

<p style="text-align: center;"> YANKEE SPRINGS TOWNSHIP <u>BOARD OF TRUSTEES</u> <u>Special Board Meeting of</u> <u>Yankee Springs Twp., City of Wayland & Wayland Twp.</u> <u>Thursday, August 13, 2015</u> 6:00 p.m. Yankee Springs Township Hall 284 North Briggs Road, Middleville, Michigan 49333 MINUTES </p>	<p> FINAL MINUTES 8-19-15 Distributed Attach Emergency Service Authority Hand out </p>
<p> <u>Meeting called to order at 6:10 PM by M. Englerth</u> <u>PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:</u> <u>Roll Call:</u> Jerkatis, J. Lippert, Englerth, Rottschafer, Campbell. (All Present) <u>YS Staff Present:</u> Frank Fiala, Alice Jansma, Jim Orr, Constable, Greg Purcell, Rich Beukema, Sandy Marcukaitis. <u>Guest Speaker:</u> Dr. Lynn Harvey, Ph.D. <u>Wayland Township Board Roll Call:</u> Present: Roger Van Volkinburg (Supervisor) <u>City of Wayland City Council Roll Call:</u> Mike Selden (City Manager) Present: Tim Bala, (Mayor) City Council Members present: Rick Mathis <u>TTES Fire Chief – David Middleton</u> <u>Wayland Fire Chief – Joe Miller; Ken Keyzer; Rick Merrin</u> <u>Visitors:</u> 15 (not including staff present). </p>	<p> CALL TO ORDER PLEDGE ROLL CALL </p>
<p> <u>PURPOSE OF MEETING:</u> <u>Informational Fire Authority Discussion with Dr. Lynn R. Harvey, Ph.D.</u> ***Please see attached, 10 page outline written by Dr. Harvey, revised August 2015 regarding Emergency Service Authorities.*** </p>	<p> <u>PURPOSE OF</u> <u>MEETING</u> </p>
<p> <u>Trustee Roger Rottschafer: Fire Committee, Chair</u> Roger Rottschafer began the meeting by reviewing some of the issues of the fire service of Yankee Springs. Lack of volunteers has been a big concern, ISO ratings have come up as well as other items. As a result, the Fire Committee was formed and is looking at different options. DK Sprague, of the Gun Lake Tribal Council has contacted Roger and Mark Englerth with concerns about the firehouse as well. <u>Dr. Lynn R. Harvey, Ph.D. – Consultant Local Government</u> Dr. Harvey commented that he was here to discuss the concept of the fire authority. (What a fire authority is). Dr. Harvey differentiated between the two types of government: General Purpose government – and </p>	<p> Trustee Roger Rottschafer: Fire Committee, Chair Page 1 of 8 YST Bd Trustees/Spec. Mtg. Fire Auth. Info. 8/13/15 </p>

Special Purpose Government. As referenced in Dr. Harvey's outline, the law permits two or more units of government to create an Authority, a special purpose government by its own Articles of Incorporation and governing body.

Dr. Lynn R. Harvey, Ph.D.
- Consultant
Local
Government

Harvey referred to the 1988 statute in legislature – a bill to create emergency service (back part of the handout). Harvey commented that the 1988 statute really cleaned up a lot of things.

Harvey commented that an authority is an easy system to create, and why would we create it? His answer: To spread costs over more people – maintain costs or lower costs (in an ideal world).

An indication of intent by resolution must be made. Articles of Incorporation (what needs to be in these Articles) are set forth in 1988 statute. Harvey commented that this information is easily available. He added that there are probably 60 to 70 fire authorities around the state. Dr. Harvey can think of only one that has dissolved.

“You can customize this in any way you'd like to do it, once you've developed the Articles of Incorporation, and each governing board adopts those Articles of Incorporation, you now have a Fire Authority. It would take a reversal resolution by bodies to disband that,” per Dr. Harvey. Harvey continued to comment on the voting situations as well if they occur.

