Fire and Rescue Budget Workshop  
Friday, January 10, 2020 – 11:00 a.m.  
Leland Township Office  
123 N. St. Joseph St., Lake Leelanau  

MINUTES

PRESENT:  Supervisor Susan Och, Clerk Lisa Brookfield, Treasurer Shirley Garthe, Trustee Michael Collins, Trustee Tony Borden  
GUESTS: Chief Dan Besson, Geoff Niessink  
Ms. Och brought the workshop to order at 11:01 a.m.

Discussion

Chief Besson distributed packets containing information concerning the operating budget in terms of staffing the Leland station (including 5 different staffing options), EMT and Paramedic Wage Comparisons, and the equipment and training budget. The fire department is also negotiating a new contract with the full time firefighters that were hired. They are working under the old contract currently. The voters supported the millage proposal. It went from 1.5 to 1.8 mils. The millage produced $287,000 more for this year. Surrounding areas are paying more to their employees in the Fire departments. For the current year, our salary/wages budget has been tight. Three EMT’s upgraded their licenses and earn more now as a result. We also have 6 paramedics instead of 3, which costs more in salaries. The contract expires in March, 2022. The millage covers the length of the contract. Training expenses are included in the equipment budget.

Chief Besson discussed the several budget options for different models of staffing the Leland station either continually or by other part-time models. There was discussion about what the taxpayers are expecting from the millage on how to staff the Leland Station. Mr. Collins stated that the taxpayers may believe that by approving the millage they would get 24/7/365 staffing of the Leland station. Other members of the Board believe that the public is aware that staffing both stations 24/7/365 may not be possible. Wages alone would cost $160,000 (figure may have been based on a 2017 or 2018 wage scale). Chief Besson provided a chart showing what each of the 5 different options would cost in terms of being over or under budget. Chief Besson discussed his preference for either Option #3 ($32,190 under budget) or Option #5 ($4,190 under budget). Chief Besson currently add staffing to the Leland station in the event that predicted weather conditions would warrant added coverage.

Chief Besson discussed other various items in the rest of the budget. He also stated that unscheduled overtime costs are not very predictable.

BOARD COMMENT

Ms. Och has suggested that Chief Besson should review the Board’s comments made at this meeting and then come up with what he thinks is the best option. Mr. Collins felt that the Board’s direction to Chief Besson should be stated at a public meeting to demonstrate transparency in government.
Mr. Borden doesn’t feel that staffing at Leland 24/7/365 is necessary. Ms. Brookfield voiced her agreement with Mr. Borden. There was further discussion about the logistics of having one person at the Leland station when an emergency situation would require a different vehicle or another person. It is not always practical or efficient to have staff and equipment in two different places. Chief Besson also mentioned that the collective bargaining process will have an effect on the budget.

**ACTION:** Mr. Collins moved to direct the Chief to look at Option #1 or Option #4 and fine tune the budget. **No support.**

**ACTION:** Ms. Brookfield moved to request the Chief to give an analysis of the current staffing model being augmented with extra staffing. **No support.**

**ACTION:** Mr. Borden moved that the Chief come up with an option that provides some level of additional staffing relative to the Leland station that recognizes peak and off-peak need demands consistent with balancing his budget based on the millage approved in May of 2019; supported by Ms. Brookfield. **Motion passes 3-2.**

Chief Besson will report on this motion and a possible subsequent plan at the Board meeting on January 13, 2020.

**ACTION:** Ms. Garthe moved to adjourn the meeting at 1:27; supported by Mr. Collins. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cindy Kacin, Recording Secretary

Date Approved: ____________________

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Susan Och, Supervision                Lisa Brookfield, Township Clerk