



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

**Minutes of the Solon Township Fire Committee
December 11, 2017 meeting, 7:30pm**

Meeting called to order by Chairman Mather at 7:30 PM

Roll Call: (* = voting member).

1. Fire Chief Jeff Drake, Fire Department Taylor Hunt. Vice Chairman Curt Steinebach*, Chairman Jeff Mather*, Township Trustee Fred Gunnell*, Community Representative Burt Dent*, Community Representative Rick Vargo*.

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

Approval of December 11, 2017 meeting minutes: Motion by Rick Vargo to approve minutes. 2nd by Curt Steinebach. Motion carried 4-0.

Business:

- 1) Chief Drake gave an update on personnel changes. The current roster includes 15 firefighters. There were 2 resumes being considered and 4 additional inquires. Chief Drake indicated that overall participation by firefighters is good and the general direction is favorable. The participation rates were 28.3 (medical), and 31.3 (non-medical).
- 2) Discussion on status of the stand-by-duty proposal which failed to pass the Board. There were a variety of reason why the proposal did not pass including additional cost (estimate of \$20,000/yr), and the recently installed incentive program was designed to take its place (estimate of \$2,000/yr). There were comments that the fire fighters were all in favor of and looking forward to the stand-by-duty option. The committee discussed pros and cons of having firefighters take the vehicle (Solon Township Fire SUV) home at night and that this is considered a status/prestige perk and would be an incentive to participate in stand-by duty.
 - a. **Action:** Committee to review this topic at next committee meeting and determine if further deliberation is warranted.
- 3) Discussion on the prospect of consolidation of the department with Cedar Springs and/or some variation on expanded shared-services. There was unanimous agreement among committee members that this is a logical path to explore, but also difficult to gain alignment and commitments due to the politically sensitive aspects. We agreed to continue consideration of the positive/negative consequences of consolidation and acknowledged that moving this forward will require alignment and leadership from elected officials from both municipalities. Currently, this does not appear to be a high priority for either.

- a. **Action:** Committee to keep this topic on agenda. Continue to better understand positive/negative aspects of consolidation and begin to develop a position on if/how the Board should pursue any further variation(s) of expanded shared services.
- 4) Lieutenant position (open): There are currently no candidates that meet the qualifications for this position yet.
- 5) Consensus budget: There is currently no capital budget for the fire department. The budgeting process includes apparatus only. All other expenditures and budgeting exercises are handled on a case by case basis (i.e., as needed). The Chief indicated that he would prefer having a capital budget that is approved by the Board. The committee was in agreement that the fire department should have a capital budget approved by the Board.
 - a. **Action** item: This should be discussed by the Board for resolution.
- 6) Discussion on having television available in the fire house. Currently there is no cable TV. The Chief would like to have cable TV available, so firefighters are encouraged to spend time at the fire house. The benefits would be quicker response times because firefighters are immediately available; improved comradery, more social interaction among members. We discussed that some of the internet devices (Roku, Apple TV, etc.) do not have sports channels available for free, so those options may not be the best. The committee was in support of the fire department having cable TV.
 - a. **Action:** This should be discussed by the Board for resolution.
- 7) Discussion on the fire Chief and Deputy Chief receiving a stipend for the business use of their cell phone. There were various opinions on this subject. Some thought there should be a stipend since they use the phones for Township business (i.e., receiving calls, making calls, GPS, directions, etc.). Other felt that cell phones are like watches... people own them already and using them for business does not impose reimbursable wear and tear on the device. We noted that the Township Supervisor receives a \$25/month stipend for the business use of his cell phone. At the end of the discussion all committee members agreed that a stipend is warranted to pay for the added responsibility of answering their personal phones (often on personal time) for business purposes.
 - a. **Action:** This should be discussed by the Board for resolution. Note: The Board members present indicated that the Chief has discretion on making purchases of this nature on his own. The Chief indicated that he would like the Board to approve this so there is no question about the validity/acceptability of the expense.
- 8) The Chief reported on the new chest compression device that was funded in part by the fundraiser dinner (Big Boy) and other donations totaling approximately \$5000. The device went into service the previous Monday.

Correspondence:

- 1) None

Additional public comments:

- 1) None

Adjourn: Motion to adjourn and accepted: Time 9:45pm

Submitted by: Jeff Mather