

Meridian City Council Work Session

March 4, 2025.

A Meeting of the Meridian City Council was called to order at 4:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 4, 2025, by Mayor Robert Simison.

Members Present: Robert Simison, Luke Cavener, Liz Strader, John Overton, Doug Taylor, Anne Little Roberts and Brian Whitlock.

Other Present: Chris Johnson, Bill Nary, Charlie Butterfield, Kris Blume, Todd Lavoie.

ROLL-CALL ATTENDANCE

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Liz Strader	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Brian Whitlock
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Anne Little Roberts	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> John Overton
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Doug Taylor	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Luke Cavener
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mayor Robert E. Simison	

Simison: Council, we will call this meeting to order. For the record it is March 4th, 2025, at 4:30 p.m. We will begin this afternoon's work session with roll call attendance.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Simison: Next item up is adoption of the agenda.

Cavener: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Councilman Cavener.

Cavener: Move we adopt the agenda as presented.

Strader: Second.

Simison: Have a motion and a second to adopt the agenda as presented. Is there any discussion? If not, all in favor signify by saying aye. Opposed nay? The ayes have it and the agenda is adopted.

MOTION CARRIED: ALL AYES.

CONSENT AGENDA [Action Item]

- 1. Meridian Commerce Park Building "J" Water Main Easement (ESMT-2025-0018).**
- 2. Raising Cane's Water Main Easement (ESMT-2025-0020)**

- 3. Final Order for Winco Wells Subdivision No. 2 (FP-2018-0018) by TAIT, located at 2600 E. Overland Rd.**
- 4. Final Order for Keep West Subdivision (FP-2024-0022), by Jarron Langston, Dawson, located at 2625 E. Lake Hazel Rd. and 6519 S. Raap Ranch Ln.**
- 5. Final Order for Tanner Creek Subdivision No.1 (FP-2024-0024) by Engineering Solutions, located at 615 W. Waltman Ln.**
- 6. Development Agreement (Baratza Subdivision H-2024-0016) Between City of Meridian and Black Cat-Meridian 77 LLC and James Ranch 280 LLC for Property Located at the Southeast Corner of N. Black Cat Rd. and W. McMillan Rd.**
- 7. Approval of Construction Contract to Challenger Companies for the WCV #26 & 28 SCADA project for the Not-to-Exceed amount of \$294,000.00**
- 8. Resolution No. 25-2506: A Resolution of the City Council of the City of Meridian, Idaho, Setting Forth Certain Findings and Purposes to Declare Surplus Property and Authorizing the Donation of Certain Office Supplies to the Idaho Youth Ranch**

Simison: First up is the Consent Agenda.

Cavener: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Councilman Cavener.

Cavener: Move we approve the Consent Agenda as presented. For the Mayor to signed and the Clerk to attest.

Strader: Second.

Simison: I have a motion and a second to approve the Consent Agenda. Is there any discussion? If not, all in favor signify by saying aye. Opposed nay? The ayes have it and the Consent Agenda is agreed to.

MOTION CARRIED: ALL AYES.

ITEMS MOVED FROM THE CONSENT AGENDA [Action Item]

DEPARTMENT / COMMISSION REPORTS [Action Item]

9. Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Amendment in the amount of \$12,000.00 for purchase of a Water Softener at Fire Station #7

Simison: Our next item up is Item 9, Fiscal Year 25 Fire Department budget amendment in the amendment amount of 12,000 dollars. It looks like we are going to have Chief Butterfield.

Butterfield: Good afternoon, Mr. Mayor, Members of Council. You have in front of you a request for a water softener for Station 7. We realized that we have been operational down there about a year and a half now and recognized that through the pictures that a part of the packet that we were seeing and the crews were advising that they are seeing a lot of the calcium build up in that particular station. We haven't noticed that in any of the other stations and so in some due diligence efforts we did meet with the water department and, essentially, we are told sometimes that happens with the different wells in the city. Some wells have produced more hard water than other wells and recognizing that we are seeing -- actually visually seeing some of that, you know, calcium build up we just want to get in front of this and be proactive as we can and get a water softener in that station. Especially with these particular fire stations 24 hour operations, the crews are there 24 hours a day utilizing a lot of the water more often than even your own house. There is a lot of people in their homes, you know, go to work and aren't using the water as often. So, with that, you know, over usage or -- or usage that's a little above and beyond what you find in a residential structure, we want to make sure that we were proactive and requested a budget amendment for a 12,000 dollars to get that installed. So, I would be happy to answer any questions Council has.

