

Village Board Public Safety Committee

MINUTES

~ Thursday, February 4, 2016 ~

CALL TO ORDER

Trustee Nero called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL

In attendance were:

Trustee Addington, Trustee Barker, Trustee Barry, Mayor Gunter, Trustee Guzzo, Trustee Liddle, Village Manager May, Trustee Nero, Village Clerk Szymiski, Fire Chief Weiss and Police Chief Mulhearn

Also present:

Deputy Fire Chief Connolly, EMS Director Dralle, Heidi Hermes - Kurtz, Pat Mannix - Andres Medical Billing/Fire Recovery USA, Public Relations Director McIntyre, Finance Director Parker, Public Works Director Ramsey, Deputy Fire Chief Riley, Finance Director Parker, Public Works Director Ramsey, Tom Vana - Kurtz, and Recording Secretary Brady

Absent:

N/A

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

All present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF NOVEMBER 5, 2015 PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE MINUTES

Trustee Addington made a motion, seconded by Trustee Barker to approve the November 5, 2015, Public Safety Committee Minutes as submitted. Motion carried.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

Due to the meeting's full agenda, Chief Weiss distributed a summary sheet of items to be reviewed. He added that in the Updated Items section is the Dispatch and New CAD System and that he, the Village Manager, and the Police Chief are involved in discussions with Downers Grove and Addison. There will be a number of changes in the near future and Chief Weiss requested that a Special Public Safety Committee meeting be convened to discuss future dispatching needs in detail. Following a short discussion, it was agreed that a Special Meeting would be scheduled for March 2, 2016.

Kurtz Wage Increase Program

Chief Weiss introduced Tom Vana, the owner of Kurtz Paramedic Services, and Heidi Hermes, Kurtz's Chief Operating Officer, to discuss increasing the wages of Westmont's contract medics.

- Mr. Vana began by first stating that Kurtz has been providing paramedic service to the Village of Westmont for over 18 years and that Westmont has long been considered the premier place to work for many reasons, including equipment, leadership and wages. Mr. Vana advised that they have seen a decrease in the number of paramedics available due to the better economy and full-time departments hiring. He stated that two years remain on the current contract, which provides that Kurtz will not increase costs over 3% per year.
- He, Chief Weiss, EMS Director Dralle, and Heidi Hermes met recently to discuss current trends and what's going on in the industry.
 - In the last few years, Westmont has had a harder time recruiting seasoned paramedics for the contract. Kurtz currently has four local contracts with an average starting salary of \$44,250. Westmont's starting contract medic salary is \$39,500. In order to retain and attract the highest-quality, seasoned paramedics, they are proposing increasing the current contract by 3% for the next two years allowing Kurtz to increase the starting pay from \$39,500 to \$44,500. This would provide a salary increase of \$5,000 over two years, or \$2,500 each year.
 - Kurtz has provided salary coverage for Westmont's summer events in 2014 and 2015, assuming an expense of \$13,162.20 for both years.
 - Kurtz has reduced its profit from 7% to 5% as a means of partnership, and offers renewal agreements in 2017, 2018, and 2019 not to exceed total overall contract increase of 2%.
 - Mayor Gunter indicated that Westmont wants the senior people and Mr. Vana added that raising the starting pay will attract the best of the best. Mr. Vana also stated that Kurtz provides its employees the best benefit package.
- Mr. Vana stated that there also has been discussion of Westmont leasing vehicles. He briefly reviewed some concerns for Westmont to consider:
 - As the vendor purchasing the vehicle, a 4% premium is added to the cost to cover as they are not tax exempt. Additionally, following the warranty year, maintenance costs will need to be covered.
 - If Westmont is able to purchase its own vehicles, it provides more flexibility and saves money in the long run.
- In response to Manager May's inquiry, Mr. Vana indicated that the current contract, with two remaining years, will not exceed a maximum increase of 3%,

and if the Village is willing to commit to another three annual renewals, Kurtz will not exceed 2% of the previous annual contract cost.

- Manager May advised that this could not be voted on at tonight's meeting but should be added as an agenda item at the next Board meeting.
- Mayor Gunter stated that Westmont needs to be competitive and attract the best paramedics.
- Following further discussion, Manager May requested a formal proposal from Kurtz that can be presented to the Board.

Fire Recovery Billing System

Chief Weiss introduced Pat Mannix, owner of Andres Medical Billing and Fire Recovery USA. Chief Weiss indicated that Westmont had a prior presentation two years ago by Fire Recovery, at which time the Board passed an ordinance approving this system. Unfortunately, Fire Recovery was not able to start the program as Westmont's rates were set too low based on insurance industry standards. When the Board was asked to increase the rates to the insurance standards level, the members chose not to do the program. Chief Weiss advised that Mr. Mannix is here to see if there is an interest in revisiting this program which could potentially bring Westmont an estimated \$88,000 in revenue per year.

