

<p style="text-align: center;"> YANKEE SPRINGS TOWNSHIP BOARD OF TRUSTEES <u>Special Meeting – Fire Services Discussion</u> Tuesday, August 27, 2024 1:00 pm Yankee Springs Township Hall 284 N. Briggs Rd., Middleville, MI 49333 MINUTES </p>	<p style="text-align: center;"> MINUTES Page 1 of 4 YS Board of Trustees Special Meeting August 27, 2024 </p>
<p>Meeting called to order at 1:02 PM by Supervisor Rob Heethuis</p> <p>PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE</p> <p>Roll Call: Mike Cunningham, Larry Knowles, Rob Heethuis, Dave VanHouten, Deb Mousseau (All Present)</p> <p>Staff Present: Frank Fiala</p> <p>Visitors: 6</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"> PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE ROLL CALL </p>
<p>APPROVAL OF AGENDA:</p> <p><i>Motion by Heethuis with support from Cunningham to accept the agenda. Roll Call Vote: Cunningham: yes; Heethuis: yes; VanHouten: yes; Mousseau: yes; Knowles: yes.</i></p> <p>Yes: 5, No: 0. MOTION CARRIED</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"> MOTION TO ACCEPT THE AGENDA </p>
<p>PUBLIC COMMENT:</p> <p>Ron Vandenberg (Member of the Yankee Springs Fire Committee): He is a retired fire fighter who has lived in the Township for 12 years and has been friends with Dan and Joe Miller for about fifty years. When Yankee Springs contracted with Wayland Fire eight years ago and put Deputy Chief Miller in charge he volunteered his services. Ron comes over to the fire station most mornings and has gotten to know most of the fire fighters. Ron has watched the department grow into a first-class department and states that Yankee Springs Fire is ready to be a stand-alone fire department.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"> PUBLIC COMMENT </p>
<p>FIRE SERVICES DISCUSSION:</p> <p>Invited Participants: Yankee Springs Township Board of Trustees, Dan Miller (Deputy Fire Chief), Jon Timmers (Acting Fire Chief Wayland), Kate Balfourt (Finance Director-City of Wayland), and Jae Guetschow (Interim City Manager-City of Wayland).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A current contract copy has been provided for discussion. • The Board has come up with some questions that are a guideline for today's 	<p style="text-align: center;"> FIRE SERVICES DISCUSSION </p>

conversations. Supervisor Heethuis clarified that the topic for this meeting is to open communication and to learn more about the structure of the Wayland Fire Department and not to discuss the possibility of Yankee Springs becoming a stand-alone department.

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- Mr. Guetschow explained his role as interim city manager allows him to oversee the operations of the Fire Department, but Jon Timmers is the acting Fire Chief at this time.
- When the current contract was signed in March 2023 everything was going well and it was pretty much a renewal of the prior contract. The fire station is very well run. Last fall the Township started receiving time sheets for extra staffing and the Board had not been made aware of any changes. This was what had prompted today's meeting but unfortunately it was delayed after Chief Stoddard's medical emergency. Many of the questions that are coming up today are based on extra charges and a need to communicate on those issues.
- Chief Jon Timmers shared a memo he has prepared for the Board today.
- At this time Chief Stoddard is still on medical leave and will not be planning to return in that role. There has been discussion about starting an Advisory Committee with the townships, the tribe, and the city to make sure everyone is communicating.
- The standards and the pay are equal throughout the department but there are fire fighters who are assigned to the City of Wayland and fire fighters who are assigned to the Township.
- Annual physicals are a national standard but due to the dollar amount involved that was an expense that probably should have been brought before the YS Board. Per the contract anything like that would need Board approval. The YS Fire Committee does not have the authority to approve expenditures.
- YS Fire Committee was activated by the current Board in 2020 with members Dan Miller, Joe Miller, Frank Fiala, Dave VanHouten, Mary Cook, and Alice Jansma. Joe Miller and Mary Cook are no longer involved. Dave VanHouten stated that Rich Beukema, Ron Vandenberg and Greg Purcell have joined but have not yet been officially appointed by the Board, which needs to be resolved.
- With regard to the additional hourly staffing at the YS Fire Station, it was not submitted to the Board and the Board feels that there should still be a presentation to the Board with regard to the need for this staffing and a decision could then be made. In the past YS has not had a strong response to medical calls, which was what prompted the decision at the time.
- Change in required credentials for fire fighters: In the past fire fighters were not required to have medical certification, but for anyone hired after June 2023 they must have both a medical license and fire fighter certification within two years. This is not a state standard but is a Wayland standard and common to other fire departments in the

area. Chief Timmers says this has not been a problem at all with hiring for Wayland, but Yankee Springs is continuing to struggle with getting enough on-call personnel. The demographics of our township make it difficult to recruit.

- Currently pay rates are the same for new fire fighters (with the same certification) as for those who have been with the department for years. Chief Timmers stated that one of his personal goals is to institute a tiered pay structure. For hourly staff who are already at work, they do not receive additional pay when a call comes in.
- Mr. Knowles asked for clarification regarding if additional staffing costs were allowed under the current contract without Board approval. Mr. Guetschow stated that whether it was allowed or not he feels that there should have been communication before the decision was made.
- Chief Timmers reviewed how the ISO fire score is determined. Fifty percent of the score is about the fire department itself: full time personnel, training, equipment, etc. Yankee Springs benefits by being part of the Wayland Fire Services because all of these help the fire department score. The lower the rating is, the lower insurance costs in the township are. The last rating was done in 2018 and included Wayland personnel. Current rating is 6/10. Since the last review, Wayland has made changes that lead them to hope that they will have a lower score at the next review. If YS stands alone, they will very likely have a higher score. One reason is that if you live where there are hydrants the score will be better than in a rural area without hydrants.
- Tribal Fire Department: The Gun Lake Tribe has lost federal money, so they are having their public safety officers become certified fire fighters. Their plan is to get the officers certified and purchase a mini pumper and be available to put out a car fire, and also be able to respond fully geared to assist. It is not intended that they will become a full fire department but will run cooperatively with Wayland.
- What issues does Wayland have with Yankee Springs Township? Chief Timmers says there are not currently any issues and the people who complained in the past are not there any longer.
- Does the City have a process/complaint process, for example if a fire fighter has an issue with the fire chief? There is not an official process, but all employees are advised to follow the "chain of command". On the other hand, the city manager maintains an open-door policy to everyone.
- Future outlook/planning: Mr. Guetschow feels that it is important for the city to have a personal presence at Township meetings and that would be an important step in improving communication. Mr. VanHouten inquired if Chief Stoddard or Chief Timmers had sat down with the YS fire fighters as a group. Chief Timmers says that has not been done. It has been more as part of the formal review process but meetings like that would be a good idea going forward.

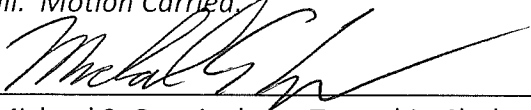
- The Board would be interested in seeing the contract that Wayland Fire has with Wayland Township. This contract is being presented at the next City Council meeting and will be available after that.
- Supervisor Heethuis thanked everyone for participating in today's discussions. This should be done more often.

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ADJOURNMENT:

Motion by Cunningham with support from Mousseau to adjourn the meeting at 2:25 PM.

Approved by all. Motion Carried.

Approved by: 
 Michael S. Cunningham, Township Clerk

Date 9/20/2024

ADJOURNMENT

Respectfully submitted by:
 Betsy Frigmanski, Recording Secretary
 August 28, 2024