

March 23, 2024

CALL TO ORDER: Supervisor Julian called the special meeting of the Kasson Township Board to order at 6:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL: Members Present: Greg Julian – Supervisor, Julia Carter – Treasurer, Dana Boomer – Clerk, Roger Noonan – Trustee, Tad Carter - Trustee

Member(s) Absent: None

Staff Present: Committee Member Fire Chief Andy Doornbos

AGENDA - Noonan moved, J. Carter seconded to approve the agenda as presented. All in favor, motion carried.

COMMENTS FROM PUBLIC – None

APPROVAL OF BILLS TO BE PAID – Boomer presented the invoice for Cedar Area Fire & Rescue for April. **T. Carter moved, Noonan seconded to approve the payment of the invoice as presented. All in favor, motion carried.**

SPECIAL BUSINESS

The fire station committee is currently composed of the Township Board plus Fire Chief Andy Doornbos. The board had extensive discussion on the need for a new fire station and the steps that should be taken to begin that process. T. Carter asked about how this fits in to the interlocal agreement. Boomer responded that it is the responsibility for the township(s) that want a new station to pay for a new station and the capital maintenance of that station, with the support and input of the fire board. It would be the responsibility of the fire department to cover operating costs for a new station. Initial long-term operating budget projections are showing the ability to cover the operating costs of a second station without exceeding the budget increase amounts allowed by the interlocal agreement. The fire chief has stated that a new station is needed on the west side of the service area, as there is approximately half of Kasson Township that is outside of a 5-mile radius from any 24/7 staffed fire department in the region, even considering mutual aid departments.

T. Carter would like to see a survey of the public regarding whether they feel a new station is needed. The board discussed this, and the rest of board would like initial renderings and concepts developed in order to present to the public at public meetings for discussion. There was consensus that there will need to be extensive public discussion and review of funding options prior to moving forward with final design work and construction of a station.

The board moved to a discussion of a potential bid process for rendering and design work. Communication with Gourdie Fraser has laid out three potential next steps prior to the commencement of construction: 1) Conceptual Renderings and Cost Estimate, 2) Community Engagement/Funding Options and Selection, and 3) Final Design. The board can bid out all of these at one time, or bid on each step separately.

J. Carter wants to make sure that any bid contract is staged in such a way that if the township decides not to move forward at any point, they do not have to pay for additional stages. The board discussed and there was consensus to request bids for all three stages, with a provision that the contract can be cancelled without penalty after any stage if the township decides not to move forward.

The board discussed whether to move forward with a request for proposals or a request for qualifications, or some hybrid of the two. Boomer is concerned that a request for qualifications looks only at the qualifications of the firm being hired, and prices are not considered until after a firm is selected. She would like to see a hybrid model considered, so that the board can consider both qualifications and prices. The board had consensus to consider a hybrid proposal model. Boomer and Julian will work to develop a hybrid request for qualifications/request for proposals. This will be presented to the board at the May regular board meeting for approval.

After approval of the request document by the board, it will be distributed. Any interested firm will be able to submit a proposal with qualifications, and the document will also be specifically sent to firms that have a history of recently designing fire stations in the region. For now, the board will request that firms submit proposals within 30 days of receipt of the request, unless that timeline is found to be unreasonable.

The board discussed the potential design of a fire station. There was a general consensus amongst the board that the exterior of the station be based on the light-colored board-and-batten style seen on the most recent station built in Peninsula Township, with red or black doors. The concept of doors that open horizontally was discussed, and these will be present in conceptual renderings. The board had consensus that the doors should be composed at least partially of glass, to allow a view into the station and to allow more natural light into the station. The board did not have substantial input on the interior layout of the station. Doornbos stated that he would request three drive-through bays for equipment, in addition to the living quarters for the crew, crew offices, and other necessary rooms such as training areas and maintenance and storage rooms. His main request for the exterior of the building is to have a large well installed so that the station can act as a year-round water point for fire suppression.

The board briefly discussed the location of the station. Doornbos says a new station in Kasson Township would be a major benefit for the west side of the service area. There are two potential general locations being considered – one near CR-616 (Burdickville Road) and Tremain Road and one near M-72 and Maple City Road. Both of these locations have pros and cons, as seen in the initial mapping document presented by Chief Doornbos prior to the April regular board meeting.

Noonan would prefer the potential location on M-72, as it is surrounded by commercial areas and farms, with minimal residences. This location would improve response times to incidents on M-72 in both Kasson and Solon Townships. There is being a large amount of growth along M-72, both commercial and residential, and service to these areas and the existing farms and commercial uses needs to be improved. Noonan believes that Kasson and Solon Townships are going to see continued growth that needs to be better served by a fire station along M-72. Julian is interested in further

exploring the station location on CR-616 due to the proximity to the school, Myles Kimmerly Park and other recreation areas, and Maple Valley Nursing Home. Doornbos stated that there are target hazards in both locations that would be better served by a nearby fire station. Boomer stated that the department is working on a growth and occupancy analysis for the Cedar Fire service area. Board members asked that current and projected response times and available utilities access be added to analysis documents for consideration.

A date was not set for the next special meeting. The request for proposals/qualifications will be discussed at the May regular board meeting, and once a reasonable number of proposals have been received a special meeting will be set to discuss them. Julian has been in touch with a number of other township supervisors and engineering/design experts who have participated in building recent local stations, and he feels it would be potentially beneficial to ask some of these people to participate in future meetings to help with future steps. Multiple of these experts have recommended the hiring of a project manager experienced in fire station design and construction to oversee the construction of the project.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Don Drabik – The location and floor plan of the station need to be decided before you look at what the outside of the station will look like. The company that does the design work should also do the renderings.

Chris Hauke – She is very glad that they are doing a full fire hall, and stated that the board should build a little bit more than you think you need, because development is coming whether we want it or not.

Tim Dowd – Jeff Shaw is a hands-on superintendent in Elmwood, which has a great fire station that is relatively new, and he would be a great resource for the township. Bringing him in to get some input would be helpful.

Mike Verschaeve – He is grateful to the board for caring about the zoning, with the Enduro hearing coming up. The Kasson Township Neighborhood Association appreciates the township supporting the zoning ordinance, and wants to see the ordinance tightened up. The fire station is a great idea. There are a huge number of seniors in the service area and township, and they need faster responses.

Marv Grahn – As a taxpayer, he would like to see what this will cost. You can't just come up with just "we need a second station", there needs to be a concrete proposal for the taxpayers to study. Given the township is growing, it is good to address this in advance, rather than waiting until the department is overloaded.

BOARD COMMENT: Noonan wants to make sure the board continues moving forward. Julian thanked Boomer for keeping the minutes while participating in the meeting. The building in Cedar has been there a long time, and has had a lot of effort put into the building by the townships of Solon and Centerville. With Kasson as a partial owner of CAFR, the township has been able to take advantage of that station. However, that station was not designed to be a full-service ALS facility with administrative staff covering four townships, and Kasson Township needs to move forward with providing another modern facility for the fire department. The station in Cedar must be kept, and Kasson must do their part to improve the department. Julian wants to see the new station on a main road, both for improved responses and so the citizens can see and access what their tax dollars have paid for.

Motion by J. Carter to adjourn, second by Noonan/**PASSED 5-0**. Meeting adjourned at 7:15 PM.

Submitted by:

Dana Boomer, Clerk