

# Minutes of the Sparta Fire Board Meeting

November 16, 2017  
Sparta Fire Station

Present: Bergman (twp-chair), Momber (twp), Van Patten (village), Dougan (village) and Goodfellow (twp).

Also, present: Chief Bolen, Deputy Chief Olney

Absent: Taylor (village) & Bradford (twp),

Bergman called the meeting to order @ 7:00 pm

## **Approval of the Agenda:**

**Motion:** Made by **Dougan** to approve the agenda with the addition of McGrath recommendations.

**Seconded: Van Patten**

**Motion Passed:** 5 -0

**Public Comment:** Shawn Morton commented on the Med3 agenda item. The reason the department originally started doing Med3's was due to a change in ALS service, ALS change in hours, ALS reduce vehicles and ALS response times. Even though ALS response times have improved they cannot match the current response time for SFD. Shawn also stated the McGrath study grossly misrepresented the Administration Assistance and Captions gross salaries. The Administration Assistance gross salary was from 2016. As Shawn stated, Administration Assistance gross wage was combination of janitorially services, laundry services, maintenance interior & exterior and over 600 response calls all rolled into one person and one gross wage. He also stated that the study showed the Caption's salary for the first 6 months of 2017 because the Captions salary for 2016 was low as he was off work for 8 months. He stated that all his calls and associated work was shifted to "Administration Assistance" because there was no else to do the work. Over 50% of the calls are during the day time hours, night hours have the next most call and weekends have the least amount of call. There currently is not sufficient fire fighters available during the day time hours to respond to calls without our current Administration Assistance answering these calls.

## **Approval of the Minutes:**

**Motion:** Made by **Goodfellow** to approve October 19, 2017 minutes.

**Seconded: Dougan**

**Motion Passed:** 5-0

## **Approval of Bills:**

**Motion:** Made by **Goodfellow** to approve bills through November 13, 2017

**Seconded: Momber**

**Motion Passed:** 5-0

## **Chief's Report:**

The Chief reported that last month there was a total of 92 calls and 1121YTD. (3) fire calls, 68 medical and emergency calls. Power wire down where the department responded and had to wait several hours before CMS arrived on site. The Chief is requesting cost recovery from CMS for waiting period. There

was one medical call at the Library, the patient needed both ALS personal to provide emergency service. The SFD provided a person to drive the ambulance to the hospital. There was one other patient assist where the SFD provided emergency services on the patient before and during the time the ALS arrived. Patient was transported by ALS. There was (1) PDA accident at M37 & 13 mile. One of the fire call, residential home at 9560 Kenowa Ave. which was a complete burn down. The department had to get an excavator to help separate the home structure before the fire could be totally put out. The Halloween Party was a huge success. There were somewhere between 700 -1000 children who attended the party sponsored and paid for by the "Fire Fighters". The costume winners we treated to a McDonalds party. The department also made a presentation on fire safely to Sowing Seeds Daycare facility. The Department was also present at the Veterans Memorial service at Sparta High School. The Chief stated that the new platform vehicle is completed and on site. There will be additional fire department training before the platform is put into service.

**McGrath Recommendations:**

Dougan presented (5) recommendations prepared by Gale Taylor from the McGrath study that they would like implemented immediately. Bergman outlined his views of the McGrath study stating that these are recommendations, (3) of the items presented are currently on the agenda tonight and he stated the Sparta Fire Protection Agreement needs to be completed first.

**Motion** made by **Dougan** to implement (5) recommendations presented.

Have a Sparta Fire Protection Agreement completed by year end.

Removed the current Administration Assistant

Eliminate all Med3's calls

Eliminate/stop using the "Fire House"

Eliminate/stop using the "Fire Captain" to complete any administrative work.

**Seconded: Van Patten**

Discussion, if approved the fire house will close, the administration assistant would be released, the Captain wouldn't do any administration work, Med3's would be eliminated and not be responded to and Sparta Fire Protection Agreement would have to be completed by year end.

