

City of Philadelphia



Council of the City of Philadelphia
Office of the Chief Clerk
Room 402, City Hall
Philadelphia

(Resolution No. 040832)

RESOLUTION

Authorizing City Council's Committee of the Whole to hold public hearings to investigate the Philadelphia Fire Department's proposed deployment; and, in furtherance of such investigation, authorizing the issuance of subpoenas to compel the attendance of witnesses and the production of documents to the full extent authorized under section 2-401 of the Home Rule Charter.

WHEREAS, Former Fire Commissioner Harold Hairston, Managing Director Philip Goldsmith and Mayor John Street informed Philadelphia City Council of drastic changes to the deployment of fire apparatus throughout the City on June 25, 2004. Previously, the Administration announced their plan for deployment to the Fire Fighters' Union and the press on June 21, 2004; and

WHEREAS, The proposed deployment recommends eliminating 4 engine companies and 4 ladder companies and the transfer of 3 ladder companies and 3 other units from their current location to alternate locations; and

WHEREAS, The Administration has not offered sufficient evidence that Philadelphians' homes, businesses and physical well-being will remain safe; nor has the Administration provided adequate statistical data to show how this deployment was designed; and

WHEREAS, The Mayor's 21st Century Review Forum explained the importance of an open, independent review as part of any potential fire department reduction process and recommended "the appointment of an independent commission with the authority to hold public hearings, take testimony, and make recommendations for consolidation or closure...." Despite this recommendation, the Administration never engaged in an open review process despite repeated requests for information by the Fire Fighters' Union and members of City Council; and

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WHEREAS, In April 2004, Commissioner Hairston testified that the City had not yet identified specific fire companies slated for closure, but agreed to present City Council with information as it became available. Commissioner Hairston failed to provide any further information prior to the passage of the Fiscal Year 2005 budget; and

WHEREAS, Commissioner Hairston and Managing Director Goldsmith did not present the City's plan to City Council until June 25, 2004, five days before it was to take effect and this deliberate action deprived City Council any meaningful opportunity to reallocate City funds or to conduct hearings on the feasibility of this action; and

WHEREAS, City Councilmembers have repeatedly acknowledged that changes to the Department may be appropriate, but they believe that the public and the City's firefighters deserve an independent study of any redeployment of fire apparatus to insure their safety and livelihood are maintained; and

WHEREAS, Any effective independent study of the Fire Department's deployment should be done in cooperation with Administration officials; and

WHEREAS, City Council received a proposal for an independent study, for which Council would pay, and requested the Mayor's support. The Mayor refused to cooperate in the study; now therefore

RESOLVED, THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Authorizes City Council's Committee of the Whole to hold public hearings to investigate the Philadelphia Fire Department's proposed deployment; and, in furtherance of such investigation, authorizing the issuance of subpoenas to compel the attendance of witnesses and the production of documents to the full extent authorized under section 2-401 of the Home Rule Charter.

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CERTIFICATION: This is a true and correct copy of the original Resolution, Adopted by the Council of the City of Philadelphia on the twenty-third of September, 2004.

Anna C. Verna
PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL

Patricia Rafferty
CHIEF CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Introduced by: Councilmembers DiCicco, Kenney, Miller, Mariano and Cohen

Sponsored by: Councilmembers DiCicco, Kenney, Miller, Mariano, Cohen, Council President Verna, Councilmembers Clarke, Goode, Rizzo, Nutter, Krajewski, Tasco, Ramos, O'Neill and Kelly