Bob Perino, of the Orangeville Township Board, commented that currently the township supports the budget for the fire department. Perino asked, “Who supports the budget for the authority?” Dr. Harvey commented that the creators are in charge of the finances of the authority. Harvey added that day to day management control could be lost, but not financial control.

Regarding finances, Harvey commented that his personal philosophy is to leave how a unit raises their share of the money up to them. Harvey mentioned that townships have the authority to creating a special assessment.

Harvey noted that it takes generally from six months to two years to form an authority, and it depends on a.) “How hard we want to work on it” and b.) “Are we able to sit down and do we have a history of negotiating with each other or are we going to get together and fight about it?”

One of the first things to do in negotiating, is to get the skeletons out of the closet according to Dr. Harvey. “It's the skeletons in the closet that impede intergovernmental relationships.... When forming a new body, we have to let “bygones” be “bygones,” added Dr. Harvey.

Harvey noted that the public needs to be kept up to speed on what is going on with the authority. Harvey commented on an example of a charter township looking into starting an authority that would save 1.5 million dollars in operating cost with an authority. One of those in the community spoke up, “I don't want to support the fire authority because we won't have our name on the truck and we always lead the 4th of July parade.” The authority never got off the ground. A lot of opportunities and savings were unrealized. It is important to still have a sense of community in an authority.

Harvey commented that one of the challenges faced of the YS Twp. Fire Department is that it doesn't have the core of people in the 25 – 55 age group for recruitment of volunteers. Harvey pointed out that the Village of Middleville, and the City of Wayland have a population to draw from. YS Twp. is no different than a lot of rural communities – they can't do it on their own, they have to have a partnership.

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Do they (fire authorities) save money? Is a question often posed per Dr. Harvey. Answer: Yes, but in the long run. Communities change. It all depends on demographics, where you have a station now may not be the place needed someday according to Harvey.

In regards to the building used by the Fire Authority, Harvey advises to let the unit that is hosting the site build it and let them have a long-term lease on the building to the authority. It will work better if the authority does disband. It is much cleaner (fixed asset-wise). The building remains where it was built.

Another question was posed, "How are disputes resolved?" Harvey commented that judges do not like intergovernmental disputes; they avoid them like the plague. Harvey commented to figure it out amongst the members of the authority.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Joe Miller, Fire Chief - City of Wayland –Asked "How do you want to make it better because now it is an authority? How are we going to make it better?"

Dr. Harvey commented that there are not currently enough volunteers here (YS Twp.) and working together will provide more coverage.

Harvey also commented that only one chief is needed and that is something that must be resolved.

Discussion took place on getting more volunteers which is a problem nation-wide. Part-time/full-pay was brought up.

Joe Miller – Fire Chief- Wayland asked "How can we cover Yankee Springs with the same personnel that we have?" Harvey commented that there is still personnel available in Yankee Springs. Harvey noted that Wayland is a single production unit – fire service only. EMS service is contracted through a separate service. Chief Middleton runs a joint production system with cross-trained personnel that do both fire and EMS. Harvey commented that it does pose a challenge, but it can be overcome.

Roger Rottschafer commented that not everyone can be an EMS first responder firefighter. Not everyone can handle first responder type of work. Roger commented on having approximately the same distance from Thornapple Township for fire services and the East end of Wayland for its fire services. Yankee Springs' current contract is a FIRE contract, not EMS as well, but it has turned into that. Rottschafer pointed out that possibly if the Fire Authority included Wayland, more volunteers from Yankee Springs would be interested. If there were a fire, for example, at Weick's (Southwest Gun Lake Area) a YS volunteer may have a better chance of getting called in on it, rather than be placed on stand-by.

Joe Miller – "So if Yankee Springs had their own Fire Dept., would that draw more people (volunteers)?" J. Miller also asked about logistics regarding the fire authority and using personnel in specific areas from different areas.

