

BROOKLYN FIRE & EMS DISTRICT BOARD MEETING MINUTES 9/9/2020

Meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm by President Mark O'Brien. Members present were John Marx, Kim Gruebling, Jim Lunde and Brit Springer. Also present were Mason Barber and Dan Dean. Sarah Andrisevic was present via online video conference.

Motion: Springer/Marx to approve minutes of 8/19/2020 meeting with changes requested by Springer. Motion carried.

No Public Comments

Marx nominated Mark O'Brien for District Board President 2021. Lunde seconded Marx nomination. Springer nominated herself as an officer; president or vice president, there was no second. Marx/Lunde motioned to close the nominations and cast a majority vote for Mark O'Brien. Springer did not vote. Motion carried. O'Brien accepted the position.

Gruebling nominated John Marx for District Board Vice President. Lunde seconded Gruebling nomination. Gruebling/Lunde motioned to close the nominations and cast a majority vote for John Marx. Springer did not vote. Motion carried. Marx accepted the position.

Brit Springer commented that she reached out to several other districts to see if they were paying hazard pay. Those that responded back to her stated they were not unless a person needed to be quarantined. EMS Director Dan Dean stated at the last EMS chief's meeting in April, several of the state agencies in the county said they intended to pay hazard pay and the money would be reimbursed by the CARES Act, he was unsure which ones specifically. John Marx stated Dean had reached out to him regarding the hazard pay in April and he reminded Dean there were no restrictions on how he pays the EMTs to have the station staffed. Springer said her board asked her to make a motion to postpone the hazard pay vote until the joint municipality meeting since it will affect their budget and it was in breach of the district contract as the village of Brooklyn understands it. Gruebling commented the board didn't meet and the EMS Director and Fire Chief were left in charge to do the job and they made a decision and the board should stand behind it and thinks the hazard pay is reasonable. And the probability of being reimbursed for it is extremely high. Springer stated again the village wants the hazard pay motion delayed because it is believed the officers did not have the authority to spend additional money not in the budget without approval from the district board. Marx argued the remedy to that is to approve the hazard pay retroactively since the district agreement says the board can make changes to the 2020 budget and it doesn't have to go to the joint meeting. Then there is no more violation/breach of contract, they have done what the agreement says they need to do.

Springer's motion to postpone hazard pay vote until the joint municipality meeting with 5 minutes per municipality allowed for discussion died as there was no second.

Motion: Marx/Lunde to approve \$3 hazard pay for EMS personnel retroactively through May 1st. Springer abstained. Motion carried.

Chief Barber spoke about the proposed increase to the fire department budget of \$24,000. It would be a one-time increase for the purchase of battery powered extrication equipment for the new engine. A 3 piece set ranges from \$30,000 - \$33,000 per set. The fire association would cover the remaining cost if needed. Springer asked why the fire department is not getting hazard pay like the EMS department is. Chief Barber responded that EMS has responded to more EIDS (emerging infectious disease) calls than fire and Director Dean has been proactive with the EMS members that if fire is not needed, to call them off as soon as possible.

Chief Barber spoke about the proposed purchase of a shared SUV for the departments as a capital expenditure. The departments would have an officer (a member that is trained in both fire and EMS) be on call for a weekend and take the SUV home with them; this would improve the department's acknowledgment and in route times that are tracked by the county. It would get someone to an incident much quicker since they could leave directly from their house and not have to go to the station first and just provide better service. The vehicle it would replace is 27 years. The estimated cost would be approximately \$56,000 for the vehicle and necessary equipment. EMS Director Dean suggested using unallocated EMS funds to purchase the SUV.

Springer was under the impression one of the pros with merging the departments would be to save the district money, but both budgets increase with the full time fire chief. Marx commented the merger and full time fire chief never claimed it would save money, but it would help with staffing the station during the week, and improve coordination between the departments. Additionally some of the budget salary items would be re-allocated to the fire chief's salary.

Motion: Marx/Gruebling to forward proposed fire budget to the Municipalities for approval at 9/16/2020 Annual Jt. Municipal Meeting. Springer abstained. Motion carried.

Motion: Marx/Lunde to forward fire chief's request to purchase a Fire/EMS SUV up to \$58,000 to Municipalities for approval at 9/16/2020 Annual Jt. Municipal Meeting. Motion carried.

Marx emphasized the department managers should have the ability to move funds around between line items within the budget. And if at any time one of the departments expects to go over budget, the district board can authorize use of the 30% reserve and only after the 30% reserve is used, any additional funds needed would have to be approved by the municipalities.

Marx commented that Chapter 66 was amended recently and municipalities can exceed their levy limits by an amount increase for joint fire/EMS districts. The amount they can exceed it is less than or equal to the % change of the consumer price index plus 2%. The town of Brooklyn treasurer thinks it'll be about 4.5%, which will be explained more at the joint meeting.

The board requested the EMS Director, Fire Chief and District Secretary figure out how to apply for the CARES Act money before next week's meeting.

Motion: Marx/Gruebling to forward proposed EMS budget with the changes to hazard pay reimbursement, and to give the municipalities the numbers regarding holding the levy amount to the 4.5% increase and keeping the per capita the same as 2020 and drawing down unallocated funds to the Municipalities for approval at 9/16/2020 Annual Jt. Municipal Meeting. Springer abstained. Motion carried.

Motion: Marx/Gruebling to approve changes made to the district agreement and to send to the municipalities and request them to approve the changes at their next available municipal meeting. Springer opposed. Motion carried.

Chief Barber reported the department had 7 calls during August, and they are 17 calls behind 2019. A large number of the calls received are medically related. Production is progressing on the new fire engine. The department gets pictures every week on the progress.

EMS Director Dean reported the department had a total of 162 through the end of August, 30 calls ahead of last year. He handed out a report that breaks out the calls by municipality, type of call, call location, time of day, average call times. The ambulance has been out of service 155 hours through the end of August.

The District Secretary handed out August financials and unallocated cash balances after 2019 bills had all been paid. EMS salaries are getting close to the budget amount, due to hazard pay and the station being staffed almost full time. The district secretary will provide an update at the next board meeting.

Springer spoke about additional proposed changes to the district agreement. Three changes were presented: 1. Each commissioner of the district board shall be an elected official of the municipality they represent 2. The commissioners would have one or more votes weighted according to each municipality's share of the district's annual budget. 3. All monthly bills be presented to the district board for review and approval by at least 2 commissioners prior to payment.

Motion: Springer/Gruebling to forward the changes to the district agreement requested by the village of Brooklyn to the Municipalities for approval at 9/16/2020 Annual Jt. Municipal Meeting. Springer voted yes. O'Brien, Lunde, Gruebling and Marx voted no. Motion denied.

Next meeting will be September 16, 2020.

Motion: Springer/O'Brien to adjourn at 10:21 pm. Motion carried.