

**JASPER COUNTY COUNCIL
LEVY COMMUNITY CENTER
MAY 24, 2007
7:00 P.M.**

SPECIAL CALLED MEETING

OFFICIALS PRESENT:

GLADYS JONES, VICE CHAIRMAN
LEROY BLACKSHEAR, COUNCILMAN
FRED TUTEN, COUNCILMAN

STAFF PRESENT:

ANDREW FULGHUM, ADMINISTRATOR
RONNIE MALPHRUS, DEP. ADM. ADM SER.
DALE TERRY, DEP. ADM. ENG. SER.
STEVEN MALPHRUS, DEP. DIRECTOR, ES
MARVIN JONES, ATTORNEY
JUDITH FRANK, CLERK TO COUNCIL

OFFICIALS ABSENT:

DR. GEORGE M. HOOD, CHAIRMAN
HUBERT TYLER, COUNCILMAN

STAFF ABSENT:

STEVE SAGER, DEP. ADM. DEV. SER.
TOM WATSON, DEP. ADM. ES

CALL TO ORDER:

VICE CHAIRMAN JONES CALLED THE MEETING TO ORDER AT 7:00 P.M.

INVOCATION:

VICE CHAIRMAN JONES GAVE THE INVOCATION.

VICE CHAIRMAN JONES SAID THE COUNCIL WAS MEETING WITH THE CITIZENS OF LEVY TO LET THEM KNOW THE LEVY FIRE DEPARTMENT EQUIPMENT WAS MOVED. VICE CHAIRMAN JONES SAID THERE WAS A COMMUNICATION PROBLEM AND THE PROBLEM NEEDED TO BE SOLVED. VICE CHAIRMANONES EXPLAINED THAT BOTH CHAIRMAN HOOD AND COUNCILMAN TYLER WERE OUT OF TOWN.

VICE CHAIRMAN JONES ASKED MR. FULGHUM TO EXPLAIN WHY HE TOOK THE ACTION HE DID ON TUESDAY. VICE CHAIRMAN JONES SAID SHE WANTED THE CITIZENS TO KNOW THAT THE COUNCIL WAS THERE TO WORK WITH THE CITIZENS AND TO GET THIS PROBLEM RESOLVED. MR FULGHUM EXPLAINED THE CHAIN OF EVENTS . MR. FULGHUM SAID THAT DURING THE BREAK AT THE MONDAY EVENING COUNCIL MEETING TWO MEMBERS OF THE COUNTY COUNCIL AND THE COUNTY ATTORNEY HAD A CONVERSATION WITH CHIEF GRAHAM. CHIEF GRAHAM TOLD THEM THAT HE WAS GOING TO REMOVE THE COUNTY'S EQUIPMENT BY 5:00 P.M. AND PUT IT IN THE STREET BECAUSE OF THE ORDINANCE THEY WERE PLANNING ON PASSING WHICH WOULD PUT LEVY FIRE DEPARTMENT UNDER THE COUNTY AND UNDER ONE PROTOCOL. MR. FULGHUM SAID MR. WATSON CONTACTED HIM AND SAID THEY HAD DEVISED A PLAN TO SET UP ANOTHER STATION IN LEVY. MR. FULGHUM SAID HE DID NOT THINK POLITICS SHOULD ENTER INTO FIRE PROTECTION, SO HE AUTHORIZED THE MOVE OF THE LEVY FIRE EQUIPMENT TO HARDEEVILLE AND THEN TO THE TEMPORARY LEVY FIRE STATION LOCATED AT THE LEVY COMMUNITY CENTER. MR. FULGHUM SAID THAT MR WATSON INFORMED CHIEF GRAHAM BY LETTER THE REASONS WHY THE EQUIPMENT WAS BEING MOVED AND THAT THE COUNTY DID NOT WANT THE EQUIPMENT HELD HOSTAGE AND THAT SOMETHING NEEDED TO BE DONE. MR. FULGHUM SAID MR. WATSON MADE A DECISION AND THAT HE (MR. FULGHUM) SUPPORTED THAT DECISION AND HE NOTIFIED THE COUNCIL. MR. FULGHUM SAID THERE ARE TWO FULL TIME FIREMEN STATIONED AT THE LEVY COMMUNITY CENTER BECAUSE THE COUNTY DOES NOT OWN THE PROPERTY OR THE FIRE STATION.

