

Neenah-Menasha Fire Rescue
Joint Finance & Personnel Committee Meeting
April 22, 2014 – 5:30 p.m.
3rd Floor Council Chambers – City of Menasha

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

Excused: Ald. Benner and Taylor.

Also Present: Chief Auxier, Deputy Director Sassman and Office Manager Theisen.

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

Public Forum: No members of the public were present.

Election of Chair: **MSC Bates/Kunz to nominate Ald. Ramos as Chair of Neenah-Menasha Fire Rescue's Joint Finance and Personnel Committee, all voting aye.**

Election of Vice-Chair: **MSC Bates/Ramos to nominate Ald. Englebert as Vice-Chair of Neenah-Menasha Fire Rescue's Joint Finance and Personnel Committee, all voting aye.**

Meeting Minutes: The Committee reviewed the meeting minutes from February 25, 2014. **MSC Englebert/Bates to approve the meeting minutes from February 25, 2014, all voting aye.**

Monthly Budget Report: The Committee reviewed the March 2014 budget report. Ald. Bates questioned the maintenance of motor vehicles account. Chief Auxier explained the issues we've had with our different engines. Some of the mechanical issues are due to the colder than usually weather this winter and some of it is due to the age of the vehicles. Ald. Bates asked for information of all the vehicles in our fleet. Chief Auxier will email this information to everyone. Ald. Bates asked about the Dive Team budget and how it is funded. Chief Auxier explained it is funded with monies raised through fundraising and placed in the trust fund. He noted that there is a budget put together for the dive team to show expenditures. We continue to fundraise for this trust, however, at some point we may not be able to raise more donations and there has been discussions with this Committee that this may need to be funded through our normal budget. He also noted the trust is overseen by the City of Neenah Finance Department. **MSC Bates/Englebert accept the March 2014 monthly budget and place on file, all voting aye.**

Monthly Activity/Automatic Aid Report: The Committee reviewed the March activity and automatic aid reports. Chief Auxier noted while the new MDC and Premier 1 CAD system was installed in all vehicles there was no automatic aid between the two Departments until the new system was installed and up and running. It only lasted a couple of weeks. Ald. Bates questioned the automatic aid reports, how it works for dispatching calls and why both Departments respond to some of the same addresses. Chief Auxier explained the mapping system, AVL, if one engine company is busy, or out of district, the next closest unit will be dispatched and that is why we both go to some of the same areas/addresses. **MSC Englebert/Bates to accept the March activity and automatic reports, and place on file, all voting aye.**

Funding of Liability Claims: Chief Auxier reviewed the discussion history with the previous Committee members and both Cities Finance Directors regarding funding potential future liability claims. Ald. Ramos explained it didn't make sense to try to fund something in the budget, as there are too many variables with deciding upon what amount, etc. Any future claims would be handled by the City of Neenah and after the claim has been processed and finalized, the City of Menasha would reimburse the City of Neenah their portion of the claim as outlined in the cost sharing formula. The previous Committee felt it was important that both Common

Councils recognize any future claims would be handled the same as all other Departments within the Cities. Ald. Bates asked how the funding of premiums was handled for the liability insurance for NMFR's portion. Chief Auxier explained NMFR's entire budget is compiled and then funded by both Cities, per the cost sharing formula. **MSC Bates/Englebert recommend the City of Neenah and City of Menasha Common Councils formally recognize funding for potential future liability claims for Neenah-Menasha Fire Rescue would be processed through the City of Neenah's Liability carrier, and once the claim has been finalized, the City of Menasha would pay their portion of the claim, as outlined in the current cost-sharing formula, all voting aye.**

Discussion of Fiscal Impact of 26 versus 27 pay dates in 2014: This will be postponed for discussion at our May 27, 2014 due to CA Godlewski and Finance Director Easker not being available for this meeting.

Response Calls on Highway 41: Chief Auxier reviewed how calls are currently dispatched on Highway from Breezewood/Bell interchange to County Highway 76. Our Department, Town of Neenah and Town of Vinland Fire Departments have different areas of jurisdiction along this stretch of highway. With the reconstruction of Highway 41 a key turn around area was removed and two lanes of traffic were added. This makes responses in this area difficult to reach, dangerous and can result in a longer response time due to our units having to go all the way down to Highway 76 to turn around and head back in the northbound lanes of traffic to reach any accidents in this area.

Chief Auxier, Chief King (Town of Neenah) and Chief Schmoker (Town of Vinland) all met to discuss the issues all three Departments have when responding to calls and to see if there were any changes they could make to improve response times and make the environment safer for personnel. All three Chiefs have ideas on how to change things. They would also include Winnebago County Dispatch and Sheriff's Department to discuss potential dispatch changes. He noted Mayor Merkes, and former Mayor Scherck, were in support of these discussions. He will update Mayor Kaufert with the discussions and look for his support. The intent of the three Chiefs is to have some kind of formal automatic aid agreement between the three of them for calls and Chief Auxier is looking for support from the Committee before proceeding any further.

