

PROPOSED MINUTES

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

SERVING LAKETOWN AND FILLMORE TOWNSHIPS

November 6, 2014

ARTICLE I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Bob Yonker called the meeting to order at 5:30pm noon and Mark Hop opened with prayer. Chief Cal Haverdink introduced new board member Todd Szakacs. Todd is full-time fire chief at Gerald Ford International Airport and also works part-time at Cutlerville Fire Department.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Cal Haverdink, Bob Yonker, Jim Lorence and Doug Den Bleyker,  
Gary Dewey, Mark Hop, Todd Szakacs  
MEMBERS ABSENT: None  
STAFF PRESENT: Al Meshkin – Township Manager  
Diane Ybarra – Recording Secretary

ARTICLE II. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The election of officers will take place at the January 2015 board meeting.

ARTICLE III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Board reviewed the minutes of the January 21, 2014. **Following discussion, a motion was made by Jim Lorence and seconded by Mark Hop to approve the minutes. UNANIMOUS DECISION – MOTION APPROVED**

ARTICLE III. OLD BUSINESS

A. EMERGENCY ACCESS UPDATE

Al Meshkin reported that MDOT engineers are reviewing the overpass bridge near the Wooden Shoe Greenhouse to determine the feasibility of upgrading it for use by the department. The barrier would be spanning the creek that runs through that area and the capacity of the drainage. MDOT is working on U.S. 31 and they had considered changing the drain flow which could reduce the amount of structure needed. MDOT is cooperative but they are also dealing with drainage issues.

The U.S. 31 split construction project has been pushed back to 2022 mostly due to the need to further study options to address the drainage. One of the big issues is drainage in that area; particularly under the overpass on 60<sup>th</sup> and a double box culvert that needs work at the cost of approximately \$2 million. The Tulip Relief Drain could be combined with the Kuiper Drain which would involve creating water storage areas within Fillmore, Laketown and Holland Townships. Laketown has passed a petition to move forward with this and one more municipality is needed to make it pass to move forward. MDOT has \$1 million to support the project if approved. One option MDOT is considering is to downsize U.S. 31 to a divided highway together with a tighter cross section similar to what is in Holland which would provide more storm water storage in the right of way. Planning for Fillmore Township would change drastically if the road construction project changed. The 60<sup>th</sup> street overpass would disappear and a roundabout concept would be implemented allowing for access to the highway. The study will be announced in 2015 but we should still move ahead with pursuing highway access. These potential changes would impact Fillmore Township greatly. Al stated the current overpass is not structurally obsolete and could last 25 more years for its current use.

Mark Hop asked that if that is done, what would be the reason to be concerned about the drains if the roundabout is constructed. Al stated the water storage needs are far greater than they would obtain in the area of discussion. The engineers are studying the overpass bridge to determine if it could tolerate a fire truck holding water. If it is and the landowner is willing to grant access, the road would be relatively low cost to build. Mark asked if the new greenhouse owners are aware of the consideration to acquire right of way access that has been underway. Al stated that is unknown to them and MDOT would have to handle the acquisition.

## B. DISCUSSION ON FUTURE VEHICLE NEEDS

Chief Haverdink stated that the 1985 truck should be replaced due to the unavailability of parts. His recommendation would be to retire Truck 12 and keep Truck 60. He would replace Truck 12 with a light duty truck. While these are his recommendations, with his pending retirement, he feels the new chief should be involved in the decision of new equipment. Al Meshkin agreed that the new chief should be part of the decision. Al confirmed that there are two annual payments left on the tanker and three annual payments left on the building. Bob Yonkers asked what the estimate for a new vehicle would be and Doug Den Bleyker responded it would be approximately \$280,000. Chief Haverdink said it may be possible to get a demo truck at a reduced price.

## ARTICLE IV. NEW BUSINESS

### A. FINANCIAL REVIEW

Al Meshkin gave a brief overview of the financials reporting that the budget is in line with a fund balance of \$21,000, somewhat higher than expected. The balance is higher than expected because there was less expenditures for the engineering study for the emergency access. This amount will remain in the budget for the anticipated expense in the future. Another change is the \$25,930.00 FEMA grant monies received used to purchase 3500 feet of 5 inch hose.

## B. CHANGE OF STATUS FROM MEDICAL FIRST RESPONDER TO BASIC LIFE SUPPORT

Cal Haverdink explained that last year Hamilton Fire Department changed their staff from Medical First Responder (MFR) to Basic Life Support (BLS) status. This elevated their response capabilities. City of Holland also holds this level of certification. Hamilton Fire Chief Dave Haverdink advised that Graafschap Fire Department would no longer be able to do medical standbys for Hamilton because their staff is not certified at this same level. Certification/licensing would require advanced training of staff and purchase of additional equipment. Once trained and certified, the annual licensing fee is \$100 per year for staff and \$25 per vehicle. It would also require the addition of a portable lab which requires licensing every other year at \$150 and a one-time cost to reprogram radios at \$35 each. Currently, eleven of the firefighters are EMT certified and five are MFR certified.

