

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
MEETING MINUTES
AUGUST 21, 2013
FIRE STATION #2

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Wolter called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Members present: Chairman Wolter, Trustees Baum, Daniels, Hughes, Vanderheiden and Zabel. Members absent: Trustees Ewert, Kaminski and Werderman. Also present were Administrator Schornack, Deputy Clerk Lofy, Fire Chief Pollpeter, Public Education Coordinator Delain and Deputy Chiefs Maury and Stark.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Zabel, second by Baum to approve the minutes from the July 29, 2013 meeting.

All present voted aye. Motion carried.

GERMANTOWN FIRE DEPARTMENT STAFFING AND RECRUITMENT PROPOSALS

Fire Chief Pollpeter and Public Education Coordinator Delain presented information to update the Committee on recruitment efforts. Five people returned applications the night prior to this meeting and two applications were received the day of this meeting. These join the three applications that were received as of the July 29, 2013 meeting. Some of the applicants responding have certifications and some are from outside Germantown. In response to Committee questions about the recruitment signs, it was stated that there were still a few yard signs available. The large sign was moved at Fire Station #2 until posts could be installed to hold it in the wind.

The cost of training was brought up as a possible issue for new recruits. The least expensive cost occurred when a new recruit started their training as a firefighter. In this situation the recruit would need to pay for their book, transportation to attend training and \$50 for licensing. All other costs of training are reimbursed by the State. EMT training is paid for and recruits are paid by the Village to attend class if they start as paid on call firefighters for the Village.

Deputy Chief Maury stated that a new employee started the night prior to this meeting at Fire Station #1 as a paid on call firefighter. This person will be starting EMT training soon. He also stated that the cost for a person only seeking EMT training is \$1,000. Any person seeking employment with the Village this way and completing their training, including State certification, would be eligible to be hired as a paid on call EMT for the Village. The \$1,000 cost would not be reimbursed.

Deputy Chief Maury went on to explain that using alternates and paid on call for weekend spots has ended the need for 48 hour shifts. One 36 hour shift still remains but the goal is to make them all 24 hour shifts. It was difficult implementing the new weekend shifts the first couple of weeks because people already had plans. Alternates have not stepped up much but full time staff has picked up some weekend hours.

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At this time Fire Chief Pollpeter, Public Education Coordinator Delain and Deputy Chiefs Maury and Stark answered questions from the Committee. It was stated that overtime should be avoided to better use the money allotted for the weekend hours. Response time has been cut from an average of 14 minutes to 7.5 minutes and stress levels have improved for paid on call staff. This shows that the weekend schedule is having a positive impact. The money for this is only allotted until the end of the year so the fire department should come prepared at budget to present a plan to keep the funding through next year. The cost to the Village for the current weekend staffing would be about \$200,000. Due to guidelines set by the State, the Village would be able to collect a maximum of about \$380,000 in extra taxes next year. This will also be a good year for the Village money wise with TIFs 3 and 5 coming onto the tax roll, 2.4% in new growth and some debt services fulfilled. The Village did lose about 2% equalized value though. With budgets tight over the last few years and employees held to a 0% increase during this time, any money will be wanted by all departments.

Discussion:

- New hires will cut down on the possibility of dollars being spent faster on overtime costs
- Lifting the residency requirement has helped attract people but still need to look at other ways to attract new recruits
- Alternates are not limited by distance because they are stationed at the firehouse during their shifts
- Residents and businesses need to be made aware, possibly through the media, that the Village does not have a full time fire department
- Funding a full time fire department would cost more in taxes or cause cuts in other services
- A referendum could be prepared to switch to a full time fire department but it is not seen as something happening for possibly the next 10 or 15 years, until the number of residents reaches between 30,000 and 35,000 or until there is an industrial base to support it
- All options should be looked at, that is why Paratech was looked at during a prior meeting

6:45 p.m. – Trustee Daniels left at this time.

Deputy Chief Maury explained how the scheduling is completed. Employees can color code days according to their preference for being scheduled that day using online software called WhenToWork.com. Deputy Chief Maury then reviews this information on Tuesday and finalizes the schedule by Thursday for the next week. Paid on call employees already know they are on call every other week from Tuesday through Thursday. The schedule tells EMTs what they will be doing, firefighter or EMT duties.

Discussion:

- Four employees are needed to get a truck out of the station, only two are at the station during the day
- This is not only a Village of Germantown issue, surrounding communities are stressed and having difficulties finding recruits also

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Discussion continued:

- Would like to see four part time employees added to the budget and continue the weekend rotation at an additional cost of between \$450,000 and \$600,000 for next year
- As the Village grows, calls will increase
- Revenue from calls will not offset all extra costs to the fire department
- Increases in senior living developments will increase ambulance calls
- Calls have decreased for the department due to loss of mutual aid calls from surrounding communities including Menomonee Falls
- This is not all about money, firefighters are proud to serve and some live here
- Important for residents to see the weekend schedule succeed or it could be ended
- More employees will be needed to make this work
- The amount of applications right now is remarkable and proves the plan is working
- Feedback on the weekend schedule has been positive
- Residents will get the biggest benefit from this plan working

The Committee directed the fire department staff to prepare a realistic plan for next year to be presented on the night of their budget meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christa Lofy, WCMC
Deputy Village Clerk