COUNCILMAN TUTEN SAID THAT CHIEF GRAHAM CAME TO HIM DURING THE BREAK AND CHIEF GRAHAM SAID THE COUNCIL HAD A 1ST READING OF AN ORDINANCE THAT WOULD MAKE LEVY COME UNDER THE COUNTY AND THAT HE WAS GOING TO PUT THE FIRE EQUIPMENT OUT ON TUESDAY. COUNCILMAN TUTEN SAID HE COULD NOT SLEEP BECAUSE HE WAS CONCERNED ABOUT THE FIRE PROTECTION IN LEVY IF CHIEF GRAHAM DID THAT. COUNCILMAN TUTEN SAID HE NOTIFIED MR. WATSON AND MR. FULGHUM ON TUESDAY MORNING.

COUNCILMAN BLACKSHEAR SAID THAT CHIEF GRAHAM DID NOT SAY ANYTHING TO HIM AND HE HEARD ABOUT IT FROM COUNCILMAN TUTEN AND THE COUNTY CANNOT BE HELD HOSTAGE BY THREATS.

VICE CHAIRMAN JONES SAID THAT SHE HAS KNOWN DOUG GRAHAM A LONG TIME AND WHILE HE WOULD ARGUE FOR WHAT HE NEEDS FOR THE LEVY FIRE DEPARTMENT AND HARASS THE COUNCIL UNTIL HE GOT IT, BUT THERE WAS ONLY ONE READING OF AN ORDINANCE BY TITLE ONLY AND HE TOLD HER HE WOULD TAKE THE EQUIPMENT OUT OF THE STATION, AND CHIEF GRAHAM HAS SAID THIS MANY TIMES IN THE PAST. VICE CHAIRMAN JONES SAID THAT THE LEVY STATION IS RUN VERY WELL AND CHIEF GRAHAM HAS RAISED HIS FAMILY AND OTHERS IN THAT STATION. VICE CHAIRMAN JONES SAID THAT HE HAS TRAINED HIS STAFF AND GIVEN THEM GOOD WORK ETHICS. VICE CHAIRMAN JONES SAID THE FIRE DEPARTMENT BELONGS TO THE COMMUNITY AND THEY SHOULD HAVE A SAY IN WHAT IS DONE, BUT THE COUNTY CANNOT

BE CHALLENGED BY THREATS THAT HE IS GOING TO CLOSE THINGS DOWN. VICE CHAIRMAN JONES SAID THAT THEY NEEDED TO KNOW THAT THE PROPERTY IS OWNED BY THE LEVY VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT AND THE COUNCIL NEEDS TO KNOW WHAT THE CITIZENS WANT AND THAT THE COUNCIL WANTS TO DO WHAT IS RIGHT AND MAKE SURE THAT EVERYONE HAS FIRE PROTECTION. VICE CHAIRMAN JONES SUGGESTED THAT A COMMITTEE BE FORMED TO WORK ON THE PROBLEMS. VICE CHAIRMAN JONES SAID THAT THE COUNTY WOULD OFFER TO LEASE OR BUY THE PROPERTY FROM THE LEVY VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT OR THE COUNTY WOULD BUY MORE LAND AND BUILD A NEW STATION AND THE COUNTY WILL OWN AND OPERATE IT, BUT A PLAN NEEDS TO BE WORKED OUT. VICE CHAIRMAN JONES SAID THAT THE COUNTY HAS PAID FIREMEN AT THE STATION AND AS A VOLUNTEER CHIEF, MR. GRAHAM HAS NO AUTHORITY TO DISCIPLINE THEM AND THE COUNTY WILL NOT CONTINUE TO BE THREATENED BY MR. GRAHAM.

GREG FESTER SAID THAT EVERYONE AGREES THAT THE LEVY FIRE DEPARTMENT IS NOT BROKEN, BUT THE COUNCIL BROKE IT AND THAT DOUG AND HIS FAMILY HAVE WORKED THE FIRE HOUSE AND RATHER THAN CLOSE IT THE COUNTY SHOULD MAKE DOUG AN EMPLOYEE AND HE COULD BE ACCOUNTABLE TO THE COUNTY.

