

NMFR Joint Finance & Personnel Committee Meeting
September 24, 2019 – 5:30 p.m.
Hauser Room – City of Neenah

Present: Ald. Stevenson, Grade, Kunz, Sevenich, Ropella and Boyette

Also Present: Chief Kloehn, Director Jacobs, Assistant Director Kahl and MA Ellis

Public: Garrett Gee, Al Wroblewski, John Pack, Josh Boelk, Mayor Merkes, Mike Novy, Jim Dunbar and Pete Anderson

Ald. Sevenich called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Public Forum: No members of the public chose to speak.

Meeting Minutes: The Committee reviewed the minutes from July 23, 2019. **MSC Grade/Boyette to approve the July 23, 2019, all voting aye.**

Activity and Mutual Aid Report: The Committee reviewed the August activity and automatic aid reports. Ald. Boyette asked if complex EMS calls are sorted out differently on the report. Chief Kloehn noted those are listed as 311A, advanced skills on the report. Ald. Boyette asked if there is a new policy in place for administering Narcan. Chief Kloehn said we did change our policy on administering Narcan. **MSC Stevenson/Boyette to approve the August activity and mutual aid reports, and place on file, all voting aye.**

Review of Average Amount of Time on Calls: Chief Kloehn noted at the July meeting a request was made to provide information on the average amount of time that is spent on calls. The Committee reviewed the average of amount of time on EMS calls and all other calls which was also broken out by each City. Ald. Kunz asked how we would handle EMS calls that come in if we were tied up at a structure fire in both Cities. Chief Kloehn explained how calls are handled with our department, use of mutual aid through box alarms, etc. Depending upon the type of call (i.e. "B" not emergent) we could have GCA handle this and not respond. Ald. Stevenson asked if the data provided is the same data that is used for the cost distribution formula. Chief Kloehn said yes. Ald. Stevenson said if we continue on this trend it appears that service calls have increased and this will affect the cost distribution formula for future budget formulas.

Review of Alternative Vehicle Response: Chief Kloehn noted at the July meeting a request was made to provide the alternative vehicle response information that was provided to this committee a few years ago. The Committee reviewed the information from 2014 along with some updated information that was obtained from Grand Chute. The only do this when they are fully staffed. Green Bay was looking at doing this but had concerns with potential work comp claims with going from 3-4 engine companies to 2 person responses with EMS calls. Ald. Kunz asked if we had this model and were on an EMS call what would happen if a structure fire came in. Chief Kloehn said if it's an EMS incident we can't leave we would go to the MABAS system to call for additional resources. This may mean longer responses times

depending upon where the other vehicles are coming from. Ald. Kunz said there appears to be a slight disadvantage if this was in place if we were on an EMS call and another call came in.

Review of Preliminary 2020 Budget: The Committee reviewed the preliminary 2020 budget. Chief Kloehn noted he had one preliminary meeting with Mayor Kaufert and Director Easker. There have not been any other meetings yet. The next step is to meet with both Mayors and Finance Directors. Director Easker called Chief Kloehn today and said we need to remove \$150,000 from the budget. Ald. Grade noted the year-to-date numbers listed on the spreadsheet January 1st was through June 30th. The total budget increase request was 4.92% and of this 3% is salary increases. Ald. Kunz said he doesn't mind reviewing the budget at this meeting just in case the Mayors don't agree the Committee is the tie breaker. He feels the overtime budget should be reduced from the \$160,000 increase to \$130,000. With Act 10 in place it still allows the union to negotiate raises and both Cities can't continue to afford it. He also said the overall supplies budget should be looked at. Ald. Grade asked if overtime was also affected by retirements with staffing. Chief Kloehn said depending upon the time of year there is a retirement and if someone is not trained it could happen. This is why they try to hire ahead. Director Jacobs handed out information that shows how the 4.92% increase impacts both Cities. Menasha's levy limit can only increase by \$75,000 and NMFR's budget request is \$180,000. Neenah is \$130,000 total increase. He ran numbers for cutting the budget and the impact by both communities. This is just expenditures and not revenues. Ald. Kunz said it's nice but the reality is a majority of the increase is a 3 % increase in salaries. Ald. Ropella asked if we can cut salaries. Ald. Stevenson said we cannot for the unions but each city can for non-represented employees if that's the direction they wish to go. Ald. Stevenson said the information is great and the input is good. Ald. Kunz said he has concerns with Squad 32's replacing parts and pieces of a machine and not the entire vehicle as it can lead to spending more money. We are in better shape with borrowing versus levy limits.

