

Pontotoc

Where Family Comes First & We Love Every Second

April 27, 2022

To Whom it May Concern:

On behalf of the Pontotoc County Chamber of Commerce and Main Street Association, I am writing in reference to the need for a relocation of a fire station for the City of Pontotoc Fire Department. While the current fire station has served its purpose through the years, it no longer functions as efficiently as needed due to the congestion of the area where it is located. The property the fire station sits on joins Pontotoc Junior High, and the high school is located across the street. When these buildings were constructed, a large majority of students rode the bus to and from school. Many students are now picked up by parents, or the students drive to school. Due to all of these vehicles, a congestion is created every morning and afternoon. While the City of Pontotoc Fire Department has adjusted to this situation, it is less than ideal. This fire department is also connected the city hall. There is a need for room on the interior of the building for the day-to-day operations of the city hall, and there is also a need for more parking spaces for those conducting business at the city hall. A large portion of the space in front of the fire department/city hall cannot be utilized for parking due to not being able to park in front of the fire trucks. Moving the fire department would help alleviate several problems for the city hall.

Chief Lance Martin has worked diligently and efficiently in creating a plan for a new fire station. Due to his forward thinking, the proposed fire department should effectively serve Pontotoc for many years to come. Chief Martin has navigated the grant process many times during his tenure. If awarded this grant, I have every confidence in the abilities of Chief Martin to effectively see this project through from start to finish. He also has a strong support staff who would be able to assist him if needed.

In closing, I might add that Pontotoc was one of the few areas in North Mississippi to see an increase in the population during the last conducted census. Pontotoc is growing, and we need to prepare for this continued growth. If awarded this grant for a new fire station, we are moving a step closer to preparing for the future.

Sincerely,



Beth Luther Waldo,
Director



FIRST
CHOICE
BANK

ON THE MONEY SINCE 1900

April 26, 2022

Grant Committee Members:

As President of the local community bank, First Choice Bank, let me begin by saying our bank always strives to be involved in projects that can enhance our local community. I strongly value our relationship with the Pontotoc Fire Department. The fire station is currently located in the center of our downtown area. Often, when we have heavy traffic downtown, it makes the response time for the fire trucks longer because they are trying to safely maneuver through the crowded downtown streets.

The Fire Department is currently planning to relocate the downtown station to another downtown area that is several blocks off Main Street. This site should allow a quicker response time because it is removed from the heavy traffic flows. Chief Martin and his staff have performed an in-depth study of the best way to move our Fire Department forward for the next several decades and, at the same time, continue to provide the excellent service they are known for. A project of this magnitude will not be possible in a small town without the help of grant funds.

I ask that the Grant Committee carefully review Chief Martin's plan and request. I think this relocation of the downtown fire station will be a positive move for the entire city and will provide greater protection to our citizens. First Choice Bank fully supports the relocation of the fire station. Thank you for your time and consideration of this project.

Sincerely,

Shane Clayton
President & CEO



Ricky Ferguson
Pontotoc County Chancery Clerk

Board of Supervisors

Wayne Stokes
District One

Mike McGregor
District Two

Brad Ward
District Three

Board of Supervisors

Ernie Wright
District Four

Dan McKnight
District Five

April 26, 2022

RE: Pontotoc Fire Department Grant Submission

To whom it may concern:

I currently serve as Chancery Clerk and County Administrator for Pontotoc County, Mississippi, and thereby coordinate services frequently with the Pontotoc Fire Department. Our firemen consistently work hard to keep our town and county safe, however the current location of the downtown station on Main Street strains local services from dispatching efficiently and constitutes a major safety concern for local residents due to high traffic volumes consistent with downtown commerce and the City school's daily operations all within the same vicinity.

The plans being outlined by Chief Martin are intentionally drawn to build a fire department equipped to serve Pontotoc more effectively and last for decades. I believe the relocated fire department would serve Pontotoc's expected growth and could encourage future industrial development. I ask that you give the fire department's grant submission the heavy weight it deserves in your determination process. If there should be any further questions please do not hesitate to call my office.