Simison: Thank you, Chief. Council, any questions?

Strader: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Council Woman Strader.

Strader: Yeah. I'm -- hopefully everyone received information, as well as the Q&A and I'm happy to make a motion to approve the Fiscal Year 2025 budget amendment in the amount of 12,000 dollars to purchase a water softener for Station 7.

Cavener: Second.

Simison: I have a motion and a second. Is there a discussion on the motion? If not, clerk call the roll.

Roll Call: Cavener, yea; Strader, yea; Overton, yea; Little Roberts, yea; Taylor, yea; Whitlock, yea.

Simison: All ayes. Motion carries and the item is agreed to. Thank you very much.

MOTION CARRIED: ALL AYES.

10. Comprehensive Financial Plan Updates

Simison: So, with that we will move on to Item 10, which is Comprehensive Financial Plan update from the Fire Department. Welcome, Chief Blume.

Blume: Well, good evening, Mr. Mayor and Members of Council. I'm really thrilled to be actually up here presenting sort of a ten year vision for the Meridian Fire Department and the service that it intends to provide to this community. You know, I really appreciated Councilman Cavener's characterization on the first night of these as this being a roadshow and I -- and I really took that to heart in how I was going to be able to present this and not get too far into the weeds, but very high level and strategic in the thinking and the planning that we are -- we are -- we are looking at. What we see right now is -- what we are going to talk about is we are really in the middle of a conversation right now and -- and that conversation is what is the best way over the next ten years can the Meridian Fire Department continue to meet its growing demands in a fiscally responsible manner and -- and so, like I said, we are in the middle -- middle of a conversation right now, because we necessarily don't know what that's going to look like, but we have an outline and a -- and a schematic of what we would like to accomplish over the next ten years. So, you will see our first request -- our first CFP request goes back to 2025 when we were making our budget proposal for FY-2025, largely predicated on an accreditation report and, then, in that accreditation report it had called out that we had some concerns regarding health and safety, cancer and carcinogen prevention and what we did is we -- we -- we have pursued -- we have gone through the RFP and now we are working with an architectural firm to sort of create a menu. What a large scale remodel would look like, what a minimal scale remodel would look like and everything in between. Necessarily these remodels -- and, you know, I'm going to speak to this first one and, then, I can just say ditto for the next five. But the first -- we don't know what station is going to go first. We want to get this plan back before we assign a station designation of which fire station we intend to remodel first. This might also play into the size of the remodel. Maybe by utilizing our Darkhorse analytic tool it may indicate that in the next ten years, the next five years, the best location for a multi-company station is Station X. Well, based on that information we might move forward with that station remodel first, recognizing that we may need a station that could house another fire station company during periods of remodel. So, that's where this is coming from and, again, largely based on that accreditation recommendation and necessarily not increasing the -- the -- the -- you know, apparatus base. We are not trying to build mega stations, we are just trying to meet the growing and evolving need of the community and -- and especially addressing the health and safety concerns that were pointed out in our accreditation report. Okay. The second one that we have is the Fire Safety Center at the Meridian Community Center. Currently -- and I think Council Woman Strader will probably be able to speak to this as well, we are looking for a budget amendment for the FY-25 budget to be able to participate in the -- having a footprint at the Community Center. The reason that we wanted to pair the Meridian Fire Department with the community center is we really recognize that when it comes to community risk reduction being able to be in front of and being able -- having a seat at the table in the community with the members of the

community, this is exactly where we need to position these people and these folks and to initiate and engage with the programs that community risk reduction is -- is -- is -- is known for and so that's -- that's this -- that's this request and what we are looking at is like -- as you see on here -- and I'm sorry the schematic is a little small, but it is a -- it's not in addition to, but it is part of that overall floor plan tying in again with community -- with the Parks and Rec Department and -- and, honestly, this is really -- this is really cool in -- in my opinion, because nationally this isn't happening, but nationally it is desired. People really would love to see risk reduction placed in a -- in a community accessible location and to be able to co-locate at a community center, it would just be very very cool.

