

<p style="text-align: center;">YANKEE SPRINGS TOWNSHIP Special Meeting Board of Trustees @ 1:00 PM Fire Services Work Session</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Tuesday, April 14, 2015 Yankee Springs Township Hall 284 North Briggs Road, Middleville, Michigan 49333</p> <p style="text-align: center;">MINUTES</p>	<p>FINAL MINUTES Approved as presented May `4, 2015</p>
<p>Meeting called to order at 1:00 PM by Chairman Mark Englerth.</p> <p><u>Roll Call:</u> <u>All Present:</u> Jerkatis, Lippert, Englerth, Rottschafer, Campbell</p> <p>PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE Staff Present: Alice Jansma, Mike Cunningham, Paul Heystek, Jim Orr- Constable, Frank Fiala; Paul Heystek</p> <p>Others Present: Vivian Conner (Barry County Commissioner)</p>	<p>CALL TO ORDER</p> <p>ROLL CALL</p> <p>PLEDGE</p>
<p>DISCUSSION:</p> <p>Initial discussion began on ISO ratings. Some board members commented on their individual insurance situations regarding ISO. Lippert requested ISO Report that is completed by the fire chief (from Thornapple).</p> <p>Fire Services Contract Renewal: At this time it was brought up that there should be a committee (outside of the board) to look at fire service, what the township is paying for, and what the township is getting for its payment. It was noted that in the past, Al McCrumb and Jack Finkbeiner would look through the contract.</p> <p>John Jerkatis commented on his thoughts, and distributed a written copy of these thoughts to those in attendance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jerkatis commented the prime concern in the township and for the township government should be for the health, safety, and welfare of the people and protection of property. <p>Discussion followed regarding comments of Jerkatis.</p> <p>Englerth commented that he made a comment to R. Rottschafer that the board would come up with a solution and move on. Englerth also commented on a recent conversation with B. Campbell about talking with each of the volunteers.</p> <p>Discussion. If a committee is formed, the committee could speak with the volunteers rather than the board.</p> <p>PUBLIC COMMENT: Paul Heystek, of the Planning Commission commented that he spoke with another member who suggested a Fire Committee or someone in charge that Thorn apple Township could answer to if there is an incident that is unacceptable.</p>	<p>DISCUSSION</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 1 of 5 YST Bd. Of Trustees/Fire Discussion 4/14/15</p>

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mike Cunningham, of the Planning Commission commented that three or four years ago, he never heard anything about the fire service problems. In his opinion, this situation was not with the people of the township thinking that they were in danger or they weren't paying enough for fire protection, it was working fine three or four years ago and now it is not. A split responsibility will not work well. (One group owning the fire barn and one group providing the fire protection). Everything should be given to Thornapple, make them responsible for everything; and buy the service from them (Thornapple). There wouldn't be an issue in finger pointing. More volunteer firefighters are needed, it is not happening. The response time seems to be adequate, Chief Middleton has stated that the township's response time is good. If the Township does a new contract, it would take "60 to 90 days to cancel the contract". He questioned if the township would really be able to replace the contract in 90 days, and suggested putting at least a year for this in the contract.

John Jerkatis commented on having to improve response time. Jerkatis cited incidents where garages or homes in the township have burned down, and two lives were lost. Jerkatis feels the commission would be a step toward determining if response are 8 to 12 minutes or in reality are 20 to 30 minutes. The commission would be assigned the responsibility to identify that, according to Jerkatis.

Mike Cunningham: The township has a fire chief who said the response time is a certain amount. Commissions cost money. The commission will then study whether Middleton is wrong or right.

Discussion between Cunningham and Rottschafer regarding the fire station analysis and ISO rating.

Cunningham commented that at the last meeting (re: April 1st) there were quite a few people in the room. His consensus from that was the audience was in favor of Option #1, or #2; certainly not #3.

A board member comment was made late during that meeting which was, "We (the board) need more input." Cunningham's impression was that the board didn't like that opinion (of group at last meeting) and it was going to look around for more.

Jim Orr, Yankee Springs Constable, commented that he had spent 28 years as a law enforcement officer in Barry County. His department worked with all the fire departments in the county, and surrounding departments. Middleville was one of the best that they worked with. Orr feels what the 3-person board is probably the right way to go. He feels that the board has to allow the board to "do it" and report back to the board, and the board can comment to them (the 3-person board). This will take time.

He commented working with volunteers, these volunteers were not reimbursed. Volunteers must be treated right.

Frank Fiala, Planning Commission Chairman, commented that it seems to him that the odds of using, or of any individual unit ever needing fire suppression or ever needing life saving, are really minimal; a small percent of the population. Somehow the township should be able to optimize this fact and take advantage of this. He questioned the response time. Is it the time from when someone makes a call and someone gets on site?

Jerkatis commented that response time was from the time the call goes in until the capacity to deal with the emergency is on site. (Not just one person in a fire truck, or an ambulance without an EMT inside of it).

Fiala added that regarding EMS service versus fire suppression (in which many people have insurance for their structures), he would differentiate between these services. He felt there was some revenue involved with the medical emergency, it would be nice to understand what the revenue stream and expense stream looks like and even if someone chooses to merge those two together, (like in Kalamazoo and Grand Rapids) what those advantages are and the role it plays. Response time for life saving situations is really important.

Alice Jansma, Deputy Treasurer, historically, the reason this even got started was the DNR took their fire equipment away from Yankee Springs. It was always meant to be a satellite fire situation, but the township got larger and larger, and now we are dealing with something that we can't control. Jansma referred to Dr. Harvey's report, not everyone agreed with the report. Maybe if the township gets an expert, maybe it should listen to him.

