

Neenah-Menasha Fire Rescue
Joint Finance & Personnel Committee Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, July 29, 2014 – 5:30 p.m.
Hauser Room – City of Neenah

Draft

Present: Ald. Bates, Ald. Taylor, Ald. Englebert, Ald. Ramos, Ald. Benner and Ald. Kunz.

Ald. Kunz entered the meeting at 5:50 p.m.

Mayor Kaufert entered the meeting at 6:20 p.m.

Also Present: Chief Auxier, Deputy Director Handevitd, A/C Sipin and OM Theisen.

Members of the Public: Mayor Kaufert, Ald. Pollnow, Jim Dunbar and Garrett Gee.

Ald. Ramos called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Public Forum: Ald. Pollnow noted he read an article in Post Crescent regarding the City of Appleton's ladder truck purchase for their fire department. This was an unexpected expense for them and they funded some of this purchase through a vehicle replacement fund. He recommends the Committee consider putting aside the excess monies from the budgeted dollars for the 27 in 2014 paychecks and use this to help fund a new aerial truck for NMFR. Chief Auxier noted this item will be discussed at our August meeting as both Finance Directors couldn't attend tonight's meeting.

Meeting Minutes: The Committee reviewed the June 24, 2014 meeting minutes. **MSC Englebert/Taylor to approve the June 24, 2014 meeting minutes, and place on file, all voting aye.**

Budget Report: The Committee reviewed the June 2014 monthly budget report. Chief Auxier followed up on the health insurance line item with Director Easker. D/D Handevitd explained the HRA monies that each employee receives in the beginning of the year is charged against the health insurance line item in the budget and that's why it looks like there is a high usage in the budget at the beginning of the year. Ald. Bates asked how the claims for fire are handled. D/D Handevitd explained there is a statement from the City of Neenah's provider that breaks the claims out by each Department and this is charged against each department's budget. If there is a claim that exceeds the City's maximum amount and then is funded through the City's stop loss insurance, this claim is spread out equally between all Departments. The telephone line item is reviewed and questioned why it is so high. Chief Auxier will follow-up with IS Director Wenninger for more information. D/D Handevitd reviewed gas charges. She noted there is a new line item on the monthly bills we receive as the energy companies can now charge a gas adjustment each month. This adjustment is for energy companies to recoup lost monies. This is a city-wide problem, as it was not known the energy companies could start charging for this, and is causing all Departments to be over budget with this line item. She is working with DC DeLeeuw to incorporate this new expense into the 2015 budget. **MSC Englebert/Taylor to accept the June 2014 budget report, and place on file, all voting aye.**

Monthly Activity/Automatic Aid Report: Chief Auxier noted OM Theisen ran statistics on calls and we are 9% ahead in calls compared to this time period last year. It was noted structure fire calls are 7% more this year than last year. Ald. Kunz asked if we could put together statistics on the last five years for calls and see if there is a trend for calls. Chief Auxier said he would work on this and bring it to August's meeting for the members to review.

The Committee reviewed the automatic aid calls. Chief Auxier reminded the members about the gap in calls with AFD in March. This was due to the new Premier 1 CAD system being installed. Winnebago County had their installation completed before Outagamie County and while Outagamie County was installing their new system they didn't have the ability to dispatch AFD to automatic aid calls in the City of Menasha. Ald. Kunz asked about the cancelled in route calls. Chief Auxier noted Outagamie does a pre-alert call and once they obtain more information for the call it can mean we will be cancelled due to an engine not being needed. (I.e. Gold Cross can handle the call without us). OM Theisen further explained that some of these calls were originally dispatched as structure fires and there are times when the first engine on scene gets more information and due to the nature of the call there is not a need for additional resources so

they will call off other incoming units. Ald. Taylor asked if the automatic aid call noted on the spreadsheet include calls to the Town of Menasha. Chief Auxier noted we only have an automatic aid agreement with the Appleton Fire Department and do not have an automatic aid agreement with the Town of Menasha. If there is a mutual aid request from the Town of Menasha, and we are dispatched, we will respond to the call if we have resources available. He further noted there are times when there is confusion by Dispatch on which jurisdiction the call is for and this is due to the islands of Town of Menasha property within the City of Menasha. We will still respond and if we find out it is a Town of Menasha call we will notify Dispatch, who will then dispatch the Town of Menasha, and we will continue to help out until they arrive.

