

## BROOKLYN FIRE & EMS DISTRICT BOARD MEETING MINUTES 11/13/2020

Meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm by Vice President John Marx. Members present were Kim Gruebling. Members Brit Springer, Fred Clark and Nancy Wedvig filling in for Jim Lunde were present via online video conference. Also present were Mason Barber and Dan Dean. Sarah Andrisevic was present via online video conference.

Motion: Gruebling/Marx to approve minutes of 10/14/2020 meeting as written. Motion carried.

Springer commented she would like to figure out how to make the zoom connection better; it cuts in and out often, making it difficult to hear those in person. Marx asked Dan Dean and Justin Wicik to look into getting Bluetooth microphones.

Chief Barber reported the department had 12 calls during October. The department has had 10 fewer calls in 2020 compared to 2019. There was one mutual aid call for a structure fire. The new fire truck is behind because of COVID, they expect to receive the truck at the beginning of December. The department is conducting member meetings via zoom. The officers are working on virtual trainings to keep members engaged. The Chief stressed how short staffed the department continues to be, especially during the day. There are 2 people interested in joining the department but they have little to no training. But it's a tricky time to bring new people in, because they don't want members at the station during COVID

Springer asked if some of the members that are not responding because of COVID and will they come back. Chief Barber didn't really know. The biggest issue is they get a lot of daytime calls and no one is available. Weekend response continues to be an issue as well.

Springer expressed her appreciation to all the hard work both departments are doing and asked the Chief and EMS Director to let their members know how much they are appreciated.

Springer asked what the village can do regarding the staffing issues. One suggestion is to use the message board on MM. Also, the Chief would like to approach a village employee that is on the Evansville fire department to join if it's okay with the village and the member to assist during daytime hours.

EMS Director Dean reported the department had a total of 208 calls through the date of this meeting, which is substantially more than any previous year at the same time. He guesses total calls for the year will be between 220 and 230, the most in service history. He shared a graph from the Dane County Department of Health that shows Brooklyn's COVID case per capita is 3 times higher than the Dane County average. They have lost one member, who moved on to a new job.

The District Secretary commented the CARES Act payment had been approved and the district should be receiving a check for the funds.

Chief Barber commented on the RF-DASH program (Rural Firefighters Delivering Agricultural Safety and Health). Deana Zentner commented she attended a webinar about it and would send the district the information. The Oregon fire department is also looking into the program and maybe the two departments can work together on it.

Motion: Marx/Gruebling auction Old Engine #2 on the Wisconsin Surplus Site. Motion carried.

Motion: Marx/Springer to move \$20,000 of the 30% EMS reserve money to the EMS salary line. Motion carried.

Marx commented not joining the WRS will be a problem for recruitment. If the district were to hire a full time chief sometime in 2021, they would lose time in the system. It also complicates the health insurance component. If you get health insurance through employee trust fund, the first year is expensive, but goes down significantly in the second year. If the district were to get into the WRS, they could use their COBRA opportunity to pay for their first year of health insurance. The district will have to tell candidates we are not in the WRS and cannot guarantee we will be.

Springer commented a big concern the village had was the resolution would exclude all current volunteers and paid employees and felt that would be a disservice to those that are currently working; to effectively tell them that all new hires and new volunteers from the effective date would be eligible. And talking to a couple of volunteers in the department felt that would be a slap in the face. And they don't want to alienate the already limited volunteers they have. They want all the members to feel included.

Marx commented he made the recommendation to move ahead with the option Springer described that moves ahead with just new hires, but that's not his decision to make. The commission would have discussed the different options and they could have chosen the option to include current employees. Secondly, they would still have to work the required number of hours to be eligible, so if they don't work 1,200 hours in a year, it doesn't matter. In 2019, no one worked enough hours to be eligible. Even the full-time EMS who are physically at the station for 12 hours, only the hours doing actual work for the district count towards the 1,200 hour threshold.

Springer commented these conversations should have started a lot sooner than October, it's a huge decision and one meeting shouldn't be the deciding factor.

Motion: Marx/Gruebling to table vote on resolution to join the Wisconsin Retirement System until after completion of the strategic plan. Motion carried

The district secretary handed out October financials. Marx asked if there would be an opportunity to submit additional expenses through the CARES Act and the answer was no, there is not going to be a round 3.

Next meeting will be December 16, 2020.

Motion: Gruebling/Springer to adjourn at 7:30 pm. Motion carried.