

LOWELL AREA FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
Monday, March 27, 2017
At the Look Memorial Fire Station

1. ROLL CALL

Jim Herb called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

Members Present: Jim Herb, Susan Reister, Tim Wittenbach, Carlton Blough, David Pasquale and Jim Hodges

2. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Herb mentioned the presentation by Rockford Ambulance should be moved to the first item of the agenda after the approval of the minutes.

IT WAS MOVED BY BLOUGH and seconded by PASQUALE to approve the agenda as corrected.
Yes – all. Motion carried.

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

A. Approval of the Regular meeting minutes – February 13, 2017

Wittenbach mentioned in the minutes under item 5, read “televising the authority meetings.” Olin said she will change the minutes to read “video recorded”.

IT WAS MOVED BY HODGES and seconded by REISTER to approve the minutes as corrected.
Yes – all. Motion carried.

7. NEW BUSINESS

A. Presentation by Rockford Ambulance – Matt McConnon. McConnon referred to a report distributed by KCEMS regarding ambulance response times, and stated Rockford Ambulance is exceeding the report. He said Rockford Ambulance is in the process of changing operations to 12 hour shifts instead of 24 hour shifts by April 17. He also stated the ambulances will be out more on the road, rather than at the station to improve response times. He said there are no immediate plans to vacate the contract until the end of September. Blough mentioned Lowell Township is at the bottom of the fire authority district. McConnon said the goal of changing operations is not to adversely affect response times but make it better. If we are already in the vehicle, the vehicle can be rolled as soon as dispatched. Reister questioned the times of the shift change? McConnon stated the times will be staggered. He added Rockford Ambulance serves approximately 3000 households or 110,000 people. He said they will lose some members, then gain, so we stay about even. Wittenbach questioned if the ambulance was changing how they do business with the smaller vehicles. McConnon responded supervisors respond in those, and they were brought to the station to cover a shift.

van Overbeek questioned if Rockford Ambulance had a back- up plan if the change in shifts didn't work out. McConnon responded it is the same program, just breaking it up into 12 hour shifts so individuals will work more frequently. McConnon mentioned that Rockford Ambulance also utilizes Dispatch Pro which is a predictive software. He said if there is a hot spot at the expressway, we can park there which translates into more mobility. Wittenbach questioned if Rockford Ambulance covered the expressway. McConnon responded yes. Herb questioned if

there had been any recent problems with response time between the department and Rockford Ambulance. Velzen mentioned it does happen. Herb added it comes with the territory.

4. FINANCIAL REPORTS.

Olin distributed a new revenue/expenditure report. She noted this report reflects \$12,300 received from the Grand Rapids Foundation for CPR assists. Also, she mentioned the invoice for these had not yet been paid in the amount of \$16,354. She added the fire authority currently has \$234,248 dollars in cash. Olin said all three municipalities are current and fourth quarter invoices are going out soon. Blough questioned the check written to Kent County from the professional services general ledger number. Olin responded this is for the Kent County fire assessment. Reister questioned a payment to Addorio Technologies. Olin responded Addorio does computer work at the station. van Overbeek added this was for two new computers, a wireless network and a small server at the station.

It was moved by PASQUALE and seconded by REISER to approve the financial report as presented. Yes – all. Motion carried.

