



Solon Township Hall
15185 Algoma Avenue NE
Cedar Springs, MI 49319
616-696-1718

**Minutes of the Solon Township Fire Committee (amended #1)
September 09, 2016 meeting 7:00pm**

Meeting called to order by Chairman Mather at 7:00 PM

Members Present: Fire Chief Jeff Drake, Vice Chairman Curt Steinebach*, Chairman Jeff Mather*, Township Trustee Fred Gunnell*, Fire Department Representative Dan Spangenberg, Community Representative Burt Dent*.

Members Absent: Community Representative Don Hamblin* (on vacation)

(* = voting member)

Approval of Agenda: Motion by Curt Steinebach to approve agenda. 2nd by Burt Dent. Motion carried 4-0.

Approval of May 18, 2016 meeting minutes: Motion by Fred Gunnell to approve minutes. 2nd by Curt Steinebach. Motion carried 4-0.

Business:

- 1) Chief Drake reviewed proposal to transfer funds from the Capital fund 406 for purchase of rescue tools. Current tool (jaws of life) are decades old and lack many features available in modern tools including improved speed of rescue, 20v lithium ion battery power with commercially available battery replacement, smaller size, lighter weight.
 - a. Board approved moving forward with a review of tool purchase.
 - b. Captain Gabrielse will be leading a demonstration of different brands of tools on October 12th.
 - c. RFP planned for October, with possibility of ownership by end of year.
- 2) Discussion on code of conduct policy and recent resignations. After review of pros and cons the committee expressed no interest in pursuing rehiring the firefighters who resigned. The primary concern was the safety of other firefighters.
 - a. There was further discussion on the drug and alcohol screening policy. Currently the screening policy includes pre-employment, annual, and possibility of reasonable suspicion. Random and post-accident/injury are not part of the policy currently. No formal training for reasonable suspicion has been provided for officers.
 - b. The committee agreed that the Board should review this matter and deliberate on the benefits of including post-accident/injury and random screening.

- i. Action item: Add drug screening topic to Board agenda for next meeting.
- 3) Discussion on how the new Deputy Chief's position is working out. Chief Drake indicated that Deputy Chief Paige is doing well, taking on new duties, coordinating the upcoming live burn project, conducting firefighter training, and handling many of the day to day duties at the fire house.
 - a. Chief Drake updated us on the progress in transferring some of the administrative duties to the Deputy Chief as was contemplated for this new position. The committee encouraged the Chief to continue coaching the Deputy Chief and delegating as much administrative work as possible to free up time for higher level leadership responsibilities.
- 4) The Chief reported that the vacant Lieutenant position will be posted again in November.
- 5) Discussion on progress of team building initiatives. The Chief reported that there has been ebb and flow in this area due to personnel changes, new hires, resignations, and leave of absence of at least one firefighter who was a strong leader in team-building initiatives. However, there continues to be a routine of various activities that are important for maintaining morale and recognition including: Badge pinning ceremony, firefighter recognition night at the bowling alley, Car bash, Kent City 911 parade, Red Flannel parade, and other team building events.
- 6) Fire Fighter Representative Spangenberg inquired about the status of repairs/lighting for the steps and walkway leading to the rear entrance of the fire house. The Board is in the process of reviewing the cost and plan of action of addressing this concern. No final decision has been made. Currently the parking lot is being resurfaced and solar lights were installed as an interim solution.
- 7) Chief Drake gave recognition to Deputy Chief Paige for the delivery of a 26-week fetus during an emergency response call. Good job Deputy Chief.
- 8) Vice Chairman Curt Steinebach lead a discussion on the current roster of only 17 firefighters. Chief Drake indicated several promising resumes have been received lately and that he will be submitting them to the Board for approval. The committee agreed that the ideal roster count should be in the mid to upper 20's and that there is a need for ongoing activity to solicit new candidates.

Additional public comments:

1. Board Trustee Mark Hoskins followed up on an agenda item from the May 18th Fire Committee meeting related to the purchase of firefighter training and gear for newly hired staff. The Board will be considering a policy for reimbursement or cost sharing when firefighters chose to resign within a certain timeframe or when they are discharged for violation of the code of conduct.

Adjourn: Motion to adjourn and accepted: Time 8:55pm (approx.)

Submitted by: Jeff Mather