

Joint Meeting Minutes
NMFR Joint Finance & Personnel
and
Joint Fire Commission
August 27, 2024 – 4:00 p.m.
NMFR Training Center

Call to Order and Roll Call:

Ald. Boyette called the NMFR Joint Finance & Personnel meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

Commissioner Keating called the Joint Fire Commission meeting to order at 4:01 p.m.

Roll Call of Joint Finance & Personnel: Boyette, Sevenich, Borchardt, Grade, Pollnow and Marshall

Roll Call of Joint Fire Commission: Keating, Englebert, Kubiak and Lewis

Excused: Commissioners Keehan and Brehmer

Also Present: Chief Teesch, DC Krueger, Director Fairchild, Director Sassman, Director Rasmussen and MA Ellis

Public: Tyler Hillen, Evan Forster, DuWayne Schwartz, Alec Hopfensperger, Garrett Gee and Adam Lemke

Review of Responsibilities of each Body: Chief Teesch reviewed the responsibilities of each of our governing bodies. NMFR's Joint Finance oversees budgetary items. Joint Commission oversees hiring, promotions, discipline and discharge of staff.

Ald. Pollnow asked Director Rasmussen about Section 4, item b of the merger agreement, if this continues to be followed and reviewed annually. Director Rasmussen said it's reviewed annually and charged back annually to each city via the cost distribution formula. She will let Ald. Pollnow know what 2024's rates are. Chief Teesch noted this will be in the upcoming budget presentation at the September meeting will show what the cost is.

2025 Strategic Goals and Economic Impact: Chief Teesch reviewed his 2025 strategic goals for the department, emphasizing that since NMFR is a merged department we have a larger operational need than if each city maintained its own fire service independently. The combined population requires a greater capacity for emergency response, equipment, and personnel to effectively cover a wider area and address the needs of both communities. However, this consolidation also brings financial efficiencies and cost savings. By sharing resources, training, and infrastructure, the merged department reduces redundant expenses, allowing both cities to benefit from enhanced service capabilities while minimizing the overall cost burden on taxpayers.

Discussion was held on current staffing levels. Ald. Sevenich said there are several parameters that should be looked at and not just population. There have been issues with overtime, but this has been worked on. He appreciates the strides the department has made with hiring ahead of retirements get staff trained before retirements happen, which helps reduce overtime. Ald. Grade he has some concern on increasing staffing, and we cannot go down that road until a study is done. Chief Teesch explained he wanted both governing bodies to hear it now versus when something bad happens. He knows there is a lot of work to do to look at many things. Ald. Borchardt asked what his 5- or 10-year plan is going forward. From a budgetary perspective he likes his analogy because certain decisions do affect other things within the budget. Chief Teesch said his vision is accreditation for officers and for the department. He sees that putting us ahead of the game. Right now, there is momentum with departments within the State to either consolidate or create fire districts. We are ahead of this trend being

consolidated. He will be sitting down with both Mayors and Finance Directors before he meets with the Joint Finance Committee in September. He's looking for ways to save money within the budget to begin the accreditation process.

Discussion was held on the current compression issue between administrative staff and the union staff they are supervising. Ald. Pollnow said it sounds like we are a little early with compression issue, job descriptions, etc. He confirmed this and this is an awareness of this issue.

Discussion was held on completing an in-house study versus hiring an outside agency to complete this. Director Fairchild confirmed there is a policy in the City of Neenah to complete a market analysis every three years with an outside agency. The next one is scheduled in 2025. This process is budgeted. However, if a separate one is done for fire with an outside agency it doesn't align with what is done for the rest of the city.

Commissioner Englebert said at the last Fire Commission meeting they were reviewing the job description on the open position. When discussing the educational requirements, they would like to move to a bachelor's degree and/or so many years of experience. However, they felt it would be hard to find qualified people if they changed the educational requirements without an increase of pay. They were in a position looking for someone with higher credentials without the pay. If they can get the pay improved, they can change the educational requirements.

A discussion was held by all on the affect of changing one position and the ripple affect it would have for other staff members in that same pay classification and what that does for other administrative staff. Commissioner Keating said that's where they were a bit stuck on how to do this with how people who are still here and leap frogging a new hire over someone who is already in the same pay scale. They felt they needed a conversation with the Finance Committee before things were changed.

Discussion was held on the compression issue. Ald. Pollnow said when he was on the council last there was also one with the police department and changes were made to fix this. Ald. Pollnow asked how we rectify this. Director Fairchild said administrative staff does work 1950 hours versus line staff working 2912 hours. They do need to look at what they are being paid for the time they are working. Chief Teesch confirmed administrative staff is scheduled to work 37.5 hours per week. However, they always work more than that. The current vacant assistant chief position always works the 4th of July for the activities scheduled in both cities. Administrative staff members do work outside of scheduled hours on a regular basis due to the nature of the department providing full-time service. Right now, the vacant assistant chief position would start out making less than staff members they would be supervising. When this was brought to his attention, he started to look for ways on how we can try to fix this.

Discussion was held on making motions and recommendations. Chief Teesch said they could make a recommendation if that is the direction they wanted to go. This discussion came out with having the meetings from two different bodies on different dates. Fire Commission was hesitant on changing things unless the pay may be equal with it. The joint meeting idea came about to have both bodies to discuss the issue at the same time. Everyone agreed the best direction was to have Director Fairchild complete the study after her training in September with Carlson Dettmer. **MSC Sevenich/Grade recommend both councils to direct NMFR staff and Director Fairchild to complete an in-house comprehensive position classification study for NMFR Administrative non-union positions.**

Report

Discussion was held how this would be completed with a vacant position that has been advertised and current applicants. Director Fairchild said we cannot change the job description at this time since it's posted with specific educational requirements. However, a good starting point is to look at both Assistant Chief positions and go from

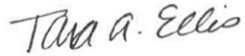
there. They all agreed on this and to have the market analysis done of the position during the normal scheduled time frame the City of Neenah has for this. The Commission will not make any job description changes for the assistant chief positions until this has been completed by Director Fairchild. She was asked if she felt she had staffing to complete this yet in 2024. She confirmed she could after her training on September 25th.

Boyette, Sevenich, Borchardt, Grade, Marshall voting aye and Pollnow voting nay.

MSC Sevenich/Pollnow to adjourn at 5:05 p.m., all voting aye.

MSC Englebert/Lewis to adjourn at 5:05 p.m., all voting aye.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tara A. Ellis".

Tara Ellis

Management Assistant