- Mr. Mannix advised that they have developed a great program that gathers billing data from fire department reports and imports that information into a claim that can be submitted to insurance carriers.
- The current ordinance would need to be revamped so that the fees are in line with what is reasonable and customary.
- The recovery process allows for the opportunity to recoup costs not only associated with salaries, but also replace equipment lost or damaged in the line of providing service.
- Provides for a completely customizable program and the recovery hub is fully transparent. Claims can be seen as they happen with 100% control.
- Fire Recovery would work with the Fire Department to get its documentation up to the standard of what an insurance company needs to complete a claim payment.
- Chief Weiss advised that the packet distributed to Board members includes a list of references and added that Mr. Mannix is the CEO of Andres Medical Billing. In his efforts to develop a strong partnership with Westmont, he has been reducing the rate Andres charges and has a long history of working with Westmont in the past.
- Also in the packet, Chief Weiss indicated is a list of some of the items that could be billed for with this program and suggested fees, providing for a projected return to the Village of \$83,144 per year. Mr. Mannix indicated that it takes about two or three years in the program to generate the \$83,000+, with the first year averaging about 50% of that amount.
- Mayor Gunter inquired about any negative feedback, to which Chief Weiss responded there would be concern from the community about charging for these services but that these claims would be submitted to the individual's or business's insurance carrier, and whatever the insurance carrier doesn't pay could be written off. That would be the only negative and there are many fire departments, as well as police departments, that are using this as a revenue stream.

- Mr. Mannix indicated that the Village would have the flexibility of customizing the program on how it handles residents vs. non-residents, and that most claims are covered by homeowner's or car insurance companies. A village employee will be in charge of sending bills over to his company for processing. He added that this recovery program is widely accepted on both coasts and is just beginning to be implemented in greater number in the Midwest.
- Finance Director Parker added that if the Village chooses to implement this program, it will need to do so at rates that meet insurance industry standards.
- Trustee Barry indicated that he would prefer to have further discussion without the vendor present.
- Trustee Addington inquired how this would affect staffing, to which Chief Weiss responded that there would be no impact. It is an automatic billing like the current EMS billing process. Deputy Chief Riley would be the contact for fire billing, as Dir. Dralle is for EMS billing. No additional staff would be needed.
- Trustee Barry inquired if there are two other comparable companies, to which Mr. Mannix responded that there are certainly other companies providing billing services but they run into connectivity problems. He stated that Firehouse software is complex and importing information from it to a billing program is a tedious process. Chief Weiss added that the Fire Department didn't look at those other companies when they considered this program three years ago because of the excellent history of working with Andres Medical Billing. If the Board wishes, he will put together that information for the Board to review.
- Discussion of topic concluded with Chief Weiss advising he would get comparison information for the Board's review.

Community Integrated Healthcare Home Services

Chief Weiss advised that they have been discussing implementing this program for the past year and are now at a point in time where they would like to move forward and offer this service to our residents. He advised that the application is ready to be submitted and we are now requesting that \$5,000 be added to wages this next year to help cover the costs of hiring back one person to conduct these home visits.

- EMS Director Dralle indicated that she reached out to Good Samaritan and they wrote the program. Westmont will be the first department to provide this service.
- Once the application is approved by the State, medics will be able to check on residents who have been discharged from the hospital. There could be one patient a week or twenty. She advised that they will first try to work with staff on duty, and then if demand increases, a medic will be hired back to cover.
- Chief Weiss pointed out that Westmont has the most senior citizens in DuPage County. Private nursing companies will be getting into this and it is his desire that our Department be in the forefront and provide our residents with the best service.
- When a hospital notifies us of a resident requiring home health care, an appointment will be set up with the resident. Services provided could include wound checks, medication review, rearranging furniture to reduce injury/fall risks, etc.
- EMS Director Dralle advised that our medics already assist elderly patients by putting up grab bars, etc., but with this program, we make sure they are taking the correct medications and understand their discharge orders from the hospital. Our medics will have to attend a thorough training program. They will need to

know the actual protocol that the patient needs to follow.

- The Village will be reimbursed by the hospital requesting the service, who will in turn bill the patient's insurance.
- In response to Trustee Liddle's inquiry, Chief Weiss advised that Good Samaritan, LaGrange, Hinsdale, Edward, Elmhurst, and Bolingbrook will be participating hospitals.
- Trustees Barry indicated this promises to be a great program for our residents.

POLICE DEPARTMENT

Countywide Records Management System (NET RMS)

Chief Mulhearn advised that a new system is in the works for CAD records management similar in nature to the Starcom radio system communications interoperability and will provide records interoperability between all the departments in DuPage County.

