
MINUTES OF SYMMES TOWNSHIP WORK SESSION

DECEMBER 2, 2019

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. Elected officials present were: Mr. Phil Beck, Ms. Jodie Leis, and Mr. Kenneth Bryant.

Also, present: Kim Lapensee – Administrator.

Carol Sims was absent.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Beck made a motion to approve the Agenda. Ms. Leis seconded the motion. Motion passes.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Proposed Police Contract Increases. Mrs. Lapensee stated she prepared a summary of the changes for the Police contract. She stated that she went through all the costs that we have paid associated with that contract over the last 4-years. She went through all the costs with the board and how much we saved on the contract (or where we were under the cap) for not paying for the power car. She stated that she prepared a spreadsheet showing each year, when the power car was present in the township and how many hours they were not here. Ms. Leis asked about the number of accidents that have occurred over the last 4 years. Mrs. Lapensee stated that she prepared a summary for the accidents as well. She stated that we have had over 12 accidents that have cost over \$25,000 through the insurance and over \$4,000.00 have been paid for deductibles. Mr. Bryant asked if we wanted to explore the length of the contract we sign with the Sheriff. Mrs. Leis asked about the power car shift and how many runs did we make each year. Mrs. Lapensee stated that she if information on the sheet with the power cars. She stated that it shows the days they were here, days they were off and how many police calls we received that day. She stated that she has the data for 2016, 2017, 2018 and part of 2019.

The board discussed the power car and how we will have to pay for the full expenses after March even though they are not in the township. Mr. Bryant stated that he would like to see us do a 5-year contract so that it coincides with the levy and we can show the residents what the costs will be for that term. Mrs. Lapensee stated that she will ask to see how long of a contract we can get. Mr. Beck asked what the utilization of the power car is. Mrs. Lapensee stated that she does not know the individual impact of the power cars, but she feels that based on the sheer number of runs, they are needed each day.

Ms. Leis stated that when she was looking at the calls, she has noticed a fair amount coming from the highway. She stated that she feels that the State Highway Patrol should be handling the calls on the highway. She stated that she had a conversation with Lieutenant Smith about calling them more.

Mr. Bryant asked how we are being billed for calls. Mrs. Lapensee stated that we are billed per call, but the amount per call changes per month. She stated that if we moved back to the county for dispatching, we would be billed for fire and ems calls twice if they are associated with a police call because they are automatically dispatched with every call.

Mrs. Lapensee stated that another large expense for us is dispatching for the police department. She stated that the county has sent out letters that after the collection period ends for the Union Terminal project, they will be putting that additional sales tax money

into public safety by reducing dispatching costs for everyone. She stated that those fees are currently \$16.00 per call and will be reduced to \$10.00 per call in 2020 and \$5.00 per call in 2021. She stated that even though the county charges for more calls per each run, the cost will still be cheaper for us to switch. Mr. Beck asked about the PSAP costs. Mrs. Lapensee stated that we pay the minimum amount to the county for them to transfer calls. She stated that we currently pay over \$23,000.00 each year for a minimum cost.

Mr. Bryant stated that dispatching fees would also affect the fire contract and its duration. He stated that our current contract runs out in December, but we won't know the answer to the levy until March. Mrs. Lapensee stated that she spoke with the Fire Chief and told him we could only do a one-year contract (if proposed by the Board) because we would not have enough money for the three-year contract LSFDF has proposed.

Mr. Beck asked about the power cars and how that is billed now vs the new contract. Mrs. Lapensee stated that they will be passing the full amount of the cost to provide the officer to us plus their overhead. Ms. Leis stated that we investigated other agencies to provide this service and this is still the cheapest way to provide the service. Mrs. Lapensee stated that she feels that we should move to paying for three full-time cars 24/7 since we would now have to pay for the power cars and they may not be there and the number of calls we get each day (anywhere from 15 to 45 calls per day). Mr. Bryant asked about overtime. Mrs. Lapensee stated that overtime will now be included in that new rate of \$59.00 per hour. She stated that we will not be billed for it any longer. Mrs. Leis stated that she would like to see how it goes this year without the two power cars. She stated we can reevaluate in 2021. Mrs. Lapensee stated that the third car could also help with other traffic complaints we have received from other areas of the township (i.e. Camp Dennison, Humphrey, etc.).

Mrs. Lapensee asked the board if they would be interested in signing a contract for 9 months (April – December) without the power shift cars to see how it goes? Mr. Bryant stated that he would not do that. Ms. Leis stated that she does not want to have to keep renegotiating contracts. Mr. Bryant stated that it would cost us 2.2 additional officers to fill a third shift. Ms. Leis asked how much we saved over the last 4-years due to the power car savings. Mr. Bryant stated that we saved over \$600,000.00. Mrs. Lapensee stated that she has no idea how much mutual aid we give or receive through the Sheriff's office. Mr. Beck stated that his hunch feels that we need more than two cars but is hesitant to go to 3 cars per day. Mrs. Lapensee stated that they have stated at the finance committee that they have a hard time filling an 8-hour car. Mrs. Lapensee asked how they would feel about filling one 12-hour car instead of 2. Mr. Bryant asked when it would be staffed. Mrs. Lapensee stated that they would probably choose to fill it at night because that is when it is the busiest time of the day for runs.

