

Cedar Area Fire & Rescue Board
Regular Meeting
Thursday, December 5, 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, John Imboden, and Ron Schaub. 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 – Jeff Shaw, Supervisor in Elmwood Township – The trustees in Elmwood Township are interested in a discussion of becoming part of Cedar Area Fire & Rescue. There would need to be meaningful discussions about whether this would be beneficial to the citizens of both service areas. If this is something that makes sense and both boards are interested in the discussion, he would like to move forward with a discussion. Julian stated that he and the Fire Chief and other interested individuals will be looking into this, and the representatives can report on this item at their township board meetings.

Steve Yoder – He is the new County Commissioner for District 7, and wanted to introduce himself to the fire board.

Consideration of Agenda – The board briefly discussed the agenda. Comeaux asked to add the Addition of Members to the agenda under New Business. **Motion by Comeaux to approve the agenda as amended, second by Schaub. All in favor, motion carried.**

Minutes: Approval of November 7, 2024 General Meeting Minutes – **Motion by DePuy to approve the November 7, 2024 General Meeting Minutes as presented, second by Schaub. All in favor (Imboden abstained), motion carried.**

Correspondence Received – None

Presentation – None

Financials –

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

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

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

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

Unfinished Business:

- a. Second Station – Julian stated that the committees are in place. The committees will provide updates at the January meeting. Imboden sent an email with questions regarding long-term capital planning to Julian – this will be discussed further in the chief’s report section.
- b. Union Negotiations – The draft union contract was distributed to the Fire Board for review. Comeaux and Julian stated that they are in agreement that this contract can be approved. Imboden asked to go into closed session to discuss the draft contract.

Imboden moved to go into closed session for a strategy session connected with the negotiation of a collective bargaining agreement at the request of the board. Comeaux seconded. Roll call vote: Imboden (yes), DePuy (yes), Schaub (yes), Comeaux (yes), Julian (yes). The board went into closed session at 2:21 pm.

At 2:57 pm, Schaub moved to return to open session. Imboden seconded. All in favor, motion carried.

Comeaux stated that language will be developed to finalize the short-term disability section. This will be reviewed by attorney Craig Lange given to the union for ratification. If the union chooses to approve the draft contract, the board will then hold a special meeting to approve the contract.

- c. Retirement Plan – Craig Lange reviewed the retirement plan documents. He recommended that the union attorney review the information as well, and so Doornbos will be sharing the documents with the union for their review.

New Business:

- a. 2025 Meeting Schedule – A draft meeting schedule was distributed (see attached). The board briefly discussed. **Imboden moved, Schaub seconded to approve the meeting schedule for 2025. All in favor, motion carried.**
- b. Board Policies – Job Descriptions – The board discussed the draft job descriptions provided by the staff for the Fire Chief, Bookkeeper, and Recording Secretary, which are the positions that report directly to the board. Comeaux asked to have a related bachelor’s

degree requirement added to the Bookkeeper description. A letter was also provided by Doornbos documenting the history of Boomer's evolution of duties (see attached). The board discussed. Comeaux thinks that beyond this letter, there should be a discussion about the overall compensation for this position. Imboden wonders about the legality of an employee working for both the board and the department – this has not been brought up as an issue by the auditors, but can be looked into. Doornbos and Boomer are requested the review and potential approval of the job descriptions, and the acknowledgement of Doornbos' letter. Julian stated that the job descriptions are a starting point for the ongoing evaluation of the employees that report to the board. DePuy thinks that it's also important to set goals and objectives for employees for the evaluations. Julian says that approving the job descriptions is a first step for the process of evaluations.

DePuy and Julian will be the committee to negotiate the chief's contract, which is coming up in March, and to develop a plan for board staff evaluations. The board returned to a brief discussion of the job descriptions. **Comeaux moved to approve the job descriptions for the Chief of Department, Bookkeeper, and Recording Secretary, with the change to the bookkeeper position as discussed, and acknowledge the letter from Doornbos. Imboden seconded. All in favor, motion carried.** Julian stated that he has been in touch with MTA over the years, and it is not uncommon for people to hold multiple positions.

- c. Addition of Members – Julian covered the history of the discussion regarding adding new townships to CAFR, including the lack of language in the interlocal agreement regarding the addition of new townships. Doornbos has developed a list of items that would need to be accounted for if a new township is to be brought into Cedar Area Fire & Rescue. Julian stated that there will be an upcoming interlocal agreement meeting, and potential language will be discussed. Comeaux is interested in the idea of moving forward with a discussion with Elmwood Township. Imboden approved of exploring the options for pooling resources. Julian stated that growing the department is a good thing, and he has had good feedback on discussions about Elmwood.