- With the current system, Westmont's records clerks have to enter all the information for parking tickets, booking information, etc., into the system and then print off the paperwork for the officers to take to the County, where it is entered again. This applies for all 35 agencies in DuPage County and becomes overwhelming.
- A vendor for records management has been chosen and they are in the process of signing the contract. The new system will be operational in 2017 and no later than 2018.
- Benefits of the new system include:
 - Incidents will be managed more efficiently.
 - Ability to share information from beginning to end of the process.
 - More information available to responder.
 - Entry of information once is used throughout the justice system workflow.
 - More complete and reliable offender and location information.
 - More awareness of incidents throughout the system.
 - Better reporting and analytical data.
 - More efficient and effective use of funds.
- First year cost to Westmont is expected to be a \$33,689 one time cost, with following years' annual costs averaging between \$11,000 to \$14,000. IT Director Liljeberg has advised that this will be cheaper than our current system.
- Cost allocation will be determined by:
 - ETSB will pay what is statutorily possible and what their budget allows.
 - Local agencies will need to pick up the other user RMS license and RMS specific implementation.
 - RMS costs are spread proportionally to agencies, including the Sheriff, based upon the percentage of user pool and MDCs.
 - There is a set license price for the maximum number of concurrent users, so the more agencies that participate, the less it will cost each agency.
 - County will house equipment and provide base level support for the system.
 - Additional end user support will require additional funds.
- Costs will not be in the coming budget year, but the next fiscal year will see additional outlay.
- Chief Mulhearn stressed the benefits of interoperability, adaptable to current

fingerprint system, provides state-of-the-art applications and technology, provides electronic information exchange (move paperless), and eliminates redundancy.

- As a side note, Chief Mulhearn advised that the one-hundredth NARCAN save was just made in DuPage County. Lake County is just starting to train their officers and CVS will begin stocking NARCAN.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

Vehicle Replacement Program Changes / Leasing Alternatives

Chief Weiss advised that there have been a number of very expensive repairs to Fire Department vehicles in the last six to seven months for two engines and the ladder truck. The ladder truck has been out of service for over two months and the main tower ladder will not pass its ladder inspection. In addition to other major repairs to this vehicle, the Department would have to invest \$8,000 to \$10,000 to repair the ladder to the level that it would pass inspection. The ladder truck also has severe rust in the suspension area. Virgil Viscuso and staff are recommending reviewing replacement of this truck and purchase or leasing a new truck with a water tank and pump. This vehicle would cost about \$300,000 less to purchase than a tower ladder truck. We have also considered reducing our engines down to three but because of our vehicles breaking down, he is hesitant to get rid of both reserve engines. Approximately three weeks ago, Fire administrative staff and Finance Director Parker met with Global Truck to discuss leasing programs. There are several options available which Deputy Chief Connolly and Finance Director Parker will review:

- Deputy Chief Connolly stated that the Department is looking to reduce its fleet as a practical way to address needs and budget concerns. We already had in the budget last year to take one engine out, which is still the ultimate goal, but upgrade on the North side from an engine to a quint. A quint would have an aerial ladder, ground ladders, pump, tank, and hose. He noted that if you take out the pump and tank to save money, the vehicle will have no resale value.
- Firefighters on the Engine Committee looked at the buildings in town that would not be served well by a 75' ladder on the quint vs. cost benefits to the Village. To their credit, as much as they would like the more expensive quint option, they concluded it is not the right thing for the Village. Since that time, though, Pierce has developed a quint that has a 107' ladder on a single axle that could replace the truck we have now.
- Department staff and Engine Committee members recommend that the Village move as quickly as possible. The Department needs a reliable truck and get rid of the older, higher maintenance vehicle.
- Finance Director Parker reviewed the budget impact :
 - Declare Engine 1822 as surplus immediately and sell when replacement arrives. No change to budget; this is as identified in FY 15-16 Budget.
 - Authorize purchase of quint at one-time impact to FY16-17 budget of \$174,000. If leasing, ongoing savings will be a negative \$12,700.
 - Minimum maintenance on Truck 1839 is estimated at \$20,000 for FY 16-17.
 - Selling Engine 1832 after quint is delivered will result in having one more vehicle than budgeted, but no extra costs.
 - Review leasing options.

- Deputy Chief Connolly advised that timing is critical. A new ladder truck takes a minimum of a year to spec and build. There are some alternatives, such as taking a truck already on the line in early production or a truck built as a demo. He added that the longer we wait, the risk of higher maintenance costs on the present truck increases. The sooner the Village moves, the better.
- Following further discussion, Trustee Nero recommended discussing the purchase of a quint at the next Board meeting.

Duty Chief Program Changes

Chief Weiss indicated that Deputy Chief Connolly will be stepping down from the on call Duty Chief Program in January of 2017 but remaining on in his administrative duties. The on-call Duty Chief is paid at the ½ rate. As a result, the Department will need to add a fourth part-time, in-station Duty Chief to cover his on-call Duty Chief shifts. This will result in a cost of \$16,000 in wages beginning in January and an additional \$16,000 to \$18,000 for FY 17-18. This follows the succession plan that was adopted by the Village Board.

With D/C Connolly's move away from this position, the Department will implement all Duty Chief's working in-station.

There being no further business to discuss, Trustee Addington motioned to adjourn, to which Trustee Liddle seconded. The meeting subsequently adjourned at 5:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lori Brady
Recording Secretary