BARBARA CLARK SAID SHE HAS LISTENED AND SHE IS APPALLED THAT THE COUNCIL HAS ONLY HEARD GOSSIP AND HEARSAY. SHE SAID THIS TELLS HER THAT DOUG DID NOT SAY ANY OF THIS FOR THE RECORD AND IF HE CAME BEFORE COUNCIL AND SAID IT THEN THEY COULD HAVE TAKEN ACTION. SHE ASKED COUNCIL WHY IS IT BETTER TO SEE THE TRUCKS OUTSIDE, SHE SAID SHE KNOWS THE RESPECT THE LEVY FIRE DEPARTMENT GIVES TO THEIR EQUIPMENT AND THIS MEETING SHOULD HAVE BEEN HELD BEFORE ANY ACTION WAS TAKEN. MS. CLARK SAID THAT COUNCILMAN TUTEN DID NOT SLEEP, BUT ALL THE PEOPLE IN LEVY DID NOT SLEEP BECAUSE THEY HAD NO FIRE PROTECTION. MS. CLARK SAID THEY NEEDED TO COME TOGETHER AND THE JASPER COUNTY COUNCIL BROKE IT AND NOW THEY NEED TO FIX IT BACK TO THE WAY IT WAS AND THE CITIZENS DID NOT HAVE ANY PROBLEMS. MS. CLARK SAID THE PROOF IS IN THE PUDDING AND INVITED THE COUNCIL TO GO TO THE LEVY FIRE STATION AND TO SEE WHAT IS THERE. MS. CLARK SAID THE CITIZENS OF LEVY WANT THEIR FIRE DEPARTMENT BACK. MS. CLARK SAID THE COUNCIL DID NOT MAKE THE DECISION, THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR MADE THE DECISION WITHOUT THE APPROVAL OF THE COUNCIL AND THE COUNCIL NEEDS TO HAVE A COMMITTEE SO THAT THE COMMUNITY AND THE COUNTY COUNCIL CAN WORK IT OUT. SUSAN LASSITER SAID WHY BUILD ANOTHER STATION THAT WILL COST THE TAXPAYERS MORE MONEY. SHE CONTINUED THAT THE LEVY FIRE DEPARTMENT IS THE BEST SO WHY BUILD ANOTHER ONE.

J.W. HARPER SAID MR. FULGHUM SAID THEY HAD ADEQUATE FIRE COVERAGE AND HE DID NOT THINK 2 PEOPLE AND 2 FIRE TRUCKS WAS ADEQUATE COVERAGE. VICE CHAIRMAN JONES SAID THAT THEY ALSO NEEDED VOLUNTEERS AND SHE HOPED THE CURRENT VOLUNTEERS WOULD BE LOYAL TO THE COMMUNITY AND THAT MR. GRAHAM WOULD HAVE TO BE PART OF THE COUNTY'S OPERATION.

MR. PATTERSON SAID THEY KNOW THE RESULTS AND WHAT LED TO THIS ACTION AND HE WANTED TO KNOW WHAT WAS READ THAT WAS NOT SUITABLE TO MR. GRAHAM. VICE CHAIRMAN JONES SAID SHE HAD A FEW COPIES OF THE ORDINANCE AND THE COUNCIL ONLY HAD ONE READING BY TITLE ONLY.

CRYSTAL SAXON SAID SHE WAS CHIEF GRAHAM'S DAUGHTER AND SHE HAS SPENT TWENTY OF HER TWENTY-SIX YEARS AT THE STATION. MS. SAXON SAID HE FATHER HAD NO TROUBLE SLEEPING ALL NIGHT ON MONDAY NIGHT BECAUSE HONEST PEOPLE CAN SLEEP AT NIGHT. MS. SAXON SAID HEARD OF A FIRE WHERE A PAID FIREMAN WENT TO A FIRE AND HAD TO GO BACK TO GET THE TRUCK. MS. SAXON SAID THAT LEVY FIRE DEPARTMENT IS NOT BROKEN AND IT DOESN'T NEED FIXED.

ANITA BUSH SAID THE COUNTY WANTED THE LEVY FIRE DEPARTMENT RUN THE SAME WAY AS THE OTHER STATIONS. MS. BUSH SAID THAT LEVY FIRE DEPARTMENT HAS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES AND WHY CAN'T A VOLUNTEER CHIEF BE OVER HIRED EMPLOYEES. MS. BUSH ASKED IF CHIEF GRAHAM WAS GIVEN A COPY OF THE RULES AND PROCEDURES OF THE COUNTY. VICE CHAIRMAN JONES ASKED CHIEF GRAHAM IF HE HAD A COPY AND SHE SAID THAT MR. GRAHAM TOLD HER THE COUNTY DID NOT HAVE THEM. MS. BUSH SAID THE SYSTEM IS NOT PERFECT AND THEY NEED TO HAVE A LIST OF WHAT THE COUNTY EXPECTS THEM TO DO AND IF THE COUNTY DOESN'T HAVE RULES AND PROCEDURES THEN WHY CAN'T THEY FOLLOW THE ONES ESTABLISHED BY CHIEF GRAHAM. MS. BUSH SAID THE COUNCIL SHOULD HAVE MET WITH THE COMMUNITY BEFORE THIS HAPPENED.

