

Cedar Area Fire & Rescue Board
Regular Meeting
Wednesday, November 7, 2024 at 2:00 pm
Cedar Fire Department

Call to Order

Chairman Greg Julian called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance. Present on roll call were Greg Julian, John DePuy, Chris Comeaux, and Ron Schaub. John Imboden was absent and Tim Stein was acting as the alternate for Cleveland Township. Andy Doornbos and Dana Boomer was present as staff.

Discussions/decisions will be for the direction of the Cedar Area Fire & Rescue Board as previously published, per the Open Meetings Act. Potential quorums of township boards will be noted in the minutes.

Citizens Comments – None

Consideration of Agenda – The board briefly discussed the agenda. MERS Plan added to new business. **Motion by DePuy to approve the agenda as amended, second by Schaub. All in favor, motion carried.**

Minutes: Approval of October 3, 2024 General Meeting Minutes – **Motion by Schaub to approve the October 3, 2024 General Meeting Minutes as presented, second by DePuy. All in favor, motion carried.**

Correspondence Received – Chief Doornbos had received four thank you letters from citizens from last month for services provided by the department.

Presentation – None

Financials –

Boomer had previously provided a handout to the board which detailed the financial statements for October. The board briefly discussed the vendors payable and payroll. The updated unpaid bills detailed list was presented, and briefly discussed.

Comeaux moved to accept the October vendors payable as presented, Schaub seconded. All in favor, motion carried.

DePuy moved to accept the October payrolls as presented, Comeaux seconded. All in favor, motion carried.

Schaub moved to accept the October financial statements as presented, Stein seconded. All in favor, motion carried.

Unfinished Business:

- a. Second Station – Julian stated there is a plan in place, with committees in place to move forward with this discussion. Julian and DePuy have had some preliminary discussions regarding station location. Schaub and Comeaux will be working on the financial committee side of the discussion, with Imboden as an alternate. Julian stated that the Kasson Township Board wants to continue moving forward with this process for the development of a new statement.

The board and Chief then discussed the recent Enterprise article regarding a potential merger with Elmwood. The article made the conversation sound much more advanced than it actually is, but there is potential to the discussion. There are potential areas for benefit, but no formal conversations have been had. Julian has spoken with Elmwood Supervisor Shaw, and Elmwood is interested in additional conversations regarding a joint venture. Julian does not see any downside to continuing a conversation of this sort, and it has potential to improve service to the eastern side of Solon Township.

Stein asked what the financial committee would be tasked with determining – Julian replied it would be the operational costs of running a second station. Stein asked how operational costs can be determined if it is unknown what kind of building would be built? Julian stated that the numbers would be based on a full-service station. Stein stated that the staff has already put together numbers for this, why isn't the financial committee just reviewing those numbers? Julian stated that the financial committee will review those numbers, and may also review other topics. Stein asked when the financial committee would be able to send out information to the townships on how this could impact their budgets – Comeaux and Schaub stated after the first of the year.

DePuy stated that this is an opportunity to bring in additional partners versus just the four townships. Cedar and Glen Lake are already working together on training. There needs to be a broader look taken at services for the southwestern portion of the county. The Park Service is negligent in paying for their share of the services that Glen Lake and Cedar provide. The board discussed the options for partnerships with other departments. Stein stated that if the discussion involves adding townships to the interlocal agreement, there is language that needs to be added to the interlocal agreement prior to it being approved, as time is running out on that. Julian stated that a meeting will need to be set up with the supervisors to work on the interlocal agreement, likely in December. Stein stated that the benefits to all of the departments will need to be identified as the discussion moves forward.

- b. Union Negotiations – Comeaux and Julian are moving forward with discussions with the union.

New Business:

- a. MERS Plan – Doornbos, Boomer and Maus have been working with the MERS plan to develop documentation for a potential switch to this plan for the department’s retirement needs. Draft resolution and plan documents were distributed to the board electronically. The board discussed the potential for a change – this is a change that has been requested by the union but after research Doornbos recommends making the change. The company handling the retirement is not specified in the union contract. The board requested legal review of the documents prior to the December meeting, through Craig Lange.
- b. Any New Business – None

Reports:

- a. Fire Chief – The Chief’s Report was provided in the meeting packet. Doornbos summarized his report.
- b. Department Staff – None
- c. Chairman – Julian stated that he continued to be in touch with supervisors from surrounding townships about matters related to the fire department.

Citizens Comments – Trina Pleva – She gave kudos to those involved with the recent audit – it was good to see that good news. She agrees with DePuy that the Park does not do their fair share, and there is a lot of aid given to the Park from the local departments. She wonders about reaching out to state and federal representatives.

Board Member & Chair Comments – DePuy stated that he has been told from the federal level that the federal government will not pay any taxes or assessments for their land, or for responses on their land.

Stein stated that there has been a crew from Indiana Dunes working in the Park for more prescribed burns next spring. Doornbos stated that Cedar Fire has interacted with them during previous prescribed burns, and they are a very good crew.

Next Meeting Date – The next regular board meeting is scheduled for Thursday, December 5, 2024 at 2 pm.

Stein moved, Schaub seconded to adjourn the meeting. With no further business, Julian adjourned the meeting at 2:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Dana Boomer
Recording Secretary