

SOLO^N Established in 1857 Township

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

Minutes of the Solon Township Fire Committee May 17, 2017 meeting, 7:00pm (Revised 6/1/2017)

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

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

Members Absent: Vice Chairman Curt Steinebach*, Community Representative Don Hamblin*
(* = voting member)

Approval of Agenda: Motion by Fred Gunnell to approve agenda. 2nd by Don Hamlin. Motion carried 3-0.

Approval of November 30, 2016 meeting minutes: Motion by Fred Gunnell to approve minutes. 2nd by Burt Dent. Motion carried 3-0.

Business:

- 1) Chief Drake commented on item #2 of the November minutes indicating that the roster count goal of mid to upper 20's is not his personal goal, although the Committee did agree to this range at the September 14, 2016 meeting. He contended that a roster count of 25-30 is somewhat irrelevant if there is a large number of inactive firefighters. He indicated that his goal is to have 20 committed and active members.
 - a. Based on previous conversation on this subject, the larger number agreed upon by the Committee reflects the reality that priorities and commitments tend to change over time. Having a larger roster of committed personnel allows for some fluctuation in staffing without effecting call response goals. The Committee deferred to the Chief's knowledge of staffing needs and agreed in theory with the goal of 20 committed members, with the caveat that commitments are variable based on life circumstances. We should strive to continually increase the roster (and commitments) even if the goal is 20.
- 2) Chief Drake gave an update on personnel changes. One firefighter was terminated due to ongoing inactivity (call response). One firefighter resigned due to personal reasons outside the fire department. The Chief is reviewing two applications currently. He indicated that there are three other candidates with MFR certification that are considering joining the department.
- 3) Chairman Mather asked if Chief Drake could include a "Total" line on the "Call Data" table in the Fire Chief's monthly report. The total line would allow for a month-to-month

comparison to better identify trends in call response numbers and overall departmental participation. Chief Drake agreed to make the change on the table.

- 4) The Chief Drake gave a review of the most recent Fire Chief's report.
 - a. Alarms: YTD = 174. 2016 YTD = 119. There was a significant increase in medical and rescue. No specific cause for the increase was identified.
 - b. Mutual aid alarms: Given: 1 YTD. Received: 11 YTD
- 5) (Revised from original) Chairman Mather inquired about the status of the Chief's proposal for a Stand-by Duty program. Per Clerk Paulsen's 5/17 email, the Board considered the motion to implement Stand-by Duty, but the motion failed to pass.
- 6) Discussion on the status of monetary incentive program. FF Rep. Spangenberg said that he felt it is appreciated by the firefighters, but it is not an effective incentive or motivator to respond to more calls. Appears to be more of a recognition bonus than an incentive.
- 7) The Chief reported that they have amended the promotion requirements for the Lieutenants position. No longer need an EMS license.
- 8) Discussion on fire committee involvement in the officer promotion process. The current (recently updated) policy allows the Chief to select a panel of three interviewers at his discretion. There is no requirement for Fire Committee involvement in this process. The committee agreed and acknowledged that the Board of Trustees always has the prerogative to ask the Fire Committee for their involvement if they believe it would be helpful.
- 9) Discussion on long term solution to ongoing staffing concerns. This relates to committee discussions on the 11/19/2015 Shared-Services Study and the pros/cons of various forms of consolidation. The committee agreed to leave this topic open as a standing agenda item for further discussion. All agreed these are options for a longer term solution and necessarily require a significant amount of work, time and commitment by various people/organizations.
- 10) (Revised from original) Discussion on drug/alcohol reasonable suspicion training for officers and FF's. Per Clerk Paulsen's 5/17 email, this topic was discussed at a recent board meeting and a motion to change the policy failed, but the board recognized the need for officer training in the "reasonable suspicion" area. Discussion included the name and cost of an online training opportunity through ARCpoint Labs out of Grand Rapids for \$49. Chairman Mather advised that this is an important aspect of the drug and alcohol program and possibly the new on-line "Target Training" system might also have a training module for this topic. Chief Drake agreed to investigate.
- 11) Discussion on the purchase of a new Tender/pumper. At the last Board meeting the purchase was tabled until the July meeting. The Chief and FF Rep. Spangenberg gave an overview of why the Tender/pumper is needed and the limitations of the apparatus currently used by the department. The committee gave strong support for the purchase of the new equipment. Further discussion with the Supervisor is needed to better understand why the subject was tabled, and to determine what if any reasonable options are available.
- 12) Chief Drake discussed the following:
 - a. The upcoming fundraiser dinner at Big Boy on May 31st to raise funds for an automatic chest compression device.

- b. Board approval of the purchase of the “Target Solutions” online training system that will allow firefighter to receive (some) training online.
- c. Overview of the recent NFPA 1403 live burn exercise on White Creek. Eight surrounding departments participated in the event and four sent equipment to assist in the exercise.
- d. Overview of the recent F.D Instructor conference attended by the Chief and one other Solon Township FF. Chief Drake indicated this was an excellent event which included various workshops and training sessions.
- e. Cedar Springs was added to the MABAS for rescue calls only.

Correspondence:

- 1) None

Additional public comments:

- 1) None

Adjourn: Motion to adjourn and accepted: Time 8:30pm

Submitted by: Jeff Mather