

**CITY OF CEDARBURG/TOWN OF CEDARBURG
AD HOC JOINT FIRE/EMS SERVICES
COMMITTEE MEETING**

August 12, 2021

A regular meeting of the Ad Hoc Joint Fire/EMS Services Committee was held Thursday, August 12, 2021 at Cedarburg Fire Station #2, 1350 Covered Bridge Road and via the Zoom app.

The meeting was called to order by Fire Chief Jeff Vahsholtz at 7:00 p.m.

Roll Call: Present – City of Cedarburg – Council Member Robert Simpson, Scott Gonwa, Daniel Den Boer

Town of Cedarburg – Town Supervisor Bill Wattson (via Zoom), Don Borgwardt, Daryl Herrick

Also Present - City Clerk Tracie Sette, Town Administrator Eric Ryer (via Zoom), Fire Chief Jeff Vahsholtz, Deputy Chief Joseph Hintz, and interested citizens.

STATEMENT OF PUBLIC NOTICE

At Chief Jeff Vahsholtz’s request, City Clerk Tracie Sette verified that notice of this meeting was posted in accordance with the Wisconsin Open Meetings Law.

COMMENTS & SUGGESTIONS FROM CITIZENS - None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Daryl Herrick made a motion to approve the July 8, 2021, Joint Fire/EMS Services Committee minutes. Daniel Den Boer seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

DISCUSSION ON 2022 FIRE DEPARTMENT STAFFING LEVELS; AND ACTION THEREON

Chief Jeff Vahsholtz began the discussion by describing the new full-time position added to the 2022 budget. The position begins July 2022. The City is open to adding this position to the budget; however, the Town of Cedarburg is struggling to fund this position. The cost split between the City and Town would be approximately 60/40.

Town Board Member Bill Wattson reiterated the reasonable goal for the Department, as agreed upon by the Committee, is a 7–8-minute call response time. He would like to discuss how large of a staff is required to meet that goal. Chief Jeff Vahsholtz explained he will research the optimum staffing level and report his findings at a future meeting. He also briefed the Committee on a potential grant the City could apply for, through the State of Wisconsin, to help fund full time staff members.

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Chief Jeff Vahsholtz informed the Committee that at the Administrator/Fire Chief meeting, it was determined an RFP will be done to conduct a study to gain detailed information regarding the requirements of creating a Joint Fire Department. A referendum would most likely have to take place should the Committee decide a Joint Fire Department would be most beneficial. Ultimately, the Committee decided to focus efforts on how to increase service levels strictly for the City and Town residents until further direction is obtained from the Administrators/Fire Chiefs.

Council Member Robert Simpson received feedback from many neighbors in the community which confirmed that many do not know the Fire Department operates completely on a volunteer basis.

Chief Jeff Vahsholtz will collaborate with Dan Den Boer, staff members, and other municipalities to develop the sufficient number of staff required to support the 7–8-minute response time the Committee set as the benchmark goal. This information will need to be shared with taxpayers as well.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

REPORT ON THE STATUS OF NEIGHBORING MUNICIPALITIES

Chief Jeff Vahsholtz shared that the City of Mequon conducted research to determine a level of staffing and hired three (3) new full-time Battalion Chiefs.

The Village of Thiensville is exploring the Ashwabenon Fire Department model where full-time Police officers are also trained Fire Fighters.

The Village of Belgium, Waubeka, and the Village of Fredonia are not interested in participating in a consolidation.

The Village of Grafton is currently negotiating with the Village of Saukville to consolidate services.

DISCUSSION ON EMS SERVICES BUDGET; AND ACTION THEREON

Chief Jeff Vahsholtz and Dan Den Boer explained they have raised EMS rates and simplified to a flat fee structure. The new rates and fee structure will be shared at the next meeting.

DISCUSSION ON ESTABLISHING A LEVEL OF SERVICE FOR FIRE AND EMS FOR THE CEDARBURG COMMUNITY; AND ACTION THEREON

The Committee established at the July 8 meeting that the optimal level of service is a 7-8 minute response time.

IDENTIFY FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS; AND ACTION THEREON

The Committee would like to discuss funding options at the next meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

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Daniel Den Boer made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:05 p.m. Council Member Robert Simpson seconded, the motion passed unanimously.

Tracie Sette
City Clerk
City of Cedarburg