

August 26, 2014
6:00 PM

The Monroe Township Board of Supervisors workshop with Monroe Fire Company was called to order by Chairman Kehoe.

ATTENDANCE

Phil Kehoe, Chairman
A.W. Castle, Vice-Chairman
Sam Simmons, Supervisor

Marjorie Metzger, Admin. Asst.

Mark Farrell – President, Deputy Chief
Dave Heckert – Fire Chief
Devin Flickinger – Asst. Chief
Clint Murphy – Captain

Donna March – Treasurer
Jeremy Zeigler – Fire Marshal
Brad Robertson – Vice Pres., Fire Police Captain

The purpose of the workshop was to have an open dialogue on topics such as the 2015 budget, capital projects, workers compensation, alarming the building, membership, and an AED for the township.

MEMBERSHIP

Mr. Kehoe said there is less money to go around each year so what can we do differently or better. He realizes there are only 10 active fire members who do so much in the township. It is recognized. He questioned if there are any creative ideas for improving membership.

Mr. Farrell said the fire company struggles with a lot of things. His goal is to work with the township to come up with a realistic budget to move forward in the right way with what is needed. There is a lot working against recruitment for membership, such as the high number of training hours required. People don't have time to dedicate. Kids have many more options now days. There is not a centralized town to pull from. We want to move forward without sacrificing the service we provide, but that is a challenge.

Mr. Kehoe mentioned the community events such as Halloween, Easter, and Christmas. Mr. Farrell mentioned going together with the township for the first night of Santa Visits is working well. Mr. Kehoe suggested promotion of the fire company with the Recreation Board, community day, senior day, or any other community activities. Mr. Farrell said people see us at community events and know what we do, but no one is interested in joining. The last couple new members came from people moving in from other areas. Mr. Kehoe mentioned being a member is a civic duty, but it is also enjoyed by the member. It is like a hobby, a friendship, and the comradery.

Mr. Heckert said there have been different commercials on tv or radio for volunteers. The problem with Monroe Township is that the pool of people to draw from is fairly small. People moving into the township are professionals who don't do blue collar volunteering. Most homes are two incomes, and they are running the kids all over. About 200-300 hours of training is required, and people can't give that kind of time anymore.

Mr. Kehoe asked if there are different classifications for volunteers that may reduce the training requirements. Mr. Heckert said Monroe Fire Company's guidelines are mirrored in this part of the state. The minimum requirements for an interior firefighter includes training in four mods and you must be a certain age. You also have to have basic first aid, CPR, different types of rescue, and haz-mat. The only difference would be for someone who does not want to be trained for interior, but rather stay on the outside and help with clean up or things of that nature. The state does not require the training, but they set the guidelines for the training. It could become an insurance issue or liability issue if you allow someone to perform the duties without training.

Mr. Castle asked if any of the training can be done through computers. Mr. Heckert said has not been an option yet. That would come from the state fire marshal. The bulk of the training is hands on.

PAID DRIVER REQUEST

Mr. Farrell said they used to have several people working night shift, so they were available to run calls during the day. That is not the case now. Daytime is now the challenge. He shared the idea of considering adding a paid driver during the day for a shift from 6 AM – 6 PM, Monday – Friday. It would be all part time with no benefits. It would cost approximately \$35,000 a year at \$10/hour. North Middleton and South Middleton have similar programs. It would provide the opportunity to get the equipment to the call, and help comes from the mutual aid companies.

Mr. Heckert explained the box system that each company sets up that determines what surrounding fire departments respond to each different type of incident. This is what the county dispatch center uses to send equipment to the scene. There are no guidelines for designing the box system. The township must sign off on the plan before it is submitted to county to be followed. The surrounding companies all have the best interests in mind, and help each other.

Mr. Castle made a suggestion of paying so much per call for those responding, or pay for gas for those who respond directly to the scene. Mr. Heckert said they have talked about an in-house system for rewarding members, such as gas cards or gift cards. That would be for retention of members, not recruitment.

