

**CITY OF MASON
COUNCIL WORKSESSION
October 3, 2005**

Mayor Beck called the meeting to order at 6:20 p.m. Those present recited the pledge of allegiance.

ATTENDANCE

The following Councilmembers were present: Victor Kidd, Steve Osborne, Tony Bradburn, Tom Grossmann, John McCurley, Charlene Pelfrey and Peter Beck.

PRESENTATION BY LARRY DAVIS

Mr. Davis addressed Council and reported on the review he prepared on the Mason Fire Departments response to a fire in the Crooked Tree Subdivision. (See attached report.) He said he is concerned over the safety of the fire fighters. He said the number of fires is dropping but the number of death of fire fighters is not. He stated there are things that need to be changed in the Mason Fire Department (MFD). He said many are put in positions without being qualified. He said the nucleus of the MFD is good. Councilmember Osborne noted his report received some criticism for the way it was written. He asked Mr. Davis if he would write it the same way today. Mr. Davis said yes because it generated this meeting and that was what needed to happen. Mr. Davis stated most full time fire fighters are required to complete 5 years of experience in qualify to take an exam for a promotion. He stated allowing only two men to operate the quint is insane. He said there should be a minimum of 3 and preferably 4. He said firing anyone over this situation is asinine. He suggested placing the department on probation for one year and evaluate every few months. He said MFD has gotten in trouble because they have hired people for EMS not as specific fire fighters. He said Mason has a good EMS service. He stated in the Crooked Tree fire Class A Foam should have been used and the first thing that should have been done is to lay a line. Mayor Beck addressed some of the details in his report and then asked him what are the biggest problems. Mr. Davis said firefighters should drop a line the first thing when they reach a fire. He said MFD's failure to do so reflects they were not prepared to make those decisions. He referred to Mason's lack of Standard Operation Guidelines. Councilmember Grossmann summarized Mr. Davis's report by repeating Mr. Davis's comments and asking you're saying the MFD is incompetent, right? Mr. Davis replied "the bottom line is that's what I said." Vice Mayor Pelfrey asked if Mr. Davis has known the City's former Fire Chief Goldfeder. Mr. Davis responded he knows him through professional organizations but not as a personal friend. He stated they write articles for the same professional publication but he has never discussed the MFD with him. Councilmember McCurley asked Mr. Davis if he exaggerated his comments. Mr. Davis said he had not. Vice Mayor Pelfrey stated the following fire experts have reviewed the report from the Crooked Tree Fire: Robert McLeod from Chandler Arizona, Francis J. Deleonibus Assistant Fire Chief of Pittsburg Bureau of Fire, Lee Husted of Red Bank Tennessee,

and David Hagerty from Dearborn Michigan. She said they all concur there are problems that need to be addressed.

PRESENTATION BY ROBERT J. WEITZEL

Mr. Weitzel addressed Council and provided a background for the steps he took to review the fire in the Crooked Tree Subdivision. (See attached report.) He said he interviewed the various fire chiefs and fire fighters involved at the scene. He also stated he spoke with the homeowners, neighbors and reviewed training records. He reported he also reviewed reports from approximately six previous fires and looked particularly at fire fighter safety. He said at the previous fires the fire fighters had a fast response and did a good job stopping the fires. He said his conclusion is they need hands on training. He stated they have standard operating guidelines but need more training. Councilmember Grossmann asked if he has a letter of retention. Mr. Wetzel replied no. Mr. Weitzel stated he agreed with Mr. Davis that the first thing that should have been done is to lay a line. He stated he would not have used foam on this fire. Councilmember Kidd asked if he agreed with Mr. Davis in that it would be asinine to fire. Mr. Weitzel replied you can't make a judgment on only one fire and he does agree with Mr. Davis. Vice Mayor Pelfrey stated a review of the reports from other fires indicate problems exist. Councilmember Bradburn stated it is evident they are not doing hands on training. He stated it showed incompetence when they had difficulty attaching the hose on the scene. He said it is important the department to get back to basics. Mayor Beck asked Mr. Weitzel if he had performed reviews in the past for others. He responded this was his first one.

Dave Manning, from the Mason Fire Department addressed Council and stated he had planned to give a presentation tonight but was told this was not a good time. Ken Schneider stated originally this meeting was planned for an executive session but it became clear the topic to be discussed would not quality for an executive session. Mayor Beck said Mr. Manning will be able to address Council at the next regular meeting. Councilmember Grossmann stated no decisions will be made until we have heard from all parties. Mr. Manning asked if there was a charge against anyone. Ken Schneider replied no.

Bill Quinn a representative of IAFF located at 1380 Dublin Road Suite 104, Columbus, Ohio addressed Council and stated the fire fighters are embarrassed by the reports. He said Mr. Davis has contradicted himself in his report and presentation. He said the bottom line is they need more fire fighters.

Mr. Skip Warm from Lebanon, Ohio addressed Council and stated he senses a confrontation is going on and he said there are a couple of people that create problems. He said the MFD needs more training and they want to learn. He said the department has not had enough people for 5 years.

Mr. Ray Mueller of 3208 Spalding Drive addressed Council and said he is the current Deputy Fire Chief. He said he was on the scene and offered to answer any questions. He

stated Mr. Davis's report is full of lies. He said he was never interviewed by Mr. Davis. He also said Mr. Davis never interviewed the Fire Chiefs from Liberty Township and Deerfield Township who were on the scene.


Mayor Beck stated the IAFF would have a chance to address Council with their report at the meeting on October 10, 2005

ADJOURN

A motion to adjourn was made by Councilmember McCurley, seconded by Vice Mayor Pelfrey. VOTE: ALL YEAS

TIME: 10:31 p.m.


Clerk of Council


Mayor