

**Minutes**  
**Special Joint Powers Meeting**  
**Future Fire Department Business**  
**Stacy Lent Fire Department**  
**30785 Forest Blvd., Stacy, MN 55079**  
**January 24, 2023 at 7:00 pm**

**STACY CALLS MEETING TO ORDER & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

M. Utecht called the meeting to order at 7pm.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Future of Bookkeeping**

This was addressed at the last meeting. The Town Treasurer will take over the Bookkeeping duties of the Fire Department and is in the process of doing so now. The parameters of the position are yet to be determined but should only include accounts receivables, accounts payables, payroll, taxes, and budget. Bills will be delivered to her as she will not be responsible for tracking them down. The Chief said he made a cover sheet for the bills with categories listed to show where they are paid from. The Training Simulator and LG555 will now come the same way. S. Aker asked if the bills being handed to her are current and T. Potrament said yes and they may be behind. The duties of the Chief and S. Aker were discussed in further detail and can be elaborated on at a later date if need be. C. Cagle asked if the bills are laid out and questioned at their monthly meetings, similar to the township. T. Potrament said no. C. Cagle asked if S. Aker should attend those meetings and T. Nelson said that is not needed. S. Aker let the Chief know that bills can be dropped off with the Town Clerk during business hours or left in the drop box outside the office. T. Nelson asked S. Aker if she knows how to handle MBFTE and the Chief said certain things are reimbursable through there and should remain all in one category. The former Bookkeeper was in attendance and explained that the Chief can make copies of the invoices that will get separated out and reimbursed. S. Aker will ask questions as they arise. She asked about office supplies – stamps, etc. T. Potrament said she could be reimbursed upon receipt. S. Aker said she would like to refrain from using township property unless the Fire Department would reimburse the township. T. Nelson questioned how it would be tracked and suggested a big purchase, ordering all that is needed, then getting paid back from the Fire Department. M. Utecht suggested the FD purchase a book of stamps and reams of paper. T. Nelson said we need to have the Bookkeeper supplied by SLFD. C. Cagle suggested a draw of \$125 to get set up for the first few months. M. Utecht said that sounds like a good idea. T. Potrament said he can email some bills but some have envelopes. M. Utecht said someone should make a motion.

**C. Cagle made a motion to start the new Bookkeeper with \$125 for office supplies. R. Keller second for discussion.**

R. Keller and C. Cagle agreed that setup might not cost that much.

**All in favor, motion carried for Lent.**

**M. Utecht made a motion to concur with Lent.**

He clarified to S. Aker that if she needs more money, she should not wait for another motion.

**All in favor, motion carried for Stacy.**

### **Future of Data Entry**

M. Utecht said this was covered and his recollection is that the chiefs will take this over. T. Potrament said yes and they agreed there was nothing else to discuss with this. M. Peltier asked T. Potrament if he would like all of the data entry stuff and he said yes. She informed the Board that T. Potrament and S. Olson have access and can log in and made M. Peltier inactive. She handed over the Data Entry paperwork at 7:18pm. T. Nelson explained that sam.gov is a sight they go through to apply for grants. The firefighters that previously handled this have since retired. It needs to start up again as it saves tax payer dollars and he is not comfortable with the chief taking it over. M. Peltier stated that most grant applications started on January 9<sup>th</sup>. J. Barrett asked about the funding and T. Nelson explained that is application specific. M. Thompson said they tend to be FEMA and T. Nelson added that it is because of the gambling. M. Peltier said they received some in 2020 and M. Utecht said that was COVID money but it all comes though sam.gov and T. Potrament knows now that this is a priority.

### **Future of Fire Relief**

T. Nelson explained the Relief is still active because of the gambling. They meet monthly and questioned if the Joint Powers Board needs to be involved. He shared the PERA numbers and informed everyone that he shared them at the last Board meeting. M. Utecht said that D. Thieling volunteered to go to the meetings. S. Olson said they are the first Monday of every month and M. Thompson said the next one is on February 7<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm. T. Nelson goes to represent Lent. T. Nelson and S. Olson discussed the Relief checkbook and that S. Bengston the sill the Treasurer and is handling it. It is the general fund for the Relief and is separate from everything else. M. Utecht said with JP still being involved with the Relief, one representative from each side is sufficient and T. Nelson agreed.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### **Transfer checkbook to S. Aker**

T. Nelson said his wife put a hold on the account. S. Aker said that since one of the individuals that are on the account is retiring soon, we should remove her at this point too. T. Nelson recommended one signer so S. Aker does not have to travel for signatures.

