

PROPOSED MINUTES

GRAAFSCHAP FIRE BOARD
4534 60TH STREET
HOLLAND, MI 49423
(616) 335-3050

SERVING LAKETOWN AND FILLMORE TOWNSHIPS

September 21, 2017

ARTICLE I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Bob Yonker called the meeting to order at 5:30pm and opened with prayer.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Doug Den Bleyker, Tim Hofman, Wayne Mokma,
Gary Dewey, Bob Yonker, Jim Lorence
MEMBERS ABSENT: Sean Reilly
STAFF PRESENT: Al Meshkin – Township Manager
Diane Ybarra – Recording Secretary

ARTICLE II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Board reviewed the minutes of the January 12, 2017 meeting. **A motion was made by Dewey and seconded by Lorence to approve the minutes as submitted. Chair Yonker called for a vote on the motion. UNANIMOUS DECISION – MOTION APPROVED**

ARTICLE III. UPDATE FROM CHIEF

A. New Personnel

Chief Den Bleyker reported hiring a new firefighter on October 1. The candidate starts with no experience and will be attending academy.

B. Cost recovery

Since January 1 we have received \$10,405.00.

C. Portable Radio Mic's

We purchased slightly used portable radio mic's for the new radios, with a cost savings of \$5,545 vs. purchasing new.

D. Update of Officer Sarah Bushee's Activities

Den Bleyker provided a full list of accomplishments and work in progress.

E. Station Use Policy

We had requests from a few members who would like to use the station for family events, and we had no policy in place. With a new policy we will give it a trial run for department members only.

F. Stats to Date

As of 9/18/17 we are 24% higher than last year in call volume – see attached stats – majority of calls are between 6:00am – 6:00pm. Full statistics were provided.

G. UTV Replacement

We are starting to experience small issues with the ranger; we have also found that there are certain areas we cannot access because the ranger lacks the power needed. We will be looking to seek approval to replace the ranger in the coming fiscal year with a diesel engine. There is another department interested in purchasing the ranger if we replace it.

H. Cadet Program

We are going to start a Cadet Program that will give young people between the ages of 16 and 18 a chance to experience what Firefighting is about.

I. Van Buren Technology Center

We recently donated outdated turnout gear that was unusable to the Van Buren Tech Center to be used for practice and training for the students.

J. Home Safety Surveys

We have a program in place and will be rolling it out this fall for both townships. Sarah will take the lead on this voluntary program.

ARTICLE IV. OLD BUSINESS

A. NEW ENGINE UPDATE

Den Bleyker reported the new engine is here and the board members can take a look at it after the meeting. The truck will be in service mid-October. Equipment must be installed and firefighter training will be done.

B. 800 MHz RADIO SYSTEM

Den Bleyker said the testing was done 3 weeks ago on the new system by driving the county over testing in 3,000 different spots in the area including up and down the lakeshore. The new system is very impressive thus far and testing on pagers will be done in the next week. Law enforcement will be on system on October 1 and firefighters on November 1. A lot of work for installation must be done and all users will do 8 hours of training which is required by the State of Michigan. This is a county-wide initiative and part of the state system. The state will sign up with First Net that is a nationwide system.

ARTICLE V. NEW BUSINESS

A. FIRE DEPARTMENT STUDY

The consultant audit went well offering a lot of good ideas including a review of pay practices. There will be a full human resources review on October 10. It was noted that ISO training and documentation is somewhat weak with a suggestion for software programs to support the record-keeping requirements. ISO rating went from 6 to a 5, missing a 4 by only 4-6 pts. Hofmann congratulated Den Bleyker on the success of the study. It was a very beneficial study and will provide good direction for future initiatives. The consultant will come back to present the formal report. Den Bleyker will advise the date upon receipt.

B. NOBEL FIRE RECOVERY

Nobel Fire Recovery is a new company that will act as a third party consultant to process our cost recovery information for a fee of 15% of the award. The current rate with other providers is 20-25% for this very time consuming task.

