

Minutes
Stacy Lent Area Fire Department
30785 Forest Blvd, Stacy, MN 55079
Joint Powers Meeting
December 2, 2019 at 7:00 pm

STACY CALLS MEETING TO ORDER & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

M. Utecht called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

REVIEW AND APPROVE AGENDA

M. Ness made a motion to approve the agenda. Second by D. Thieling. All in favor, motion carried for Stacy.

T. Nelson made a motion to concur with Stacy. Second by R. Keller. All in favor, motion carried.

APPROVE THE SEPTEMBER 9, 2019 MEETING MINUTES

M. Ness made a motion to approve the September 9, 2019 meeting minutes. Second by M. Utecht. All in favor, motion carried for Stacy.

B. Seekon made a motion to concur with Stacy. Second by T. Nelson. All in favor, motion carried for Lent.

CHIEF'S REPORT

Chief Potrament reported on the following:

- It has been a good year
- Started out rough with cold weather
- Members are outstanding and doing an exceptional job
 - He can't ask for better
- Total calls are pretty much the same
 - 276 now 274 last
- Membership is down
 - Lost a member
 - Down to 26 members
 - Hoping to get that number back up
 - It is a time commitment for people
 - They are fortunate for the Fire Fighters they have
- Hourly wages are down

RELIEF ASSOCIATION REPORT

N. Peltier handed out the investment report for the year. Up \$62k just in a gain, not including what they paid out through the year. About a 10% increase. Received State aid which is a couple thousand more than last year. He said both entities agreed on \$20k for this year. He will get the letters out so he can get paid.

N. Peltier went over the special fund balance sheet he handed out to everyone. The numbers were as of 10-31-2019. They are funded well enough for a pension increase. He explained the ratio at which they would be funded with different contribution scenarios and noted that the State likes to see them 95-100% vested. The State does not require a contribution unless they are under 95%. T. Nelson said they give you five years. N. Peltier said if the entities agree to keep doing the \$20k, this year it might be up. You can contribute the \$20k back. If we increased \$300 per year, we are 97% funded with no increase. A lot of it has to do with the members we lost because they are not vested. They get nothing unless they have ten years. We gained because of the younger members who have left. T. Nelson said the gain is down. N. Peltier said State aid has been going up a couple thousand every year.

Discussion was had on how the SLFD compares to neighboring districts as far as pay. N. Peltier said there were two payouts this year. They are paying out who they already owe and there are only 6 people on the deferred payout. M. Utecht said that they had discussed health insurance and equipment. He said he wants to make sure they are using the funds to give Fire Fighters the most benefit. He does not want to put \$25k into this and not be able to do other things that may be able to benefit other ways. They talked about things burning that lead to cancer. He said he does not know what the answer is, but he would like to think about it.

M. Ness said we should evaluate the \$20k if we start to offer cancer insurance. M. Utecht said we need to know other things we have not thought about to make it better to be a Fire Fighter. B. Seekon said this is the retirement fund and it cannot be muddled into the budget. We could put it somewhere else. We should not look at it as money to buy equipment. He said, N. Peltier's numbers show it can be kept funded. T. Nelson agreed. M. Ness said part of their benefits are insurance, retirement, etc. N. Peltier said if we do not have a benefit package, we will not have people coming in. He said he never saw it as part of the budget because it is something that has been always done. He said that they are not getting a ton of applications and that this is the only benefit insurance we have to offer.

N. Peltier reminded everyone they have firm numbers in front of them. This is the year we are up for the benefit approval because it is every three years. M. Ness asked if they can do it every year. M. Ness made a motion to increase to \$2100 along with a 1-year review of the municipal contribution. Second by M. Utecht. M. Utecht said he does not see a reason not to go to the \$2200. No matter what happens in the political climate a 5 % return is likely. He wants to do what is right for our folks because we got a good department. He doesn't know what other departments are like. He wants to focus on our folks. We have the funds to do the \$2200. M. Utecht asked the Council what they thought. M. Ness stated he is more conservative and that with the stock market you never know; he is not comfortable. P. Authier said he would lean toward the \$2100. D. Thieling said he leans towards the \$2200. M. Utecht called for a vote. D. Thieling nay. M. Utecht nay. M. Ness and P. Authier voted aye. Motion fails lack of majority.

T. Nelson made a motion to increase to \$2200 starting 1-1-2020 and review the annual contribution every 3 years. B. Seekon seconds. B. Seekon said he was thinking they should approve it annually even though the likelihood they decrease it is slim. L. Sinna said she budgets every year. T. Nelson said we have the power to change it any time we would like.

T. Nelson rescinded his motion and B. Seekon rescinded his second. L. Sinna said it forces us to look at other tools for us to recruit and not keep tabling it.

T. Nelson made a motion to increase to \$2200 starting 1-1-2020 and to review the contribution annually. L. Sinna seconds. C. Cagle asked if she can vote because Gary retired. It is locked in so she can vote. All in favor, motion carried for Lent.

M. Utecht made a motion to concur with Lent. P. Authier seconds. M. Ness nay. Motion carried 3-1 for Stacy.

OLD BUSINESS

Radio Update

C. Cagle said they had the meeting after the Lent Board meeting, but the Board received the information. T. Nelson said everyone has done a great job, but would like to know why we are still paying because we never had to before. We have had radios and only had to pay for the infrastructure. He does not mind paying for the infrastructure. M. Utecht said the 800-megahertz radios work better due to a lack of dead spots. It is an unfunded mandate. For him, it is worth the extra money. T. Nelson said the County is making us pay for them and he said we should just buy our own radios.