Strader: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Council Woman Strader.

Strader: Yeah. Maybe just on that briefly, since you did mention it, Chief, the Fire Department has sent me a proposed budget amendment for the design of this prevention piece at the Community Center and it has not been approved yet. I wanted to get some more background and information for us, because I feel like -- it seems like having a robust Q&A is really going to help us to work through these things, but I think this is a good example of a budget amendment that would be approved for discussion, because it is a wider discussion. The, I think, tricky thing about it is that the design process that the Parks Department has already engaged in is already underway and so if we do want to have fire prevention co-located there we need to amend that agreement and actually pay for the design of this. It sounds like the timing should be sooner rather than later, otherwise, the cost would go up. But, again, the Community Center timing is kind of an open discussion and probably something I expected more around the time when the budget would be presented. So, that's just to sort of preview this for you. If you receive a budget amendment from me it should have a lot of robust Q&A and back and forth that you could look at and, then, I think we all need to just have a conversation about it. So, that's kind of a preview, but for everybody to sort of know what he is talking about. Thanks, chief.

Blume: Thank you very much, ma'am. I appreciate that. Okay. Moving forward that's our -- that concludes FY-26 budget requests -- or CFP requests rather. And, then, again, you will see a second station remodel. You know, I appreciated -- and -- and, actually, it was interesting when we came before you requesting funding to -- to -- to go down this road of station remodels, Councilman Cavener actually said, you know, I -- I don't -- I don't -- I don't feel good about the ten year span and so what we tried to do is condense because of the concern with health and safety in -- in a five year period instead of a ten year period. But this is the second station remodel and, again, it will largely be predicated on the information that we get back from the architectural firm, some of the plans and, then, putting an overlay of where Darkhorse is recommending our -- our station remodels and the sequencing of it. In FY-27 we are looking to add a third ladder service to the City of Meridian. This is largely predicated on the ISRB recommendations. Currently with the two ladder services that we have in the City of

Meridian. We are -- we are scoring it in the 33rd percentile in -- in ladder coverage. Now, I recognize that that's just, you know, one data point, but as we are noticing the mid-rise and multi-family residence that are multiple stories all over Meridian, this appears to be the right path forward for the City of Meridian in the service with a ladder. With it being the third ladder service, the intent would be that it would be a cross-staffed model. So, this ladder service would not come with the request for additional staffing, it would just be the ladder service and according to the ISRB rating bureau they indicate that by having it cross-staffed we will get the credit for the third additional ladder service.

Strader: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Council Woman Strader.

Strader: Yeah. I think this is another good example where we can provide maybe some more insight to the Council, but I know the lead times have been a challenge on adding either a new ladder service or a replacement ladder service, which is a separate conversation, but do you want to just walk us through what you are hearing, what you are seeing and kind of what your thoughts are on ladder service generally, making sure that we get to the right place, but the lead time sounded crazy. So, if you don't mind.

Blume: Yes, ma'am. You are not wrong. As we have been working with -- well, let me back up. So, the -- the Meridian Fire Department is fleet specific to one vendor right now. It's Pierce. And the reason that we have been fleet specific is for the interoperability. The -- you know, the alternator on one of the engines is identical to the other six that we have, as well as for crew familiarity. So, if a firefighter works at one fire station and goes to a different fire station it's the same apparatus and that really becomes important when you are the driver or the operator of it. They don't have to have, you know, special, oh, I forgot that I had to do that with this one as brands go. So, that's why we -- we have -- we have been sticking with Pierce. That's not to say that we will forever. Certainly as Council Woman Strader indicated that there are profound lead times with no end to that in sight. Forty to 50 months, 56 months in a lead time once a -- once a purchase order is -- is issued is -- is not unheard of and so that's one consideration. The other consideration that we can make is to buy a demo model and these come up throughout the year. We have a very specific model that we are looking for and it would be identical, again, in -- in keeping with the idea of having identical apparatus -- to the ladder truck that is currently stationed at Station 35. It's a quint. So, what we are -- if -- if we go with a stock unit there is the chance of reducing that lead time by half. So, we are -- you know, it -- it's -- it's kind of interesting, because we are playing the long game in recognizing that it can take up to 40 to 50 months to get a ladder truck, but we also have some opportunities that may bring -- get it in sooner. But we can't plan on those. Those are one offs as they would -- as they would come up. So, that's sort of -- Council Woman Strader does that sort of help with that?

