

**Neenah-Menasha Fire Rescue**  
**Joint Finance & Personnel Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**Tuesday, August 26, 2014 – 5:30 p.m.**  
**3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Council Chambers – City of Menasha**

**Draft**

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

Excused: Ald. Benner and Ald. Taylor.

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

Public: Ald. Pollnow.

Public Forum: No members of the public present spoke.

Ald. Ramos called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m.

July 29, 2014 and August 11, 2014 Meeting Minutes: The Committee reviewed the meeting minutes from July 29, 2014 and August 11, 2014. **MSC Bates/Englebert, to approve the July 29, 2014 and August 11, 2014 meeting minutes, all voting aye**

July Budget Report: The Committee reviewed the July budget report. Members reviewed the memo from Director Wenninger regarding the overage in the telephone line budget. Ald. Kunz asked about the salary budget and if that will be within budget. Director Steeno noted that this line item should be within budget as they budget for what their wages are. There may be some variables if there is FMLA, however, in the end it should be within budget. Ald. Bates asked about the negative balance in the communication equipment budget. Chief Auxier explained we were given permission to sell some of our old radios, that are no longer compatible with our new radio system, and the money was put back into that line item. **MSC Bates/Englebert, to approve the July budget report, and place on file, all voting aye.**

Monthly Activity and Review of Calls for the Last Five Years: The Committee reviewed the July activity report and overview of calls for the last five years. The July Automatic Aid was inadvertently not included with the packet and was not reviewed.

Ald. Kunz asked why there were so many false alarms. Chief Auxier a lot of these calls are due to alarms activating during storms, system issues, and maintenance/testing but they don't call us to notify us so we are dispatched, etc. He noted there is a system in place to charge companies for our response as a way for businesses to be more proactive and not incur these additional expenses and to help us cover our expenses with responding to false alarms. He further explained how engine companies respond to potential false alarm calls. Ald. Bates asked if these calls are specific to only fire alarms and Chief Auxier confirmed this. **MSC Bates/Englebert to accept the July Activity report, and place on file, all voting aye.**

Station 31 Update: Chief Auxier said he has been working with his contacts at FVTC to have information, prior to today's meeting to review. However, he has not received anything yet. He noted it has been a slow process with FVTC's attorneys and his contacts at FVTC have been doing their best to obtain this information for us. He also noted Mayor Kaufert recently held the Neenah Department Head at the building so they could tour and see what space will be vacated by FVTC. Ald. Kunz asked if FVTC just leaves who owns the other buildings that are on our land. Chief Auxier said he discussed this with CA Godlewski and they do belong to FVTC as they did construct and pay for them. However, CA Godlewski did advise Chief Auxier that after lease agreement expires, the buildings would become property of the City of Neenah. Ald. Kunz asked about the \$14,000 set aside for Station 31 and what the money was for. Chief Auxier said this is a capital expense, only for the City of Neenah, and it was for the painting of the building. The Committee asked Chief Auxier to see if he could reserve the meeting room that FVTC has at their space at Station 31 as they would like to have their September meeting there so they can see the space that is available.

Consideration and Action of the 2015 Cost Distribution Formula: Chief Auxier handed out the information that was put together by Directors Steeno and Easker. He explained the history of the budget formula. He noted Director Easker and retired Director Stoffel worked hard to come up with a formula that was fair, and equitable, for both Cities. They wanted something that would not have major changes each year where it could have a detrimental impact on one of the Cities ability to fund their portion of NMFR's budget. The five part formula is what was agreed upon during the merger and it has been working well for the last ten years. There have been small changes for each City, from year to year, but there has not been anything that has been extreme for either City.

Director Steeno said she has been with the City of Menasha for only nine months and has had some difficulty in obtaining the square footage of all buildings within the City of Menasha. She further explained that the City of Neenah has a square footage noted on all of their storm water utility bills and this includes non-profit entities. The City of Menasha doesn't have assessments on all of their non-profit properties so she cannot obtain their information the same way the City of Neenah does. She has been investigating how this information has been gathered in previous years but has not been able to obtain this information prior to this meeting. She said she spoke to Director Easker about this and they both agreed to a 1% increase in these numbers for the City of Menasha. The square footage formula doesn't have a major effect on the overall formula. Both Finance Directors realize they may have to look at the long term numbers to see if the square footage is still a viable option for the formula if the City of Menasha cannot obtain "real" numbers.

Ald. Pollnow, who was attending the meeting and allowed to speak, requested both Finance Directors put the information in their budget books that explain five factors of NMFR's budget formula and how those numbers are obtained.

**MSC Bates/Englebert recommend the City of Neenah and City of Menasha Common Councils approve the proposed 2015 cost distribution formula with the City of Neenah funding share set at 60.55% and City of Menasha funding share set at 39.45% and direct both Finance Directors to continue to research the square footage of all buildings and make sure this is a viable component for future budget formulas.**

Ald. Kunz asked about equalized value and feels these numbers should be the same as the square footage numbers. Ald. Bates felt the costs would be the same regardless of which City it is in and didn't think this would make a difference. Ald. Kunz asked if both Finance Directors could research an easier way to obtain information and make the formula easier.

**Motion carried with all members voting aye.**

Tobacco Use Policy Changes: Ald. Bates asked for this to be put on the agenda for review. It was noted this is informational only and no action is required. Chief Auxier explained, as part of the merger agreement, all NMFR have to have one "official" employer for administration of benefits, etc, and it was agreed they would be City of Neenah employees. All employees have to follow the City of Neenah's policies and procedures.

Ald. Englebert asked if the Union expressed concern with this policy and regarding off duty tobacco use. Chief Auxier said the Union didn't object to the policy. Ald. Bates asked about Wisconsin's Heart & Lung Bill. Chief Auxier said there is some presumption that they have exposure from the job, due to them not knowing all of the things they are exposed to, and there is a process to file for disability if there is an issue. The new tobacco policy does help reinforce the Heart & Lung Bill's criteria regarding tobacco use. Ald. Kunz said this seems like a big change and asked if there are a lot of firefighters who chew tobacco. Chief Auxier said there will be a cessation program that will be offered to anyone who uses chewing tobacco. Ald. Ramos said when this policy was presented to the City of Neenah Council he was surprised this was not in place already as this has been a normal standard for other area municipalities. Ald. Bates asked if employees are tested. Chief Auxier said a condition of employment, for all new employees, is they pass a nicotine test and may be subject to future testing while they were employed. Ald. Bates asked how much smoke firefighters breath when they are at a fire. Chief Auxier said there is some inhalation when they first arrive on scene. However, once they put their masks on they are breathing clean air. They do not allow employees to remove their mask until testing is conducted and we confirm it is clean air.

NMFR Dive Team at Quarry Quest: Chief Auxier said our Dive Team was invited by Michel's Quarry to participate in this year's Quarry Quest to educate the public about our Dive Team. There will be a few members at this event.

**MSC Bates/Englebert to adjourn at 6:20 p.m., all voting aye.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Al Auxier  
Chief

AA/tt