DOUG GRAHAM SAID HE HAS WORKED WITH THE LEVY FIRE DEPARTMENT FOR 20 YEARS, 6 MONTHS, AND TWO WEEKS AND TWO WEEKS AGO HE WAS CALLED TO RIDGELAND BY MR. FULGHUM AND MET WITH HIM AND MR. WATSON. MR. WATSON HAD MR. FULGHUM SPEAK AND HE WAS GIVEN THREE CHOICES AND THE CHOICES WERE HE COULD SIGN OVER THE LEVY STATION TO THE COUNTY, THE COUNTY WOULD BUY THE STATION OR THEY WOULD HAVE THE COUNTY ATTORNEY FIND A WAY TO GET THE STATION. THE COUNTY WANTS TO RUN ALL THE STATIONS THE SAME WAY AND HE HAS BEEN TO THE OTHER STATIONS AND MR. FULGHUM TOLD YOU WHAT HE WANTED TO SAY AND COUNCILMAN BLACKSHEAR KNEW NOTHING AND COUNCILMAN TUTEN SAID WHAT HE WANTED YOU TO HEAR. CHIEF GRAHAM SAID HE SPOKE WITH VICE CHAIRMAN JONES THIS MORNING AND TOLD HER SHE SHOULD NOT VOTE FOR SOMETHING THEY DID NOT KNOW ABOUT. CHIEF GRAHAM SAID THERE WILL BE TWO MORE

