

Neenah-Menasha Fire Rescue
Joint Finance & Personnel Committee Meeting
December 8, 2014 – 6:00 p.m.
Hauser Room – City of Neenah

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

Also Present: Chief Auxier, Director Easker, CA Godlewski, Director Barber and OM Theisen.

Members of the Public: Jamie Leonard, AC Mike Sipin, Chris Ederer, AC Vernon Green, Mayor Kaufert, Dan Schultz, Garrett Gee, Jim Dunbar, Ald. Nichols, Anthony Leiton and Ald. Lendrum.

Ald. Englebert called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Public Forum: Local 275 President Leonard asked for support in replacing the two firefighter positions. Staffing levels are important to maintain the high quality service we provide for the citizens of Neenah and Menasha and to also maintain safety for the firefighters while they are performing their job.

Meeting Minutes: The Committee reviewed the September 30, 2014 meeting minutes. **MSC Benner/Kunz to approve the September 30, 2014 meeting minutes and place on file, all voting aye.**

Monthly Budget Report: Chief Auxier said the November 2014 budget report was not available for this meeting as the City of Neenah Finance Department was working on tax bills. The Committee reviewed the October 2014 budget report. Chief Auxier noted there are several line items that are over budget. However, they have reduced expenses in other line items to maintain the overall budget. The intent and goal is to not go over budget.

Ald. Bates asked about Fire Commission budget and if all of the 2014 budget will be used for the hiring process to replace fire fighters. Chief Auxier said there will be some expense out of the budget this year but not all of it will be used.

Ald. Ramos joined the meeting at 6:05 p.m.

Ald. Benner asked about the maintenance of motor vehicles and if this line item overage is due to the old Quint. Chief Auxier confirmed most of this amount is due to this vehicle. He said this budget line item was not reduced in 2015 due to the again of motor vehicles fleet we have. **MSC Bates/Benner to approve the October 2014 budget report and place on file, all voting aye.**

Ald. Ramos took over chairing the rest of the meeting.

Monthly Activity and Automatic Aid Report: Chief Auxier noted OM Theisen changed the monthly activity reports in an effort to provide more information regarding our activities. He asked the members to provide feedback if they like this additional information or not. The automatic aid report was reviewed. It was noted Appleton Fire Department has taken more calls for us than we have for them; however, the overall numbers are close. Ald. Kunz asked about the calls and noted that it seems we each respond to some of the same areas within the two communities. Chief Auxier noted the area in Menasha has a lot of elderly housing and apartment buildings. Ald. Bates asked if holidays are busier

than other days. Chief Auxier noted this varies but there are no dramatic increases. Ald. Kunz asked again about the disparity of calls. OM Theisen explained during the radio switchover there was about a month where we were taking calls for each other, however, until the new CAD Monitor system was up and running we were not able to capture these calls. **MSC Englebert/Benner to accept the November Activity and Automatic Aid reports and place on file, all voting aye.**

Consideration and Action of Replacing Two Firefighters to Fill Two Future Vacancies: The Committee reviewed the memo from Chief Auxier regarding the upcoming vacancies of two firefighter positions and the process for establishing an eligibility list with the Fire Commission. He noted he spoke to both Mayors regarding replacement of the positions and they both will be meeting and supported bringing this to the Committee for review.

Ald. Benner said as we continue to review the monthly budget reports we are always over budget with our overtime due to employee injuries, FMLA requests, back-filling for training, etc. He doesn't feel reducing staffing will help our budget as it will cause more overtime monies to be used and it will also decrease morale. He is in favor of replacing these two vacancies.

Ald. Kunz said he has many questions regarding staffing but feels a discussion on how we staff our stations can be discussed at a different time. He felt with all of the different things we have going on there are many things that make us have overtime. He feels we can manage training, overtime, and other things that we do better and it can be discussed at a different time. Chief Auxier said when there are circumstances that cause the overtime to increase he will continue to bring this information to the Committee (i.e. work comp injuries, FMLA, etc.). He noted we continue to do our best to manage our overall budget.

Ald. Benner said these are existing position that we are looking to fill. They are already budgeted and we've already determined the need to fill them and not doing so will create more hardships. He supported filling the positions. Ald. Englebert said there is no reason to not recommend this as we have the right complementary of people for the Department and they are already existing positions.

Chief Auxier said the candidates coming through the process are highly trained and feels because of the training they will bring with them we will not need to have a lot of extra training with them. They will be hired before vacations start.