There was a discussion over capital expenses and who pays for the radios, computers, guns, etc. Mrs. Lapensee stated that she does hear complaints about the channels we are on for our radios due to being with NECC. She stated that the other townships can't hear our traffic. She stated that those issues would go away if we switch to the county for dispatching.

Mr. Beck asked how we can control the administrative costs through the Sheriff. Mrs. Lapensee stated that we cannot control any of those costs. There was a discussion over the overhead costs and how much we would be paying for personnel costs for the Sheriff now (8% added on for each hourly rate). Mr. Bryant asked how much will the cost increase for 2020? Mrs. Lapensee stated that the cost will increase 18% because we were always under the cap due to the power cars. She stated that right now we are paying around 53.50 per hour (including benefits) and it will jump to \$59.00 per hour.

Mr. Bryant stated that we will have to pass something at our next meeting to be able to afford the police. He asked how much the contract will cost for 2020? Mrs. Lapensee stated that it will be just over \$1.2 million dollars. Mr. Bryant asked when we would run out of money to pay for police and fire. Mrs. Lapensee stated that we will run out of money in 2022 if we don't increase the levy. She stated that if the 1.5 mills does not get renewed, then it would be in 2021. Ms. Leis stated that she does not want to have the power car

anymore. Mr. Bryant asked if we went to 3 full-time cars would it cost around \$250,000 more than what we are paying now. Mrs. Lapensee stated yes. Mr. Beck asked about the RENU officer. Mrs. Lapensee stated that she did not really look at that option. Mr. Beck wanted to know if they can wear two hats if they need the officer on the road. Mrs. Lapensee stated no, RENU officers have different hours, wear different clothes, and drive different cars to blend in.

Mrs. Lapensee stated that she would like to see other items added to the contract. They include: Drivers license checks, drivers training, driver acceptability standards, and workers comp reimbursement (2016 & 2017 where we were erroneously charged).

Ms. Leis asked if we did not renew our contract with the Sheriff, what does the Sheriff have to statutorily provide us? Mrs. Lapensee stated that they are saying they do not have to provide us with anything. She stated that we would have to wait for a county unit to show up which could be hours.

2. Proposed Fire Contract Increases. Mrs. Lapensee stated that our contract runs out for personnel costs at the end of December. She stated that she did have a conversation with the Chief about only signing a one-year contract with them due to the timing of the levy. She stated that LSFD had proposed a three-year contract. Mrs. Lapensee went through the memo that the Chief provided to the board explaining his rationale for the costs and increases. She stated that they are asking for a 5% increase (which includes the peak time staffing costs from the old contract) for three years each year (15% over the length of the contract). Ms. Leis asked that we check with all the other fire departments to see what their costs are and how their departments are structured.

Mrs. Lapensee stated that the 2015 contract agreed to a contract increase from 52%/48% split to a 55%/45% split between us and Loveland. She asked the board why that came to be. Mr. Bryant stated that they had negotiated an increase due to the population split (since we have more people than they do). He stated that it needs to be revisited because they have more runs than we do. He stated that he feels that it should be based on usage. Mr. Bryant stated that we should go back and review that study from 2015 that backed up that contract language change so that we can see the logic behind it.

The board discussed their staffing and how the personnel costs have been determined. Mrs. Lapensee stated that she had asked the Chief what is included in the salaries and benefits and what the township is paying for. The board went through the spreadsheets provided by the fire department.

The board discussed the dispatching costs again and how that would affect their income but save our taxpayers money over the long run if the county reduces their fees. Mrs. Lapensee stated that we also must keep in mind our costs for maintain our buildings and that we will have to replace the Remington station sometime in the future. She stated that the building is over 25 years old and has been remolded before and we have replaced the doors and apron, the water line to the building, painted, replaced the HVAC system, etc.

Mrs. Lapensee stated to better understand all that we are paying for would we want to see a detailed bill for the personnel costs. She asked the board how they felt about receiving that and maybe paying when we receive the detailed bill at the end of the month instead of paying at the front? Mr. Beck stated that he thought it was a good idea and we should probably do that with the Sheriff. Mrs. Lapensee stated that we already receive a detailed bill with the Sheriff but that will end with the new billing. Mrs. Lapensee asked about peak time staffing and that it is not listed in the contract line item anymore. Mrs. Lapensee asked about other miscellaneous items that we provide that are not listed in the contract for us to pay for such as kitchen and laundry supplies and sheets. Mr. Bryant stated that Mr. Borchers allowed for them to pay for those items that were not specifically stated in the contract. Mr. Beck stated that it would be interesting in finding out what other townships pay for. Mrs. Lapensee stated that she will ask the other townships what they supply and what the structures of their organizations are.