Bergman stated the previous board eliminated the finance committee which included salary checks. He stated that previous board didn't do a fire chief evaluation. He also stated that the reason the Administration Assistance responded to calls was there are no other options during the day. He stated that the Township has (3) folks named to work on the Fire Protection Agreement but the Village hasn't named any persons yet. Dougan stated her concern was proper funding and spending and expects all tax dollars to be accounted for. Momber asked if all (5) recommendations being voted on would be implemented immediately if approved with no interim plans in place or how to even implement these recommendations. Answer is yes. That's what would happen.

**Motion Failed:** 2-3 (Bergman, Momber & Goodfellow dissenting)

**Med3's:**

**Motion:** Made by **Dougan** to eliminate all responses to Med3's

Van Patten asked if SFD could respond to some Med3's but not all of them. Deputy Chief Olney stated the SFD could request the county dispatch/E911 to just issue Med3's to SFD based on whatever types of Med3's the SFD wanted to receive.

**Seconded: None, motion failed**

Deputy Chief Olney presented to the board the Med3 data for the last 3 years. There were 390 Med3 calls in 2015, 410 Med3 calls in 2016 and estimated to handle approximately 398 Med3 calls in 2017. The majority of Med3 calls, over 50% are during the day time hours when the station had daily coverage. The night time calls and weekend calls were approximately 25% - 20% of the total calls. The average cost for a Med3 call is approximately \$40.00 in labor and 1.25 hours each for 2 responders. It's cost the department approximately \$16,000 per year to provide Med3 services. He estimated that 60% of the Med3 calls were within the Village. The Chief stated that there are times when ALS will divert to a Med2, another call in lieu of responding to a Med3 call. The Chief stated that for the past 3 years responding to Med3 calls as approved by the Fire Board, the SFD hadn't exceeded their operational budget. The SFD is providing a public service to the residents by responding to the Med3 requests. Dougan asked if the Med3 were eliminated could the money saved be used for other services and equipment, the Chief stated yes.

Dougan was asked if it was the consensus of the Village Board to eliminate all Med3's, she stated the Village wants to eliminate all Med3's. Momber stated; eliminating or reducing Med3's doesn't save a lot of operational money considering the public service you're providing.

The Van Patten asked if there was a hybrid solution, something between eliminating all Med3's and continuing to respond to all Med3's. The Chief stated that the Med3's are based on the input that the Dispatcher receives. He stated that SFD could request the county dispatch/E911 to issue Med3's to SFD based on whatever types of Med3's the SFD wanted to receive and respond to.

**Motion:** Made by **Dougan** to have the Chief present a hybrid Med3 solution at the next board meeting.

**Seconded:** **Goodfellow**

The Chief stated he could do that.

**Motion Passed:** 5-0

#### **Job Descriptions:**

None of the existing job descriptions were in the "Red Book" department policies. The current job descriptions were completed and or updated over the past several years. Ex: the Fire Chief job description was last updated January of 2016. The Administration Assistant, the Captain and Lieutenant were available to the board but the last time they were updated is unknown.

Dougan asked how a fire fighter filled out their time/run sheets. Deputy Olney described the process the fire fighter used. He then described what he did with run sheets, reviewed them, determined pay, hours, and prepared payroll. It was the consensus of the fire board that the Chief meet with the folks and update the current job description for the positions in question and have them available for next month's meeting.

#### **Administration Staff Wages and Hours:**

Discussion: The current Administration Assistant is working more than 40 hours per week and the board would like to reduce these "Administration Assistant" hours to between 15-20 hours. However, the current responsibilities under the "Administration Assistant" has increased in responsibility and hours by having the work responsibility of several other fire department members and or contractors move to the Assistant. Other fire department members that haven't been available to do some functions and to save money not using a contractor, these additional responsibilities were rolled up to the Administration Assistant to handle.

The Chief presented a list of current responsibilities that Administration Assistant currently does which will have to be contracted out, eliminated, amended or reallocated to other department members if the board only want an Administration Assistant to work 15-20 hours on just administrative work.

