

Raleigh Fire Department Historical Society 2009 Kick-Off Meeting Notes

Recorded by Mike Legeros

Attendees

Tues., Feb. 24

- Amato, Gary
- Harkey, Jeff
- Henshaw, Tim
- Legeros, Mike
- Parker, Jan
- Parker, Jim
- Ray, K.C.
- Walters, Alan
- Woodlief, Phil

Weds., Feb. 25

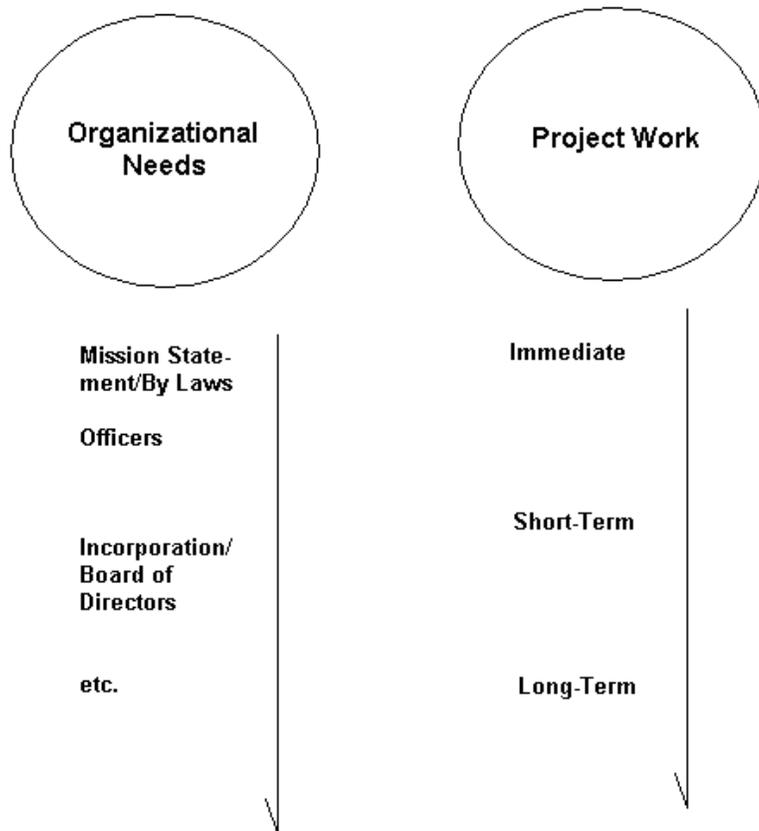
- Averette, Paul
- Barefoot, David
- Chamblee, Jan
- Jones, Welton
- Legeros, Mike
- Walters, Alan
- Wilson, Lee

Agenda

- Welcome from Chief Walters
- Welcome from Mike Legeros
- Projects in Process
- Committees Needed
- Call For Volunteers
- Call For Discussions
- Q&A

Diagram

As explained by Mike Legeros, there are two parallel paths of activities envisioned at present. First are those administrative activities needed to organize a historical society, and range from crafting a mission statement and by-laws, to incorporation as a non-profit. Second are projects, which range from immediate and ongoing projects, to long-term, future plans.



Projects in Process

Mike Legeros described some of the historical projects presently in progress:

- **RFDHS web site on RFD computer network.**
Created late last year, and used to both post old photos and other history bits, and RFDHS meeting news. Only available to active personnel, however.
- **History talks by Mike Legeros.**
Hour-long presentation on history of RFD, from volunteer through full-paid era. Given to recruits during fire academy. Shown to public during Fire Prevention Week. Available for active personnel by request, on per-Battalion basis, and conducted at EMT stations.
- **Newsletter as retiree outreach.**
The quarterly newsletter has been produced for two years now. It is land-mailed to all retirees, and has proven a valuable tool for outreach. Active personnel also receive the newsletter.
- **Public Safety Center display area.**
Fire Administration has asked Alan Walters and Mike Legeros to serve as liaison to the Public Safety Center designers, who are planning a lobby display area for both fire and policy historical items.
- **Public Safety Center inventory.**
Alan Walters and Mike Legeros recently completed an initial inventory of items,

consisting of a small set of artifacts that represent the variety of artifacts that could be displayed in the PS Center. They ranged in size from badges to the old steam.