5. PUBLIC COMMENT – No public comments were received.

6. OLD BUSINESS

- A. Sale of Truck Assets. van Overbeek said two vehicles were sold at Ranger Bid on March 21st. He said originally the dealer was going to give \$2500.00 for the pair. van Overbeek said the ambulance sold for \$1,780 and the suburban \$2,575. He mentioned both vehicles have been picked up.
- B. UTV Progress. van Overbeek said the UTV will be picked up tomorrow evening from Platinum Powersports and then he will begin the process of putting together the rack and equipment. van Overbeek said the size of the tank for the UTV, could hold us up. Blough questioned when it would be placed in service. van Overbeek added he would like to have the UTV up and running for a switch grass burn the end of April.
- C. Discussion of Fund Balance. Herb stated Steve Thompson, of Dickinson, Thompson, Carr and Huber, put together suggestions regarding the fund balance. Herb said in regard to his item 2 concerning wages and payroll, the authority has lowered its budgeted payroll. Also, Olin said in regard to item 4 in his letter, \$12,000 addition is no longer being collected. Hodges suggested placing the excess fund balance into another account for equipment and trucks and future expenditures. Herb recommended our fund balance be around \$50,000. Pasquale suggested utilizing the funds for equipment purchases and placed into a special fund for grant matches for needs the department has. Burns stated in Fenton, there was a truck fund and the city designated \$100,000 per year. Blough felt the agreement was not to have extra money setting in the fire authority. Wittenbach said we rely on the formula to fund the fire department and we didn't want a huge fund balance. He added we wanted the municipalities involved on the fiscal side. Blough suggested taking this item back to the townships and see what their opinion is. Pasquale suggested Letzmann look at the agreement. Herb suggested tabling this until the next meeting.
- D. Firearm Carry Policy. Letzmann read aloud the policy regarding fire arms and stated it is straight forward, meaning on duty is the period during which the employee is performing fire and rescue services, from the time of dispatch, including travel to the station house or to the scene. The default, in the event the employee is unable to secure the firearm prior to leaving after exhausting best effort to do so is to secure the firearm in a locked place or glove compartment of the vehicle. Also, advise his superior officer, as soon as is practical, that the member, volunteer and employee has a firearm. This policy shall not apply to an active law enforcement officer in the authority's jurisdiction. Letzmann mentioned stowing the firearm unloaded in a safe manner. Herb

questioned the glove compartment, personal vehicle or an authority vehicle. He said you may not want the member to delay going back to a private vehicle, locked compartment, or glove box. He said the firearms law provides carrying a firearm safely including the unloaded portion. Letzmann said it is up to the board members on how stringent you want to make this. Herb asked if there were locked compartments on fire vehicles. van Overbeek responded no. Rather you leave your gun at home our default is to secure. Letzmann said you can get portable gun safes that are chained to the seat mechanism of your car, like a big cigar box. Chief Bukala stated if a concealed pistol holder fire fighter is driving down the road leaving Meijer with his family, and an injury accident occurs, and he has his pistol, do you want him to take his gun off and throw underneath the seat with his family in the vehicle? Bukala said the safest place for the firearm is on his hip, not underneath the seat or glove box. Letzmann said he would work on a paragraph 3 on how to handle those situations whereby a firemen has to render aid. Bukala said he could see this happening on a weekly basis. van Overbeek said the Fire Authority's insurance company is not going to cover this regardless. Bukala added he has never had a gun fall out of his holster. Letzmann mentioned individuals carry different holsters. Herb, requested an item 3 be added based on what we talked about. Letzmann advocating prudence and caution as the attorney, I know the law is clear and general public can carry a firearm while they are working. He said the employer can inhibit or restrict. van Overbeek added the fire authority insurance company made it clear, they are not going to cover us regardless. Blough questioned if the policy would go into the firemen's book or authority itself as a policy? Letzmann responded this is the board's policy, and the chief can change that administratively. Herb said the board would refer to this topic at the next meeting.

- E. Grant Status. Witherell said he applied to the Grand Rapids Foundation for an automated CPR assist machine and then demonstrated to the board how the CPR assist machine worked. He said this unit replaces an individual from having to do chest compressions. He added there is a FEMA grant for two more chest compressors, and that everyone on the department is trained, and they are functioning well. He said there will be a press release with the Ledger and Lowell's First Look regarding the CPR machines. He added the Fire Department is looking at applying to the Michigan Township Par Grant for hydrant adapters due in June.
- F. Further Discussion of Possible Inspection Charges. Witherell explained he surveyed a handful of departments regarding inspection charges, and it is often referred to as a business licensing fee. Different business licensing fees vary between \$20 and \$55 dollars and the frequency of required inspections. He said the fee covers two things; when the business applies for the license they fill out all of their contact information which is forwarded to the inspection division and the fees assist to help offset cost of inspections. Herb questioned if the adjacent fire departments were charging? Witherell said it is more rare there are charges than not. Witherell said with the new emergency reporting software, there is a tab that allows for occupancies and inspections and tracks contact information in addition to their gas meter locations, connections and meters for the building. Herb said it is up to the board members to take inspection fees back to their respective boards. Blough questioned how many businesses needs inspections. Witherell mentioned it is broken down by municipalities including churches and multifamily, not just store front properties. He said businesses in the downtown require two separate inspections, with the businesses downstairs and the apartment upstairs. Herb suggested each board member take this item to their boards to discuss. Herb said inspections are a cost to the fire department. Wittenbach mentioned billing the municipalities separately for inspections. Witherell explained costs are \$25 to \$55 currently based on frequency and size of inspection requirements. Blough would like to see what the actual costs are for inspections. Hale was not in favor of charging businesses more fees.