READINGS. CHIEF GRAHAM SAID THE ASSISTANT CHIEF WAS TOLD HE COULD VOLUNTEER, BUT THAT HE WOULD COME UNDER JASPER COUNTY. CHIEF GRAHAM SAID HE HAD A RESOLUTION SIGNED BY THE JASPER COUNTY COUNCIL MAKING LEVY A FIRE DISTRICT AND IT GIVES ALL THE POWER TO LEVY. CHIEF GRAHAM SAID THIS RESOLUTION IS IN EFFECT UNTIL THE ORDINANCE TAKES EFFECT. CHIEF GRAHAM SAID THAT HE IS STILL THE CHIEF IN LEVY AND HE WILL WORK AND A LIST OF DUTIES WILL BE PROVIDED TO PEOPLE ON DUTY. CHIEF GRAHAM ADMITTED THAT HE HAD PROBLEMS WITH SOME OF THE HIRED FIREMEN THAT WERE SENT TO HIS STATION. CHIEF GRAHAM SAID ONE WANTED TO SLEEP ALL DAY, ONE WANTED TO WATCH TELEVISION ALL DAY AND ONE THAT TORE UP THE EQUIPMENT AND HE SENT THEM BACK TO MR. WATSON. CHIEF GRAHAM SAID HE ASKED MR. WATSON FOR THE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES OVER A YEAR AND HALF AGO AND HE HAS STILL NOT GOTTEN THEM FROM MR. WATSON AND MR. WATSON HAS NEVER ANSWERED ANY QUESTIONS HE HAS ASKED. VICE CHAIRMAN JONES SAID THAT THE COUNCIL WOULD LOOK AT THE RESOLUTION THAT IS PROPOSED, BUT THERE IS AN ISSUE HERE TONIGHT THAT NEEDS TO BE WORKED OUT. CHIEF GRAHAM SAID THE WAY TO FIX IT IS TO PUT THE TRUCKS BACK AT LEVY, GIVE THE FIRE DEPARTMENT THE \$25,000.00 THEY GIVE TO ALL THE OTHER STATIONS AND TO LET LEVY ALONE. ERIC SAXON SAID THAT THE LEVY FIRE STATION IS A CHARTERD ORGANIZATION AND IT WAS ALSO INCORPORATED AND THE COUNTY CAN NOT TAKE IT OVER AND THE VOLUNTEERS OWN THE STATION. MR. SAXON SAID THEY HAVE A BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND CHIEF GRAHAM IS THE CHAIRMAN AND HE CONFIRMS WITH THE BOARD AND THE VOLUNTEERS WHAT THEY WANT DONE. MR. SAXON SAID THE VOLUNTEERS ARE ALL DISHEARTENED AS THEY PUT SO MUCH INTO THEIR FIRE DEPARTMENT. MR. SAXON SAID HE HAD NO PROBLEM WITH THE PAID FIREMEN, BUT THE VOLUNTEERS ARE THE HEART OF THE FIRE DEPARTMENT. MR. SAXON SAID HE KNEW THERE WERE TWO PAID FIREMEN THERE AND THAT HARDEEVILLE AND BLUFFTON HAVE AGREED TO PROVIDE BACK UP, BUT HE DID NOT THINK THE VOLUNTEERS TONES SHOULD HAVE BEEN TURNED OFF. MR. STEVEN MALPHRUS SAID THAT WAS CORRECTED. MR. SAXON SAID HE REQUESTED OVER RECORDED LINES THAT THE TONES BE TURNED BACK ON AND HE GAVE CENTRAL A TWENTY ONE AND HAS NOT GOTTEN AN ANSWER YET. MR. SAXON SAID HE ASKED WHY THE VOLUNTEER'S TONES WERE TURNED OFF AND HE SAID HE WAS TOLD THAT THEY WERE CONCERNED THE LEVY VOLUNTEERS WOULD SHOW UP AT AN INCIDENT AND CAUSE TROUBLE. MR. SAXON SAID IT WAS ONE THING TO DISAGREE WITH CHIEF GRAHAM, BUT HE DID NOT THINK IT SHOULD BE TAKEN OUT ON THE VOLUNTEERS. MR. SAXON SAID THAT WHEN THEY ARE CALLED ALL THE LEVY VOLUNTEERS COME AND EVERY TUESDAY NIGHT THEY TRAIN AND THEY CARE ABOUT THE COMMUNITY AND THE COMMUNITY CARES ABOUT THE FIRE DEPARTMENT. MR. SAXON SAID THAT EVERY FIRE DEPARTMENT IN THE COUNTY THAT SIGNED OVER TO BE UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE COUNTY SAID THEY WOULD NOT DO IT AGAIN AND NOW THEY ONLY HAVE A FEW VOLUNTEERS. VICE CHAIRMAN JONES ASKED WHO WERE THE MEMBERS OF LEVY FIRE DEPARTMENT BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND MR. SAXON SAID CHIEF GRAHAM, NELVIN GRAHAM, RONNIE GRAHAM, ANITA BUSH AND GARY BUSH. BARBARA CLARK ASKED HOW THIS WAS GOING TO AFFECT THEIR ISO RATINGS AND INSURANCE RATES. PHIL FLEXEN ASKED WHY CAN'T THEY KEEP THE OPERATION OPEN WHILE THEY RESOLVE THE PROBLEM. RANDY KINNED ASKED IF THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR CAN MAKE THAT KIND OF DECISION WITHOUT CONSULTING THE COUNTY COUNCIL. VICE CHAIRMAN JONES SAID THE ADMINISTRATOR'S ACTION WAS NOT SATISFACTORY TO HER, BUT SHE WANTED TO COME UP WITH A SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM AND IF THEY PUT A FIRE DEPARTMENT BACK IT WOULD BE A TEMPORARY SOLUTION AND SHE WANTED TO MEET WITH THE COMMITTEE SO THEY COULD COME UP WITH A LONG TERM SOLUTION. MR. KINNED ASKED WHY THE COUNCIL COULD NOT VOTE TO PUT IT BACK. ATTORNEY JONES SAID THEY COULD NOT VOTE AT A SPECIAL CALLED MEETING THAT WAS CALLED TO GET INFORMATION. TOM FARRIS SAID THE COUNCIL TOOK NO ACTION AND DID NOT VOTE TO CLOSE IT THEN THE ADMINISTRATOR'S ACTIONS HAVE NO LEGAL EFFECT AND ALL THE COUNCIL HAS TO DO IS TELL THE ADMINISTRATOR TO CHANGE HIS DECISION. MR. KINNED SAID THE COUNCIL CAN MAKE THE ADMINISTRATOR REVERSE HIS DECISION. VICE CHAIRMAN JONES SAID THE COUNCIL MUST GO BY THE LEGAL ADVICE OF THEIR ATTORNEY. MR. KINNED ASK THE COUNCIL TO REQUEST THAT THE ADMINISTRATOR TO RESCIND HIS DECISION AND TO ALLOW THE FIRE DEPARTMENT TO OPERATE UNTIL THE PROBLEM IS SOLVED. J. W. HARPER ASKED IF THE ADMINISTRATOR HAS THE AUTHORITY TO MAKE THIS KIND OF DECISION. ATTORNEY JONES SAID THAT THE ADMINISTRATOR HAS THE AUTHORITY TO MAKE THIS DECISION. COUNCILMAN BLACKSHEAR SAID THE MISSION TONIGHT WAS TO DISCUSS LEVY FIRE COVERAGE AND HE HAS RECEIVED CALLS THAT LEVY WAS NOT PROTECTED AND NOW THEY HAVE PROTECTION LOCATED AT THE COMMUNITY CENTER AND ANYTHING ELSE SHOULD BE DISCUSSED AT ANOTHER MEETING. VICE CHAIRMAN JONES ASKED IF THE VOLUNTEERS WERE GETTING TONES NOW. MR. SAXON SAID THEY ARE, BUT THEY HAVE NO GEAR AND THE LEVY FIRE DEPARTMENT IS WHERE IS GEAR IS LOCATED AND THAT GEAR WAS PURCHASED BY THE VOLUNTEERS AND THEIR LOYALITES WERE TO THE FIRE STATION AND THE COMMUNITY AND THEY WERE NOT GOING TO DO IT.