Jeff Shaw stated there is interest at the level of the Elmwood Township board level. They are looking to Cedar Area Fire & Rescue for guidance on how this might move forward. Imboden asked for a brief summary of Elmwood – they run approximately 500-600 calls for year, from one station, covering one township. They have 9 full time unionized employees plus a full time chief, and run BLS service with ALS covered by MMR out of Traverse City. Elmwood is not expecting to save money by doing this, they want to improve service. Comeaux states that there are duplicated resources and efforts. DePuy thinks the board also needs to look at the west side of the service area and partnerships with Glen Lake.

In his email, Imboden referenced the need for a 20 year real estate plan, research on operating costs for a new station, and the cost increases from BLS to ALS. There has been a 63% growth in costs over 5 years, which is justifiable, but needs to plateau at

some point. Related to the 20-year real estate plan, this would be a plan to determine where the best location for stations and services would be 20 years from now, not just putting stations where they might be needed now. Julian will forward the email to the rest of the fire board. Imboden asked about policies and procedures. Doornbos and Boomer have been working to put together a Google Drive with all of the board level policies and procedures, and will share this with the board.

d. 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 – No report

Citizens Comments – Jeff Shaw – Thank you on behalf of Elmwood for the discussion today.

Board Member & Chair Comments – DePuy stated that he has been working with ESAC to map water points between Empire and Traverse City – he will work with Doornbos on this.

Next Meeting Date – The next regular board meeting is scheduled for Thursday, January 2, 2025 at 2 pm.

Imboden moved, Schaub seconded to adjourn the meeting. With no further business, Julian adjourned the meeting at 3:44 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Dana Boomer
Recording Secretary

Cedar Area Fire & Rescue

Meeting Dates – 2025

All meetings will take place on the first Thursday of each month at 2 p.m. unless otherwise indicated.

January 2, 2025

February 6

March 6

April 3

May 1

June 5

July 3

August 7

September 4

October 2

November 6

December 4

November 27, 2024

Fire Board members,

Over the last couple of months, there have been a few questions come up regarding the job descriptions for positions appointed by the Cedar Area Fire & Rescue Board. When staff reviewed what was on file, it was found that there were draft job descriptions that had not been officially approved by the board. This finding resulted in staff again reviewing the draft documents for content and the agenda item for this month's meeting requesting review and final approval of the job descriptions for the Chief, Bookkeeper and Recording Secretary positions.

Adding to the questions about the job descriptions, there have also been previous conversations with the department's auditor who would like for us to better outline the compensation for duties performed by Dana Boomer related to her board appointed and department positions. This letter will serve as a history of the evolution of duties and current status of her position, to provide the requested clarification, given her multiple roles within our department.

In October 2015, Ms. Boomer was appointed as the Recording Secretary by the organizational committee that would eventually become the Cedar Area Fire & Rescue Board and it was agreed that she would be compensated at a rate of \$20/hr plus mileage. Ms. Boomer's first meeting as Recording Secretary was the November 2015 organizational committee meeting.

Starting in 2017, Ms. Boomer began to be assigned additional administrative tasks outside of the appointed role of Recording Secretary, and in these tasks reported to the Fire Chief. In 2022 an official job description for an Administrative Assistant reporting to the Chief was developed and added to our department job descriptions.

Throughout late 2018 into early 2020, Ms. Boomer attended training for and was certified as a Firefighter I/II and EMT-B and began responding to incidents along with her other duties. These responses often happened during the day while in the office completing work related to her other appointments.

In February 2019, the board appointed Ms. Boomer to take over the role of Bookkeeper from the retiring David Milliron, beginning April 1, 2019. No specific compensation for Ms. Boomer was discussed at the Board level while adding the role of Bookkeeper and she continued to be paid at the rate of \$20/hr for time worked plus mileage through March 31, 2019.

On April 1, 2019, at the initiation of retired Chief Comeaux, Ms. Boomer began to be paid a rate of \$500 per pay period, plus \$20/hr for any hours over 20 in a pay period to complete the duties of Recording Secretary, Bookkeeper, Administrative Assistant to the Chief and as a Firefighter/EMT-B responding to calls. Due to Ms. Boomer regularly surpassing 20 hours per pay period, on April 16, 2021, her compensation was increased to \$750 per pay period, plus \$20/hr for any hours over 40 in a pay period. That compensation agreement is still in place today.

The above is my best effort to simply describe the complex nature of the multiple roles Ms. Boomer holds in our department and how she is compensated for all of it. I am requesting acknowledgement by the board as to how we are currently compensating Ms. Boomer to fill the roles of Board Appointed Recording Secretary and Bookkeeper, along with her roles as department Administrative Assistant to the Chief and Firefighter/EMT-B.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Respectfully,

Andrew T. Doornbos
Chief of Department
Cedar Area Fire & Rescue