MSC Bates/Kunz to accept the June 2014 activity and automatic aid reports, and place on file, all voting aye.

Review of Vehicle Usage and Staffing: The Committee members noted they reviewed the information that was handed out at June's meeting and didn't have any additional questions.

Quint 32 Mechanical Issues: Chief Auxier noted Quint 32 is having more frequent mechanical issues and handed out a memo that detailed the history of issues. These mechanical issues are affecting us at calls. He has begun researching options for replacing this aerial truck. There are some stock aerial trucks available for purchase. He has also been researching the value of our current aerial truck and has been trying to obtain information on what we may be able to sell this vehicle for and/or what money we could receive if we traded this vehicle in during the purchase of a new vehicle. The Committee members asked Chief Auxier to update them with additional information he receives at the August meeting.

FVTC Space at Station 31: Chief Auxier said AC Sipin spoke to staff at FVTC today regarding "rental" costs that we may have to pay to use their new facility and handed out a memo AC Sipin put together that outlined what these costs would be to utilize their new facility. Ald. Benner asked if FVTC provided any more information on the items they were going to remove and/or leave behind after they vacated the space at Station 31. Chief Auxier said they had a meeting and FVTC didn't come to the meeting with that information. They said they would try to get us this information by mid-August. Ald. Kunz suggested we take a different approach with FVTC about the structural items that are currently on our property and outline what our expectations are with these items. He felt if there are items we could use for training our staff members they should be left behind, without any cost to our Department, as these purchases were already funded once through tax-payers' dollars. He also asked what they can legally remove from the property. Chief Auxier did note there are some things items that we will not use, and do not need, and want them to remove these items at their expense. However, we do need to know what they are going to leave behind so we can figure out a budget to assume the responsibility of maintaining these structures. CA Godlewski did attend the meeting with FVTC and he did state if it is part of their property they can legally remove it from our building.

Ald. Benner noted we have had a lease, and a good working relationship with them, for the past 20 years and he doesn't want us to do anything to jeopardize that. They paid us for the use of the land, through a lease, and we have not had any issues with them paying their lease monies and/or portion of utility and maintenance expenses. They purchased the equipment, and installed it, with their own budget dollars. He feels we should continue to see what they are willing to do to work with us on equipment they no longer have a use for. Ald. Bates concurred with Ald. Benner.

Ald. Ramos asked when the lease is up. Chief Auxier said it is May 1, 2015 but there have been questions of who will assume their portion of the building since it is a City of Neenah building. Ald. Kunz asked how the lease monies have been paid. Chief Auxier said the lease monies have been paid directly to the City of Neenah as it is their building. The utilities were paid by NMFR. FVTC received a bill from the City of Neenah Finance Department for their portion of the utilities, and once they pay, these monies are credited back to NMFR's budget line item.

Ald. Englebert asked if they are responsible for removing all of the equipment and remediating the land if we cannot come up with an agreement on things that we may be interested in assuming from them. Chief Auxier confirmed this is in the lease agreement. He said we have had a good working relationship with them and we want to maintain this. Ald. Kunz said we should continue with our civil approach and if we don't get answers from them then we ask the Mayors to contact FVTC, on our behalf, to keep this moving forward.