RANDY KINNED ASKED IF THE ADMINISTRATOR WILL RESCIND HIS DECISION. MR. FULGHUM SAID HE APPRECIATED THE COMMENTS AND HE IS WILLING TO WORK WITH THE COMMUNITY AND WHILE HE DOES NOT ALWAYS AGREE WITH CHIEF GRAHAM HE KNOWS HE RUNS A GOOD FIRE DEPARTMENT. MR. FULGHUM SAID THAT THE LEVY FIRE BOARD NEEDS TO COME UP WITH A SOLUTION AND HE WOULD BE WILLING TO MEET WITH CHIEF GRAHAM. MR. GRAHAM SAID HE WILL MEET WITH HIM, BUT HE WANTED THE CITIZENS TO STAY SO THEY WOULD KNOW WHAT WAS GOING ON. MR. FULGHUM SAID HE DID NOT SET THE POLICIES, THE COUNCIL DID, AND THEY ARE WILLING TO TALK WITH HIM AND TO WORK WITH HIM. CHIEF GRAHAM TOLD MR. FULGHUM THAT HE MADE THE DECISION TO MOVE THE TRUCKS AND THAT MR. FULGHUM CAN MAKE THE DECISION TO PUT THEM BACK. MR. SAXON SAID THAT CHIEF GRAHAM IS THE SPOKESMAN FOR THE LEVY VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT.

MR. LASSISTER SAID THE RESOLUTION WAS VOTED ON AND PASSED BY COUNTY COUNCIL TO ESTABLISH THE LEVY FIRE DISTRICT SO HOW CAN THE ADMINISTRATOR GO OVER THE COUNCIL'S RESOLUTION. MR LASSISTER SAID THE LEVY VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT IS AN ENTITY ON ITS OWN AND THINGS NEED TO BE PUT BACK THE WAY THEY WERE.

ATTORNEY JONES SAID THE RESOLUTION IS STILL IN PLACE AND THERE IS MORE THAN ONE THING GOING ON. LEVY STILL IS A FIRE DISTRICT AND THE COUNTY PROVIDES THE EQUIPMENT, BUT IF THAT EQUIPMENT IS THREATENED TO BE MOVED AND CHIEF GRAHAM ASKED IF ORDINANCE WOULD REVOKE THE RESOLUTION AND MR. GRAHAM ASKED HIM IF HE WAS GOING TO FIGHT FIRES IN LEVY AND MR GRAHAM SAID HE WOULD PUT THE EQUIPMENT OUT ON THE STREET. THE COUNTY CANNOT ALLOW THAT THREAT TO BE MADE. THE PEOPLE ARE WITHOUT FIRE PROTECTION BECAUSE THEY CANNOT GET ALONG WITH EACH OTHER. MR. FULGHUM SAID THE TRUCKS WERE MOVED AND ADDITIONAL FIREMEN WERE PROVIDED AND THEY STILL HAVE VOLUNTEERS.

TOM FARRIS SAID THEY HAVE GOOD VOLUNTEERS AND THEY DO NOT HAVE WHAT THEY NEED. HE TOLD MR. FULGHUM THAT HE MADE A DECISION AND DID NOT GO TO COUNCIL OR HAVE A PUBLIC FORUM AND IT IS NOT A POLICY TO THROW TRUCKS OUT ON THE ROAD. MR. FARRIS SAID THE PEOPLE OF LEVY RESPECT EACH OTHER AND TAKE CARE OF ONE ANOTHER.

