

SOUTH KALAMAZOO COUNTY

FIRE AUTHORITY

Minutes of Special Meeting Held October 12, 2016

The regular meeting of the South Kalamazoo County Fire Authority Board was held at 13123 S. 24th Street, Vicksburg, Michigan on October 12, 2016. The meeting was called to order by Randy Smith at 7:00 pm.

The following members of the Authority Board were present for all or part of the meeting: Bill Adams, Todd Carlin, Jason Gatlin, Randy Smith, Mike Tomlinson, and Don Ulsh.

Guests in attendance for all or part of the meeting: Administrator Tracy Locey.

Approval of the Agenda

Smith moved, seconded by Tomlinson to approve the agenda as presented. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Citizen's Time

Trenton VanderBor – Mr. VanderBor thanked SKCFA for their response and support following his accident. He chronicled his accident to date.

Alicia Crandall – Mrs. Crandall feels the Chief should be left alone to do his job; Crandall thinks Smith should step down from the Chairman position. Crandall does not understand why staff members are not allowed to “hang out” at the station.

Smith responded by clarifying the role of Chairman. Everything is done by the Board, not the Chairman. The Board approves the agenda and sets the course for the Authority by making motions, seconds and conducting votes. The Chairman's only statutory duty is to run the meeting by making sure the rules of order and the agenda are followed as voted upon. All action items must be dictated by the Board and not any individual member of the Board. Annually the Board selects which members will fill the roles of Chairman, Vice Chairman, and Secretary. Smith has served in the Chairman role for the last couple of years as the Authority worked through updating its Articles of Incorporation, Mutual Aid Agreements, and the 20 year Capital Plan. One of the main reasons for Smith's reappointment to the Chairman position has been as the Authority implemented the 20 yr. Capital Plan, there were many meetings and presentations to be given and Smith was open to serving in the role. Smith has been clear since he has devoted many hours to the aforementioned items; he didn't want to be involved with the Human Resource Committee and its duties of working through the recommendations of the CPSM report. “Chairman” is the title given to the person that runs the meetings.

Loretta Brundige – Ms. Brundige thinks the board should only concern its self with the financial portion of running the Authority. She suggested the Authority should be disbanded and rely on mutual aid agreements like it was done in the past. The Board doesn't understand what it's like to be a firefighter. Officers should be allowed to run things and the Board should butt out. Brundige wanted to know why the Articles of Incorporation are not posted at the stations.

Tomlinson responded to why the individual municipalities do not run their own fire departments. The main reason is cost. The fact that the participating entities could no longer afford their own departments is what drove the creation of the Authority. Tomlinson also noted the Articles of Incorporation may be

requested through the Administrator. Smith noted the Board and Officers work together on fulfilling the equipment needs of the department while working within the financial constraints that exist.

Ron Glenn – Mr. Glenn inquired why the Articles were changed to only six members from seven and how is a vote determined.

Smith noted that the seventh member was not an elected official and not held accountable to the voters and was therefore eliminated. Votes still take four yes votes to pass, same as with seven members. A tied vote does not pass.

Receive an Update on Mr. Nason

Smith began with asking everyone to forego the rumors and preconceived notions that they may have before coming to the meeting. Smith noted CPSM presented a report on ways we could make the department better. At the presentation of the report, eleven of the forty-nine objectives had already been completed. A main surprise of the report was the recommendation the department should not be running on about 80% of the medical calls that are currently dispatched. It was also determined some of the recommendations were beyond our control such as dispatch times and the types of calls the department is dispatched. Some of the objectives are not likely financially feasible. This left a small number of objectives to be further considered. However, the consultant said the Board should not be concerned with the objectives. The Board should be focused on creating a new Fire Chief job description. The position should be more administrative in nature. When the position is filled, that person's responsibility would be addressing the objectives in the report. They will present their plans and the Board will work with the individual on how to afford the recommended plans.

Adams recruited Jim Mallery and Rick Nason to serve on a HR Panel to assist the Board with the development of a job description and conduct a candidate search. The Board felt the two individuals to be experts in the fire service and to be an asset to the Authority. At the April 27, 2016 meeting the panel was approved by the Board. In order for the panel to act on behalf of the Board, a vote of the Board was required. At some point the Panel began working on the CPSM objectives. The problem was it was outside of the scope of work approved by the Board, even though good ideas were being considered. Smith noted along the way the panel was working outside the scope of work. Smith met with Nason and discussed his concerns. At that time, Nason was unaware three resumes had been received by the panel. It was determined the activities of Nason were a good idea, and therefore a Fire Commissioner position was needed in order for him to continue his work on the objectives. Nason was asked to develop a Fire Commissioner job description. At the September 15, 2016 meeting, the job description was adopted and Nason was appointed by the Board to the position.

Smith noted there are only two main reasons for going into closed session by the Board. First is to discuss pending litigation with legal counsel and the second is to discuss an employee's performance. The caveat is the employee must request the Board go to closed session; otherwise it will be discussed in an open meeting. Smith had sent an email to the Board members suggesting a closed session meeting with Nason to discuss his activities to date and the plans moving forward.

After the email was sent to the Board, Nason resigned. There are questions as to what occurred that would result in his resignation. In his ~~resignation~~ email letter, Nason cited: 1. some members felt uncomfortable giving up authority; 2. he felt he was being setup to be the fall guy for replacing Chief McMillan due to political ramifications; and 3. the suggestion of a closed meeting. Gatlin read a portion of Nason's resignation letter.

Smith feels item 3 was a misunderstanding and noted not all performance evaluations meetings are negative. Smith read an email response back to Nason on the three points mentioned in his letter.

Ulsh wanted to know why Nason was being considered an employee. The actions of the Board at the last meeting were reviewed in regards to hiring of Nason. Ulsh stated he has spoken with Nason and there is more to his resignation than was stated in his letter.

Adams stated the HR Committee has had dialogue with Nason. A meeting with Nason, Mallery, and McMillan is to be rescheduled. Adams moved, seconded by Smith to have the HR Committee reach out to Nason to discuss getting things back on track. Motion carried 6-0. Tomlinson stated the Board wants to understand what the problem is or was. Adams feels it was a misunderstanding.

Update from HR Committee on the Fire Chief Candidate Search

The HR Committee will request the Panel submit a report on the resume review progress.

Smith inquired on his email about changing the venue of future meetings to Brady Township. Since SCEMS wants their key back, it may be easier to hold the meetings elsewhere. This item was tabled until the next meeting.

With there being no further business, Smith adjourned the meeting at 8:01 pm.

Todd Carlin, Secretary

Recorded and typed by Tracy Locey.