

**Whitewater Township Board
And
Emergency Services Advisory Committee
Minutes of Special Joint Meeting held September 19, 2011**

Call to Order

Supervisor Lake called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. at the Whitewater Township Hall, 5777 Vinton Road, Williamsburg, Michigan.

Roll Call

Township Board members present: Benak, Boyd, Hockin, Hubbell and Lake.

Township Board members absent: None

Emergency Services Advisory Committee members present: Butler, Conlan, Kuncaitis, Miller and Savage

Emergency Services Advisory Committee member absent: None

Others present: ESAC alternate Decker, Fire Captain Arbenowske, Rural Chief Sedlacek and 5 others.

Agenda

The agenda was approved as printed.

Declaration of Conflict of Interest

None.

Public Comment

None

Fire Department Affiliation

ESAC chairman Kuncaitis reported that the main concern for the committee was fire coverage and they had looked at three alternatives: Metro, Independent and Rural.

Kuncaitis asked each committee member to give input to the Township Board on an affiliation with Metro

Savage

- Metro gave a good presentation
- Metro does not want an affiliation at this time

Butler

- Agrees with Savage

Decker

- Was not at meeting with Metro

Conlan

- Metro does not want affiliation
- ISO ratings

Miller

- Concurs with other committee members

Kuncaitis

- Metro lite is not wanted in Whitewater Township
- Metro happy with relationships at this time
- Metro took themselves off the table
- Millage would have to increase with Metro affiliation

Kuncaitis then asked committee members to report on continuing affiliation with Rural

Savage

- Originally in favor of severing affiliation with Rural
- Has changed his mind; stay with Rural
- Funding not available to become independent
- Feels things can be turned around.

Butler

- Did not realize the cost of training
- Would not be good to raise millage

Decker

- Came in neutral
- Focus drifted away from cost
- Looked at work load associated with becoming independent, training
- Contract with tribe requires training
- Equipment & supplies tracking detail is a big work load
- Dismissed future plans
- Current services would require a big work load

Conlan

- Township does not have necessary funding to become independent
- Not sufficient time to accomplish becoming independent
- Look into existing millage to see if ambulance can be incorporated
- Not enough firefighters
- Would require efficient administrator
- Firefighters would like to stay with Rural
- Extend affiliation with Rural

Miller

- Concurs with other members
- Rural provides a lot of services
- Best for taxpayers to stay with Rural
- Look at fire based EMS in future

Kuncaitis

- Previous committee got misinformation
- Equipment and training are too costly
- Millage base is not sufficient
- Nationwide the trend is not to become independent; enter into intergovernmental agreements

Decker

- Team work important
- Waters are calm
- Fire fighters are comfortable with Rural

Supervisor Lake voiced concerns regarding future grants if the Township stays with Rural.

Kuncaitis

- Review cost presented by former Chief Stites some time ago

Benak

- Wants documentation of cost

Chief Sedlacek

- Stated the services that are provided by Rural
- Rural does not build fire stations
- Tribe wants to be a part of building a new station and having Whitewater decide who will run it

There was a discussion of how the Rural Board feels and the misinformation both ways. There is presently better communication.

Lake thanked the committee for information researched and presented to the board.

Kuncaitis recommends starting communication with Rural

Moved by Butler, seconded by Savage to begin communication with Rural to stay with Rural.

Unanimously approved.

Hubbell agrees with Benak regarding the documentation regarding cost.

Hockin stated the document referred to by Kuncaitis was presented to the board by Stites.

Boyd

- We have seen the documentation
- Release of fire chief has been helpful
- Rural administration direction has changed; battalion now has a captain rather than a chief
- Rural communication is better
- Dispute resolution has been satisfied

Moved by Boyd, seconded by Hockin to rescind the Whitewater Township Letter of Intent to Withdraw from the Rural Fire Intergovernmental Agreement.

Benak

- We need to follow the agreement

Arbenowske

- Membership feels they have backing of Rural Fire
- Didn't know previously that they had the backing of Rural Fire
- Keeping lines of communication open with Rural Fire
- Membership is positive
- Membership is in favor of staying with Rural

Conlan asked Arbenowske what it would take for administration if the department was independent.

Arbenowske replied it would be a full time position.

Roll call vote: Benak, yes; Boyd, yes; Hockin, yes; Hubbell, yes; Lake, yes. **Motion approved 5-0.**

Clerk and Supervisor will send necessary letter to Rural Fire Representatives and Clerks.

Hubbell thanked the ESAC for all of their work on the Emergency Services issues.

In turn Kuncaitis thanked the board on behalf of the committee for allowing them to be a part of the process.

Lake and other board members also voiced their thanks.

Thanks was also given to Arbenowske and the fire personnel for their cooperation during the process by both the board and the committee.

Sedlacek thanked the board and committee on behalf of Rural Fire.

Arbenowske suggested keeping the line of communication open by having joint meetings again.

Hockin thanked Lisa Bowerman for taking on the job of recording secretary for the ESAC.

It was the consensus that Kuncaitis attend the Rural Fire board meeting with Lake on Wednesday.

Public Comment

None.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Carol Hockin, Clerk