Strader: Yes. Thank you. I apologize, I'm having some technical issues. That's why I'm not on video. But at least everybody can hear me. Yeah, I -- I think it's just important for people to kind of understand that road map and we do know we have an

existing ladder that does need to be replaced as well. Did you want to touch on that at all in this conversation, so people at least understand that?

Blume: I -- I certainly can, ma'am. So, it being a replacement, that's why you are not seeing it in the CFP request, but it -- I'm -- I'm anticipating -- or I'm hoping that we can have that as part of FY-26 budget dialogue as a replacement. Currently the ladder that we have that we would like to replace is 15 years old. We are trying to follow NFPA standards, especially as it relates to emergency services vehicles. Fifteen years of an emergency service vehicle is -- is old. It's tired. It has over 120,000 miles and according to the recent numbers from our logistics chief it's costing the city 80,000 dollars a year in -- in -- in maintenance fees to keep it on the road and keep it in a reserve status. All that to say it has significant downtime and so that plays into the calculus of -- of when and how we should replace it. So, if that helps with -- with that as well.

Strader: Thank you. Yeah. That was very helpful. I think it's just good for people to kind of understand the -- the big picture around that and we will have future discussions around that. But at least kind of now everyone understands how the new service kind of fits in. This is an additional service that is needed for city --

Blume: Yes, ma'am. Correct.

Strader: -- and not a replacement. Thank you.

Taylor: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Councilman Taylor.

Taylor: Thanks. Chief Blume, really quick question on the different vendors. With such long lead time does it make sense to work with any other vendors potentially? I know like -- I don't even know if Boise Mobile Equipment, for example, does these types of fire trucks, but if we are looking at such long lead times and the difficulty with that is there value in looking at other vendors potentially? And I -- I get the, you know, interoperability with parts and things that -- I -- I get that, but could you speak to that for a little bit?

Blume: Councilman Taylor, you are absolutely spot on and I have witnesses here with me this evening. We had this conversation on Monday. We are not going to be beholden to one manufacturer. If we can't get -- if you, as Council Members and the Mayor, approve a ladder, it's because you believe that we need the ladder. We don't need it 40 months from now, we need it now, and so we were talking about moving away from being vendor specific and purpose driven, like if -- if we can find a comparable that meets the -- the demand and meets the requirement that we are looking for from another vendor -- and there are, there is five other vendors out there. We are -- we are doing that this week.

Strader: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Councilman Cavener.

Cavener: I'm going to tread lightly, because I don't want to start moving into a budget conversation, but I -- I need some -- maybe just some understanding of your industry as it pertains to the cost of a -- of a ladder truck and I will share this because I -- when we bought our first ladder truck I think it was one and a half million dollars and the reason why I know this is because I told my kids and every time a ladder truck drives by it's one and a half and the second is 1.75 and so now I see at two and a half million dollars. Has the technology of the industry evolved that it requires a ladder truck to adhere? Is it demand? Help me understand -- I mean when I see almost doubling in what we paid for our first ladder truck for what would be proposed here in the CFP, I really struggle with that and I'm trying to understand for myself what's causing the significant increase in cost.

Blume: Councilman Cavener, very excellent question. And, in fact, I was just back at the Congressional Fire Services Institute and this was a topic of discussion among fire chiefs from across the country. There was a comparison that was made. They said ten years ago it cost 740 million dollars to build a Boeing 747. Last year in FY-24 it cost 747 million dollars -- or 474 million dollars. So, seven million dollar increase on a 400 and -- you get where I'm going. So, there is no reason that -- that we can think of that we could possibly put our finger on as to why the prices jump to the point that you just made. I mean we are looking at a 50 percent increase, a hundred percent increase over a ten year period. It doesn't make sense. And certainly now there is a commission that was established that's actually looking into this like for the industry, like why in the world -- it's very unique. It's -- it doesn't occur in law enforcement. It doesn't occur in -- in, you know, commercial trucking, it's -- it's occurring in the fire service and so you are -- you are not wrong and the concern is a national one.