Ald. Bates asked about the status of their new building. Chief Auxier said the plan is to have the new building completed by the time the winter semester begins. Ald. Taylor said FVTC sold the taxpayers, on their referendum, that they were going to have a state of the art building that would be used by everyone. He feels if we continue to use the Tullar Road facility this is a burden for the taxpayers as they should only have to pay for the use of one building. Chief Auxier noted FVTC said the same thing 20 years ago when they built the facility with us in Neenah. There were not many Departments who have used the facility in Neenah. AC Sipin said the Tullar Road facility has been used the most by NMFR. Appleton Fire Department has its own training facility and has only used the Tullar Road facility a few times for live burn training. Oshkosh Fire Department is looking at trying to obtain their own training tower, along with other area departments, as it's a logistical nightmare to move around on duty crews for training. If we move crews out of our cities for training we cannot cover calls that come in and we cannot afford to pay overtime to have crews come in off duty for training and/or back fill for on duty crews to train. Ald. Englebert asked that once we know what items they are interested in leaving behind he would like to see what the costs associated with using the new facility versus maintaining the facilities left behind are. He also noted it's not the first time FVTC has led the taxpayers to believe in something that is not actual and they never asked us if we would use the facility before they moved forward with the referendum for their new facility. Ald. Benner said training for our firefighters is critical. The best thing we can do for our firefighters is to give them the opportunity to train together, with our own equipment, so they are prepared when an emergency does happen and hopes we can come to some kind of an agreement with FVTC that benefits both entities. Ald. Kunz asked who decides on the use of the building after they vacate their portion. Chief Auxier said it is a City of Neenah property, and per the merger agreement, the City of Neenah is responsible for maintaining this building. This decision would probably be decided by Mayor Kaufert and the City of Neenah Council members. Ald. Benner noted the Joint Finance Committee's involvement with be if it affects NMFR utilizing this facility for training and any operational expenses that affect NMFR's budget. Ald. Pollnow asked that this item be put on the City of Neenah's Finance & Personnel agenda for discussion.

Review of Jurisdictional Boundaries: A map was reviewed of the jurisdictional boundaries of the different fire departments within Winnebago County. Chief Auxier also reviewed the water response areas and how they are handled. Ald. Kunz asked about dispatching to townships. Chief Auxier said there are times we are dispatched and if it ends up being a township we will do our best to address the situation until the appropriate department responds. This happens due to the number of islands of township property within our Cities. Ald. Bates asked about the retention pond on Highway A. Chief Auxier said there was a request from the Town of Neenah Fire Department, and we agreed to help if there is any water rescue calls.

Ald. Taylor asked about Little Lake Butte Des Morts and the response for that. He said we put our employees at a high risk situation and the townships don't have any responsibility for our employees getting hurt while we are going on calls for their area. He feels the townships have a responsibility to help us cover these costs and asked Chief Auxier to discuss these costs with the area township fire departments. Chief Auxier confirmed we do respond to this entire area of Little Lake Butte Des Morts. Winnebago County does provide equipment for us to use and our agreement we have is to help them respond to areas we can get to quicker than them and in return they provide and maintain the equipment. There are many variables when a water rescue call is dispatched and it is hard for dispatch to pinpoint an exact location. A majority of the calls we have responded to have been in our area and it is a benefit to the citizens of Neenah and Menasha to continue this agreement with Winnebago County. A majority of our water rescue calls have been within our jurisdiction. Ald. Benner said some of the equipment is ours but a majority of the equipment belongs to Winnebago County. The tax payers in the Townships do pay for the cost of the equipment through their property taxes. It is a benefit for our citizens to have this equipment available to us and the costs we incur are not a lot. We do not know whose citizen it is and the right thing to do is to continue to respond when there is a need for help. He doesn't feel this is a major issue that needs to be addressed at this time.

Ald. Englebert said the Dive Team has been funded through donations. Our current agreement with Winnebago County Sherriff's Department is a benefit to our citizens. We are providing a better service to our citizens and even if we have to provide a service for town residents it is a good trade off. Chief Auxier noted eventually these funds will dry up and we may have to start using dollars within our operating budget. Ald. Taylor asked Chief Auxier to meet with the Townships and see if they are willing to help fund some of our expenses for providing water rescue calls to their area.

Other: Mayor Kaufert noted the next Mayor's Charity Golf Outing is on Monday, August 4, 2014. He thanked Local 275 members for their help with coordinating this event.

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, August 26, 2014 at 5:30 p.m. in the City of Menasha.

MSC Englebert/Benner to adjourn at 6:30 p.m., all voting aye.

Respectfully Submitted,

Al Auxier
Fire Chief

AA/tt