

Pinellas Assembly

1 st. Draft Recommendations

9-30-03

Taskforce Mandate; Item A, Savings

Recommendation 1

It is recommended that a study be undertaken by consultants with the expertise to determine if Pinellas County, as a whole, can improve its ISO (Insurance Service Office) classification to a three (3) or better. It is further recommended that if the finding is favorable, to then formally request the ISO to make an official survey of the County as a whole.

Background

This recommendation is intended to explore the opportunities of a more favorable fire insurance rating Countywide. The purpose being to improve the economic impact of more favorable fire insurance rates on primarily commercial, and to a lesser recognizable extent, and residential properties.

Procedurally, a pre ISO survey should be done by a consultant to determine the ability of the County to achieve a rating of three (3) or better. If the results are favorable a formal survey by the Insurance Services Office (ISO) could then be requested. If the results are unfavorable the findings of the pre ISO survey would provide a roadmap for Pinellas County and its fire services agencies to provide planned enhancements for future ISO improvement endeavors.

The benefits that would encourage an improved ISO rating and result in reduced fire insurance rates are such items as improvements that are currently being made in the infrastructure, more specifically the water supply. Joint training that is being conducted by many fire service organizations in the County, Central dispatch which consistently receives the highest of marks in performance and services, and automatic aid and nearest unit dispatching are also benefits that support improved ratings.

As a condition of requesting a formal County wide ISO survey, it would be a condition of the request that any fire service entity or municipality currently with a three rating or better would incur no reduction in their current status.

Fire Insurance rates are one of the significant overhead costs to businesses and manufacturing which might locate in Pinellas County. Any reduction in those fire insurance rates would be a favorable mark in terms of locating a business in this County of Pinellas.

Taskforce Mandate; Item A, Savings

Recommendation 2

It is recommended that the practice of joint purchasing for expendable supplies and commodities, uniforms and equipment be supported and encouraged in the fire service Countywide. It is further recommended that a consortium of risk managers and/or purchasing directors participate in an exploratory study to determine if savings could be achieved by jointly purchasing workers compensation insurance, employee healthcare benefits and other non traditional programs where joint negotiations and procurement would result in cost reductions.

Background

The Fire Chiefs of Pinellas County, by their own initiative, have instituted joint purchasing. However, continued improvement for cost savings can be accomplished by all parties joining in a uniform policy of participation in the program.

Many Fire Chief in the County are utilizing the State purchasing contract, and utilizing the Pride Industries (prison industries) as a source of some supplies at competitive costs. They are also utilizing rolling apparatus purchasing contracts that are currently (at the time of purchase) in effect in other jurisdictions. This avoids duplicating costly specification writing and procurement processes which have already been undertaken by the participating jurisdiction. These practices should be applauded, encouraged and endorsed.

The subject of rolling apparatus requires some discussion. Due to the variations in geographic and demographic complexions of the several response districts in the County, unique requirements of fire apparatus design and capability is required. Therefore, it is NOT recommended to purchase rolling fire apparatus under this program. It IS recommended that the current practice be continued wherever possible. That is of purchasing needed apparatus off purchase contracts that are currently outstanding with other fire service and government agencies where specifications for purchase meet the needs of the Pinellas County fire agency making such purchase.

Fire fighter uniforms, protective clothing, fire hose, etc can be specified for joint purchase with the specifications written broadly enough to meet the needs of the multiple agencies but still achieve the cost savings available through joint purchasing.

This recommendation, to be successful would require a uniform policy and commitment of municipal and fire district administrators to participate in such. One such means might be a contractual agreement between the County and the agency receiving County funds under contract, that eligibility for receipt of funds might be contingent on participation in some form of joint purchasing.