Cavener: Mr. Mayor, if I may, because this --

Simison: Councilman Cavener.

Cavener: -- pertains a little bit to where we are headed in this year's budget. I look at, okay, get a ten year lifespan on this truck. Okay. So, it's 250,000 dollars a year versus an existing ladder truck you are saying it's costing us 80,000 dollars to continue to operate. Now, I want to take aside the downtime, because I think that's -- that's the critical piece, but if I am budget conscious, which I think we all are, certainly say, wow, we are getting a better ROI out of maintaining an existing vehicle at 80,000 dollars a year, as opposed to spending three times that for something new. So, I think that is challenges for you as subject matter experts to help us understand as we move into our budget hearing. I don't want to necessarily get into that, but I -- the -- the -- the cost disparity is so wide that I didn't want to catch you off guard with these types of questions when we move into our budget hearing.

Simison: I assure you you are not catching them off guard with that question.

Blume: Nope. Yep. The Mayor and I have had the same -- that same conversation and it's hard to argue, that the -- the ROI is there. Again we are looking at trying to be compliant with NFPA standards, you know, as it relates to safety and, yeah, I mean we will be prepared to have this conversation when it -- when we -- when we get to budget. Any other questions on that one? I get to -- get to go to another ditto slide here. So, here is our third station remodel. We are looking to begin that in -- start funding in FY-28 and it is -- again it's consistent with the previous two that you have seen.

Taylor: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Councilman Taylor.

Taylor: Just a quick question. On these remodels are those impact fee eligible? Is that how we pay for those remodels?

Blume: Excellent question. They are impact fee eligible if it's for an increase in square footage. Working within the existing footprint of the stations that we have, specifically a turn out room that is isolated from the apparatus bay, would be additional square footage. Gym space -- or -- or workout area that is isolated from diesel particulate matter would be an increased floor space. So, I would defer to Finance who is here, but if it's for an increase in square footage it is impact fee eligible, but if it's for interior remodeling, adding additional bedrooms or -- or things like that, then, that is not impact fee eligible.

Simison: Any walls or separations within the footprint are not. It's only if it expands beyond the current footprint.

Taylor: Mr. Mayor, to clarify on that point, is it possible that there is a combination of funding sources -- increased footprint for the impact fees and, then, other funds for the -- okay. Thank you.

Blume: Okay. Again, so here is another one of our station remodels. Again same -- same thing, FY-29, kind of pacing us out with that five year cadence to get all five done. And this is our last one. In FY-30 we will be looking to complete the fifth station remodel. After that what we are looking at is acquiring land for Fire Station No. 9 and I could fast forward real quick and I will come back to that, but purchasing the land is going to be leveraging heavily on the Darkhorse analytic tool that the city has provided the Fire Department and what you see right on the -- on the left there is a screen grab of -- of sort of the dashboard that we are looking at. I mean this is a extremely powerful powerful tool. We can change everything -- every variable and it inputs -- it has within its -- its background capability all of the approved construction, all the existing construction. We can put in hypothetical roads. We can do a lot of things and, then, we overlay that with our current call volume, as well as potential future call volumes and what we are trying to do is determine where the best location for the next fire station