Committees

Alan Walters and Mike Legeros described the committees that RFDHS needs, as it gets organized. They also asked the open question of "are these the right committees" and "are other committees needed?"

By-Laws / Mission Statement

This committee is envisioned as leading activities to create by-laws and a mission statement, as these are "foundation items" and required for incorporating the HS as a non-profit organization. Alan and Mike have a copy of the Winston-Salem FD historical society by-laws, which we can use as a seed document. That group was organized a couple years ago.

Volunteers:

- Amato, Gary
- Henshaw, Tim
- Woodall, Andy*

* Not present, contacted earlier.

Fundraising

This committee is envisioned as brainstorming on, and leading activities related to raising money for the HS.

Volunteers:

- Barefoot, David
- Rhebock, John*
- Walters, Phillip*

*Not present, contacted earlier.

Apparatus & Station 28 Space

This committee is envisioned as leading activities related to the maintenance, operation, and restoration of the city's antique apparatus. This committee is expected to be comprised or led by members already working with the city's antique apparatus, which presently consists of a 1905 steamer, a 1926 American LaFrance, a 1950 Mack, a trailer with 1950s rescue boats, and a 1982 Mack.

This committee would also lead activities to utilize a bedroom at Station 28 that has been provided for HS use. The room is envisioned as a storage area for antique apparatus supplies and artifacts.

Volunteers:

- Amato, Gary
- Chamblee, Jan
- Henshaw, Tim
- Woodlief, Phil

Artifact Inventory & Acquisitions

This committee is envisioned as leading activities to conduct an inventory of all historical artifacts in possession of the Raleigh Fire Department, as well as develop processes and procedures for artifacts loaned, donated, or acquired by the HS.

Volunteers:

- Legeros, Mike

Artifact Storage & Station 23 Space

This committee is envisioned as leading renovations of the half-story above Station 23, and two rooms targeted for artifact storage. One room is envisioned as having extensive shelf space, for storing log books and written records. The second room is envisioned for storage of hand-equipment and small artifacts.

Volunteers:

- Barefoot, David
- Legeros, Mike
- Thomas, _____*
- Walters, Alan

* Woodworking resource at Station 23.

Heavy/Large Artifact Handling

This committee is envisioned as leading the handling of heavy or large artifacts, such as the 1870 alarm bell.

Volunteers:

- McLaurin, Frank*
- USAR Team

*Not present, contacted earlier.

Active Member & Retiree Outreach

This committee is envisioned as leading activities related to communication and contact with active, retired, and former members.

Volunteers:

- Legeros, Mike

Long Range Committees

2012 is both the 100th anniversary of the fully-paid RFD, and the 150th anniversary of the volunteer RFD being re-organized. Two longer-range committees are proposed:

2012 Yearbook

This committee would lead production of a yearbook for 2012, which would be similar but likely bigger/better/thicker than the 2007 yearbook. This committee should expect a minimum of 18 months from conception to fulfillment of books, and probably longer to incorporate more material.

Volunteers:

- Legeros, Mike

2012 Anniversary

This committee would lead organization of activities for 2012, which could range from a parade on Fayetteville Street, to birthday parties for the FD, to a formal fireman's ball.

Volunteers:

- Walters, Alan
- Rhebock, John*

*Not present, contacted earlier.

Suggested Committees

Nominating

This committee is envisioned as lead the nomination of officers to the HS, and processes and procedures therein.

Events / State Fireman's Convention

This committee is envisioned as leading HS activities related to events, such as the State Fireman's Convention. Or, this could be a committee dedicated entirely to HS activities related to the State Fireman's Convention.

Membership & Marketing

This committee is envisioned as leading HS activities related to membership (getting members, retaining members, etc.) and marketing (branding, logos, messaging, etc.).