**M. Utecht made a motion to remove Sharon Payne, Mandi Peltier, Lynda Schmidt, and Kelly Potrament from the SLFD checking account ending in 4536, and add Tanya Smolke and Stephanie Aker to the SLFD checking account ending in 4536, and require only one signer. Second by T. Sawatzky. All in favor. Motion carried for Stacy.**

**R. Keller made a motion to concur with Stacy. Second by B. Seekon. All in favor. Motion carried for Lent.**

**List of names on checking account covered**

### **DWIs**

M. Utecht said we have suggested additions to the SOPs that came from the City Attorney and the Joint Powers should consider them. R. Keller agreed they are appropriate. T. Sawatzky asked if this has been an issue and the mayor said they do not want it to be and explained that is came up while updating other things. M. Utecht pointed out that a CDL is gone for five years after a

DWI. T. Nelson said he talked with the insurance company and we need to adopt a rule to follow and it is up to the governing body to create it. M. Utecht agreed and stated that our price is based on our policies. R. Keller said this should also cover reckless/ careless and multiple speeding tickets if one is operating a large vehicle.

**R. Keller made a motion to adopt the new SOP policies as proposed by the city attorney. T. Nelson second for discussion.**

T. Nelson explained that a firefighter with a DWI can go to a fire, just not drive the JP equipment.

**All in favor, motion carried for Lent.**

**M. Utecht made a motion to concur with Lent. D. Thieling second.**

Discussion was had on legalities and liabilities and it was decided they will move towards adopting the national law. The mayor noted there could be a motion to amend at a later date if the new policies are less than state and national laws.

**All in favor, motion carried for Stacy.**

### **Driving privileges**

R. Keller said people in the community think the chief's truck is being used when it should not be. He supports the general use of the truck but it should be limited to a thirty mile radius around the city. The trucks are important to travel with is because they contain equipment like defibrillators. T. Sawatzky said state statute should be looked at because they are tax-payer funded but C. Cagle said this is different as the SLFD is on-call with their vehicles. M. Utecht said if the FD truck is being used for any FD purpose, they should be able to use the truck. J. Barrett asked if they could listen to T. Potrament's opinion. The Chief said he agrees. He was the first to the scene in North Branch when he was at the movie theater up there. J. Barrett confirmed that it is not lent nor misused. T. Nelson said to check with the SOPs to see if it is covered in there. M. Utecht said he will check with the city attorney and can address this at the next meeting. J. Barrett asked if we can compare other departments and the mayor said it is best to steal rules from other government entities with the added bonus of saving time.

### **Possible SOP additions**

covered

### **Chief car uses**

covered

### **Officer conduct**

Mayor Utecht said this may be the touchiest policy. T. Nelson disagreed and said if an officer is not doing their job, they should be gone. J. Barrett questioned the topic and M. Utecht said this was a general concern that was brought up and he would like to make sure this topic is clear if it was not prior to this. T. Potrament said the Code of Conduct is in the SOPs. T. Nelson will send it to T. Smolke. Complaint forms were discussed and are available at the township and city. Interior complaints were discussed and these should be made to the governing body as stated in the SOPs. N. Dodge said the posted law should be referenced as it may say to go up the chain of command and one may remain anonymous. M. Thompson asked if the FD is currently under investigation and if they have done something wrong or should be worried. The mayor stated that everything that needed to be investigated was already complete. T. Nelson and R. Keller agree

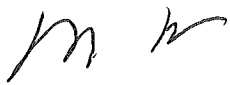
the FD should be trusted 100% and they should not want the township or city involved. Code of Conduct on and off duty was discussed. Both are important as there is representation in either situation and these individuals are held to a higher standard. These firefighters are on call 24/7. Further discussion was had on personal lives and, if drinking while on call, an individual would not respond to a call. M. Thompson said it is clear to them what they are representing and clarified that they are no volunteer, but paid on-call. When they are in the area, wearing the SLFD logo, they represent well. The officers make that clear upon hiring. S. Olson asked if the new SOPs are active right now and M. Utecht said with the exception of the last line and that they wanted the FD to write these. N. Dodge said to give her an email to send the information requested. R. Keller gave his email and the email for the township clerk. When the mayor was asked if he could share his findings with the investigation, he said it was personnel related and by law he cannot. They are satisfied with what they found and want it behind them and for the FD to move on. N. Dodge said she has been at all of these meetings and has been a member for seven years. She believes the firefighters are not being heard. She asked if they could have an open-forum meeting to discuss their issues. R. Keller said anytime she feels like there is a personnel conflict, she should message the JP Board. Both the chairperson and mayor shared their email addresses. Past complaints were discussed and the mayor made it clear that the firefighters can speak freely at these meeting though the board is limited. E. Coen requested radios be added to the next agenda as they will need a new truck in a few years and would like the costs staggered. R. Keller said they are the taxing authority and can raise them if needed. The chief mentioned radios start at \$5000. N. Dodge said the gambling is great but it makes them ineligible for some grants. B. Seekon said the time and effort put into the gambling is phenomenal and saves so much taxpayer money.

#### **ADJOURN**

**Mayor Utecht declared the meeting adjourned at 8:32pm. R. Keller made a motion to concur. Second by B. Seekon. All in favor. Motion carries for Lent.**

**The next Joint Powers meeting is Monday, March 6, 2023. Lent will preside.**

  
Mark Utecht, Mayor

  
Rick Keller, Chair

  
Tanya Smolke, Secretary

