

Special Meeting Minutes
Brodhead Fire District Commission and
Brodhead Common Council
Monday Feb 12, 2018

Call to Order: 5pm Hazeltine called meeting to order. Present included Hazeltine, Schneider, Faessler, Anderson, Fox. Absent: Withee

Presentation by Common Council concerning fire budget numbers. Schneider, Withee, Anderson and Osborne had meet prior to meeting to discuss the accuracy of numbers and agreement about what numbers to use. Corrected base number of \$171,616 (using audited hydrant numbers) with an increase of 1% annually. Estimated yearly savings of about \$50,000. Budget with a 3% increase is less than \$200,000 but currently is \$275,000. If the Fire department went back under the city it could potentially save money with insurance, etc going under the city umbrella. Estimate budget of \$231,000 includes part time chief and secretary. Both rural and city could pay \$130,000 each. (Savings has not been \$500,000 but more like \$250,000). At term of contract all assets and control will go to district. Decatur assessment is in process and could gain another commission member.

Hazeltine stated that the district needs to have a completed audit. He contacted a firm regarding an audit. The original 2012 rural numbers used were budget not actual. Other income varies from year to year including 2% fees. Steve stated that his opinion is that the rural pays more because they would like a say in what is happening with the fire district. This goes back to the full time chief when the Rural Association were paying 40% and had no say. Rural Association did not want to continue with full time chief. Steve stated that he hopes if there is a 4th member that the first commitment is the district not the entities they represent. He stated that they have dealt with a 0% increase over several years but it is difficult to do future planning when there are no increase in budget. He said they need to keep politics out of fire department.

Schneider stated that 2013 numbers are not used for baseline number because it was a transition year. Numbers are hard to figure and what number to use for base year is a judgement call. These are best numbers to date but some are off by over \$10,000. This is why they have decided to perform an audit to make sure numbers are accurate.

Mayor Pinnow expressed concern about the make up of the district because rural has experience with fire department and two of the city members have no fire experience and that puts the City at a disadvantage. City wants the district to work. The city does not have any long term hidden goals. The city needs to be able to justify a 20% increase for fire district to residents and then cuts will need to come out of every other department. Pinnow stated that the City appreciate all the fire department does and the City has a fiscal responsibility to the residents.

Hazeltine stated that there needs to be more open communication.

Peach stated he would recommend that city has a budget they need to adhere to and can't deviate from that. City and Rural need to work together. Anderson stated Pinnow did discuss a 20 year plan and capital expenditures at last meeting.

Fox stated concerns about decisions being made by rural fire members outside of the commission meeting. Items were acted on that had a financial impact. Decision should not be made outside of meetings. Since she voiced these concerns work has been made to address these concerns after a meeting with Heather, Steve and Chief.

Huffman stated his concern is the 3 vs 3 mentality and that politics should not get in the way of the fire district.

Nyman stated the council is not updated on fire district operations and the fire department is the only department that is saving lives. It costs money to get equipment to save lives. Peach stated he was hoping that we wouldn't go down the road as to what department is more important than another. If we don't have clean water from water utilities could have large issues and we depend on police to save lives. This argument does not carry merit when you discuss being fiscally responsible to citizens.

Faessler stated that communication is a good start. Keeping the department as a volunteer department will be one of the biggest challenges.

Hazeltine would like to see the district succeed. He would like to see young people get involved by introducing new programs.

Adjournment: Motion by Hazeltine, second by Schneider. Motion passed. (6:20PM)

Ann Anderson