Roger Rottschafer – commented that in talking with Lynn Harvey, the issue of volunteers is all over the country. By putting an authority together of three or four different areas, hopefully you are getting enough people to run it.

Dr. Harvey – commented that one needs to think of it (an authority) as regions- not jurisdictions. "A citizen doesn't care where that truck comes from, they just hope it comes quick with water. As an

authority, what you've done is maximize the amount of assets that can be brought to a fire."

Mark Englerth – responding to Joe Miller, commented that the community has a “win-win here in that you recruit people that are closer to your station, there may be other volunteers that can respond to other areas besides their own township or city.” Englerth felt that the meeting of three communities tonight was very valuable asking “How can we serve our community the best?” Englerth also commented “We are supposed to leave a legacy that is past current administrators and boards.”

Dr. Harvey commented that the discussion is just to “get you thinking. You may decide in the long run, this may not be your cup of tea.” Each community has different pressure points. Wayland has US-131 to deal with. Yankee Springs has a recreational community. Dr. Harvey referred to figures that 80 to 85 percent of most emergency runs are for medical assists not for fire runs. Medical assists are involved with both departments, but Dave’s (Middleton) (TTES) is also for transporting after the assists.

Ken Keyzer of Wayland Fire Dept.: asked about the population of YS Twp. “Is it more older folks?...Is there just people not stepping up to be put on board?” “Do they come home from work and say they are done for the day and it’s time for the pontoon boat or I’m going fishing... so someone is going to take care of me if I have a problem?”

D. Middleton, TTES Fire Chief – commented that he recently put on a guy in his 50s and his son (into YS Fire service). Middleton noted, “People live in a recreation area and they want to recreate.”

Ken Keyzer of Wayland Fire Dept. noted the seasonal population change in Yankee Springs because of it being a recreational area. Keyzer added “If you have a fire where I live (city of Wayland), if we get a mutual aid call to Yankee Springs, I come right from home and try to get on scene and call Joe (Miller).”

Roger Rottschafer commented that an analysis was done on this. Rottschafer noted that the YS barn has nice everything in there and it is not being used. “Maybe if we get an authority together we can get more bodies in there, and we can use it,” commented Rottschafer. Rottschafer commented that the township can’t keep an ISO rating (brought up by D. Middleton)- if the YS station isn’t being used. So Rottschafer said that the alternative to shutting it down in his thought process, is to get the YS station used. Rottschafer commented on Wayland Township/City of Wayland paying a large part of Wayland’s budget, and Yankee Springs paying a large part of Thornapple Township’s (TTES) budget. Rottschafer questioned if there is some way of getting all this together and doing it better.

Dave Middleton commented that he appreciated what Rottschafer and committee was doing – “You are not leaving any stone unturned and I appreciate it,” commented Middleton. D. Middleton also wanted it known that “Joe and I don’t have border wars.” Middleton mentioned that in July, the Yankee Springs truck turned Thornapple’s truck around 7 times because they were in service. “Things are getting better we are not there yet. We desperately need more people,” added Middleton. He also noted a federal program coming out to help TTES/YS attract more people in August.

Roger Rottschafer added that Mike Bremer (Thornapple Township Supervisor) commented 6 or 7 months ago, he’d give his eye teeth to get an authority. Rottschafer commented that then they talked about it with D. Middleton about the start of an authority and Dave agreed.

Rottschafer commented on the YS facility sitting there and one truck has 6,000 miles on it and the truck is 12 years old. “They are just not turning a lot, in the past, but it’s getting better,” added Rottschafer.