C. MEDICAL EVALUATIONS 2018

Sarah reviewed the current Firefighter Physical process and explained the huge push for med exams on a continual basis. The current provider is Holland Medi-Center charging \$164.50 for a pre-employment physical and an additional \$55.00 for the annual Pulmonary Function Test. Bushee proposed a new vendor, Med-1 charging \$313.00 for the initial NFPA compliant physical; \$35.00 for the annual Pulmonary Function Test and a 3-year rotation program for full NFPA compliant physicals at \$105.00 per member. Bushee proposes all 20 firefighters completing the full physical (\$6250) to become fully NFPA 1500 compliant and also provide a baseline on all staff.

Lorence said in his conversation with the consultant he felt more concern for the medical response incidents encountering illegal situations that could pose danger to the firefighters. Den Bleyker responded that the practice is to stage the response depending on dispatch to advise of potential danger and if present wait for a patrol officer. There was some discussion regarding firefighters being licensed to carry a concealed weapon as some jurisdictions have firefighters as first responders. Dewey added that perhaps new hires have police training, too. Hofmann asked if you have CPL, is it legal to carry while on duty and Bushee responded it is determined by the department. Den Bleyker said some of the Saugatuck Fire Department staff are allowed to carry but only if they are properly trained in the same manner as police officers. Mokma said in Saugatuck duty shifts don bullet proof vests and it is becoming more and more common.

D. SATURDAY DAYTIME DUTY SHIFTS

Den Bleyker explained concern regarding Saturday daytime shifts and the low response during the hours of 6am – 6pm. It is difficult to ensure that staff is in the area to cover that day/shift. There are duty shifts from 6pm – 6am but not daytime. He proposed the following options to the staff: 1) a monthly sign-up sheet for coverage with a \$40 stipend or 2) two Saturdays assigned per quarter not allowing quick runs out of the area; 3) Saturday duty crew that would be expected to do work around the station during downtime. Obviously, there would be some cost involved in all three options and unsure if there are funds in the budget to cover. So far 2017 is far exceeding calls of previous years. Meshkin gave a brief overview of the budget and suggesting further discussion after the consultant’s report is received. In the meantime, a sign-up sheet will be used in addition to the duty shift staff.

E. FIRE FIGHTERS WAGES

Den Bleyker provided a study to benchmark study on wages of neighboring departments. He asked that the board review and be prepared to discuss for the budget meeting. Mokma commented that we do not function for the money and everyone understands “give back” for the public service.

F. CADET PROGRAM

Following discussion of the previous comments, **a motion was made by Dewey and seconded by Mokma to recommend approval of the cadet program to the to the Township Boards. Yonker called for a vote on the motion. UNANIMOUS DECISION – MOTION APPROVED**

Den Bleyker and Meshkin will prepare the resolution for the township boards.

G. OLD ENGINE DECOMMISSION/SALE

Den Bleyker asked for recommendation from the board. There will be some equipment removed; the old rescue truck will be repurposed for a heavy rescue unit; the old ladders will be mounted on that truck. The engine (1985 model) is worth about \$2,000 in scrap value.

Following discussion, **a motion was made by Dewey and seconded by Lorence to give the Fire Department discretion on the decommission/sale of the old engine. Yonker called for a vote on the motion. UNANIMOUS DECISION – MOTION APPROVED**

H. FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Meshkin reported the statements will be available from the auditor soon noting there was an error of \$20,000 that will be made up this year. The Fund Balance was expected to be \$180,000 but will be \$140,000 due to expenditures for equipment on the new engine and an additional \$2,000 in salaries.

Yonker asked about the emergency access and Meshkin advised the attorneys are working with the property owner to come to an agreement. An offer of \$10,000 has been made for the easement which has been appraised at \$8,700. Once settled Meshkin hopes to get bids out for construction with actual work to be done in 2018 following the MDOT process.

ARTICLE VI. CITIZENS COMMENTS - None

ARTICLE VII. ADJOURN

A motion was made by Hofman and seconded by Dewey to adjourn the meeting at 6:35 P.M.