

**CITY OF CEDARBURG/TOWN OF CEDARBURG
JOINT FIRE/EMS SERVICES
COMMITTEE MEETING
UNAPPROVED MINUTES
AUGUST 23, 2023**

A regular meeting of the Joint Fire/EMS Services Committee was held Monday, August 23, 2023, at the Town of Cedarburg, 1293 Washington Avenue, Cedarburg, WI Town Board Room, and online utilizing the Zoom app.

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Scott Gonwa at 7:00 p.m.

Roll Call: Present – City of Cedarburg – Scott Gonwa, Council Member Patricia Thome, Council Member Robert Simpson

Town of Cedarburg – Town Supervisor Larry Lechner, Town Supervisor Wayne Pipkorn, Don Borgwardt

Also Present - City Administrator Mikko Hilvo, Town Administrator Eric Ryer, Fire Chief Jeff Vahsholtz, Town Clerk Jack Johnston, and interested citizens.

STATEMENT OF PUBLIC NOTICE

At Chairperson Scott Gonwa’s request, Town Clerk Johnston verified that notice of this meeting was posted in accordance with the Wisconsin Open Meetings Law.

COMMENTS & SUGGESTIONS FROM CITIZENS – None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Committee member Thome made a motion to approve the July 24, 2023, Joint Fire/EMS Services Committee minutes, seconded by Council Member Simpson. Motion carried without a negative vote.

NEW BUSINESS

DISCUSSION WITH MUELLER COMMUNICATIONS ON THE PROCESS OF PREPARING FOR THE REFERENDUM*

Mia Tripi and Lauren George from Mueller Communications were present at the meeting and provided the Committee with a draft timeline of the process leading up to a potential April 2024 referendum. Included in their materials were deliverable timeline projections, including a draft options assessment being prepared by the second week of September.

Ms. Tripi also discussed the survey to go out to all City and Town households in the near future, reporting that they have proposed to close the survey responses and begin compiling responses by November 20. The results will be published approximately December 18.

Ms. Tripi and Ms. George continued with their presentation, showing a recently completed referendum package for Pleasant Prairie WI. She clarified that this example was slightly different than the Cedarburg referendum as no two communities are alike, nor are their needs when it comes to emergency responses. In the Pleasant Prairie example, improvements to both fire and police were

sought, for example. Ms. Tripi and Ms. George reported a similar deliverable to the Town and City would be completed in the coming months.

DISCUSSION AND UPDATE ON COUNTY ARPA ALLOCATION CHANGES

City Administrator Hilvo reported that the Ozaukee County Administrator is recommending a reduction in County ARPA funds for Ozaukee County Fire Departments. In the case of the Cedarburg Fire Department, this allocation reduction would equal a potential \$300,000 reduction in allocated funds, a decrease from \$600,000 to \$300,000.

The Committee asked if this allocation change had been approved by the full County Board. Fire Chief Vahsholtz and City Administrator Hilvo explained it has not yet been passed by the entire Board but has gone through Committee and will likely be voted on during the next Ozaukee County Board meeting in early September.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON 2024 FIRE/EMS BUDGET*

The new Fire/EMS shared services agreement (1/1/2024-12/31/2033) between the City and Town requires the proposed annual department budget to be reviewed by this Committee in the summer months and approved by both the Common Council and Town Board at their respective August meetings; following a presentation and/or Annual Report by the Fire Chief. This will allow the incorporation of Fire/EMS budget into the City/Town annual budgets. That practice will begin in 2024.

In regard to the 2024 budget, City Administrator Hilvo presented the draft 2024 Fire/EMS Budget to the Committee, noting the changes impacted by the potential reduction in ARPA allocation from Ozaukee County. He explained the current budget would use fund balance to cover that lost amount if need be, but hoped Ozaukee County would allocate what they originally intended. The budget shows the tax support from the City, as well as tax support from the Town broken out. He also reported to the Committee that the State of Wisconsin health insurance renewal information was released, with an annual increase year-over-year of 14%. He explained this budget includes a worst case scenario in terms of ARPA funding in order to have a budget in place that could function in that situation.

In terms of EMS Transport billing revenues, the Fire Department previously budgeted revenue at \$320,000 with expected year end at \$360,000. As of today, the Fire Department was at about \$400,000, so that should help in terms of revenues offsetting operating expenditures. For 2024, the Fire Department is proposing still budgeting EMS transport billing revenues on the conservative side in hopes of exceeding the budgeted number as Fire Department budgeting is transferred from the Fire Department to the City finance department.

As for expenses, salaries were budgeted at a 3% increase, with the hope of eventually introducing a step program. Overtime pay was budgeted at \$20,000. Part-time salaries were also budgeted for an increase due to the introduction of a paid-on-call (POC) method for call responses for the part-time staff at CFD. He did note that any staff already on the full-time payroll that would respond to calls for service by the Fire Department would continue to be paid their hourly wages until overtime is triggered, which would then be 1.5 times their regular wage. This only applies to hourly employees. Staff is still determining how this would impact salaried employees under the same circumstances.

The Committee directed staff to present the draft Fire & EMS budget to the respective municipal bodies.

DISCUSSION ON THE ROLE OF THE COMMITTEE

Chairperson Gonwa asked the Committee to discuss its role going forward. Town Board Supervisor Lechner noted the Committee should serve as advisory to both the Town Board and Common Council on budgetary matters per the terms of the 10-year shared services agreement, as well as continue discussions in regard to the referendum. The shared services agreement establishes the role of the Committee, along with the annual budget approval process and Annual Report presentation by the Chief to the Town Board and City Common Council at their respective August meetings.

Don Borgwardt asked when the deadline to submit the referendum question was. Clerk Johnston reported it was due in mid to late January and Town and City staff would work cooperatively to ensure timely submittal.

CONFIRM NEXT MEETING

The Committee agreed to hold the next meeting on September 27, 2023 in the City Hall Council Chambers beginning at 7 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Don Borgwardt, seconded by Council Member Simpson, to adjourn the meeting at 8:46 p.m. Motion carried without a negative vote.

Jack Johnston
Town Clerk