It is with sincere appreciation I remain

Sincerely,

Ricky D. Ferguson

Chancery Clerk & County Administrator
Pontotoc County, Mississippi

RF/hf



PONTOTOC CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Michelle Bivens, Ph. D.
Superintendent of Education



Grant Committee Members:

As superintendent of the Pontotoc City Schools District, I am always in support of district and community projects that improve the safety of our students. The Pontotoc City School District truly values our relationship with the Pontotoc Fire Department. Currently the Fire Department shares a property line with our Middle School and Junior High School and is across the street from the High School. While the Fire Department's proximity to three of our campuses does ensure swift response in an emergency, it can also create safety and noise issues for our students. Moving the fire station to a different location will make it more centralized to all of our campuses while cutting down on the disruptions and safety issues that can and do occur in its current location.

The Fire Department's plan is thorough and will meet the needs of our schools and community. A program of this magnitude requires much insight and planning. Chief Martin is a planner. He has written numerous grants and implemented various programs during his tenure with our city. He thinks about what the City of Pontotoc and its residents need now and what we will need for the next fifty years. I feel confident this project will be a model from which others can learn and duplicate. I ask that you please give careful consideration to Chief Martin's purposed project. I believe it will be good for our students and community as a whole. The Pontotoc City School District fully supports the relocation of the downtown Pontotoc Fire Department as a progressive and prudent plan directed at improving our city and the safety all its residents. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Michelle A. Bivens

MAYOR
BOB PEEPLES

CITY CLERK
JESSICA MCLEVIN

CHIEF OF POLICE
RANDY TUTOR

FIRE CHIEF
LANCE MARTIN

Pontotoc

MISSISSIPPI

Where Family Comes First & We Love Every Second

JEFF STAFFORD
ALDERMAN AT LARGE

LENA CHEWE
WARD ONE

JIMMA SMITH
WARD TWO

JOE DIDONNA
WARD THREE

DAVID ANDERSON
WARD FOUR

Dear Committee Members:

I currently serve as Fire Chief for the City of Pontotoc, MS. We have two stations strategically located to serve our community with both full and volunteer staff. We serve approximately 6,400 residents inside the municipal limits of Pontotoc City, and we also have a Pontotoc County response district that extends approximately a 5-mile radius outside the Municipal limits. This county district has around 7,000 residents who are solely our responsibility. Additionally, we are the primary rescue services for entire Pontotoc County.

The downtown fire station (Station 1) is the base of all the above mentioned services provided. We currently share a building with City Hall and are directly across the street from Pontotoc High School and adjacent to Pontotoc Jr High campuses. Furthermore, the primary school athletic facilities for the school district is located behind the FD. As an additional complication, we have a crosswalk for Main Street (MS HWY 9) within 8 feet of our engine bays that has a constant flow of teacher and student foot traffic traveling between campuses during and after the school day.

While most crosswalks are at an intersection or have some other type of traffic control device to regulate movement, ours does not. During my tenure as Chief, I've watched the congestion of foot traffic, school traffic, and commercial traffic increase to the point of serious safety concerns for our students and residents from our emergency apparatus responding to and returning to quarters. It is often necessary for fire fighters or police officers to temporarily stop the flow of traffic in front of our station on a state highway so that we can leave or return to the station. This congestion greatly inhibits our response to calls where minutes and seconds can positively or negatively impact outcomes.

The safety of everyone is our highest priority. We consistently striving for lower response times to our city and county district territory but are hampered by variables that are outside our control. The relocation of Station 1 would not only enhance and lower response times to our most rural areas, but also alleviate the concerns of student and bus safety as they travel this route daily picking up and dropping students from campus to campus.

I've attached letters from community leaders, community organizations, and business owners who share our concern and support our attempt to relocate Station 1. While we are all committed to relocating Station to a more feasible location, the move will be quite a difficult task without financial assistance. We have already expended considerable effort to find an appropriate and central location for Station 1. The new location has received approval from the Mississippi State Rating Bureau and the Mississippi Insurance Commissioner's Office. It is only a few blocks off of Main Street and is close proximity to other city and community service providers. It will provide safety and assistance to the citizens and businesses of Pontotoc for decades to come. Further, the transition from the current location to the newly approved location will be an easy one for staff and our citizens. I humbly request your thorough consideration of our grant application. We would appreciate your assistance in funding this vital community project which can be summarized in one word: "SAFETY". The overarching goal is to make our Fire Department safer for our staff and for all those who we serve now and in the future. Thank you in advance for your time and consideration. I eagerly look forward to your response.

Sincerely



Lance Martin

Fire Chief City of Pontotoc