

APPROVED
Cedar Area Fire & Rescue Board
Regular Meeting
Wednesday, April 3, 2024 at 2:00 pm
Cedar Fire Department

Call to Order

Chairman Greg Julian called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance. Present on roll call were Greg Julian, Chris Comeaux, and John Imboden. Ron Schaub was absent and Trina Pleva was present as the alternate for Centerville Township. John DePuy was absent. Andy Doornbos and Dana Boomer was present as staff.

Discussions/decisions will be for the direction of the Cedar Area Fire & Rescue Board as previously published, per the Open Meetings Act. Potential quorums of township boards will be noted in the minutes.

Citizens Comments – None

Consideration of Agenda – The board briefly discussed the agenda. Union contract negotiation dates was added under New Business. **Motion by Imboden to approve the agenda as amended, second by Pleva. All in favor, motion carried.**

Minutes: Approval of March 6, 2024 General Meeting Minutes – **Motion by Comeaux to approve the March 6, 2024 General Meeting Minutes as presented, second by Imboden. All in favor (Pleva abstained), motion carried.**

Correspondence Received – None

Financials –

Boomer had previously provided a handout to the board which detailed the financial statements for March. The board briefly discussed the vendors payable and payroll. The updated unpaid bills detailed list was presented, and briefly discussed.

Imboden moved to accept the March vendors payable as presented, Pleva seconded. All in favor, motion carried.

Comeaux moved to accept the March payrolls as presented, Pleva seconded. All in favor, motion carried.

Pleva moved to accept the March financial statements as presented, Comeaux seconded. All in favor, motion carried.

Unfinished Business:

- a. None

New Business:

- a. Part-Time Employee Hiring – Doornbos recommended the hire of Anthony Forton as a part-time FF/Paramedic. He is a long-time FF/Paramedic in the area, and also has experience as a contract paramedic in the Middle East, as well as running his own EMS training company. Comeaux seconded the recommendation. **Imboden moved, Comeaux seconded to approve the hiring of Anthony Forton as a part-time FF/Paramedic effective April 3, 2024. All in favor, motion carried.**
- b. Second Station Assessment – Needs Analysis – The packet today includes copies of the letter from Kasson Township to Cleveland Township regarding a potential new station and the discussion by Cleveland in their March board minutes. Cleveland Township does not feel that a station in the previously discussed vicinity of CR616 and CR669 would substantially improve service to their township, so they are not interested in pursuing this construction. Kasson Township’s board feels that there is a need for improved service on the western side of the service area, and would like to proceed with the exploration process for the construction of a new station.

The need for a new station has been stated by previous and current fire chiefs of CAFR, as well as discussed by the Fire Board. Kasson and Cleveland Township have been discussing this need for the last two years, and looking for a potential location for a new station. Julian summarized the history of the discussion between the two townships, leading up to the letter and responding minutes distributed in the packet. Kasson Township would like to continue to pursue a new station, unless the Fire Board receives information that a new station is not needed.

Julian would like to see the department and board digest the information received from Kasson and Cleveland, and he would like to see a new recommendation come forward from the staff and board regarding what is needed for the four townships to give direction for the townships to pursue. Imboden reported that while the topic has been brought up at multiple Cleveland board meetings, it hasn’t been substantially discussed in depth until the March meeting. The western side of Cleveland is fairly unpopulated, and in terms of cost benefit, a new station would be a minor benefit and a large cost for Cleveland Township. *Imboden stated that in addition to the cost- benefit issue, Cleveland is also sensitive to how supportive the citizens have been in funding the substantial improvement in safety over the last several years and is concerned about another substantial increase in the millage rate.*

The board discussed the need for a second station, the demographics of the townships, the location of calls, and other topics. Comeaux and Doornbos stated that both the population and calls of the service area fall into a “shotgun” pattern, with no major pockets of calls. Julian asked to bring the conversation to a Fire Board level and a discussion of what is best for the citizens of all four townships. Comeaux suggested hiring a consultant to

conduct a study. Imboden reiterated that he does not believe the benefit of a station on the west side outweighs the capital and operating cost to the department and townships.

The board continued the discussion of whether there is a need for a second station. The board discussed the potential for a study for determining the need for a second station and a location. The cost is unknown for a study at this time. Kasson is interested in moving forward on a station to improve service to their township; if Cleveland Township is not interested in participating, the ideal location for Kasson Township likely moves south of the location previously discussed for a joint-township station. Doornbos is currently working on pulling data to determine an ideal location for Kasson Township alone, as the previous location recommendation was based on a station that was ideal for Kasson and Cleveland Townships together. The board determined that they would go back to their township boards to discuss this issue, to determine the interest in moving forward on this issue. In addition, study costs will be investigated by staff.

- c. Union Contract Negotiation Dates – Julian stated that he has received a communication that the union is interested in moving forward with the negotiations for the new union contract, potentially starting prior to the June board meeting. Julian and Comeaux have been on this committee prior, and would like to stay in those positions. There has previously been an alternate named – the alternate position was discussed and will be finalized in May. All details for negotiations will be finalized in May.
- d. Any New Business – None

Reports:

- a. Fire Chief – The Chief’s Report was provided in the meeting packet. Doornbos summarized his report.
- b. Department Staff – Kasson and Centerville have re-appointed DePuy as the member-at-large, and Cleveland re-appointed Imboden as their representative. Cleveland and Solon are unknown at this point as to whether DePuy has been re-appointed – Imboden and Comeaux will check with their township boards.
- c. Chairman – The board briefly discussed officer positions – they will be retained as current.

Citizens Comments – Pleva asked what the protocol is for citizens who drive themselves to the station for care. Doornbos stated that if the staff is at the station they treat the patient and transport if necessary. It is best if the people driving to the station call dispatch so that dispatch can let the station or staff (if they are away from the station) know that there is a patient in route.

Board Member & Chair Comments – Comeaux stated that the staff has been extremely professional when he sees them in the ER, especially on the recent CPR/grass fire call. Maus stated that the reporting party who called in the fire and patient did more and better than many bystanders do, in that he stopped to assist (rather than calling in the fire while continuing to drive), performed CPR as a layperson, and assisted department staff on scene. Maus stated that

department staff would like to see the bystander receive a commendation if he is interested in such.

Next Meeting Date – The next regular board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 1, 2024 at 2 pm.

Pleva moved, Imboden seconded to adjourn the meeting. With no further business, Julian adjourned the meeting at 3:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Dana Boomer
Recording Secretary