

Raleigh Fire Department Historical Society

Meeting Minutes

June 6, 2010, 7:30 p.m.

History Trailer, Keeter Training Center

Attendees:

- Alan Walters
- David Barefoot
- Jan Chamblee
- Lee Wilson
- Mike Davis
- Mike Legeros
- Tim Wall

Agenda:

- Retiree Day feedback
- Trailer next steps
- Collection next steps
- Donations, promised or received
- Non-profit status update
- 2012 update
- Liability issues
- Retiree mailing list
- Ops 101 feedback

Summary:

This meeting ended up as more of a brainstorming session than a business meeting. Action items were few and far between, and the most notable of which was composing an e-mail message (to command staff, or troops) asking for suggestions on how to make the trailer accessible to personnel, while keeping everything secure. The below minutes are a bit less formal, this time around, with action items noted in bold.

Retiree Day Feedback

People heard good feedback on the trailer, from folks attending Retiree Day. Active and retired personnel really enjoyed the thing. We were a hit. Nothing bad

was said. Group discussed event attendance, as well as timing of the event in relation to a retiree luncheon conducted to a couple weeks prior. Greater spacing between the events is probably desired. For the next Retiree Day, in 2012, perhaps that can be recommended.

Wall asked if any attending retirees offered to donate items. Walters talked with C. B. Edwards, who subsequently donated his turnout gear, his helmet, shirt and cap badges, and an alarm box casing. His donation could be recognized in an upcoming newsletter issue, which might spur more interest or donations. Wall also said that he has old badges and maybe a helmet that he could donate.

The group also discussed quantities of items, and accepting multiples of items now versus later.

Ops 101 Feedback

Among the members of City Council who attended Saturday's Ops 101, two paid a visit to the history trailer, which was opened and with all three media screens activated (two computer slideshows, and a DVD of old movie footage). They were impressed with our efforts. They were pleased to hear that we're working on our non-profit status, and subsequent direction of fundraising. They suggested that we should get some North Carolina State University design students to create displays. Legeros indicated that he's planning to send a personal note to both of them, to thank them for visiting.

Trailer Next Steps

Legeros offered the suggestion that the trailer probably needs an "owner." Someone in charge or overseeing all "trailer stuff." He suggested Walters was ideal for that role.

More display cases are wanted/needed.

Access to the trailer was discussed at length. How can we open the trailer to personnel, while keeping the contents secure? Modifications to the trailer contents were discussed, such as adding Plexiglas to the fronts of the bookshelves that are serving as display shelves. Davis offered an anecdote about securing tools

in a truck. Just adding a camper shell was sufficient, without locking. Putting our items behind glass, and in a cabinet, may be sufficient to deter temptation.

Other access ideas included leaving a key in a lockbox, and letting KTC instructors take their students—or be responsible for their students—in the trailer. Would instructors mind taking 10 minutes at the end of their class, to open and then lock the trailer. And be responsible for the people visiting?

Outside students—personnel from other departments—would likely like to see the trailer, and it would be good to be able to show them. What about opening the trailer to the public? In fact, the “wow” factor might be even easier with public visitors.

Legeros suggested that we survey personnel, and ask their help for a solution. He suggested an e-mail to everyone, describing the problem, and requesting solutions. This was agreed as a good idea. Or maybe start with a note to command staff. **Action item: Legeros will draft such a message, and send to Walters for distribution.**

Other ideas were discussed for the trailer. We could present a multimedia show, centered around specific fires. Such as the Mangel fire. Play old radio traffic, along with professionally record narration or description of the fire, along with video or still images of the scene. **Action items: Legeros will ask the ECC if they have archived radio transmissions from long ago. Legeros will also inquire of WRAL and other news outlets if archived video is available.**

Legeros said that the trailer is perhaps the most “sexy” thing that RFDHS is doing these days. It will likely draw the greatest amount of interest and attention from people and perspective members.

Do we have a sign for the trailer? Negative. Walters has asked Ron Campbell about a sign in style similar to the education signs at fire stations.

Station 3

Fire Station 3 was repeatedly cited as a desired destination for RFDHS artifacts and an eventual museum. Davis asked if RFDHS knows for sure that Station 3 will

become available. Negative. The group discussed the present structure and its condition, the possible limitations of size, the surrounding property and its owners and uses. Davis asked if we had thought about asking Wake County fire departments and members for historical artifacts. Negative. Legeros offered the concept of expanding scope, and that such a museum project could be extended to statewide. Such as the Harrisburg Fire Museum in PA, which encompasses all of that state. He also discussed scope in the context of control. Broader scope means more people, means more pulls for power. It also means dilution. People would want to see histories other than just Raleigh.

Collection Next Steps

Legeros discussed the need for ownership or management of “collection tasks.” That is, all things related to the artifacts that RFDHS is collection, or managing. This includes hardware, uniforms, badges, photos, records, and log books. There is a need to inventory everything. We need to know what we have, and where it is located.

