



Weekly Legislative Report

Your Legislative Team

Chief Ron Beesley, Legislative Director
Fred Angelo, 1st Legislative Vice Pres.
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April 3, 2009

LOCAL SCENE:

North County:

Riviera Beach: EVP Chuck Lupo has been attending all City Council meetings and the last pension meeting. Upcoming workshop on DROP Program. Will keep you posted.

Palm Beach Gardens: Chief Beesley, AJ O'Laughlin and Fred Angelo met with the DVP Morejon and the members of PBGFR. The city is attacking the pension fund cost and has reduced staffing at two stations. DVP Morejon suggested that the members look at the possibility of a merger with PBCFR. The members voted to move forward with getting the PROS and CONS of such action. Meanwhile, DVP Morejon and Fred Angelo are making rounds with the council next week.

Central County:

Glen Ridge: Councilman/Captain Michael Jawdy of Palm Beach County Fire Rescue continues his support with assisting in getting us a spot on the agenda to gain the support for our Surtax. We are scheduled for May 6th at 7p.

Lake Worth: County Commission votes on Tuesday April 7th about the proposed merger of LWFR. The biggest merger in the history of PB County Fire Rescue.

Mayor Jeff Clemens was given the information he requested about our Emergency Fire Rescue Diversified Funding Act and has committed to signing a support letter for us. Thanks Mayor!

Town of Haverhill: Met with the City Manager about getting the Town to pass a resolution to Support our Emergency Fire Rescue Diversified Funding Act. Scheduling a follow-up meeting. Looks good.

Lake Clarke Shores: Met with the City Manager about the Emergency Fire Rescue Diversified Funding Act. She really liked it. It is on the Council Consent agenda for April 23.

Unincorporated PBC: Chief Beesley and President Mayo made rounds with the County Commission on the Lake Worth merger. The County Commission votes April 7th. Should have little debate.

A special thanks to PSL Councilman Chris Cooper (E41 B) and PSL Councilwoman Michelle Berger, (wife of DVP 4 Capt. Scott Berger) for getting our Emergency Fire Rescue Diversified Funding Act on both the PSL Council agenda and the PSL Fire Board agenda. Talk about action oriented.

Palm Beach: Gearing up for Negotiations. Scheduling meeting with PB Civic Association.

South Palm Beach: Waiting to get on the agenda in SPB. Should be soon.

West County:

Wellington: With the Support of the City Manager, Councilwoman Lizbeth Benequisto and Councilman/PBCFR Captain Willhite, our Emergency Fire Rescue Diversified Funding Act is on the Consent agenda for April 14th. If you can attend we will see you there.

Loxahatchee Groves: Newly elected Councilman Ron Jarriel (Retired PBCFR) has been instrumental in facilitating a meeting with the City Clerk and City Mgr to have our Emergency Fire Rescue Diversified Funding Act placed on the April 7th agenda to gain support via a resolution by the City supporting our Surtax. If you are in the area please feel free to stop by the council chambers at 101 D Rd. and show your support.

Loxahatchee Groves Water Control District: Board member and Retired PBCFR Lieutenant Dave Demarois cannot be thanked enough for his work in getting us a spot on the April 13th agenda to gain support via a resolution for our Emergency Fire Rescue Diversified Funding Act. This Board meeting will also be held at 101 D Rd. If you live in the area please stop by and show your support.

City of Pahokee: Met with the Mayor and City Manager and facilitated getting a spot on the April 14th agenda to ask the council pass a resolution supporting the Emergency Fire Rescue Diversified Funding Act. If you are in the area stop by.

City of South Bay: Thanks to Chief Arena for facilitating a meeting with the South Bay City Manager. After a long wait and a short meeting we are on the agenda April 21st asking for a resolution supporting our Emergency Fire Rescue Diversified Funding Act.

City of Royal Palm Beach: Met with City Manager Farber. He supports the Surtax and has placed our resolution on the consent agenda for April 16th. Should be quick and easy but not counting our chickens yet.

South County:

City of Delray Beach: DVP Tabek has been working with the city manager and staff to have our Surtax placed on the Agenda. Waiting on exact date. Way to go Tabek. In addition, DVP Tabek hosted newly elected councilman Frankel to Panther Hockey. Way to go!

City Boca Raton: Palm Beach County Fire Rescue's **Anthony Majhess**, was sworn in as a new councilman. Congrats! AJ and Fred met with Boca FR union guys to have the Emergency Fire Rescue Diversified Funding Act placed on their agenda. No action as of yet. We are hopeful.

STATE:

Week 5 has come and gone. Great progress was made this week. We began this process with 2 bills as our primary mission. They were House Bill 365 and Senate Bill 1000. These bills were written to “diversify” the funding of the Fire and Rescue Services statewide. Essentially, they are the same bill filed in both chambers of the Florida Legislature. We are requesting permission, to have a referendum approving a 1 percent sales tax to be used for Fire and Rescue services.

Initially we were given 4 committees in the House and 5 in the Senate. This is a tall order to fill in order to get to the floor for a final vote. Additionally, we had to bring in the FPF, Fire Chiefs, League of Cities, Association of Counties, a score of bill drafting attorneys, and several other groups on board.

Prior to this week, we had cleared 2 committees in the Senate, and, thanks to all of the phone calls, and the help of Leader Hasner and Chair Bogdanoff, the first in the House. We set out to get a “withdrawal” from the next Committee. Again, with the help of our friends, we were successful. We now have 2 Councils in the House, and 3 committees in the Senate. We are on the agenda for the next Senate Committee, Judiciary, Monday @ 4:00 pm. We will begin lobbying Monday morning first thing. With any luck, we will be able to go to the Floor within a couple of weeks.

Simultaneously, we have had a team working on getting resolutions of support from the cities in our County, a team doing the research and communications necessary to keep up with all of the questions that have been coming up, and a team working on expanding the coalition of firefighters and others for this effort, from around the state.

I cannot express enough how important the efforts from this fall have been to the current efforts. Keep up the good work all. Continue to be responsive to the requests from the Legislative team, and we will prevail.

Items on our watch list:

HB 1495 Citizens Catastrophic Fund

SB1572/HB673 2%-3% Buy Back

HB311 - Elimination of Workers Comp Attorney’s Fees

SB538/HB5 Municipal Fire Pensions Prior service credit for FRS

HB605 - 8 yr DROP for Cops

SB384 - FF Bill of Rights

SB792/HB259 - FF Death Benefit during Training

SB198/HB 171 - FF Flag

SB523 - payment of Vince Merriweather