Automatic Aid Update with Appleton Fire Department: Chief Kloehn did contact Sheriff Matz and he would be willing to come to this meeting and speak to the group. They are having a hard time with getting both systems to talk to each other and isn't sure it will happen. He said on Motorola's end if there are any issues that needs to be fixed it's done right away. Spielman handles it by having a ticket opened up and they work on it when they get to it. Ald. Stevenson asked if any of the vendors is owed any money yet. Chief Kloehn didn't know. Ald. Kunz said he can also ask Tom Nelson to come to this meeting and hear our concerns. Not having the same system is impacting a lot of people. This also impacts us with working with any other departments that are in Outagamie County. The Committee requested Sheriff Matz, Chief Hansen and Tom Nelson to come to the next meeting to speak to the group.

Automatic Aid with Fox Crossing Fire Department: Chief Kloehn did send it to both agreements to both City Attorneys to review. The discussion of the sunset, removal of EMS, etc. were not in these agreements. Assistant CA Vandenhuevel didn't have any issues with this. He has not heard back from CA Captain. The Committee discussed having a step plan in place and Fox Crossing Fire Department is in favor of this. In looking at our current budget both Cities cannot continue afford this and we have to come up with other options to fund our budget. This is the first step to start things slow and see if there's a way in the future. He is looking at alternatives now and doesn't want to go down the road of

getting rid of staff. He's been told this current budget model doesn't work and he wants to do the right thing for our two cities.

Ald. Stevenson asked where we are at from the last meeting to this meeting. This sounds like this is just an update. He feels a step agreement would be great as this defines the process and expectations. There should be an end date to this agreement so we can review the data. Chief Kloehn noted that Fox Crossing Fire Department received a SAFER grant. He explained this is a grant that helps with adding staffing and it's a one-time thing. At the end of the three year grant, Fox Crossing will have to pay for the full cost to maintain the additional staff. Additional staffing will give them 24-hour coverage from Friday evening through Monday morning. Ald. Kunz said he feels there are a lot of conversations going on by people and he doesn't know about it. He hasn't seen any projections on what our budget will look like in 5 years. He feels there is something is going on behind the scenes that the committee needs to know about. Questions need to be answered such as would this new arrangement benefit us by reducing costs? Is there a measurable way? Is there anyone who gets more than another? We shouldn't give anyone else a better advantage than us. What is the long term economic issues?

Ald. Ropella said 95% of our costs are fixed costs. The fire department will look different in 3-4 years. Maybe we should go to only 8 or 12 hours shifts now and not have 24 hour shifts. Maybe we should go down to Fox Crossing's level of paid on call and we can do stuff with them. Chief Kloehn said he is not in favor of doing this. This doesn't benefit both Cities. It's not going to be too far off where they will be 24/7/365 just like this. He said this started with the Fire Chief's having a conversation and looking at the future of what each department will face for funding, staffing, etc. The Chiefs can only talk and can't make changes. The next conversation that was had was with all four Cities' Mayors and they were in favor of looking at this. The cost of doing business isn't getting cheaper and he believes the right thing to do is a regional department. The first step in this process is automatic aid where we can look at each other's staffing, equipment, bring extra firefighters to the scene, etc. We can look at the statistics and go from there. Ald. Sevenich said there is always an issue with borders and doesn't want to do this. Ald. Kunz said he is excited that this conversation is being held and we are looking at this. It will give us a bigger advantage to say to other communities if they don't want to join with us they are on their own. Tell them what the issues are and why there needs to be changes. Ald. Boyette doesn't want us to be the lead on training them if they are not equivalent as us and doesn't want to pay for this. The Committee directed Directors Easker and Jacobs do a five year project on what the budget will look like, in years, with retirements, increases, etc. and bring this back to the committee to review.

Jacobs said CA Captain shared with him that she reviewed the agreement. She felt there is exposure for risk the employees of NMFR to handle the situation and with Appleton it's the same. She also said State Statute 66.03125 has information in there about mutual aid reimbursement for personnel and equipment costs that can be billed to the requestor of the services. There could be a funding method for this agreement. Ald. Stevenson said CAP Captain needs to share this information with Chief Kloehn.

Ald. Stevenson left the meeting at 6:45 p.m.

MSC Boyette/Grade to adjourn at 6:46 p.m., all voting aye.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tara A. Ellis

Tara Ellis
Management Assistant