Legeros suggested himself as the “in charge” person for this. He noted that his strengths are less about people and more about things. He’s a back-end guy.

Walters indicated that light duty personnel have expressed interest in helping RFDHS, and could be utilized for this purpose. We need to inventory all trailer contents, as well as Station 23 storage space contents. Indexing of all log books at Station 23 is also desired. Legeros notes that climate controls at Station 23 need repair, before that story space is fit for summer habitation.

Antique Apparatus

Walters asked if any updates were available on the antique RFD apparatus that Tim Henshaw mentioned in the last meeting. No updates known. Wall asked for a review of antiques presently in RFD possession. They are the 1905 steamer, the 1926 pumper, the 1950 pumper, the 1982 pumper, and the rescue boats and trailer. The group discussed the risk of moving the oldest apparatus, and that they could be safest parked/stored in a museum. Legeros noted that he has a pending project with Gary Amato, to record knowledge on operating and maintaining the

1926 pumper. Davis asked if portable or rolling displays could be utilize, to take RFD history and put it on display in public locations. Legeros noted that Winston-Salem FDHS has a display/museum trailer that they utilized.

Non-Profit Status

Legeros provided this update. Incorporation with the state was done in March, and for a fee of \$65. Applying for federal non-profit tax status is in progress. We are using LegalZoom for the service. It will cost about \$900, including filing fee. Legeros handed out a summary of RFDHS accomplishments, to be included in the federal application.

Donations

Two donations were made or promised to RFD in prior months or years. Upon his death, retiree Charles Chappell left around \$5,000, for the purpose of funding apparatus (steamer?) restoration. To the best of everyone's knowledge, this money was never received by RFD. We need to inquire of the Chappell family. Also, in recent months, it is believed Chief Stanford received a small monetary donation, and is holding same. We need to inquire of him.

The group discussed donations in general. Walters has the idea of requesting \$1 per paycheck from personnel, in the style of United Way contributions. The group felt \$26 per year was a reasonable amount to request, and that many personnel and even retirees would readily give that amount.

Action item for Walters and Barefoot: Begin investigating how to make personnel donations happen.

2012 Update

Walters is forming a committee of command staff and personnel to brainstorm and plan for the fire department's 100th anniversary in 2012. The committee has met once. The members were given "homework," to think of ideas for 2012 events and activities. The members were asked to survey their crews and other personnel, and get input. The committee meets at the end of June.

Ideas for 2012 activities were discussed. Such as a Fireman's Ball, where members attend in dress uniforms. Commemorative or challenge coin. T-shirts.

Networking

Wall asked Legeros if he had reached out to the City Museum staff. Negative.

Legeros retains the action item to perform this action.

Liabilities

Gary Amato asked that the agenda contain a discussion of liability. He was not present, and the group discussed the subject a bit. No ready or obvious liabilities were identified. **Action item: Legeros will ask Amato for more information about his question.**

Photography Club

Walters talked about the photography club concept, which he believes could also generate interest and membership in RFDHS. The photography club would be a group of RFD members, interested in photography, and who could have regular meetings, and exchange knowledge. The club could be developed into an official arm of the fire department, much as such a function exists in Philadelphia.

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Raleigh Fire Department Historical Society Accomplishments / Milestones / Related Events

Mar 2008 –Historical society concept receives blessing from Fire Chief.

May 2008 – History room presented as part of Retiree Day. Mike Legeros coordinates creation of content including posters, handouts, charts, maps, and old movies.

Aug 2008 – Architects working on Public Safety Center designers meet with Alan Walters and Mike Legeros, to learn about the type and size of fire department historical artifacts, which could be displayed in a planned lobby display area.

Aug 2008 – E-mail address RFDhistory@ci.raleigh.nc.us created, and redirects to Alan Walters and Mike Legeros.

Aug 2008 – Frank McLaurin receives donation from water department, of 1950s rescue boats and trailer. They are moved to Station 28 for storage.

Sep 2008 – Mike Legeros conducts one-hour class on fire department history for new recruits at training center.

Sep 2008 – Survey distributed to department personnel, asking about their interest in RFDHS.

Sep 2008 – Smokehouse plaque dedicated at training center, that tells the story of the smokehouse, as built with bricks saved from Old Station 5. Mike Legeros delivers speech with the history. Project starts March 2008, led by Alan Walters.

Sep 2008 – Station 1 personnel move records and materials stored in downstairs bathroom to upstairs storage room.

Sep 2008 – Empty bedroom at Station 28 made available for historical society use. The room is later released, after space at the more strategically located Station 23 is made available.

Oct 2008 – First meetings are held with Walters, Legeros, and interested personnel and other people. The meetings are held on two nights in a classroom trailer at the Keeter Training Center.

Oct 2008 – Mike Legeros makes contact with Winston-Salem Fire Department History Society, to network. They provide copies of the WFSFHS articles of incorporation and by-laws, which will be used as templates for RFDHS.