D. Middleton commented “Miles are not the key, it’s hours (regarding truck usage).”

Dr. Harvey – we are no longer going to provide services (strictly volunteer) with small stipends, got to figure out what kind of incentive is needed to get people to want to do this on a part time basis. Harvey mentioned getting recruits out of community college. Harvey commented that it takes a good year to get recruits trained, and then there is the problem of training them and they move on to where they can work full-time (in larger departments). Harvey mentioned in preparation for this report, he got together with the Chief in Hastings – Birch Fire “Association” not an authority. The Hastings chief said he needs more people, and he is in a population center that is a lot better than here (Yankee Springs).

Roger Rottschafer mentioned the \$127,000 contract with TTES and if he took approximately \$75,000, he could pay 10 firefighters/52 weeks out of the year \$150 to be on call.

Dr. Harvey commented that in Hastings – a flat fee is involved in payment of firefighters and it is not necessarily based on how many calls. Harvey also commented that the combined population of the three units is 11,232 people. A population of a small city. Harvey feels that the three are sort of the same population wise. \$435.4 million taxable value combined, YS is at \$237 million on its own. Harvey talked about the ratio that would have to be worked out for the difference in taxable value.

Mark Englerth brought up the past discussion that a \$150,000 house in Wayland Township, if that same house is by a lake in Yankee Springs is \$500,000. Englerth asked, “Does it cost more to protect the house on the lake? Or in town? “We are not going to resolve all of the questions in one night,” added Englerth. This meeting is a first step. He feels it is the right thing to do to have these conversations, talking about what is most important to the community. Englerth thanked Roger Rottschafer, Dr. Lynn Harvey and all that have participated.

Dr. Harvey commented that good relationships (inter-governmentally) come from breaking bread together. These three communities spend for fire services (without Dave’s operation) \$456,000 last year. For Yankee Springs that works out to \$49 per person that is a resident. Wayland is about \$55. And if you take Wayland City and township together it takes it down to \$36. (Wayland City has a little lower expenditure rate per Harvey). Harvey commented, “You got enough resources money-wise, and fixed assets and equipment, but the question is: Is there a different way that this mix could be put together and still have a better service? It would be nice to have a couple people form an exploratory committee.” Harvey complimented Roger Rottschafer’s dedication to this issue.

Joe Miller - commented that 18 of his personnel live in the city of Wayland. Miller asked “If we use the YS Station and if you can’t get the people that want to live there, and work there, and volunteer there, how are we going to change that?”

Roger Rottschafer, in reply to J. Miller, commented that it might be a useless experiment, but right now if the experiment brings people out of nothing right now (that we don’t have) to man it, the township would be more than happy to have 15 people all of sudden and all of us working together. Rottschafer added that this is not just to help Yankee Springs. DK Sprague has a reservation out there that he is concerned about and Yankee Springs Township is closer to the reservation than downtown Wayland.

Mark Englerth - commented “It’s just a question of how can we work better together than in the past.”

Rottschafer mentioned Wayland fire services not getting mutual aid from Yankee Springs.

Rick Merren of Wayland Fire Dept. - asked, "Do you see a lot more benefit as far as getting people there faster with an authority rather than mutual aid (that we currently have)?"

Dr. Harvey commented that there's never been anybody that has really looked at that, but commented on mutual aid versus an authority having one commander.

Jan Lippert, YS Township Clerk commented on being an authority in order for a Wayland firefighter (who lives close to the YS Station) to take a truck from Yankee Springs Fire Station. It was noted that without the authority, the Wayland firefighter cannot take a YS Station truck out. Discussion occurred regarding insurance responsibility in mutual aid calls.

Roger Rottschafer commented on a qualification for ISO rating – having at least 4 (four) Yankee Springs people at a fire. D. Middleton commented that it depends on the time of the day as to whether four Yankee Springs firefighters would be available.

D. Middleton commented on talking to Danny Boulter about sharing employees. Middleton commented that there are options available. D. Middleton commented that Joe Miller and D. Boulter of Orangeville Township are open to sharing.

Danny Boulter commented about the requirements (mile radius from residence) for firefighters in his township.

