

Emergency Services Committee Meeting on August 8, 2017

A meeting of the Watab Emergency Services Committee was called to order at 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday, August 8, 2017 by Chair Craig Gondeck. Those present were Supervisors Craig Gondeck, Lloyd Erdmann, and Todd Waytashek, Clerk Pat Spence, Treasurer Maureen Graber, Jason Krueger, Bob Raveling, Dick Raveling, John Olson, and Ed Kacures Jr. Chair Gondeck turned the meeting over to Supervisor Waytashek, who reported on the Baldwin Fire Department Tour. Photos were shown of the building, and details of the visit were shared by those who participated.

Highlights included:

1. It may be beneficial to have the overhead doors going off the side of the building to help with future expansion, if needed.
2. Add a slide to the presentation summarizing impressions the committee has of the fire departments visited.
3. Next visit is on August 19th at 9am with Palmer Township. Those going on the tour should meet at the town hall at 8:15am.
4. Sheriff Heck would like to be invited to a meeting to discuss having space available for a deputy when in this part of the county. Supervisor Gondeck will contact him about whether they would like to have a punch key code on the front door for their use.
5. Chain of Lakes Fire Department ran ads in three local newspapers and in township newsletters to recruit fire fighters. A letter was not sent out.
6. Dick Raveling read the study he did on impact on homeowners' insurance policy rates if the township builds its own department. His study was distributed to committee members and is on file at the Clerk and Treasurers' offices.
7. Maureen Graber reported on her discussion with American Family Insurance. For fire risk, they quite using ISO ratings and are going strictly by distance of your home from the fire department. Fire risk is a small factor in the cost of your homeowner's insurance.
8. Include a slide in the presentation that homeowner's property insurance may go up or down depending on your own credit rating, home construction, distance from the fire hall, etc. Collectively, the committee believes that building a fire department in Watab will not adversely affect most of the residents. It is important for residents to check with their own provider. For those that are impacted by ISO rating, water supply is the key factor. The township will need to identify all the water sources that are usable, including the dry and wet hydrants.
9. Supervisor Waytashek made additions to the slide "Good Ideas."
10. Treasurer Graber reported on her discussion with Gold Cross. Out of 82 sites, Watab's location comes in as their number two preferred site.
11. The committee discussed the pros and cons of offering emergency first response for medical calls. All agreed that it would be nice to have, if we can afford it. We need to identify if we have people in the township with the skills needed for first response. Gold Cross can be the primary provider, and Watab can work toward supporting them.

12. It is important to send a fire engine on every call.
13. The committee discussed what it wants to recommend to the citizens regarding having a township fire department. Supervisor Waytashek would like to create a draft recommendation of further discussion at the next committee meeting. All agreed that the next step is to prepare two budgets: (1) Capital Outlay for the building and equipment and (2) Operating Budget. That can then be compared with what the township is currently spending. Jason Krueger emphasized that one of the biggest selling points to convey to the voters is to have a bar chart with the costs over a ten-year time that compares costs of contracts with other departments versus a township department; hopefully, the costs would balance out in a ten-year time frame. John Olson suggested using annual four percent cost of living increases. The committee voted on whether to move forward. A unanimous vote was to prepare a recommendation with the cost analysis for the township residents.
14. If the citizens are favorable to starting a township fire department, the committee will address the type of construction for the building. Supervisor Waytashek will contact the architect for the Chain of Lakes Department for further information. The Palmer Township visit will give the committee information on a concrete building.
15. Clerk Spence was asked to check on the tax base for Baldwin Township.
16. Cove Development hydrant may be a potential water source for a fire department at the town hall site.

The next committee meeting will be Tuesday, August 29th at 6:30 p.m. at the Town Hall. The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m. Everyone was thanked for their input.

Respectfully submitted by Clerk Pat Spence