DANNY COOLER SAID HE WORKED WITH HARDEEVILLE AND LEVY FIRE DEPARTMENTS AND THERE WOULD HAVE HAD TO BE A BOARD VOTE TO TAKE THE TRUCKS OUT AND PUT THEM ON THE STREET AND THAT VOTE WOULD HAVE TO BE UNANIMOUS.

YOLAMAE BROWN SAID CHIEF GRAHAM IS A GOOD FIREMAN AND THE PEOPLE WANT HIM TO KEEP THE STATION AND THE COUNTY SHOULD WORK ON THE PROBLEM.

HOSEN BARMUN ASKED WHERE THE COUNCIL MEMBERS LIVED AND IF THEY HAD A FIRE COMPANY . MR. BARMUN SAID MR. GRAHAM IS WHERE HE NEEDS TO BE AND THAT THE ADMINISTRATOR MADE A HASTY DECISION OVER ANGER. AND HE ASKED WHAT IS THE MANDATE FOR WHAT HE DID. VICE CHAIRMAN JONES SAID THAT MR. FULGHUM IS A SMART MAN AND HE MADE THE DECISION.

JUANITA WHITE SAID THAT RIGHT IS RIGHT AND WRONG IS WRONG AND THE PEOPLE NEED TO WORK TOGETHER AND COMMUNICATE AND TO TRY AND FIND A SOLUTION. THEY NEED TO WORK WITH THE PERSON IN CHARGE AND THE ORDINANCE THE COUNTY IS TALKING ABOUT IS DESIGNED TO HAVE AN UMBRELLA OVER THE COUNTY AND TO DISTINGUISH WHO IS IN CHARGE AND THEY NEED TO DECIDE WHERE THE TRUCKS ARE GOING TO BE LOCATED. MS. WHITE SAID THE PEOPLE NEED TO TALK TO THE ADMINISTRATOR ABOUT USING THE LEVY FIRE DEPARTMENT FACILITY AND MR. GRAHAM CAN BE CHIEF, BUT THE PAID EMPLOYEES CANNOT BE ACCOUNTABLE TO A VOLUNTEER.

MR. GRAHAM SAID HE COULD NOT WORK FOR JASPER COUNTY.

MR. FULGHUM SAID BASED ON WHAT HE HEARD IS THAT A DECISION WAS MADE BASED ON RUMORS AND HE FELT THE COUNCIL WOULD BE WILLING TO STAY AND WORK WITH THE BOARD TO FIND A RESOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM.

SHERYL MAIJON SAID THAT IN 3 MINUTES THE LEVY FIRE DEPARTMENT SAVED HER HOME WHEN THERE WAS A CHIMNEY FIRE.

VICE CHAIRMAN JONES SAID NO ONE DISAGREES THAT THE LEVY VOLUNTEERS DO A GOOD JOB AND THAT A SMALL GROUP CAN WORK THIS PROBLEM OUT AND COME TO A SOLUTION.

MR. FULGHUM SAID THE PEOPLE NEED TO COME TO THE MEETINGS AND EXPRESS THEIR FEELINGS ABOUT THE NEW ORDINANCE.

MR. SAXON SAID THAT IF A NEW YORK FIGHTER CAME TO LEVY FIRE DISTRICT, CHIEF GRAHAM WOULD BE INCHARGE AND THAT IS MANDATED BY STATE LAW.

CHIEF GRAHAM SAID THAT REGARDING THE THREATS AND THAT VICE CHAIRMAN JONES HAS SAID SHE HAS HEARD HIM MAKE THREATS AT TLEAST 50 TIMES, BUT HE HAS FOUGHT FOR EVERYTHING LEVY HAS AND THE PEOPLE ARE BEHIND HIM. CHIEF GRAHAM SAID HE ASKED ATTORNEY JONES IF HE COULD FIGHT A FIRE AND HE TOLD ATTORNEY JONES THAT HE WAS GOING TO TALK WITH HIS ATTORNEY TO SEE IF ATTORNEY JONES COULD DESOLVE THE LEVY VOUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT. CHIEF GRAHAM SAID THAT ATTORNEY JONES WOULD NOT BE FIGHTING A FIRE IN LEVY BECAUSE HE LIVED IN WALTERBORO AND THE EMERGENCY SERVICE DIRECTOR LIVED IN HAMPTON. CHIEF GRAHAM SAID THAT THE COUNCIL NEEDED TO HIRE LOCAL PEOPLE WHO CARE ABOUT JASPER COUNTY.

RITA THOMAS SAID THE CHIEF IS IN CHARGE AND THEY NEEDED TO KEEP HIM ON IN A VOLUNTEER POSITION.

