

SCIO TOWNSHIP FIRE SERVICES GUIDANCE COMMITTEE
Regular Meeting of the FSGC
December 7th, 2022
9:30 AM
Scio Township Fire Department with Remote Participation
1055 North Zeeb Road

MINUTES

1. Call to order
 - a. Chair David Read called the meeting to order at 9:30 AM.
2. Roll call
 - a. Secretary Ryan Yapple called roll. Present: Goodsitt (remote), Groden, Hyde, Flintoft, Read, Baird, Perry, Yapple(remote). Ex Officio member Chief Houde was also present.
3. Adoption of the agenda
 - a. Agenda approved without objection.
4. Public comment
 - a. Rob Pattinson – Thank you Chief Houde, Lt. Baird, Captain Cooke and Assistant Chief Armstrong for the meeting with a small group of residents last week. Scio Township Fire Department is the most important department as it is the only department that saves lives. Why doesn't the Fire Chief have control of the funds that he is responsible for? Why does someone in the township who has no experience in running a fire department have control of these funds? Scio Township has 5 paid on call employees who get paid \$15 an hour for shift work and \$21 an hour for work on active emergencies. If the fire department had the ability to pay more than minimum wage, we would likely have more firefighters. It takes 12-18 months to become a full-time firefighter that the Chief is fully trained.

Mark Perry your analysis of that double tax aspect of that mistake and trying to resolve with a SAD is extremely important for the Board of Trustees to understand. Kathleen Brant highlighted how recent public benefits of development projects have seemed backwards. Crossroads has proposed giving \$80,000 to the fire department while contributing \$500,000 to pathways. All these public benefits ratios are backwards. Public benefits should benefit all residents. There are too many pet projects in Scio that benefit..... We need to read the ESCI report. We need to get an actuary who understands the ISO ratings and the benefits to residents of reducing our ISO score. In 2019 the fire department really needed a 1.9 mill but the powers that be chopped it down to a 1.35 mill. This gutted the fire department of their ability to do their job safely.

Chief Houde responded to questions from Rob Pattinson – 705 N. Zeeb dispatches police, Pittsfield Township holds the HVA/Fire Department dispatch center. Everyone in the county fire wise is dispatched by HVA.

- b. Jillian Kerry – When you give us the report is it the time they call from the emergency or the time that is received from dispatch?

Chief Houde – I report two different times. I report the time it takes HVA to process the call and the time it takes for Scio Township Fire Department to arrive on time. Our call processing time averages around 2 minutes. Our higher priority calls are quicker, the lower priority calls take a bit longer.

Jillian asked Bob Hyde how public benefits related to PUD's work

- Bob Hyde responded that the Board of Trustees have a subset of people who approve these agreements.

- c. Public comment closed without objection.
- 5. Approval of minutes
 - a. Minutes approved without objection.
 - 6. Communications and/or Correspondence
 - a. None
 - 7. Old business
 - a. Discussion of Options for recommendations to the Board of Trustees.
 - i. Option 1.5 does not require the purchase of a new rescue.
 - ii. Option 2 does have two rescue vehicles.
 - iii. Bob Hyde – I think we need to communicate with the BOT, they need to set the timeline. If we are headed towards option 3, they need to know things will be done.
 - iv. Clerk Flintoft – Ballot language, proposal, enabling ordinance and election date should be in all of our proposal to the BOT.
 - v. Mitch Goodsitt – Option 1.5 builds upon option 1. I think we need a chart to explain this to the public. In the chart I sent to Chief Houde, I included how we increase our millage over time.
 - vi. Bob Hyde – In order to get started on the building as early as possible, we need to use other funds. I don't know if it's better to start off at a medium amount and then go up/go down over time as the township tax base evolves. I would rather not start off at a minimum as we may not have enough funds to order new trucks for example.
 - vii. Mitch Goodsitt – It will take a lot of education, but I believe citizens will be supportive of this.
 - viii. David Read – We need to tell the public it will be X in Y time period.
 - 1. David Read – It is possible we may not get past Option 2 in the next 5-10 years; it depends upon our funding.
 - ix. Bob Hyde – Do we need a public education committee? Whether it's a subset of us staying on or new people.
 - 1. David Read – A firefighter or two, a few residents, people that are experienced with PR.
 - 2. Clerk Flintoft – It would need to be education but not a campaign.

- x. Chief Houde – If there is a new planning commission and a new board that Jackson Road needs to be 12 stories all the way down, things would change.
- xi. Mark Perry – As stated earlier, these comments are taken for what it's worth. I haven't been able to update the revenue forecast from last week's meeting. Committee recommendations was not in the original draft, that was option 1.5. I inserted that new paragraph to address option 1.5. We have talked about the cost of transport and implementation of the transport service. We are going to need to add administrative staff to address it.
- xii. Chief Houde – Scio Township Fire Department wants nothing to do with billing. It will be outsourced. If we have a \$450 BLS transport, the third party takes a percentage. The third-party biller ensures that the requirement, bills to the payer and then the fire department would receive \$330.
 - 1. Mark Perry – We have not had a discussion on how these administrative expenses work.
 - 2. Chief Houde – This is a standard contract that most EMS/fire services partner with a 3rd party contractor.
- xiii. Mark Perry – We ought to have a throttle/governor on the millage rate given that the economy improves or declines.
- xiv. Mark Perry – We may want to adjust the operating fund to be 12 months of operating capital. We would evaluate this each year.
 - 1. Clerk Flintoft – Can we only do this through PA 33 or through a millage?
- xv. Mark Perry – The ballot language needs to have an indicator of the governor throttle process.
- xvi. Mark Perry – We have talked about the millage covering operating and capital expenditures, it could go up and down. The other thought is we have ballot language with two questions, one on operating, one on capital. We know what it is.
- xvii. Mark Perry – This puts all your variables in the operating side. You don't necessarily know the variable expenses especially based upon your taxable value.
- xviii. Chief Houde – It doesn't make sense to bond for things with a service life lower than the bond length.
- xix. Mark Perry – You have a reserve of 1/10th or 1/15th or whatever the service life of those assets are to ensure that you have cash to replace the equipment.
- xx. Mark Perry – We had a discussion of public safety at a previous meeting. I think it would be less informative to the Board of Trustees if we didn't footnote it somewhere. Public safety in general is the bigger picture. It may not be an appropriate question to ask now. That police contract may break the budget.
- xxi. David Read – Would it be appropriate to cover this as a separate issue instead of a footnote with a paragraph. If we get one bucket of money, it may involve conflict.
- xxii. Mark Perry – This only takes care of ½ of public safety in 1,2,3,4,5 years down the road. The Board of Trustees would look foolish, it will blow up at some point.

