

Emergency Services Committee Minutes for Tour of Palmer Township Fire Department

The Emergency Services Committee of Watab Township met at the Town Hall at 8:15am on Saturday, August 19, 2017 to carpool to the Palmer Township Fire Hall near Clear Lake. Those participating were Todd Waytashek, Ed Kacures, Craig Gondeck, Maureen Graber, and Pat Spence. They met Roger Johnson, Palmer Township Treasurer, at 9:00 a.m. at the fire hall. Roger was also the project manager for the construction of the building which includes the town hall, fire hall, Sherburne County Sheriff's area, and a commons area.

The fire hall is seventy-four by seventy-six feet and was constructed in 2006 and 2007. There are four overhead doors both front and back side of the building; only three are seen from the interior, because a wall separates the sheriff's department bay. An additional 2,200 square feet is used as a sheriff's department office space. This has an area for a receptionist, offices, meeting room, and interrogation rooms. They have a separate computer system. The sheriff's department donated half a million dollars for construction and signed a fifteen-year lease to have space at Palmer Township. In addition, they pay monthly utilities. The sheriff used his own funds from jail rental.

Palmer is a substation of the Clear Lake Fire Department serving Palmer Township, Clear Lake, and Clear Lake Township. They allow 28-32 firefighters; 14 are stationed at Palmer Township.

Roger covered the following:

- A monitor shows which firefighters are responding and where they are traveling tracked by pagers.
- Copeland from Eagan did the construction; Keenan Architects from St. Cloud did the design.
- He recommends having two bathrooms rather than the one unisex bathroom they have in the Fire Hall. There are handicapped bathrooms with showers in the Commons Area.
- On the main floor, there was a dispatch room, break room, and mechanical room.
- He recommends having gas furnaces; they have in floor heat with gel/water.
- They had red signs on their stair ways that indicated which breakers control different units, such as the air exchanger and furnaces located on the second floor and roof.
- Their washer and dryer were on the mezzanine; he thought they were mostly used for cleaning rags.
- Doors are 14-feet high.

- There is a weight room and training capabilities on the mezzanine level.
- They considered both block and pre-cast construction and decided to go with pre-cast, which cost \$74,000 more than block at that time.
- They started construction in spring 2007 and were operational that October.
- They have rapid-recovery heaters in the corners of the fire hall ceiling for when the overhead doors are opened. In floor heat is set at fifty-six degrees.
- The electric bill for all three buildings is about \$600 per month.
- Floors are epoxy on concrete. There were gas and oil collection plates in each bay that are drained to an outside eight-thousand-gallon tank. Black strips mark the low spots.
- Equipment includes: a pickup/grass rig; hazmat trailer; two rescue rigs – one at Palmer and one in Clear Lake; tanker 27 and a new engine, which cost \$235,000. Both are poly. The Argo is used for grass fires; the boat is used mostly for training. It was donated by the DNR. Foam was on hand as they do backup for the St. Cloud Airport.
- Palmer Townships' cost was \$1.3 million, but that includes the town hall, fire hall, commons area, and sheriff's space. They bonded for \$900,000.
- Palmer pays 51% of the operating budget, about \$100,000. The shares are determined based on the Net Tax Capacity of each of the three units of government.
- Population of Palmer Township is 2,800.
- Trucks fill with water at the back wall, where they back up to the fill well area. Roger said that you need a variable speed pump if pumping from a well. Their well pumps 400 gallons a minute, so it takes about 8 minutes to fill the tanker.
- They have a dual fuel generator (natural gas and LP) that is started every Monday at noon for testing.
- He recommends a red/green light signal at the overhead doors for safety of letting a driver know that the overhead door is fully lifted.
- Sheriff's staff cannot use the fire hall space, and fire fighters cannot use the sheriff's space. They can all use the commons area. Sheriff pays utilities for his areas.
- County business can be handled in the Sheriff's area so residents don't have to travel to the courthouse in Elk River.
- Roger's contact information is 320-743-2792 and rblakers@midco.net. Send him an email, and he will send the breakdown of costs for utilities for the fire hall.
- He recommends a hose tower.

- They have one dry hydrant at their lake access, which is used considerably.
- They placed a four-inch conduit under the asphalt in the back of the building for running future wiring, etc.
- At dispatch time, both Clear Lake and Palmer Township fire fighters are dispatched, which works well.
- The Clear Lake City Clerk handles all the paperwork for the fire department. She is also a fire fighter.
- Roger says he sees no issues with being a sub-station of Clear Lake.
- About eight fire fighters are available during the day shift.
- Mutual aid is automatic if there is a structure fire.

Respectfully submitted by Clerk Pat Spence