Represented         |
|---------------------|----------------------------|
| Don Sayre           | Tarpon Springs Fire Rescue |
| Jack Powell         | PC Atty Office             |
| Mark WEINKAMITZ     | ELTSFD                     |
| Tom Jamison         | ELTSFD                     |
| Kevin Hammigan      | SPFD                       |
| Bob Markford        | Palm Harbor Fire           |
| Bruce Haddock       | City of Oldsmar            |
| John Hyland         | St. Pete #11               |

## Observer Sign In

| Name (Please Print) | Agency Represented              |
|---------------------|---------------------------------|
| Jim Millican        | Lealman Fire District           |
| JAMES Apple         | Palm Harbor Fire District       |
| Norm Atherton       | "                               |
| Joe Petrillo        | "                               |
| Robert Polk         | Pinellas Suncoast Fire & Rescue |
| Ann Lindberg        | St. Petersburg Times            |
| Tim W. Mohr         | SP Times                        |
| Robert Marotto      | St Pete Fire Rescue             |
| Leslie Nolan        | City of Belleair Beach          |
| CHARLIE FANT        | TREASURE ISLAND F.D.            |
| Michael Gustafson   | Pinellas Park                   |

## Observer Sign In

| Name (Please Print)  | Agency Represented     |
|----------------------|------------------------|
| LT. Scott Zweifel    | ST. PETE FIRE & RESCUE |
| Daniel Klement       | SPC                    |
| Charlie Gerdes       | self                   |
| James Marenkovic     | Gulfport Fire Dept.    |
| Doug Lewis           | PP                     |
| Will New             | SPFR                   |
| Linda Hallas         | City of So. Pasadena   |
| MARTIN MORAN         | CLEARWATER FIRE        |
| Chris Walker         | Tampa Springs          |
| Andrew Williams      | MedFLEET               |
| LARRY J. WILLIAMS    | SELF                   |
| Regina Kradash       | P.P.                   |
| Matt Sporz           | Safety Harbor          |
| Kevin Doolery        | SPFR                   |
| MICHAEL LEWIS        | SPFR                   |
| Christopher Spafford | SPFR                   |
| BRAD WILLIAMS        | SPFR                   |
| Leslie Waters        | Seminole               |

## Observer Sign In

| Name (Please Print) | Agency Represented         |
|---------------------|----------------------------|
| Don Sayre           | Tarpon Springs Fire Rescue |
| Jack Powell         | PC Atty Office             |
| Mark WEINKAMITZ     | ELTSFD                     |
| Tom Jamison         | ELTSFD                     |
| Kevin Hummigan      | SPFD                       |
| Bob Markford        | Palm Harbor Fire           |
| Bruce Haddock       | City of Oldsmar            |
| John Mykars         | St. Pete #1                |