

8/25/03  
Handout

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**PINELLAS ASSEMBLY TASK GROUP ON FIRE AND EMS**

**Disclaimer:**

**This document is intended ONLY as a paper of observations for discussion purposes. It is not intended to be construed in any way as recommendations from the Pinellas Assembly Task Group on Fire and EMS.**

**The observations contained herein are the result of issues raised in the presentations made to the task group, and have been formatted as issues to discuss within the membership of the task group.**

**Issues for discussion;**

1. Develop a program that provides for the payment in lieu of taxes for those properties, which for various reasons are exempt from ad valorem taxation but whose need for and utilization of Fire and EMS services is commensurate with property, which currently pays ad valorem taxes.

*Relationship to the Task Force Goals; Distribution of costs.*

2. Continue development and refine the program of joint purchasing initiated by the Fire Chiefs with participation in the use of the selected vendors a condition of the fire contracts and receiving of County funds.

*Relationship to the Task Force Goals; Assessing levels of service and cost.*

3. Initiate steps to make all Pinellas County unincorporated areas, as much as possible, one consolidated fire district with uniform Fire taxation County wide, while continuing to contract with the nearest appropriate fire and EMS agency for services.

*Relationship to the Task Force Goals; More equitable assignment of costs from consolidating districts.*

4. Conduct a study of the issues, successes and failures of counties in Florida, which have consolidated fire and EMS services under county government and compare it to the current Pinellas County model. The purpose of which is to determine the cost and benefits of such an initiative.

*Relationship to the Task Force Goals; Evaluate the potential for savings, improved services, and more equitable assignment of costs from consolidating districts.*

5. Initiate a surcharge on Utilities for the funding of the Pinellas County Hazardous Materials Team.

*Relationship to the Task Force Goals; More equitable assignments of costs.*

6. Initiate an ordinance and policy of diligently pursuing cost recovery from
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commercial carriers and entities whose enterprise results in a hazardous materials incident resulting in costs to the emergency services.

*Relationship to the Task Force Goals; More equitable assignment of costs.*

7. Considering that the availability of technical rescue, below grade and confined space rescue is provided through the Pinellas County fire services. The result of which permits various utilities and other agencies to rely on public services rather than a requirement to provide their own. The County should initiate a policy of soliciting fees or contributions from those agencies to continue to provide those services.

*Relationship to the Task Force Goals; More Equitable assignment of costs.*

8. On the issue of the Fire Service, Emergency Medical Service component conducting ambulance transportation as part of their services. A Countywide policy should be initiated that permits Fire Service Rescue units that are equipped and licensed as ambulances to transport EMS patients under liberal guidelines when it is in the best interest of the patient and provides a higher level of emergency medical services. It should be noted that who ever transports the patient, the revenue to the County is the same.

It should be also recommended that the County, which is one of the approving authorities, place no undue restrictions on licensing units as ambulances.

*Relationship to the Task Force Goals; Evaluation of whether costs might be improved by combining EMS with partially or fully consolidation fire protection services.*

9. Following a statistical review of ISO ratings throughout Pinellas County, The County should act as facilitator and begin an initiative to have ISO rate Pinellas County as a whole. The purpose of which is to improve the classification for fire insurance purposes with a target of class three or better. Existing entities whose classification is currently at a three or better would remain in that class while those below a class three would achieve an improved rating.

The result of the above would reduce fire insurance premiums on commercial properties and to a lesser extent on the fire portion of homeowners insurance throughout the County.

*Relationship to the Task Force Goals; Conduct a study County wide to assess levels of service.*

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