

**COMMISSIONERS' COURT AND
MT. PLEASANT CITY COUNCIL MEETING
JUNE 15, 1995**

BE IT REMEMBERED THAT THE TITUS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT AND MT. PLEASANT CITY COUNCIL met in *Special Session* on Thursday, June 15, 1995, at the Western Sizzling Steak House at 6:00 P.M. with the following members present:

DANNY P. CROOKSCOUNTY JUDGE
MIKE PRICECOMMISSIONER PRECINCT 1
MIKE FIELDSCOMMISSIONER PRECINCT 2
J. W. TERRELL, JR.COMMISSIONER PRECINCT 3
THOMAS E. HOCKADAYCOMMISSIONER PRECINCT 4
JEAN CROVERDEPUTY COUNTY CLERK

ABSENT: NONE

RICHARD E. CHAFFINCITY MANAGER
MIKE HALLASSISTANT CITY MANAGER
BILL CHAMBERSMAYOR
ROBERT NANCEMAYOR PRO-TEM
JO MARSPLACE #3 COUNCILWOMAN
ERMAN HENSELPLACE #2 COUNCILMAN
PAUL O. MERIWETHERPLACE #4 COUNCILMAN
LES HANCOCKPLACE #5 COUNCILMAN
LARRY McRAECITY FIRE CHIEF
JO ANN REEVESEXECUTIVE SECRETARY

ABSENT: NONE

PUBLIC AND OFFICIALS ATTENDING MEETING:

REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE MT. PLEASANT FIRE
DEPARTMENT
REPRESENTATIVES FROM TITUS COUNTY VOLUNTEER
FIRE DEPARTMENTS
MT. PLEASANT DAILY TRIBUNE -- SCOTT WILLEY

Mayor Bill Chambers and County Judge Danny P. Crooks opened the meeting at 6:35 p.m.

Invocation was given by City Manager, Rick Chaffin.

Mayor Bill Chambers expressed his feeling that the citizens in the City of Mount were paying more than their fair share of the fire protection cost. He pointed out that county taxpayers pay \$27.00 annually for fire protection compared to \$156.00 by those who live in the city according to a study. Mayor Chambers said, "I feel like we owe it to the citizens of Mount Pleasant to correct this inequity."

Because of the inequality, "a resident of the city is at risk of receiving less than adequate response if they call on the department for assistance at a time when the department is fighting a fire in the county," said consultant Ton Martin, whose firm was commissioned to study the state of fire service countywide. He continued, "The city does not have enough personnel to fight structural fires in the county and still have people to respond within the city." In order to meet this roll he felt adding extra staff and new facilities could meet this role.

Mayor Chambers and his council believe there to be three solutions to the fire protection of the city and county as the following:

1. We could establish a Fire District that took care of all fires and rescues for the city and county. This would still mean both city and county would have to chip in financial aid.
2. The city and county split financial cost 50/50.
3. The county would have to establish their own fire department with no financial aid, equipment or men to help the county department.

Commissioner Thomas E. Hockaday asked, "If the city fire department sends only one man and one engine how could they justify a 50/50 split?"

Commissioner Mike Fields stated, "The Talco, Winfield and Texas Utilities Mining Company all have been included in the over all picture. They have their own fire departments and have trained personnel to handle fires." He

continued, "The county does furnish the city with some equipment, gas and repairs along with their support of all 5 volunteer fire departments." Commissioner Mike Fields said, "Therefore, I feel this report given us by the city is misleading and inaccurate."

Fire Chief Larry McRae said, "Since the last contract in October of 1994 until today the city fire department had report 217 runs." When asked how many were structural related he replied, "175."

The fire chief did explain that they do go out to all accidents. Their department felt that by going out when the call comes in they save lives. It would take more time for the police officer to go out and determine if a rescue unit was needed then send for them. The first hour starts from the moment an accident happens and that is the most critical time.

It was agreed by both the city and county realistically it all boils down to finances.

Under the 50/50 proposal which budget is \$1,000,000.00, the city is asking the county to split 50/50 saying the county's portion would be \$500,000.00 less \$100,000.00 (the amount being paid to volunteer fire departments by the county) leaving a balance of \$400,000.00. Rick Chaffin, City Manager explained this money would pay the salaries of 3 additional personnel and build a new fire station. When asked where the fire station would be located. Chaffin replied, "We are looking at a spot on Highway 67 since you can get to the interstate quicker and north end of town is where new sub-divisions are expanding. "We are in hopes of building a third station in 6 or 7 years on the South end of town."

Commissioner Mike Fields said, "Fire protection has come a long way in the past 8 years. We all benefit from the fire services no matter if we live in the city or county."

Fire Chief McRae said, "We really need to have a true picture of the over all." "Last year we responded to 378 total calls of which 2/3's were in the city and 1/3 were in the county. However, it equaled out to 50/50 since it takes more time out responding to the calls in the county areas."

Bill Chambers said, "We do need a decision by Tuesday night's city council meeting."

The Commissioners all agreed that they felt the amount asked for was a little high and they would need to meet on Monday.

County Judge Danny P. Crooks and commissioners will call a Special Commissioners' Court for Monday and return with an answer for the city by Tuesday night's city council meeting.

Rick Chaffin pointed out that if the county did not sign the new contract the county would lose its coverage in 90 days.

Councilman Robert Nance said, "We look like the City and County are against each other. That is not the case we just need to find a working solution."

Mayor Bill Chambers and County Judge Danny P. Crooks then adjourned the meeting at 7:30 p.m.