- G. Discussion of Biocare Physicals for Members. van Overbeek said he attended the fire chief conference in Novi, Michigan and Biocare was in attendance. He said if he coordinates with other departments, he can cut travel costs down including trucks fees and travel. Also, van Overbeek mentioned Rockford Ambulance can provide the TB testing at \$10. vs \$25. from Biocare. By working together with other departments, the savings would be \$1,205 off the top. Herb questioned if there was a standard set for each member as far as physicals, pass or fail. Witherell stated the NFPA standards for functional job duty are “fit” for duty or “not.” Reister mentioned Biocare over ten years, detected cancer. Van Overbeek said they also have an option for a chest x-ray, blood screen and EKG. Blough questioned what if we didn’t go with Biocare. van Overbeek said we pay the fine because we aren’t compliant. Witherell said the Cascade Fire Department looked into Spectrum rather than onsite and it cost them more. Wittenbach questioned if van Overbeek was comfortable with waiting until fall?

It was moved by BLOUGH and seconded by HODGES to approve up to \$7,000 in testing of Biocare Physicals as soon as possible for members. Yes – all. Motion carried.

- H. Fire Building Repairs and Insurance. Michael Burns stated van Overbeek and himself have had discussions about maintaining the fire barn building. Burns, said the City has also brought in inspectors for energy audits including, Honeywell. Burns stated he provides direction regarding City facilities, and feels this is not his job to say what the fire department should be doing in their facility. Burns suggested a letter of understanding between the city and fire authority which addresses the fire authority insuring the building and maintaining it. van Overbeek stated if the fire department is going to be responsible for maintenance, then we are all for it. Burns added he is trying to have it so the city isn’t dictating what the fire department can do with their building. Wittenbach said it makes sense, and that the insurance might be a little higher but would clear up issues with the windows and doors. Burns said he would discuss this item with the council and have the attorney write a memorandum of understanding concerning the fire station. Wittenbach questioned if the ambulance building was separate. Burns said that is the next thing to work out.

7. NEW BUSINESS.

- B. Review of LAFD Municipality Presentation at City Hall. Herb said the Fire Department presentation will be held at the Lowell City Hall on Thursday and all municipalities should have their various boards attend. van Overbeek said he would include the budget for next year and the formula in his presentation. Hale mentioned an email blast was sent to contacts in Lowell Township. Herb mentioned a notice was also placed in the Lowell Ledger. Herb suggested bringing the recently purchased CPR assist to the meeting.
- C. Herb mentioned a six month review of the Fire Chief was held including Hodges, Wittenbach and himself. Wittenbach mentioned the review lasted between two and three hours, and covered many items. He added the surveys were super positive and he is doing a good job. Hodges concurred noting copies of the surveys are available if board members would like a copy.

8. COMMITTEE REPORTS

- A. Capital appropriations
- B. Financial

9. FIRE CHIEF REPORT AND UPDATES.

van Overbeek said last month 48 incidents occurred in February and 18 were fire related and 30 medical. He said he attended the Chiefs conference in Novi and there was good networking. He added the UTV will be picked up tomorrow at Platinum Powersports. He added the Rotary meeting he attended on 2/15/2017 was an eye opener and lots of good questions. van Overbeek said the

department is working on the punch list, doing a great job cleaning up the stations and scrubbing the tile floor. van Overbeek said in regard to his review, he feels the department is moving in the right direction and there is always room for improvement. He added in regard to the equipment used in our reports, we used 8000 gallons of water in a structure fire and the water was taken from Pratt Lake and no municipal hydrants.

10. MEMBER COMMENTS

No comments were received.

11. DATE FOR NEXT MEETING(s)

Herb said the next meeting will be held May 8th^h.

IT WAS MOVED BY HODGES and seconded by REISTER to adjourn at 5:20 p.m. Yes – all. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Herb, Chairman

Suzanne Olin, Recording Secretary