Roger Rottschafer – Yankee Springs has a fire station, but has to contract to TTES. Rottschafer commented on D. Middleton coming in to a meeting and saying he needs \$150k worth of stuff is needed and we say, "What?" YS Board shouldn't be in the fire business, according to Rottschafer. "To have Dave and to have Joe and to have a fire authority running seems to make a whole lot more sense than to have us (YS Twp.) running it.

An unidentified speaker commented that it is more fair to the community and to the taxpayer to have an authority financially, than to not have one.

Bob Perino (Trustee Orangeville Twp.) commented on forming a committee that can come up with a solid marketing and recruiting effort. 3,500 is the population of Orangeville Township. The population isn't any different than what you have in YS and Wayland according to Perino. Perino commented on that when he looks at Yankee Springs and all of its state and county land and lake homes and the greater tax dollars, "this doesn't speak to Orangeville."

Roger Rottschafer commented that Orangeville has Danny (Orangeville fire chief) working on volunteers, but Dave is with Thornapple. Yankee doesn't have a fire chief (Rottschafer pointed out that he was not slighting D. Middleton). Dave has been trying to get guys at Yankee. When you have a station that doesn't have much action, people don't want to come out to volunteer to be put on "stand-by" at the most. Dave has had to keep his hands on a full-time ambulance service and fire. Rottschafer commented that he is not knocking Dave, that somebody is needed to be physically there, at the fire station (like Danny at Orangeville). Rottschafer is looking at the option of having an authority rather than hiring a full-time fire chief.

Jan Lippert asked of Orangeville's Danny Boulter, "What is the average age of the firemen in Orangeville?" Boulter confirmed that the average age is mid 20s to lower 40s. Lippert also asked, "How

do you recruit them?" Boulter responded, "We don't. We just get the phone calls." Orangeville has 22 volunteers.

Joe Miller –commented that they (Wayland) are paid on call at \$17 an hour. J. Miller commented "That is good money." Miller feels that this is incentive.

Mark Englerth noted demographic work on the US Census that was done in comparison of Yankee Springs and Orangeville Townships. It was noted that there is 25% less population in Orangeville than in Yankee Springs. The census- age group wise- does not show a big difference.

Wayland City Manager, Mike Selden commented on the situation with the fire department with Wayland Township being a "no-brainer" to create a fire authority to go with Wayland Township and the City of Wayland. Selden commented that they looked at Leighton, and Martin township and now Yankee Springs has approached them and he feels that to get in at the beginning of it (the creation of a Fire Authority) works best for all. "I think it is a positive in any direction," commented M. Selden.

Tim Bala, Mayor of City of Wayland –commented that if it (the authority) may or may not save the taxpayers any money and our (Wayland City's) ISO rating can't get any better, he couldn't see a benefit if it can't save the taxpayers any money.

Dr. Harvey commented in response to Tim Bala, that he made the statement about savings because he didn't want to be held accountable. Dr H. also commented, "Is the saving a private cost or a public saving? -is the question to be asked here." Harvey also commented that this is at a preliminary level at this time and questions can't be asked as a huge group. "What are the real costs in the long run? -is what has to be looked at," commented Harvey.

Cathy Pardee, former Watson Twp. Board member- commented they (Watson Twp.) have a formula based arrangement with area governmental units including Hopkins Village, Hopkins Township, Monterey Township and (possibly others as well). Pardee commented that they get new equipment every five years. They did a special assessment at Watson. Pardee commented that there's a way their attorney had Watson do it so that there is not a public hearing every year. They have public meetings and put out newspaper notices and "It works!" commented C. Pardee enthusiastically.