Oct 2008 – Internal web site is created for RFDHS use, for posting organizational news and historical information. Site is utilized for two years, until content moved to external web site.

Nov 2008 – Yearbooks delivered from publisher. Project starts August 2007. Led by Alan Walters, with committee members Donald Carter, Donald Summers, Anthony Tant, Andrew Meier, Mike Legeros, and Lee Wilson. Historical materials and content created by Legeros. Monies left over from project total \$1062.56 and committee members agree to give to historical society, as seed money.

Nov 2008 – 1870 alarm bell ownership is transferred from North Carolina State University to the fire department in a ceremony at Station 1. Mike Legeros delivers a speech about the history of the bell. Project starts on/before March 2008, with Alan Walters approaching Fire Chief. Bell is physically removed from campus location using USAR personnel and led by Frank McLaurin in July 2008.

Nov 2008 – Mike Legeros learns of old photographs at Public Affairs. He visits office and makes digital copies of prints and negatives, over the course a couple months.

Jan 2009 – Fire Prevention transfers numerous artifacts and boxes to RFDHS, and represents the beginning of awareness of personnel, who begin contacting Walters and Legeros when they find old or historical items at stations and fire department facilities.

Jan 2009 – Alan Walters leads department discussion of resuming written log books, or improving processes using current computer-based daily records. The results are a DOI on recording daily activities using the computer system.

Jan 2009 – Walters and Legeros provide the Public Safety Center architects with a rough inventory of the types of items that could or would be displayed in a lobby display area.

Feb 2009 – Two kick-off meetings are held at Station 1. Sixteen people attend, including active and retired personnel, and citizens. Committees and interested parties are named.

Feb 2009 – Mike Legeros coordinates identification and removal of decades-worth of paper records from upstairs of alarm house at Station 1. Saved records are moved to Station 23. The remaining records are moved to downstairs, and subsequently removed by a shredding company.

Mar 2009 – Log books and records at Station 1 moved from the upstairs storage closet, to the upstairs storage room.

Mar 2009 – Mike Legeros purchases domain name raleighfirehistory.org. Internal web site RFDHS content moved to this external web site.

Mar 2009 – Yahoo mailing list raleighfirehistory@yahoo.com created for distribution of RFDHS information among members.

Mar 2009 (correct date?) – Alan Walters meets with Services staff, to locate old equipment in storage. He obtains several pieces of equipment that are transferred to Station 23.

March 2009 – Message sent to Captains and command staff, asking station personnel to watch for historical items during spring cleaning, that an inventory of historical items is starting, and that informal visits by RFDHS members are forthcoming.

April 2009 – Two yearbooks are donated to the Wake County local history library, and the North Carolina State Archives. Letters are including, naming RFDHS as donor.

Apr 2009 – By-Laws Committee (Walters, Legeros, Henshaw, Amato) begins meeting, and working on crafting documents based on WFSFDHS documents. Documents are revised over

several months. Incorporation process, using Articles of Incorporation, takes place in February 2010.

Aug 2009 – Mike Legeros conducts 90-minute session including presentation at the North Carolina State Firemen's Association annual convention, on the topic of North Carolina Firefighting History.

Sep 2009 – Fire Prevention donates several shelves to the historical society. The shelves are moved to the Station 23 storage space.

Nov 2009 – By-Laws Committee appoints temporary officers of Mike Legeros (President), Alan Walters (Vice-President), and Timothy Henshaw (Secretary and Vice President).

Feb 2010 (right date?) – Alan Walters begins organizing committee of command staff and firefighters, interested in planning for department's 100th anniversary in 2012.

Feb 2010 – Collection of fire station log books completed. They are stored on bookshelves at the RFDHS storage area at Station 23. Project starts in/around March 2010. Alan Walters and Mike Legeros provide transportation during that time for most of the books.

Mar 2010 – First meeting of 2010.

Mar 2010 – RFDHS is incorporated by the state of North Carolina. Filing fee is \$65. Incorporation application process is started by Mike Legeros in February 2010.

Apr 2010 – Committee of personnel formed to begin planning for a yearbook or history book for 2012 anniversary. Project led by Andrew Meier, with Bradley Harvey as executive sponsor. Mike Legeros also member.

Apr 2010 – Display case procured for display of historical items in stairwell lobby at Fire Administration offices. Alan Walters is consulted on project.

Apr 2010 – Donation form created by K.C. Ray and Mike Legeros. Project starts April 2009, with Ray and Legeros as committee of two, discussing needs surrounding artifacts.

May 2010 – History trailer debuts at Retiree Day. Display space for historical information and items is a classroom trailer at the training center. Project starts March 2010 (correct date?), with physical preparation of trailer by Frank McLaurin and other volunteers. Alan Walters leads collection of artifacts and display cases.

May 2010 – Mike Legeros conducts one-hour class on fire department history for new recruits at training center.

May 2010 – Mike Legeros purchases LegalZoom service for filing of federal income tax exemption.