

**LOWELL AREA FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES BOARD**  
**MEETING MINUTES**  
**Monday, January 11, 2016**

1. ROLL CALL

Jim Herb called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

Members Present: Jim Herb, David Pasquale, Susan Reister, Tim Wittenbach, Jeff Altoft and Carlton Blough

2. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Herb mentioned he was going to move the hiring of new fire chief as the next item.

IT WAS MOVED BY PASQUALE and supported by REISTER to approve the agenda as corrected.  
Yes – all. Motion carried.

3. HIRING OF NEW FIRE CHIEF

Phil Dougherty of Bowne Township stated he has been on the department for 23 years. Dave Murray of Ada Township stated he has been the chief for two years. Grand Rapids Township Supervisor Mike Devries said he was appointed 18 years ago. He added it is nice to contribute to the township things that will last into the future. The fire authority members then introduced themselves. Reister presented a “rough draft” job description. Herb mentioned our retiring Chief Frank Martin had worked full time for the City of Lowell and could fill in as fire chief when needed. Since he retired from the City, he has become more administrative. Devries suggested that the authority analyze numbers including number of runs, time, and day of runs and then staff to accommodate those needs. He commended the fire authority for not rushing into the hiring of a chief. He said the staff at Rockford ambulance handles the medical calls for Grand Rapids Township. Wittenbach questioned if anyone had fire millages? Murray said Grand Rapids Township has a public safety millage. Dougherty mentioned he disagreed with the qualification on the job description that mentioned a college degree. He thought a degree was asking too much. Wittenbach mentioned our department currently has cafeteria pay for administrative work. Dougherty mentioned 90 percent of his work is administrative work. He added training is delegated as well as truck inspections. Dougherty mentioned 30 % of their calls are medical while the rest are fire related. Blough questioned how the chiefs would go about hiring a new chief. Devries responded he would spend the first two weeks working with the current department and how the operation worked. He mentioned he would be happy to assist in the process. He added job descriptions, chain of command and camaraderie are very important to have in a department. Devries said Lowell has a good group of people and that he is still learning every day. He added there have been several chief turnovers recently. Dougherty mentioned the authority should thank the current acting chief. He said there is a lot of weight on him for filling in.

4. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Approval of the December 14, 2015 meeting. Wittenbach requested under item 7D to read “Wittenbach mentioned Mike Devries assisted Ada Township in the selection of a new chief.

IT WAS MOVED BY PASQUALE and seconded by BLOUGH to approve the minutes as corrected.  
Yes – all. Motion carried.

5. APPROVAL OF THE FINANCIAL REPORTS.

Olin mentioned the authority had a \$144,000 cash balance. She said the City and Lowell Township will be making their third quarter payments. Reister questioned the purchase to Best Buy in the amount of \$3,513 on the accounts payable report. Witherell responded it was for the purchase of laptops and tablets for the tech improvements.

IT WAS MOVED BY PASQUALE and seconded by REISTER to approve the financial reports as presented.  
Yes – all. Motion carried.

6. PUBLIC COMMENT.

No public comments were received.

7. OLD BUSINESS

Review of restated "Authority Agreement". Letzmann presented a clean copy for the fire authority of the fire agreement. Wittenbach mentioned in regard to section 2.3 funding formula, it has now been in existence for six years. He would like to research the funding formula and how the municipalities are charged. Blough felt this would be the time to review the formula. Herb mentioned this item be tabled until February. Altoft mentioned it may make a difference where the calls are going in the township.

8. NEW BUSINESS

A. Election of officers

Moved by Pasquale, supported by Reister to nominate Jim Herb as chairman. Yes – all. Motion carried.

Moved by Reister, supported by Altoft to nominate Pasquale as vice-chairman. Yes – all. Motion carried.

Moved by Reister supported by Pasquale to nominate Blough as secretary/treasurer. Yes – all. Motion carried.

B. Approve 2016 meeting dates.

Herb mentioned as part of the first organizational meeting, 2016 meeting dates must be approved.

IT WAS MOVED BY WITTENBACH and seconded by REISTER to approve the 2016 meeting dates. Yes – all. Motion carried.

C. Residency requirement discussion.

Letzman said in regard to residency laws, the state of Michigan has it spelled out as part of public law. He added, in 1999 police and fire unions did away with the residency requirement. He added the law provides 20 miles distance. Pasquale questioned 20 miles from the station or district.

D. Determine actions and tentative schedule for hiring of a Fire Chief.

Letzmann suggested a job description and operating procedures to start with. Herb suggested a committee meet to work on fire statistics including fire runs statistics and the formula.

E. Televised authority meetings proposal.

Blough said Lowell Township is currently not televising their meetings. Devore mentioned you would be surprised how many people watch Lowell City Council meetings. Altoft mentioned Lowell Light and Power has a stationary camera that uploads into you tube. Herb said it is something to think about.

F. Discussion of LCTV and Englehardt Funds grants submission opportunity.

Witherell mentioned purchasing 40 radios for the department through a Cable Grant in the amount of \$15,000 including batteries and chargers with a contribution from the authority. Chief Bukala said he is pursuing purchasing the same grant for radios.

IT WAS MOVED BY WITTENBACH and supported by ALTOFT to pursue a grant from the Lowell Cable TV to purchase radios for the department. Yes all. Motion Carried.

Witherell mentioned pursuing an Englehardt grant for the purchase of a breathing air compressor and fill station as well as a gear extractor.

IT WAS MOVED BY BLOUGH and supported by REISTER to put in for both grants including Englehardt and Fema to purchase a breathing air compressor, fill station and gear extractor. Yes all. Motion carried.

- G. Presentation and review of restated "Bylaws".  
Herb mentioned this item is tabled at this time.

#### 9. COMMITTEE REPORTS

- A. Capital appropriations. No reports were received.
- B. Financial. No reports were received.

#### 10. FIRE CHIEF REPORTS AND UPDATES

- A. Vanoverbeek presented reports from the new fire software including major incident type and detailed breakdown by incident type. He added there were 24 fire incidents and 51 medical responses for the month of December. The total for the year is 771 calls. In house training on the new air-packs is now complete. The new tools purchased through the grant are being mounted on the engines. Witherell is overseeing the medical and fire reports that are sent to NFIRS. Captain Witherell is also doing the inspections and site plans along with Corey Velzen.

#### 11. MEMBER COMMENTS.

- A. No comments were received.

#### 12. DATE FOR NEXT MEETING

- A. Herb said a committee consisting of Wittenbach, Atoft, Blough and Shannon will discuss fire run statistics at a worksession on Wednesday February 20 at 6:00 p.m.

IT WAS MOVED BY PASQUALE and supported by Reister to adjourn at 6:00 P.m. Yes – all. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

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Jim Herb, Chairman

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Suzanne Olin, Recording Secretary