MSC Bates/Englebert recommends the City of Neenah and City of Menasha Common Councils authorize hiring two firefighters after January 1, 2015 subject to the departure or retirement of two existing employees with Neenah-Menasha Fire Rescue

Ald. Kunz said he agrees filling these positions. The comments Chief Auxier made regarding the Mayors meeting to discuss what the proper staffing is for our Department is something he feels the Committee should discuss with the Department. He would like the Department to explain how we staff each station, why we staff this way, why we have overtime and these things should be looked at by the Committee at a different place and time.

Motion carried, all voting aye.

Consideration and Action to Purchase 11 Dive Masks with Communication Equipment from Green Bay SCUBA, LLC: The Committee reviewed the information regarding the purchasing of 11 new dive masks. Chief Auxier noted our current dive equipment was purchased through the \$100,000.00 fundraising money for the Dive Team. He encouraged everyone to come to our station and look at the equipment we have. He felt the purchase of the new masks will increase safety and hygiene for the divers. He said the masks tend to freeze up during ice dives which decreases the time the divers have for training and also decreases the time under water if this was for a call. Ald. Taylor said he was glad to see the communication microphones as part of the masks. He asked how far you can hear the communications. Chief Auxier deferred this answer to Chris Ederer who has taken over a lot of the dive team equipment ordering and training. Chris Ederer explained this is a hard line on an 11mm rope and runs through a 200 ft rope. This goes from the diver to shore and allows the communication between the diver and the tender. Chief Auxier commended Chris Ederer for his efforts in putting together this pricing. He noted one of the reasons to bring this forward was due to an upcoming one-day only sale where you can purchase one and get one half price. During Chris' efforts to obtain pricing he found a local dealer who was willing to match the pricing of this one day sale. Ald. Bates asked if we can use the current masks as a backup. Chief Auxier said there are 15 divers and this purchase would allow all of the current divers to have their own masks and there wouldn't be any back-up masks. However, there are enough divers on each shift that are available to finish the dive if a diver had a mask freeze during a call. Chris Ederer further explained each air tank has around 30 minutes of air so the diver does have to come out after that. If there are extreme cold conditions they will come out of the water sooner and the next diver would go into the water. Ald. Kunz asked which year's budget this purchase would be made from. Chief Auxier said it would be a purchased in January 2015 with approved \$20,000 budget line item. Ald. Benner said when this started this was done by donations and fundraising and asked if we are continue to do this. Chief Auxier said we are always looking for grants and other ways to fund this line item. There are no active fundraising efforts going on at this time.

Ald. Benner said this service brings value to what we do but he feels we should continue to try to raise money outside of the current budget as this is what we said we would do when we brought the need forward. Chief Auxier said if there are opportunities for fundraisers they we will participate in these. Ald. Kunz asked if the Winnebago County Sheriff's Department would fund any additional equipment for us since they already provide the boat for us to use. Chief Auxier said he has talked to Sheriff Matz about this and was told there is not money available within his current budget. Sheriff Matz also works with other agencies that provide water and/or dive services within the county and if he funded something for us he would have to do this for the other departments. Chief Auxier said we are fortunate for them to have the ability to provide us the boats to use and pay for the maintenance and service.

Ald. Kunz asked if we are expected to dive in other areas. Chief Auxier said we are expected to cover our area and under the current Winnebago County Mutual Aid Agreement, we can be called to help other areas. Oshkosh Fire Department does back us up with dives and we also help them when they have calls. Ald. Kunz feels Winnebago County is getting more service for the money they provided than what they should. Chief Auxier said the intent of the dive team was to help people and to make a difference. We've been able to make a difference with calls in the past couple of years.

Ald. Taylor said he reviewed the map of the area we are expected to cover. He said Menasha and Neenah has half of the water front and the Town of Menasha has the other half. He feels we should ask the Town of Menasha to contribute to the service we are providing for them. Chief Auxier said he can ask Chief Kiesow if they are willing to make a contribution to our dive team budget due to the area we

are covering. **MSC Bates/Benner recommends the City of Neenah and City of Menasha Common Councils approve the purchase in January 2015 of eleven (11) OTS Guardian Full Face Masks with the EM-OTS2 Communication Microphones and Earphones for \$795 per unit for a total of \$8,745.00 plus \$55.00 shipping for a grand total of \$8,800.00, all voting aye.**

2015 Meeting Dates: The 2015 meeting dates were attached as informational items.

MSC Englebert/Benner to adjourn at 6:35 p.m., all voting aye.

Respectfully Submitted,

Al Auxier
Chief

AA/tt