Mark Hop asked if this came from Dave Haverdink as a requirement and what if we do not do this, does it jeopardize the department in any way. Chief Haverdink responded that it does not jeopardize the department. Hop asked how long it takes to be trained and certified at this next level. Todd Szakacs said the training takes about 3-4 months, 2 nights per week and a couple of Saturdays. Den Bleyker reiterated that there is ongoing cost on some of the equipment such as the EPI pens that would have to be included which have a limited shelf life. Haverdink said if you go to the hospital before they expire they will replace them for free and those used are replaced by the hospital. The initial cost is approximately \$320 for a two pen pack per vehicle. Hop asked if we advance to this level of service, would the five firefighters not currently certified be pushed out. Szakacs said they have to operate under their current certification level. Jim Lorence asked if there would ever be a time when you send someone out and there is no EMT so a victim may not get that level of immediate treatment. Den Bleyker said it would be possible. Haverdink stated that even though we have EMT certified firefighters on staff today, we do not carry the necessary equipment for them to provide that level of treatment. Hop confirmed that we currently have a mutual aid agreement in place. Haverdink responded that is correct but we are talking about upgrading the services we could provide to our residents to what they would get in Holland. Hop asked for an initial cost estimate. Haverdink responded it would be approximately \$7-8,000, certainly under \$10,000. Lorence said if 11 of the 16 current staff are trained it is training they are not using while they are here; I think we should look at this and provide the best service for the community. Hop asked how many of the five would potentially upgrade. Haverdink said it would be up to the new chief to require new hires and current staff to upgrade. He added that most full-time departments require EMT level of certification/licensing.

Following discussion, **a motion was made by Jim Lorence and seconded by Gary Dewey to approve Chief Haverdink to further pursue action to upgrade the firefighter status from Medical First Responder to Basic Life Support Responder.**

Hop asked if this is something we want to decide before hiring the new chief. Den Bleyker said basically the only ones who have it are Holland and Hamilton while Park and Fillmore Townships

are MFR certified. Bob Yonker asked how Den Bleyker felt about it and he said he would pursue the higher level of certification. Hop said he would have concern about the current MFR staff feeling pressured to upgrade. Den Bleyker said it could be an issue during the day to have an EMT on every call. Meshkin asked if we are licensed for BLS what happens if there is not an EMT available. Haverdink stated that the responder would only be able to provide the treatment he is certified for. A policy should be established as to how we handle potential situations whether or not we upgrade the status level. BLS status would restrict mutual aid calls from departments that have that level of certification. If we get an out of area call, one EMT would have to remain at the station. Haverdink added that Overisel is considering doing it, too. He personally does not feel we would lose any of the 5 staff members if the upgrade was done. Den Bleyker said if we require the EMT status and we pay for the initial license, we would also have to pay for the renewal which is \$35 every three years. Szakacs said a lot of people would like to take the class but can't afford it because the cost is \$900 to \$1,000.

Hop said he would feel better if there was a documented proposal to go with this for the future reference; it is important to understand expectations, timeframe and costs. Haverdink asked if we have that from Hamilton's perspective and Hop said no. Hop asked if this would be a requirement of the job for future applicants. Meshkin asked if we went to BLS status now, can we downgrade back to MFR if we chose to do so in the future. Den Bleyker answered yes; you should be able to do that.

**Chairman Yonker called for a vote on the motion. Vote 3 yea to 1 nay, Hop opposed.  
MOTION APPROVED**

### C. UPCOMING FIRE CHIEF POSITION OPENING

Al Meshkin stated that Chief Haverdink is planning to retire effective April 1, 2015. The Fire Board is responsible for making a recommendation to both township boards after which a final decision is made. The hiring of a new fire chief is not a process we do very often so he would like to understand how the Fire Board would like to go about conducting the search for Cal's replacement. Would you like to look strictly in house or look externally as well? Who should be involved in the process, board members and staff? Haverdink stated that he was hired by both township supervisors back in 1996. Meshkin added that consideration should be given to compensation for the new chief as Cal has been underpaid at \$45,000. What are we able and willing to pay his successor? Meshkin asked the Board members to give thought to how they would like to proceed and proposed using a consultant to aid in the process. Diane Ybarra has many years of experience in the human resources field and would be willing to provide support to the search team. We need to start moving on this process to have someone in place by April 1. Mark Hop asked if there is anything in the bylaws on how it has to proceed, is it open to the public? Meshkin responded per the contract the Fire Board recommends the candidate to both township boards and they have to agree. Hop asked if it has to be in the newspaper. Meshkin said it should be considered; it isn't in the contract how you have to go about it. A meeting will be held in December to focus on how the board would like to proceed.

#### D. AUTO AID AGREEMENT

Chief Haverdink reviewed the Automatic Mutual Aid Agreement with the City of Holland stating that a decision is not necessary tonight but only asked that the board members review for discussion at the January meeting. The aid would be to support commercial and industrial fires and life threatening medical calls for the noted fire quadrants. In turn the City of Holland would provide aid to all structure fires in Fillmore Township in the geographical areas noted. Currently, the City of Holland provides aid in areas such as Spring Brook Apartments and in the Mac Hills. Chief Haverdink recommends approving the agreement as it would be very beneficial for the residents. Holland Township has signed a similar agreement with the City of Holland. If signed, the agreement could be terminated with a 30-day notice.

Al Meshkin asked that the Fire Board review the document for resolution at the January meeting. Haverdink would like to get back to Captain Tinney in January and in the meantime, he will advise that it is under review with the Fire Board.

#### ARTICLE V. CITIZENS COMMENTS

Chief Haverdink reported receiving the new Lucas tool for cardio emergency responses. The unique piece of equipment is powered by a lithium battery and provides CPR compression at a rate that would otherwise require two responders to administer. The unit can be strapped onto the victim and continue the compression while being transported. It can also be used in conjunction with a defibrillator. He also reported that the smoke alarm program has been a huge success. Over the past year, the department installed over 600 units valued at approximately \$12,000 covered by the FEMA grant.

Todd Szakacs stated that he and Doug Den Bleyker are working on a FEMA grant to obtain additional hose. The grant requires only a ten percent match.

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, December 2 at 5:30pm.

#### ARTICLE VI. ADJOURN

**A motion was made by James Lorence and seconded by Mark Hop to adjourn the meeting at 6:40 PM. UNANIMOUS DECISION MOTION APPROVED**