should be. This software when we -- I'm going to use the term manipulate, but it's -- it's in the context of manipulating the data. It indicates very clearly where our next fire station should go, should we want to maintain our level of performance and you will see that 60 percent performance, that is with the variables that were inputted in there. You know, I mean 60 percent of our performance, so -- so, that -- that means, you know, are -- are we making it to our -- our calls with an effective response force in the adequate amount of time to address the community's emergencies. We can change that based on -- if it's a medical call, if it's a car accident, if it's a high risk fire event and so that performance changes, but I just wanted to kind of illustrate -- this is an impressive tool and I -- I would argue the city is not going to be wrong when they pick the next location for their fire station, because this is a very very useful tool specifically for that. So, again, that -- that's sort of -- in talking about the land acquisition that's what's going to sort of drive that conversation and that dialogue. We already have a ton of useful information that kind of gives us that predictive modeling of where it needs to be within, you know, a quarter of a mile. Then we would move into in 2030 the design phase for Fire Station No. 9 and coinciding with Fire Station 9, not necessarily deployed at Station 9, would be the fourth ladder service. Again, looking at the predictive analytic model it may tell us to relocate an engine from over here and put that at Station 9, put the ladder service, you know, on the Ten Mile corridor, for example. So, we are not beholden to it going to Station 9, what we are saying is it will coincide -- this will be the apparatus that's purchased to support the opening of Station 9, if that makes sense. But that would be the fourth ladder service in the community and at this point, according to ISRB, we would get a hundred percent credit for ladder service in the -- in the -- in the City of Meridian. Station 9 construction occurring in 2031 and, then, again, now we get to the personnel considerations and we have pushed this out to coincide with the opening of -- of Station 9. Three battalion chiefs as well and -- and a vehicle -- by my estimation we are at a point now where having the conversation for a second battalion is -- is -- is necessary. Span of control issues, the response time for a battalion chief, if they happen to be at Station 7 on the southeast end of town and they need to make it over to Station 8 on the northwest side of town, it's a 45 minute travel time. Sometimes things are needing to be addressed in -- in an immediate sense and certainly having a second battalion would allow us to district the city in a north-south fashion or an east-west fashion and allow for a better span of control model for the city fire department. It's also worth noting, too, that anytime there is a confirmed structure fire in the City of Meridian by our FRLS -- our -- our response level, it necessitates two battalion chiefs. So, with us only having one we are always pulling a second battalion chief from our neighboring partners. That's current.

Taylor: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Councilman Taylor.

Taylor: Chief Blume, when you say it necessitates a second battalion chief, can you just tell me -- help me understand why that is. Is that -- that city policy? Is that, you know, best practices? Can you tell me why it necessitates that?

Blume: Councilman Taylor, great question. Necessitate in -- in regard to how the -- the Ada county -- how we dispatch fires in Ada county. So, it's a -- it's a -- it's an agreed upon standard with the -- with the jurisdictions and it certainly does lend itself to a component of safety. Fire scenes are very hectic and if you are a battalion chief and you are on one side of the structure, there is a lot going on potentially on the other side that does -- they don't get eyes on and, then, it -- certainly as it relates to a span of control, once you get into an apartment fire, for example, and you have to start making division assignments you need the additional human resource to -- to manage that.

Strader: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Council Woman Strader.

Strader: Maybe it would be helpful -- if you want to just talk a little bit about span of control. Like I -- I found that very helpful. Not everyone has a public safety background. So, if you want to just quickly explain that.

Blume: Yes, ma'am. So -- so, as it relates to, you know, that there -- there is business models that say four to five span of control. When -- when you have one battalion chief who has got eight currently -- eight captains, eight crews operating, it's very challenging for them to get beyond task level -- task saturation at the task level and being able to reduce that burden. If I were to only have four stations and four captains and four crews and I'm responsible for, they are -- they are much better able to address the needs of -- of those crews, they are better able to supervise those crews and provide protection, direction order for them and, then, certainly the span of control that I just indicated with the fire and emergency scenes. It's -- it's -- it is essential, because, you know, when you have eight to ten fire companies operating in a very chaotic environment, having a span of control and a separation of who is in charge of what is really important.

Strader: Thank you. I think that helps everybody to be on the same page. Appreciate it.

Blume: Yes, ma'am. All right. So, Station 9, once we get to a point of opening it and turning the keys on there, we are looking at -- we are going to need staff -- additional staff for that station. We -- we have put in here 12 staff members for that station and you will see on there it has three captains, three engineers and six firefighters. Our last two requests include a captain of inspection and vehicle. Currently we have a inspection bureau, inspection division that that consists of three people and I can tell you that they are extremely busy and as Meridian continues to grow, as businesses -- you know, they don't inspect residence, but they do inspect the commercial businesses in -- in the community. They have got their hands full and -- and there is a lot going on in the year round work and certainly what we are projecting is if in -- in ten years, you know, where it's saturation now, in -- in ten years it would definitely be appropriate to add this additional service. Our last one is a captain of training. Currently -- and before we had the growth that we had in -- in Meridian where the fire department grew by two fire stations and 40 percent staff, we had two captains of training and we still have two