Ald. Kunz asked what type of formal agreement would be discussed and would it include compensation for calls that we cover for the townships. He expressed his concern with our two Cities supplementing services both townships are to provide, especially with some of the recent things that have happened between the City of Neenah and the Town of Neenah. He questioned what benefit do we have for picking up the extra calls and having the extra risk associated with equipment breaking, personnel being hurt, etc. Chief Auxier said these are valid concerns and further explained both townships' annual calls in this area are between 5-8 calls per year. Our calls are much higher than the other two Departments and all three Departments have areas that are hard to reach and one of other two departments can get to these areas easier.

Ald. Bates asked about the liability for covering calls. Chief Auxier said in the Winnebago County Mutual Aid Agreement each Department is responsible for covering their own costs associated with equipment and personnel. Ald. Englebert asked how mutual aid works. Chief Auxier explained there is a county-wide mutual aid agreement so all departments can be called if another department needs help. Ald. Englebert asked the language in the agreement, between the three departments be clearly defined on what all three Departments agreed upon.

Chief Auxier confirmed there would be clearly, defined language in the agreement. The Committee supported Chief Auxier moving forward with these discussions.

Public Education Grant: Chief Auxier explained our Department is part of a regional public education committee. Members of this committee also include Green Bay Fire Department, Town of Grand Chute Fire Department and Town of Menasha Fire Department. This committee has been successful with applying for a regional smoke detector grant. The FEMA grant applications opened and all four departments applied for a

regional fire prevention grant. We have asked for monument signs (digit board for the stations) and billboard wraps for public education messages. NMFR's anticipated cost for our portion of the grant match is estimated to be around \$4,000. If we are awarded this grant, we will look at covering our portion of the grant with budgeted department funds. Office Manager Theisen explained there is not a regular time period to apply for these grants. This year we had a very short time period to apply and we never know when decisions will be made for acceptance or rejection of the grants. There have been times we are notified within a couple of months and other times it has taken up to a year. If we are awarded the grant, it will come to this Committee to review, approve and send to council before acceptance of the grant is given to FEMA. The Committee was supportive of applying for the grant and asked to keep them updated of the status. Chief Auxier said he would send information out about the grant.

Painting at Station 31: The Committee reviewed the information for painting Station 31. Two quotes were received and Chief Auxier is recommending approving the quote from Van Eperen. Chief Auxier explained, under the merger agreement, this is a City of Neenah expense. Both Cities are responsible for the costs associated with maintaining the two fire stations within their City. The current lease agreement with Fox Valley Technical College does include maintenance expenses and they will need to pay 1/3 share of this expense. He did notify Jeremy Hanson about the project and they do not have issues with moving forward with the painting. Ald. Kunz asked how the building at Station 31 is designed. Chief Auxier explained the layout and noted this project has been looked at for the past three years, however, due to budget constraints it was deferred. We are now to the point that we cannot put the painting off any longer. Ald. Kunz asked about the future of the building once FVTC vacates the space and that we be pro-active on things that may need to be fixed. Chief Auxier said he has been working with City of Neenah officials for the future of this space; however, FVTC has not given formal notice that they will vacate the building at the end of their lease, which is May 2015. Definite plans for use of the building cannot be made until we receive formal notice. He has also been working with Jeremy Hanson to see find out what items may be left behind once they vacate the property, as we have to obtain costs for possible remediation of the property. The lease does state they have to fix any issues before they vacate their space. Ald. Ramos asked when the building was last painted. Chief Auxier said it's the original paint from when the building was built 20 years ago and Van Eperen was the original painter. He feels confident in their service has their work has held up for the past 20 years. **MSC Bates/Kunz recommends the City of Neenah Common Council approve the painting at Station 31, and accept the bid from Van Eperen Painting. FVTC will pay one-third of the cost, as outlined in their lease agreement, of \$4,539.00, the City of Neenah's will pay \$9,215.00 for a grand total of \$13,754.00, all voting aye.**

Overtime/Staffing Update: Chief Auxier updated the committee on recent FMLA requests, employee injuries and future FMLA requests. Due to this we are currently ahead of usage of our overtime budget compared to last year. Ald. Kunz asked if these leaves would reduce the salaries paid out. Chief Auxier noted it would not as they have the option of using their paid sick and/or vacation accruals it will not reduce the wages the Department pays. The Committee thanked Chief Auxier for the updated.

MSC Englebert/Kunz to adjourn at 6:25 p.m., all voting aye.

Respectfully Submitted,

Al Auxier
Chief

AA/tt