SHERRY EMMANUEL SAID YOU ARE TALKING ABOUT EVERYONE BEING SO PURE, YOU NEED TO GIVE GRAHAM HIS POSITION.

ROBERT MANGLIN SAID THAT EVERYONE KNOWS THAT THE LEVY FIRE DEPARTMENT IS SUPERIOR TO ANY COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT. MR. MANGLIN ASKED WHO OWN THE EQUIPMENT AND VICE CHAIRMAN JONES SAID THE COUNTY TAXPAYERS OWNED THE EQUIPMENT AND MR. MANGLIN SAID AS A TAXPAYER HE WANTED THE EQUIPMENT BACK IN LEVY VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT STATION. MR. MANGLIN SAID THEY WANT THEIR FIRE DEPARTMENT BACK WITH THE COUNTY'S SUPPORT, BUT LET THEM DO WHAT THEY WANT, HE SAID THE CITIZENS SHOULD HAVE A VOICE AND THEY WANT GRAHAM AND THE LEVY FIRE DEPARTMENT BACK LIKE IT WAS.

VICE CHAIRMAN JONES SAID THEY WOULD HAVE THE SUPPORT OF THE COUNCIL SO LONG AS THEY FOLLOW THE RULES.

PEGGY RIDGEWAY SAID THAT CHIEF GRAHAM AND THE HARDEEVILLE FIRE DEPARTMENT WORK TOGETHER AND THERE ARE TOO MANY PEOPLE STICKING THEIR NOSES IN THE PICTURE. MRS. RIDGEWAY TOLD MR. FULGHUM HE MAY HAVE BOOK LEARNING, BUT HE HAD NO COMMON SENSE.

WILLA MAE HARRINGTON SAID THE COUNTY IS TRYING TO TAKE OVER AND PUSH THE LITTLE MAN OUT AND PUT BIG MEN IN CHARGE. SHE DID NOT WANT THE COUNCIL TO TAKE OVER. BILL THOMAS, OF DELTA ESTATES SAID THE COMMUNITY IS VERY COMFORTABLE WITH THE SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE LEVY VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT AND HE HAS STILL NOT HEARD THE ADMINISTRATOR SAY HE WOULD RESCIND HIS DECISION AND TO PUT THE FIRE TRUCKS AND TOOLS BACK WHERE THEY BELONG AND THEN TO SIT DOWN AND MAKE AN EDUCATED AND INFORMED DECISION. MR. THOMAS SAID THE OTHER COUNTY OPERATED FIRE DEPARTMENTS DO NOT DO AS GOOD A JOB AS LEVY VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT AND LEVY VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT NEEDS TO BE PUT BACK TO WORK AND THE EQUIPMENT NEEDS TO BE RETURNED.

BARBARA CLARK SAID THAT THE COUNCIL WANTS TO MEET AND FOR THE PEOPLE TO GO OUT SIDE AND WAIT . MS. CLARK SAID THE COMMUNITY IS ASKING FOR A TEMPORARY DECISION AND ADEQUATE PROTECTION WHILE THEY ARE REACHING A DECISION.

THE MEETING BROKE UP AT 8:45 P.M. FOR A MEETING OF THE COUNCIL, THE ADMINISTRATOR, STEVEN MALPHRUS, AND THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE LEVY VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT.

THE MEETING RESUMED AT 9:15 P.M.

TWO STATEMENT WERE MADE, MR. FULGHUM ASKED MR. GRAHAM TO GO FIRST.

CHIEF GRAHAM SAID ON MONDAY HE MAY HAVE MADE STATEMENTS THAT HE SHOULD NOT HAVE MADE AND HE APOLOGIZED TO VICE CHAIRMAN JONES, COUNCILMAN TUTEN AND ATTORNEY JONES. CHIEF GRAHAM SAID HE HAS ALWAYS FOUGHT FOR THE FIRE DEPARTMENT AND THERE WILL BE NO MORE THREATS.

MR. FULGHUM THANKED MR. GRAHAM FOR HIS STATEMENT AND THERE WAS NEVER ANY REAL THREAT TO THE COMMUNITY BECAUSE FIREMEN AND THE EQUIPMENT WERE STILL IN THE COMMUNITY AT THE COMMUNITY CENTER, BUT THAT THE EQUIPMENT CAN GO BACK TO THE LEVY STATION.

THE MEETING ENDED AT 9:20 P.M.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED BY:

APPROVED BY:

JUDITH M. FRANK, CCC
CLERK TO COUNCIL

GLADYS N. JONES
VICE CHAIRMAN