captains of training. What we are doing now to sort of get by is we are pulling captains off of their line assignment, off of their engine or ladder assignment and bringing them into the training division during our peak needs, specific to our fire academies and, then, they go back to their assignment after -- after the academy is over. But, certainly, as -- as training evolves and the need for our people to be mentored and coached in -- in -- in fire ground evolutions, having training staff available is -- is really important and we feel that three would be the -- a great number, considering we have three shifts. We assign one to each shift that becomes a shift training captain and that, if I'm not mistaken, that concludes the presentation for the next ten years for the Fire Department.

Simison: Thank you, Chief. Council, questions? Councilman Whitlock.

Whitlock: A quick one. Chief, thank you for the overview and very very helpful. Just a question on your ditto slide -- the ditto slides, the dollar amounts were also ditto. Explain to me how that works over a five year period?

Blume: Well, I appreciate that question. Those are guesses. We are in the architectural -- we are getting the design and development and by the time we go to a budget this -- this June and July we will have a much better understanding and a better number that we can associate. These were just best -- I mean not even best -- they were just guests, honestly.

Strader: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Council Woman Strader.

Strader: Maybe something that would help everyone is -- and Todd will jump in if I'm incorrect. My understanding of the CFP projection model is that we put in today's dollars and, then, within the CFP itself the Finance team adds an inflation factor to everything. I'm looking at Todd for a nod. Yep. So, that helps everybody kind of understand how we do that, because, otherwise, to your point, it's extremely difficult to predict.

Cavener: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Councilman Cavener.

Cavener: Couple quick questions. Talk to me and the Council a little bit about remodel versus relocation. Your predecessor spoke at great lengths about the need to relocate some or other stations. The training center as well. Is that a position this current administration supports or shares? How are you finding the balance between remodeling and certainly I wouldn't want to remodel a location if we were inevitably going to relocate that. So, that's my first question. Help me understand kind of what the -- the vision is for our current stations as they are currently built.

Blume: Excellent question, Councilman Cavener. No, we are not looking to relocate and -- and that's the simple answer. But, you know, Chief Butterfield and I have spent a lot of time in this Darkhorse platform and we have run the scenario. Where would you put -- wipe all the stations off the map and where would you put them? Correct me if I'm wrong, but within quarter of a mile -- I don't know if -- if Meridian was guessing really well or got very lucky, but they placed all of their fire stations within quarter of a mile of where Darkhorse would -- would -- would put them.

Cavener: Great.

Blume: So, the answer is no. We think that where we are located is -- is -- is the correct location for serving the community. Relocating the training center. There is a lot of consideration to that. It's -- it does make it challenging running fire academies and it does make it challenging operating a fire station in one location, as well as a training center. The training center has needs. Currently when we are -- we are training our recruits -- and I know this is kind of really in the weeds, but, you know, there -- there are no showers. There is -- there is no place for the -- for these people. So, they are -- it -- it's challenging. So, it's not ideal.

Cavener: Okay.

Blume: But it's expensive. I mean those training towers -- I can't even imagine what rebuilding one of those training towers on any piece of dirt would cost and so it -- it -- it is challenging. But, again, Station 1 is in a great location and it has wonderful frontage access right out onto Franklin. So, that's what -- that's an important thing, like relocating a station, you start -- as a firefighter, as a captain at a station, the decision pulling out of the station is really do I go left or right. Well, Franklin is awesome, because I can go -- I can be to Meridian Road or Locust Grove just by a left or right turn, I don't have to navigate out of a neighborhood. I don't have to navigate on some side streets and wait for traffic, I go left or right. So, I think that we are in good locations.

Strader: Mr. Mayor, one more additional?

Simison: Councilman Cavener.

Strader: On -- on your ditto slides there is a bullet that certainly speaks to me and it -- it revolved around carcinogen avoidance was the term that you used. For all of us, right, the health and safety of all of our employees is paramount, but that term avoidance sparked some interest, because my understanding we can't avoid carcinogens and so I guess at a later point in time I -- I want some greater understanding about why our station remodel was just at the point of avoiding versus further limiting and so I would want to make sure that the Council feels really comfortable. If we are doing a remodel is it moving us into a position where our -- our, you know, on the ground firefighters are avoiding carcinogens in the station versus what we are doing to limit that exposure. So, I think just more -- I think that's -- that's planting a seed for a later conversation that I think -- I -- I -- I want some really strong understanding about that particular piece.