John Jerkatis, Treasurer –commented that this is the first baby step. Our 1st responsibility here is to provide the best emergency services possible. "As to cost economies along with that by developing some sort of a fire authority, so much the better. We've enjoyed very good fire service for many years here at Yankee Springs Township. There are some things, like Roger said that there are times we don't feel like we are getting the best utilization of the equipment and facilities we have got invested in here in Yankee Springs. So we are trying to derive some alternatives to improve the utilization of that equipment. An authority would be one. We essentially have a simple authority with Thornapple Township..... as Wayland Township does with the City of Wayland." Jerkatis spoke of Orangeville and Wayland having stations with equipment and personnel. Jerkatis noted that Yankee Springs has equipment but not the personnel. Jerkatis commented that he didn't see how an authority would change the population demographics in Yankee Springs Township. The authority will enable the other people in other departments to respond quicker which would help YS Twp. and that would improve the situation for Yankee Springs, possibly. Jerkatis asked, "What will the other units be asking YS township to bring to the table. Is it equipment and facilities? Personnel? Money?"

Dr. Harvey replied, "Yes, to all three. This is a collective effort. Not everyone will bring to the table the same value of assets, the same taxing ability or the same number of volunteers. The question is: Can we

collectively increase the size of the whole? Can we add value? Will the equipment staying at Yankee Springs add value to the collective region - in terms of fire suppression and response in terms of medical first responders. Is it all a one way flow of benefits?" Harvey would argue that it is not. "It is a collective good ... not all a one way share of benefits," added Harvey.

Roger VanVolkinburg, Wayland Township, Supervisor– commented "From Day One... it's not about how much are we going to save. It's "Can we get better service from our money from an authority?" "It takes the politics out of it by being an authority...Public safety is public safety. It shouldn't be in the hands of a politician... Public safety shouldn't have a boundary line...It's not about who's name is on the truck." Roger VanVolkinburg thinks it is a good idea if it brings the mutual aid to everybody's benefit.

Greg Purcell, former county administrator of Calhoun County, YS Planning Commissioner: (has been involved on some consolidating of 911 services). Purcell commented "What you are embarking on is not an easy task. This is going to be tough work..... You are creating a special purpose unit of government that is only thinking about this fire authority.....They have one purpose. The board is focused on the fire. We don't have the economies of scale for townships six by six miles square or the city of Wayland to be able to do this in a cost effective manner. I don't think you are going to save money.... but your cost won't go up as quickly. You will be able to spread the cost over many more shoulders in terms of who is paying the bill for all that and you can do some capital planning that will save you money as well in terms of where your fire stations are at and what kind of equipment that you need..... You all have professional firefighters here that are doing a great job for you, and volunteers are moving more and more toward professionalism. ...We ought to be applauding these people. I would like to see this kind of exploration move forward in terms of how we create an authority that is for the benefit of everybody as you look at it. I think that you are going to find that if you get this sort of authority going, you are going to get a lot more attention and you are drawing from a much broader base for volunteers. ... I applaud all of you for coming together and looking at this, as a citizen and a taxpayer, I think you are moving in the right direction. I'd like to see it go further and you take the next step."

Dr. Harvey commented that he appreciated this opportunity. "You are on the right course just meeting together as neighbors." Dr. Harvey offered to help in any step of the way the way.

Mark Englerth commented that those in attendance should go back and talk with separate boards and talk about what we've learned tonight and where we want to go from here. Then, even if nothing happens, we should have a meeting altogether again next year. Englerth commented on the possibility of having Jim Brown come in and talk about what the City of Hastings is doing.

Roger Rottschafer mentioned Jim Brown of Birch offering his assistance as well. A red book was referred to – possibly put out by the MTA- that may be helpful with the continuing discussion.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion by J. Lippert with support from Englerth to close this special board meeting at 7:56 p.m.
Approved by all.

Respectfully submitted:
Deb Mousseau
Recording Secretary 8/15/15

** JCL Draft Distributed Date: 8-19-15
The detailed format of these minutes include direct quotes so that comments cannot be
misconstrued or altered. This was the direction given and is not the same format that is used
for Board Meetings*

Approved Date:Sept. 10, 2015

Janice C. Lippert, Township Clerk