Mrs. Lapensee asked about the subcontractor's language in the current contract. She stated that the contract states that they can hire any sub they want, and we can't unreasonably withhold our approval. Mr. Beck stated that we will still have the final approval.

Mrs. Lapensee stated that she will check into the following for the contract renewal: the formula for the costs – should be based on population and run volume, bill in the rear so we can see expenses, ask the other townships what they pay for as far as kitchen items, cleaning items, laundry and sheets, Wi-Fi, cable, etc. for their employees, ask what their plan is for peak time staffing (is it included in the total cost already), can we go month to month for the first three months until the levy is figured out, and what changes will need to be made if the levy does not pass.

Mr. Bryant asked how we will explain this to the public without signing a longer-term contract. Ms. Leis stated that we just tell everyone we will only sign a one-year contract until we know what the levy brings and then we will change to a longer term.

Mrs. Leis stated that the budget for Miami Township's fire budget is around \$4,000,000.00.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Zoning Resolution Proposed Changes. Mrs. Lapensee asked if we wanted to keep going to discuss the zoning changes or stop. Mr. Beck stated that he has no problem with the sidewalks being added because we have already talked about it. He stated that the next section is vague. Mrs. Lapensee stated that this section deals with the property maintenance issues we are having and can't enforce right now without one. He stated that "keep in good condition or good repair" is vague. Mrs. Lapensee stated that we have a fence right now that is leaning onto someone else's property and they won't fix it. Mr. Beck stated that we need to explain our intentions – the fence needs to be plumb and in an upright position. Mr. Beck asked about the grass statement – "everyone is expected to mow their grass". Mrs. Lapensee stated that we have some residents who mow their front yard but won't mow the rear yard and the rear yard neighbor must look at it. He asked about the compost pile and the setbacks. Mrs. Lapensee stated that she would like to make all the setbacks consistent and everything is at 5'-0" to make it easier to administer and that all sections are the same. Mr. Beck stated that it does not matter how far away from the property lines they are, it still smells. Mrs. Lapensee stated that it would be better for the township and the fire department to have a 5'-0" setback for fire access if needed (10'-0") total between house. She stated that you can't get a fire truck down the property line with a 3'-0" setback.

Ms. Leis stated that she would like some extra time to review this.

Mrs. Lapensee went through the sections quickly. She stated that the first section deals with adding sidewalks to all the main roads anytime there is a new lot created or a new house is built. The next couple of sections make all setbacks 5'-0" to be consistent (compost piles, sheds, etc.). She stated that the next section deals with paved aprons and driveways for all new driveways and parking surfaces. Mr. Bryant asked what we would do with panhandle lots. Mrs. Lapensee stated that we are having lots of drainage issues with people paving up to the property line and creating drainage issues for their neighbors. Mr. Beck stated that he thinks it would be okay to have gravel. There was a discussion back and forth about the positive and negatives of gravel driveways vs paved driveways. Mrs. Lapensee stated that we still need to think of a way to protect the downhill neighbor from the water. Mrs. Lapensee stated that the next section deals with the campers and RV's not being permitted to park in the front yard or on the street. Mr. Beck asked if there is a time period for loading and unloading. Mrs. Lapensee stated yes.

Mrs. Lapensee stated that next sections deal with accessory structures – she would like to move all setbacks to 5’-0”. She stated that the next section deals with the time period for a zoning permit. She stated that the zoning permit is now forever and there is no ending date. She gave the example that you could get a permit now and build something 10 years from now that may or may not meet the current code. She stated that Section 319 deals with variable message boards so that we can build our sign at Meade Park. She stated that the next section would be adding tree houses to accessory structures and that they must meet the setbacks. Mrs. Lapensee stated that the next section deals with fences and a setback from utilities (i.e. fire hydrants or any public utility).

Mr. Beck asked about the 3’-0” vs 5’-0” setback. He stated that all the yards are getting smaller instead of bigger and he feels that the setbacks should be at 3”-0”. Mrs. Lapensee stated that she would rather see a larger setback just in case for fires and if they have 10’-0” between buildings, there is access. Mr. Beck stated that he does not see the need for a larger setback.

Mr. Bryant made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Beck seconded the motion and the roll call vote was as follows: Mr. Bryant - ‘aye’; Mr. Beck - ‘aye’, Ms. Leis – ‘aye’.

Meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Approved:

Philip J. Beck, Board President

Jodie L. Leis, Vice-President

Kenneth N. Bryant, Trustee