Blume: That's an excellent -- excellent observation and I think that our membership would like that as well. Yes, sir.

Taylor: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Councilman Taylor.

Taylor: Just a quick question and maybe a little history lesson for me if you could. I'm just thinking a little bit about the timing of the next fire station and thinking back to the rapid growth we had and bringing on the last couple of fire stations. Maybe I recognize a bit of an extraordinary growth that kind of pushed maybe more quickly building out some fire stations. So, I guess the question would be do you anticipate possibly that the timing of Station 9 could be moved up by any considerable length of time or even maybe delayed if we should see a real slowdown in growth? Maybe just kind of talk to me a little bit about how comfortable you are with the timing of Station 9 when we are looking at it in the CFP and maybe what we saw in recent years. I -- that was before I came on Council, some of that discussion, so I'm kind of missing some of those pieces. So, I would appreciate some discussion on that.

Blume: That's a -- that's a great question, Councilman Taylor. You know, the consideration for Station 9 is not whether we need to build it or not, it -- it needs to be built. I think that what I have tried to project this evening was recognizing the difficult situation that you as Council are sitting in right now, the onboarding of an additional 12 firefighters potentially. You know, I -- I -- I'm -- I'm trying to be sensitive to -- to that understanding. Now, there may be other ways to get to a staffing model at that station, but recognizing in the -- in the current situation we are in right today, I -- I -- I don't know how the city can be in a position to support 12 additional firefighters. So, that's kind of where I'm at.

Simison: Maybe just to set some -- there could be other uses for a Station 9 that might want to build it sooner if we were to use that as we do station remodels. So, I guess I would say there might be a conversation about doing that, but it doesn't mean we add more staff or we operate more engines, but we might -- that might be a way to address that, rather than putting two current stations out of one station in the short term, but those -- the impact fees when are they and what are the other competing priorities I think is part of that conversation and when we would have access to the right place is part of that. So, I -- I don't want to have the chief say it's only when we get to the people, in case it shows up in two years as a conversation point.

Taylor: Mr. Mayor, quick follow up?

Simison: Councilman Taylor.

Taylor: You kind of brought up a good point that I had been thinking about. When it comes to remodel is that something where the -- you have to vacate the premise to do the remodel or is it -- can you coexist while that's happening?

Blume: Excellent question and, to be honest, we don't know yet. Depending on the significance of the remodel. I mean if this is an addition that is occurring outside of the footprint that doesn't impact the station life or the -- then -- then, yeah, they can probably operate out of it. We are working in -- in the mindset of where would we relocate people if we had to do that.

Strader: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Council Woman Strader.

Strader: At least the beginnings of a strategy I had heard you articulate that I thought had made some sense and it's just worth thinking through would be if Darkhorse indicated a strong preference for one multi-company station, if the analytics indicated that, that would be a logical first remodel, because that would give us the ability to co-locate in the first one and, then, that would kind of create a domino effect. So, again, I -- I agree with the Mayor, I think there are multiple paths to remodeling all these stations and -- and you all will have to just, you know, as you are thinking through tactically with us you can articulate what the best path is. But I thought that that -- that made common sense to me if that was a -- a path that you go down.

Blue: Yes, ma'am.

Simison: Council, any additional questions? All right. Thank you very much. With that we have reached the end. Councilman Cavener.

Cavener: Move that we adjourn our work session.

Simison: Motion to adjourn. All in favor signify by -- well --

Strader: Second.

Simison: Motion and second to adjourn the work session. All in favor signify by saying aye. Opposed nay? The ayes have it. We are adjourned

MOTION CARRIED: ALL AYES.

MEETING ADJOURNED AT 5:11 P.M.
(AUDIO RECORDING ON FILE OF THESE PROCEEDINGS)

MAYOR ROBERT SIMISON

DATE APPROVED

ATTEST:

CHRIS JOHNSON - CITY CLERK