R. Rottschafner, commented "You're either in the fire business or you're not." With the ISO situation, the township is not in the fire business by D. Middleton's standards or ISO standards. By adding another mill on and justifying the ISO issue, it is a costly proposition to do without it (fire barn). Right now the township is doing without it. If the township weighs in on the ISO matter, with \$100 or \$200 a household, it would be a lot of money and John's (Jerkatis) proposal would be cheaper.

Rottschafner didn't feel that it was possible to get more volunteers. Firefighters are paid on call. He supports the 3-person commission that is proposed.

Alice Jansma commented the Fire contract of 2008, referring to #11, the only difference was the insurance. Someone commented earlier that the contract was really changed. It has not.

Vivian Conner commented that new staff looks at things with a new set of eyes. New members on the board may see things differently than previous board members did. Conner offered a suggestion commenting on Prairieville (Twp.) pulling out of BPH three years ago. Now they are a stand-alone. Conner felt maybe Prairieville should be looked at.

OTHER BOARD DISCUSSION:

Englerth mentioned a recent medical emergency occurring near Devil's Soup Bowl.

Jerkatis asked if the board could be polled regarding the forming of a 3-person board.

* (The board approved the forming of the board by consensus).

Jerkatis suggested as goals of next Tuesday's meeting would be noting items that the 3-person board would be responsible for, who they (new 3 person board) would answer to, if additional staff will be needed, who this additional staff will answer to, looking into the contract, making suggestions to line items in the contract, etc. Jerkatis asked that everyone come back with ideas for the new 3-person board at the next meeting (April 21st).

Englerth commented that the only thing that needs to be added to Jerkatis' suggestion was what the township was going to do in the interim.

PUBLIC COMMENT:
continued

**OTHER BOARD
DISCUSSION**

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Jerkatis felt that Englerth's interim question would be better addressed after the board shares their thoughts regarding the formation of the (3-person board).

Jan Lippert commented that she wanted to find out from Thornapple about the 12% increase over last year. Discussion occurred about payroll costs of personnel and insurance benefits.

Fiala commented that Dr. Harvey was paid to give advice regarding fire protection, and that Roger Rottschafer was one of the finest analysts that the township has around digging into this situation. He wondered what a group would do (that was appointed) compared to elected people that have responsibility and get paid for their job versus volunteers. Fiala asked what this group could do that the board (elected officials) couldn't do.

Jerkatis commented on what he felt this newly appointed board would do. He felt that it was too important to put an additional duty onto board members.

Fiala felt that it would be a very challenging job for an ad hoc group to come up with the necessary information and present it in a formal proposal.

Rottschafer commented what Dr. Harvey recommended and what he recommended was not liked, so what the 3-person board presents might not be liked either.

Jerkatis asked those in attendance to look at the map and envision the liability of property and life in the three mile radius around each one of the fire stations, as compared to the liability of property and life around our (YS) fire station and what we have to protect it. Discussion.

Fire department vs. fire station. Jerkatis commented that he felt they were moving in the direction of full-time protection.

CLOSING COMMENTS:

Jerkatis would like to have formally assigned responsibilities and objectives before the next meeting.

Lippert the next meeting will be April 21st at 3 p.m.

Rottschafer If anyone's intent is to make Yankee Springs full-time (fire protection), it is not the fire board's decision, but it is the peoples' vote decision. His proposal to shut the fire barn down based on its cost and ISO wasn't a part of it, it was something that enough people were here the other night to hear.

Several people called Rottschafer and wondered why his recommendation got kicked down the street.

Regarding making a substation to a full fire department, it isn't going to be a fire authority's job to make that decision whether to do it or not. It will have to be voted on and how it will be paid for. Rottschafer added that there is a big difference in looking at \$100,000 savings versus potentially \$300,000 to man full-time protection around the clock.

**A question was posed to Rottschafer. "You're going to look at full-time to cover two to three fires a year?"*

Englerth commented that full-time wasn't an option put out today. Englerth felt the discussion was positive.

CLOSING BOARD COMMENTS

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**Continued Board
Closing Comments**

Englerth mentioned the demographics on the map. He commented on Orangeville, Wayland, and Thornapple “districts” covering Yankee Springs. Englerth mentioned the option of choosing that the fire barn no longer functions as an emergency service center, and looking at Irving Township who already does this. Irving gets support from Freeport, Birch, and Thornapple. We cannot put a dollar or sense value on a life or a response time, but on the other hand, dollars mean something, and it isn’t like we are running 24/7, so would it make sense to entertain having Wayland, and Orangeville, and ask “What would this look like if we dissected this (YS) three different ways?”

Rottschafer spoke with the Wayland Fire Chief regarding Englerth’s question of dissecting the township (3 different ways). Rottschafer mentioned the City of Hastings not even having their own fire department.

Rottschafer didn’t understand how Yankee Springs would need one.

Jerkatis commented on seeing how Orangeville Township’s fire department works. He would like to glean information from successful fire department’s such as Orangeville, and Wayland, and what they went through.

Campbell commented on seeing camaraderie among volunteers at Orangeville.

Englerth felt that this was a good discussion, great conversation and great input took place at this meeting.

J. Lippert in reviewing the 911 report, an ambulance call went to Yankee Springs Township Park from Wayland Ambulance (responded); another call; Wayland Ambulance responds to Patterson and Bass Rd... majority of these calls are in the radius area of Wayland responding to ambulance calls.

ADJOURNMENT: Motion by Rottschafer with support from Lippert to adjourn at 2:58 p.m. All ayes. MOTION CARRIED.

Respectfully submitted:
Deb Mousseau, 4-23-15

Janice C. Lippert, Clerk.
draft copy 4-30-15

Approved: May 14, 2015

Fire Services Special Meeting Board of Trustees

Work Session Discussion:

Board Comments

Public comments

NO BOARD ACTIONS

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