M. Utecht said we are paying a fee and another annual State fee. This is a fee that the County has to pay. It is based on how many the County has. We are going to pay the fee plus the \$30 administration fee. L. Iverson said we want to make sure there is a formula that is easy to follow when we are no longer on the board. This locks us into the set \$30 admin fee. L. Iverson said they were making money on this before. She said we have been paying for the infrastructure. We got them to take out almost 4 million dollars. We got them to take out a cabinet, toilets, etc. They bonded for them. We got them down to 8 million from over 12 million. There are set state fees that we know what they are.

M. Utecht said we got the County to admit they invented a number so we would not ask for more radios than we needed. This is when they knew this was not going to work anymore and they had to make a number work. C. Cagle said it got them to recognize that we know what they are doing. M. Utecht said we offered to pay the \$30 to be the *good guys*. He knew the radios would never get shut off. The fact that Bruce Messelt even thought he could threaten to shut off public service is beyond him. He wanted to show that they are willing to do what is right. When they found out what the numbers really were, within 90 seconds, we said we want to talk. L. Iverson said that this committee is about taking the high road and having a process in place. It is a four-year agreement.

M. Utecht said the other thing about this contract, there is no set sunset on this, it keeps going if no one does anything. L. Iverson said they are working with Koran and Neu and has a call into the Governor. They want them to know what is going on. The County does not have any control over the fees. It is published. T. Nelson said he still does not like the \$30. M. Utecht said either way we are paying for this. It is \$10k per year Countywide. It is the additional radios outside of the Sheriff department. R. Keller said he told T. Nelson he is willing to pay whatever it takes so

that the Fire Department has the radios. He said the group did a great job and we are saving \$9k a year because of them.

M. Utecht said they respectfully stood up to the bullying. C. Cagle said they now know we are paying attention and prior to this, they did not even have a system with their bookkeeper. L. Iverson stated that the Fire Fighters who came the meeting changed the scope of the meeting. Until they showed up, they were going to vote it down. We have to continue to work together. L. Sinna said she is going to livestream their meetings. R. Keller said the \$30 is no big deal. M. Ness thanked L. Iverson for putting this together and for her leadership. The County cannot decide our radios are not good enough. M. Utecht said if there is a specific radio that is making the system bad, they will shut it off. L. Iverson said start looking for people to run because there are 3 people up. T. Potrament said they submit for a grant every year for radios, pagers, everything. They have good odds. Unlike, if they tried to get a grant themselves.

Budget

M. Utecht said we do not have the actual document. N. Peltier said it will get handed at each of our meetings.

T. Potrament said the radios will function for at least 4 or 5 years before having to be replaced. B. Seekon said with the new agreement it will not cost as much as they had planned on and asked if they should put the money aside for the new radios. M. Utecht said it has to go in a specific fund so it does not go back to the entities.

T. Nelson said they are about a year from replacing air packs. N. Peltier said they have applied for grants for packs and have charitable gambling. They have been denied, but have been close. M. Utecht said with charitable gambling, we might have money. He would rather stick with the sure thing. N. Peltier said they need air packs all new masks, cylinders, packs, etc. which are around \$200k for the decked-out gear. The company they currently use is MSA. They offer a program with up to a 7 year pay off with low interest. N. Peltier said they might have to ask for them next year in December and stated they may be able to cover some of the cost. There is no penalty if they are paid off early.

T. Nelson said that \$230k is next year's budget and asked what the transcriber fee is going to be and if a column was specified. N. Peltier said this year and next year. It drops in 2021. We have not received a bill for it yet. M. Utecht asked how likely it is that they can get financing. N. Peltier replied 100% and added that North Branch just did.

N. Peltier stated that they got 15 years out of the last ones. They went on the high end when they got bids. M. Utecht said if there is a specification, we should go with that. We need to make sure what we get meets requirements. N. Peltier said by the time we go to purchase them the price will go up. That is why he went with \$200k. M. Utecht asked if they know of any other upcoming replacements the Department will require. N. Peltier said Engine 1 will be the next to be replaced; most likely in 2024. They love it and want to keep it as long as possible. T. Potrament said they will only replace it if they need to. Engine 3 will follow. N. Peltier stated that their grass rigs are in good condition. Maybe some of the SUVs will need to be replaced as they rot out. M. Utecht said he likes financing because it is the people who are living here that

are the ones paying for it, not the people who used to live here. N. Peltier stated he is happy with the budget and noted they had some mechanical things go wrong.

NEW BUSINESS

None

ADJOURN

M. Utecht declared the meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm.

B. Seekon made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 pm. Second by R. Keller. All in favor, motion carried for Lent.

The next Joint Powers meeting is Monday, March 2, 2020. Lent will preside.

Board/Council Present:

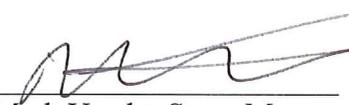
C. Cagle
T. Nelson
B. Seekon
R. Keller
L. Sinna
M. Utecht
M. Ness
P. Authier
D. Thieling

Fire Fighters Present:

T. Potrament
N. Peltier
S. Olson
L. Granberg

Others Present:

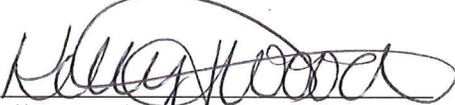
L. Iverson
K. Wood



Mark Utecht, Stacy Mayor



Rick Keller, Lent Chair



Kelly Wood, Joint Powers Secretary

