

Lee Township
Special Meeting
September 28, 2020

The Special Meeting of the Lee Township Board was called to order at 6:30 pm at the Lee Township Hall located at 877 56th Street, Pullman Michigan.

Members Present: Trustee Hatfield, Trustee Galdikas, Supervisor Owen and Clerk King.
Absent: Treasurer Lowery

The purpose of the meeting to discuss the position of Director of the First Responders and the staff issues with the First Responders.

Clerk King met on September 17th with Chief Chamberlain, Assist Chief Kasinger and Pam Rawson regarding the issues that the First Responders had been facing for some time with staffing as well as looking into the possibility of merging the Fire and First Responders and also considering having a full time person managing the department. Clerk King provided all with the budgets for both First Responders and the Fire Department along with questions that should be considered. Some of the things to be considered 1.) Does the budgets support a full-time staff person? 2.) Are there budget items that can be adjusted to free up revenue to fund position? 3.) What duties would the position be responsible for? 4.) Would this leave available funds for paying for increased staffing if recruiting were possible? 5.) How would the position benefit the First Responders in correcting the current staffing issues?

Chief Chamberlain stated that it was clear that the funds do not support a full time person and that with the high number of calls and the limited staff it created a problem with the department operating as required by their license. He stated that training was going to be necessary and that he would approach the fire personnel to see if they would be willing to take the necessary training. It also takes months for a person to get licensed and many are not fully prepared for what they will encounter after they start working. This leads to burn out of those scheduled and some feel that it is too much emotionally and no longer want to continue.

The number of calls and the nature of the calls make it a challenge for those that are currently with the Fire and First Responders because most work day time jobs and are not able to be listed on the schedule daily and still function with their other responsibility. Asst. Chief Kasinger has been covering most of the calls with the help of Rawson and also the new recruit Becca Waldschmidt, but this still leaves many shifts open that are required to be covered by the license.

The board had questions such as the amount of time that it takes for LIFE EMS to respond after the First Responders have already gotten to the scene. First Responders continue servicing family on the scene even after ambulance arrives.

In discussing possible solutions, mutual aid with other local communities was addressed, but with further discussion it was determined that it would not be likely a solution because of the extra call load it wouldn't be feasible for the neighboring township to handle with their own calls.

It was discussed to have a public recruiting event as well as through social media and also provide an opportunity for those interested to be able to ride along so that they fully understand what the responsibilities are before committing to training.

It was suggested by P. Rawson to have the fire fighters run alongside with a responder so that they can assist as they currently having training and are allowed to do this under their current training and license. This would free up schedule by only having one Responder per shift instead of two.

Training was discussed which is a 90 day training that takes place 2 nights per week and 2 Saturdays and is set up on various dates.

Also merging the two departments could be of help and Supervisor Owen will investigate the possibility. Clerk King stated that the First Responder's millage did include Fire language but the Fire Department millage would need to be looked into further.

The last issue to be discussed was who would cover the Director position. Currently P. Rawson has been doing the payroll and most of the scheduling. Asst. Director R. Irely is responsible for ordering and the licensing paperwork with the State.

A motion was made by King and seconded by Owen to have P. Rawson as the Interim First Responders Director retroactive to August 2020. Roll call vote was taken: Yes – Hatfield, Galdikas, Owen and King. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Galdikas and seconded by King to move forward with combining the First Responders with the Fire Department with the funding sources established. All voted "Aye." Motion carried.

Motion was made by Owen and seconded by Galdikas to adjourn the meeting at 8:12 pm.

Minutes Submitted by:

Jacquelyn King, Clerk