Mr. Castle asked if there was anything the township could do to take any of the load off

the volunteers. Any basic, routine, redundant things such as administrative or around the building. Is training the road crew for daytime use an option, but then they would have to take all the hundreds of hours of training. Mrs. March mentioned Greg Hertzler used to be a member.

Mr. Heckert said the driver is critical. There are days of the week there may be nobody during the day. If we don't get out, you must wait for the next due company to get there. It is an accepted thing that all department will have issues of getting out during the day and either have failures or late responses. The only qualified engine drivers now are the three chiefs, the Captain and Lieutenant. These people are also the qualified firefighters.

Mr. Castle asked about cutting the request in half. Pick three of the five days and start with that. Mr. Farrell said that is better than what they have today. Mr. Heckert said there are people out there willing to be drivers. There are people who drive out of a different station every day of the week. Mr. Farrell said the driver would be given other duties around the station.

Mr. Simmons asked about live in personnel who could help. There may be people willing to help out just for a place to live. Mr. Farrell said they have live in quarters in the station, but no one is there right now. That would also become an issue of needing the training to be able to help.

CAPITAL PROJECTS

Mr. Farrell said there will always be something. The township owns the building and the fire company leases it for \$1. The building needs painted, which would include stripping and priming because of the age. They have received quotes for \$16,000 - \$18,000. They will provide copies of the quotes to the township. The building looks bad, but it has not affected the structure.

Alarming of the building also needs to be done, for both smoke/fire and burglary. They received quotes of \$15,000 for this work. The quotes will be provided to the township. The fire company has had several electrical component issues that almost led to fires, so they need to protect themselves. They also need to know who is coming and going from the building.

The roof was repaired, but the air conditioning unit still is a problem and is on borrowed time. The front doors need replaced. They are very heavy. The parking lot was oil & chipped, which they appreciate.

Mr. Farrell suggested these items could be added to the township's general maintenance program for all township buildings.

Mr. Castle mentioned these items should be planned for and money set aside. He questioned if there would be any savings in insurance coverage if the alarm system was installed. Mr. Farrell questioned if the firehouse alarm system could be annexed to the existing alarm

system in the township building? It could be a cost savings.

Mr. Kehoe said a list is being organized and developed for Level B & C projects that could possibly be done as Eagle Scout projects. These would be projects that could be done by the kids working on their Eagle Scout ranking.

Mr. Farrell said there are no big purchases on the horizon.

WORKER'S COMPENSATION

Mr. Farrell said \$16,000 has been included in the budget, in trying to plan for the expense. The secretary will check to see if Bennecon is making any coverage available for worker's compensation insurance.

Mr. Kehoe questioned if there are any other ways to better structure the insurance coverages together. Mr. Farrell said the fire company insurance is for specific types of coverage because of the equipment and type of business. They also provide an additional insurance through firemen's relief.

AED UNIT

Mr. Kehoe explained the original plan was to get an AED unit through the baseball association who had received a grant. That option has fallen through. The baseball association is willing to split the cost with the township to purchase one. Mr. Castle suggested asking for donations through the newsletter and website. Mr. Flickinger can assist in determining what type of unit should be purchased. Mr. Heckert said it should be placed in a common area that is not locked. AED units do not do well in extreme temperatures. It was suggested the AED unit be placed in the rental hall and the baseball association be given access to the rear door. Mr. Flickinger said a unit for public use runs around \$2,560.

BUDGET

Mr. Farrell provided a budget worksheet that he prepared. He added the staffing for the daytime driver. Staffing is a big concern. He has attempted to make the budget meet the expenses. There is money that comes off for tax commission. The apparatus budget is actual.

Mr. Kehoe said the audit report complimented the fire company on their bookkeeping efforts.

Mr. Kehoe said the budget comes down to the fire tax. The expenses don't go away, but it all needs to be balanced out.

ADJOURN

The workshop was adjourned at 7:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Marjorie E. Metzger
Admin. Asst./ Secretary-Treasurer