- xxiii. Chief Houde – It's not much of a negotiation. It could be standalone police/standalone fire. The county has stated that there is a fixed cost per officer, here is what the cost is to use it.
- xxiv. David Read – Is there anything we can do to make the millage language easier to understand?
- xxv. Bob Hyde – We need to have an ordinance in addition to the ballot language.
- xxvi. Chief Houde – I will work with David to incorporate all the comments.
- xxvii. Mark Perry – Here is a list of available industrial properties within the township, not just the southeastern quadrant. We would still need a 10 ft ceiling.
- xxviii. Mark Perry – What's the impact of Ann Arbor staffing their own ambulance on Scio? That vehicle will be licensed to transport. Ann Arbor will be purchasing their own ambulance and will be licensed for BLS transport.
 - 1. Assistant Chief Armstrong – They transported 26 times during the trial in Ann Arbor.
- xxix. Mark Perry – Where does HVA get its money from? Fees and donations. Does the county give them some money? Not that Chief Houde is aware of.
- xxx. Chief Houde – We need a draft before Christmas. Is there a value of doing a 1-page summary?
- xxxi. Chief Houde – 2/13/2024 might be appropriate, November 7th would be the date if we want any revenue in calendar year 2023.
- xxxii. Mark Perry – Being subject matter experts vs. being advocates are two different things.
- xxxiii. Bob Hyde – The trustees must set this in motion.
- xxxiv. David Read – Can the fire department advocate?
 - 1. Chief Houde – No but the firefighters union could.
- xxxv. Mark Perry – Which option are we going with? The paper hasn't specifically stated it.
 - 1. David Read – Does Option 2 satisfy us for 10 years?
- xxxvi. Bob Groden – Let's look at this in five-year periods vs. 10 year periods.
- xxxvii. Bob Groden – Does Scio really want to put up skyscrapers? Where are the people coming from
- xxxviii. David Read – How can we do 1.5 without the space to house it.
- xxxix. Bob Hyde – How sharp does our pencil have to be in order to only have a 5 year plan?
 - xl. Mark Perry – Cautions the committee to not go back to the well. Repeatedly going back often wears taxpayers out.
 - xli. Bob Hyde – How do we implement this?

8. New Business

- a. There was no new business.

9. Public comment

- a. Pam Boyd – great conversation. I would like this group to get more education on HVA. Certainly, more fire departments are trying to be more inclusive. Before we put any more eggs in the HVA basket, we need to have more information.

- b. Jillian – Talking about 5/10-year millage timing, look at the election cycle. When the 2020 Board came in, they had to make a lot of big decisions. You may want to schedule the renewal of the millage in the 2nd/3rd year of a 4-year cycle. Regarding campaigning, as far as an official on any board/commission/committee you cannot talk/promote a millage. Mark, I agree with you, you probably should recuse yourself because of your unusual situation. Regarding combining the fire/sheriff special assessments under Act 33. I am not in favor of this as the police service is a contracted vs. being owned by Scio. If you look at some of the types of decisions that Ann Arbor has made, decisions unfold and build upon each other. We do have that potential while it is not immediate it is possible.
 - i. David Read responded we cannot follow up with the public as members? Jillian stated that you can talk to family, friends or neighbors on an individual basis.
 - ii. Mark Perry responded that he has deductibility information on the SAD
- c. Rob – Terry Soave thank you for using the website and making it easy to understand. I've stopped going through the township list to get to this committee, I've gone directly to the fire services committee web page. There are two packets, one is just the agenda, one is the full packet. In watching all these meetings, I didn't understand the two in/two out definition. That means there are four people on staff, so four people can respond. I think the \$1.5 million dollar mistake needs to be fixed sooner rather than later. The Chief hasn't had access to funds, he hasn't been able to hire. Scio Township only has 3 people per shift. We need to hire four more people. We don't need to wait for the millage. Don't disband this committee. This committee is perfect. You talked about coming back in 3 years, come back every year and make a recommendation to the BOT how the throttle is working. Mark thank you for highlighting your ethical approach and your ethics. In terms of getting things on the ballot, sooner rather than later. The ambulance for Ann Arbor, does that mean it's two years out to get an ambulance? They worked an arrangement where they had it produced for them, it will be ready in January.
 - i. David Read – isn't what Rob suggesting a fire board?
- d. Pam Boyd – Would you be willing to have a meeting in January?
 - i. David Read – it's a need, we need to see.

10. Adjournment

- a. Meeting adjourned at 12:01 PM