Volunteers:

- Harkey, Jeff (Marketing)

Recorded During Discussions

- Record the names of people who donate artifacts, so they can be recognized with signs/plaques for public display.
- Track the names of people who donate artifacts.
- Develop SOPs for acquisition, determining/recording ownership, process for loaning artifacts, etc.
- Nomination committee for officers?
- Booth at NC State Fireman's Association?
- What kind of non-profit is planned? Pursue tax-deductible.
- Investigate availability of domain names.
- Fireman's ball, perhaps an event for 2012?
- Committees should each appoint a spokesperson or chair.
- The committee presentation/solicitation should be repeated at one of the monthly retiree breakfasts at Pam's restaurant.

Discussion Notes

- The question was raised of outside participation. Should HS work start with only active and retired personnel, plus key friends of the department, like Legeros and Harkey? What

about others? Area public safety personnel? Other city employees? Local and regional fire buffs? General citizens? The group shared a variety of opinions. It would be nice if HS interest and participation originated with RFD, noted one. But what about highly motivated people outside RFD, noted another, who may have far greater availability for participation?

The example was offered of a citizen who may have money to give or donate, but who would be excluded if the HS stays inclusive. Mike Legeros noted that he has extensive contacts via his blog and other avenues, but he has made no mention of HS efforts as of yet. No action was recommended, though it was suggested that by-laws could answer or accommodate this question.

- The suggestion was made to consider having a HS presence at the state fireman's convention, which will be held in Raleigh this year. The possible cost of display space, the location of display space, and the appeal to the convention audience was discussed. Mike Legeros noted, on a related note, that he has already submitted a program proposal to the show planners, offering to conduct either an RFD history talk or a program on researching FD histories, and which would incorporate his RFD research. There was also discussion of utilizing space that RFD will already have, at the convention.
- The suggestion was made to consider a Nominating Committee, to be used in the process of nominating and electing HS officers. This concept was discussed some.
- The suggestion was made to consider an Events Committee, in the context of the state fireman's convention and other activities. It was suggested that perhaps the HS President, when officers have been elected, would lead suggestion/selection/etc. around Events.
- Questions were asked about donated artifacts. Is the donor name recorded? Will it be displayed somewhere, with the artifact? Recording/displaying the name could be a good way to increasing donations. A procedure or policy for donating, or loaning artifacts, was suggested, along with a means to determine or establish ownership of artifacts.
- Mike Legeros mentioned how the Winston-Salem FD historical society, organized a couple years ago, incorporates a high-level FD member into their organizational structure. As written in the by-laws, the role-- Bat. Chief or higher, perhaps-- serves as a liaison/advocate/guardian/representative for the city's interests, and provides an official tie between the non-profit and the city agency.
- The issue of insurance for antique apparatus was discussed.
- The availability of information about the HS was discussed. Minutes, notes, and other records from these meetings should be made available to active personnel. The internal HS web site was discussed, and it was noted that no public-facing HS web site is available at present.

Chief Walters and Mike Legeros took the action item to investigate domain names, to begin working toward a public-facing web site, which would at a minimum make meeting information available to everyone. Mike Legeros is recording notes from these meetings and will distribute to everyone who attended both nights, as well as make available to others. He may post on the RFDHS internal web site, or may create a new/temporary public-facing web site for the notes.

- The issue of non-profit corporations was discussed, either tax-deductible or non-tax-deductible types. It was recommended that our group pursue tax-deductible.
- The idea of a fireman's ball was suggested. Some of the attendees have been asked if RFD would hold a fireman's ball, where people dress fancy and personnel would wear dress uniforms. Charlotte has such a ball (each year?). This could be a fund-raising event as well. Perhaps an ideal event for the 2012 anniversary year.
- How the historical society will treat former members, who left prior to retirement, was discussed. They are also part of RFD history, and will be included in what is recorded/presented/compiled/etc. For example, the city's first full-time black firefighter, hired in 1963, left after a couple years.

The group also discussed the potential for Public Safety Center displays on fire department subgroups, such as black firefighters, female firefighters, auxiliary firefighters during World War II, the volunteer fire companies, and so on.

Notes on Note Taking

- For people names, ranks and affiliations are omitted.
- Outside of Alan and Mike, names of speakers and people who suggested and discussed things are omitted. Partly because they aren't remembered, or weren't recorded. Partly because these are not verbatim notes.
- What are the expectations or best practices regarding notes and note-taking going forward? Ideas and input welcome.