

2016 Avon Fire Board Meeting Minutes

After due call and notice thereof, a Fire Board Meeting of the Avon Fire Department (AFD) was duly held at Avon City Hall on the 17th day of February 2016 at 7:00 p.m.

THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS WERE PRESENT:

Hugh Knox – Mayor, City of Avon

Joel Richter – Chief, AFD

Gary Schmitz – Treasurer, AFD

Adam Pogatschnik – Assistant Chief, AFD

Casey Jansky – AFD

Russ Panek – AFD

Steve Webber – AFD

Chris Pflueger - AFD

John Merdan – Avon Township

Roger Nelson – Avon Township

Richard Bresnahan – Avon Township

Bob Simmon – Collegville Township

Craig Guggenberger – Collegeville

Rick Thompson – Collegeville Township

Jim Thares - City Clerk-Administrator

Fire Board Meeting Minutes

Motion by John Merdan to approve the 2015 Annual Fire Board Meeting minutes. Second by Bob Simmon. Motion passed unanimously.

Avon Fire Relief Association: Gary Schmitz reviewed the Relief Association financial report. The current bond market investment returns have been good for the Association's portfolio. There has been one recent retirement, Gene Kostreba. His retirement payout is already factored into the report that shows a balance of \$50,000 in available liquid funds. The donation account is also in great shape. The Relief Association would like to request the annual retirement credit amount per year of service be increased to \$2,000. It is currently at \$1,800. Increasing it may be an incentive for young people to join the Fire Department. The payout for other nearby cities varies although it is closely tied to call volume. In 2015, the AFD responded to 151 calls. The members sacrifice a lot of time in training and responding to calls. **Motion by Bob Simmon to increase the Fire Relief Pension Association annual retirement credit amount to \$2,000. Second by John Merdan. Motion passed unanimously.**

Fire Service Contract: Richard Bresnahan asked if the contract invoice for service payment could be broken into a first half and second installment payment; June, 1 and December 1. This would help the Township significantly as they receive delayed settlement payments from Stearns County. City Clerk-Administrator Thares and Mayor Knox said this request would need to go to the City Council for consideration as it would mean amending the contract language which calls for full payment by June 1.

Joint Powers Agreement:

Bob Simmon suggested that a structure utilizing a Joint Powers Board (JPB) be more seriously considered. He feels that since the Townships are paying for the bulk of the Department's operating costs (65 percent) they would like to have a little more say in the governance of the Department. The AFD could be a better organization with nicer facilities and equipment under a stable, broad based governance and ownership structure. The Chain-O-Lakes Joint Powers Agreement was cited as an example. Discussion by members ensued with examples of governing board membership offered as key negotiating points. Mayor Knox indicated the City Council would need to weigh in with its opinion. Fire Chief Joel Richter suggested that the JPB concept could be introduced at the April Council meeting for feedback. He would also be able to attend the Township Annual Board meetings to update the Township attendees on the Department's status and activities. The Township members feel this is helpful. The current territory covered by the AFD is 96 square miles. This is fairly large.

The small additional service area in St. Wendel Township is governed under a separate contract. City Clerk-Administrator Thares explained that it is a multi-year contract with an initial billing rate of \$600 per year with automatic step ups in the out-years

Projects and Purchases: Purchases in 2015 include a Dodge Brush Truck, a laptop and mini personal computer, SCBA Head Straps and SCBA High Temperature Lamp. A total of \$58,201 was spent on capital items. A new heater was installed in the Fire Hall as well. The 2015 FEMA grant is still pending and if awarded it will help pay for new turnout gear. The cost of new gear is \$2,800 per member. The “I Am Responding” software was also purchased. It is very helpful. Efforts continue to get the County to acknowledge and synchronize with this software. Proposed purchases and projects for 2016 include: new fire hose, turn-out gear, winter hats, cabinets in lunch room as well as other items.

Gary Schmitz reviewed the 2016 depreciation schedule. Joel said that the Pumper Truck will not be replaced until there is a new Fire Hall building as there is not currently room for a modern vehicle. Members agreed that identifying an appropriate site for a new Fire Hall is the very first step in this process.

Membership:

There are currently 22 fully trained members. Two (2) new members are in training at this time. There are also two (2) members who have 20+ years of service.

Fundraisers:

The annual fundraisers consist of the Blattner Charitable Golf Tournament, the Spunk Days Raffle and the Calendar Ads.

Billing/Calls/Financial Report:

Chief Richter pointed out that the billing rate of \$12.00 per hour for non-local calls is lower than the cost of providing the fire protection service. He suggested that the bill rate should be \$20.00 per hour or higher. **Motion by Richard Bresnahan to increase the billing rate to \$25.00 per hour effective immediately. Second by Craig Guggenberger. Motion passed unanimously.**

There were 151 calls in 2015. This is down from 2014 when there were 174 calls. So far in 2016, the pace is indicating an increase over 2015. The 2015 call hours totaled 2,014. The average hours per call is equal to 13 (meaning 13 members responded). The breakdown is as follows:

Avon City = 43 (495 hours)
Collegeville Twp. = 27 (358 hours)
Avon Twp. = 62 (750 hours)
I-94 = 13 (170 hours)
Mutual Aid = 6 (241 hours)

The 2015 budget was reviewed by Gary with the amount spent on the building noted at \$6,204.67. The combined operating cost for fire and emergency call response during the 2015 calendar year was \$107,603 versus a budgeted amount of \$112,000. The 2016 service billing breaks out as follows:

Avon City	\$47,050 (33.31 % of total service billing)
Avon Township	\$59,117 (41.86 % of total service billing)
Collegeville Township	\$35,068 (24.83 % of total service billing)

The Fire Department revenue sources were also reviewed along with the investments (CDs). The total capital account dollars as of the end of 2015 is \$464,368.22. It was also noted that a total of \$63,000 is set aside in the building fund for a new Fire Hall.

**Motion by John Merdan to adjourn the meeting at 8:35 p.m. Second by Craig Guggenberger.
Motion passed unanimously.**

Respectfully Submitted
Jim Thares, City Clerk-Administrator