1. Day time run calls: With the lack of available fire fighters for the day time shifts, the chief will have to look for addition help or hope other departments can respond during day time hours.
2. Station hours will be reduced, there will be no one to answer calls, visitors, contractors, vendors, or employee questions. There will have to be a notice posted on the door if this isn't an emergency, please call and schedule an appointment. If this is an emergency, please call 911.
3. Any walk in medical emergency. Will be directed to call 911.
4. Launder service, mend and repair turnout gear. This will have to be contracted out. Depending on the contractor service times, additional gear may have to be purchased to be used as spare uniforms.
5. Equipment issues with office equipment, HVAC and other station equipment. Addition maintenance agreements with vendors maybe required.
6. Housekeeping/janitorial service, including trash removal for the station house and fire station. This will be contracted out.
7. Exterior building and property maintenance (excluding lawn service already contracted). This will be contracted out.
8. Snow removal, sidewalk shoveling, salt etc. as the station must be clear always. This will be contracted out.

It was the consensus of the board to have the Chief find way to outsource some of the current Administration Assistant duties to contractors or others. It could include hiring a new "Administration Assistant" for just those duties. The Chief will submit his propose plan to board at the next meeting.

#### **Chief's Contract:**

The Chief stated he'd like to continue as the Sparta Fire Chief. The consensus of the board was the Chief should have his annual evaluation completed before discussion on a new contract. Goodfellow to send out sample format of previous evaluation to board members. He will incorporate all the board members evaluation and summarize into a single document. (the documents have been sent out)

The information needs to be returned before the next board meeting.

#### **Next Regular Meeting Date**

December 21, 2017 at 7:00 pm at the Sparta Fire Station

#### **Public Comment:**

**Ryan Hayes** stated, if the Med3's responses are changed to something less than the current plan, the community will not be getting the service they expect. If the response times goes up your insurance rates will also go up.

**Bob Shangle** suggested that numerous Med3 calls to a single resident, the resident should be billed/invoiced after a determined number of calls.

**Marcy Savage** stated she was disappointed in the board for not making more decisions. She thinks the full-time Sparta fire department makes all the decisions and not the board. She stated that Algoma has a full-time fire chief and (1) part time fire fighter that does approximately 15 hours of administration work per week. Marcy also stated that she thinks some of the Med3's should be eliminated.

As note, Per Troy Guerra, Algoma Fire Chief: The Algoma Fire Department has a full-time fire chief, (1) "civilian" part time employee as the Fire Department Administration Assistant. The Fire Department also has the township clerical staff available to do additional Administration department work. (at one time the fire department was charged \$5000 per year for the additional clerical work but that policy has been dropped). He also has one fire fighter who works 3 days a week 5a-5p running day time calls/runs.

**Shawn Morton;** If you are going to start billing for Med3 services then you should start billing for total service provided. He stated that if you cut the hours that a person is present at the fire station, Admiration Assistant or whomever. Who are you going to get to respond to these calls. Over 50% of all calls are in the day time hours and the department can't find anyone who's available for those hours. He stated anyone can answer the phone but who's going to respond? Shawn stated that the fire board several year ago changed the procedure to have a person at the fire station during the day time hours. The hours were split between several folks during that time with exception 2016 where he was off for 8 month and Deputy Chief wife had a new baby. The change was made because there were times during the day when several (more than 2) fire fighter would respond to a call and it would cost more money. There were times when the response times were increased while waiting for a fire fighter to respond. It was a cost savings for the department and response time improvement for the department to have someone at the station during the day time hours. He stated the he's made the following statement before: The expectations of the fire board and disagreement within the board are part of the problem, they need to look at themselves as part of the problem. He stated that you need people on the fire board that understand and have knowledge of how the fire department works. He said the Village and Township boards need clarifications of what they expect of the Fire Department to do not just give the problem/issue to the Chief to handle.

**Motion:** Made by **Dougan** to adjourn at 9:35 pm

**Seconded:** **Momber**

**Motion Passed:** 5-0

Minutes by **Goodfellow** 11-20-17

Finance meeting dates: December 5<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 PM township offices.