



Unique History ... Vibrant Future

Memorandum

From: Mayor Tamara Jenkins
To: City Council
Subject: Fire Department Budget Plan B
Date: November 10, 2008

The purpose of this memo is to address Plan B for the 2009 Fire Budget in terms of the policy path and next steps.

It appears the Fire/Medic One Levy will fail. I offer below a clear plan based on policy guidance the Council has already expressed (i.e. Resolution of Intent). My recommendations are based on a lot of personal reflection and consultation with City Administrator Bill McDonald, ACA/Finance Director Dawn Masko, Acting Fire Chief Bob Merritt, and Lakewood Fire Chief Ken Sharp. It is now time to face the reality of fewer revenue dollars and adjust levels of service.

Effective Thursday November 13, 2008, the policy path will be implemented by my administration. This policy path honors the City Council's direction in Resolution No. 08-358, honors the work of the Fire Task Force, and brings the fire budget to the 2007 budget level of \$1, 700,000. The five point policy path is outlined below:

- 1. Validate the Fire Task Force Work.** The City invested over six months of time and resources in a Fire Task Force which provided excellent recommendations for moving forward with Fire and Medic One services. I do not support reconvening the Task Force or modifying their work. **I believe their recommendations are still credible.**
- 2. Continue the Partnership with Pierce County Fire District #2 (Lakewood Fire Department).** The current contract with Pierce County Fire District #2 is in force through 2009. It has been a valuable partnership through which our Fire Department has delivered a heretofore unachievable level of service. **I do not support ending this important partnership but, I do see the need to modify the agreement to remove ambulance service.**
- 3. Eliminate Ambulance Service.** The Resolution of Intent adopted by the City Council in October (as modified), clearly identifies ambulance service as on the

bubble if the levy fails. I support the City Council's policy of suspending ambulance service and believe it should occur immediately. **The credibility of the Mayor and City Council are at stake if we do not follow through on this action. There is also no other way of filling the gap in the 2009 Budget.**

- 4. Reduce the Fire Budget to Parity with the Police Department.** The City Council has reviewed the non public safety departments and is aware that those budgets virtually flat line for 2009. My staff has also been asked to assume more work as we strive to adjust to current economic conditions. Adjustments to bring the 2009 Budget into balance should focus on the Fire Department exclusively. I have proposed a target budget which rolls back to an inflation adjusted 2007 Fire Department Budget. **This Budget is roughly in parity with the proposed 2009 Police Department.**
- 5. Submit a New Ballot Measure.** I will propose a properly drafted Ballot Measure early in 2009 (perhaps the April election) for a simple levy lift of approximately \$1, for not more than a two-year term. This measure would position the City to continue the Pierce County Fire District #2 (Lakewood) partnership into 2010. It would also be consistent with our message that eventual annexation is our goal. **Putting a measure on the ballot in April would also allow for a fall back position for the general election in November.**

The City of DuPont must move ahead to solve the problem of stable, reliable, and affordable service for the Fire Department. We may have suffered a set back but should not over analyze the outcome. We simply had some early ballot measure construction problems which we were not able to overcome. So, we move on and keep working on a solution.

Attached is a worksheet which compares the proposed 2009 Fire Department Budget with the Levy to the adjusted Budget without the Levy. It identifies how we have arrived at a target 2009 Fire Department Budget of about \$1,700,000. Clearly we are forced to go to a place that we all find to be uncomfortable. Nevertheless, it is a disservice to the public to be anything but clear about the need for additional resources to provide stable, reliable, and affordable services. **This budget lives within our resources and adjusts service levels accordingly.**

It is an honor serve with each of you. Thank you for your dedication and commitment to serving DuPont. Let me know if you have questions, suggestions, and/or comments to this memo.

Attachments:
2009 Proposed General Fund Budget Worksheet With & Without Levy
Resolution No. 08-358
2009 General Election Dates