

Fire Territory Board Meeting

Weds., July 12, 2023 - 5:30 p.m. (EST)

New Carlisle Library, 408 S. Bray St., New Carlisle, IN 46552

ATTENDANCE:

Board members:

Brian Gray, Hudson Twp. board

Tim Creason, Olive Twp. board

Marcy Kauffman, New Carlisle town council

Jerry Colanese, New Carlisle town council

Bob Middlebrook, Olive Twp. Board

Also:

Josh Schweizer, Fire chief

Chad Hess, Asst. Fire chief

Meeting called to order at 5:34 p.m. by Brian Gray, board president.

Motion to adopt agenda made by Bob Middlebrook. Second by Tim Creason. Motion approved, 5-0.

Minutes have been e-mailed to each board member after each meeting this year. However, they still need to be formally approved. No physical copies are available to be signed, so approval is tabled till next meeting.

BUDGET REPORT: Josh Schweizer reports that the fire department is putting together a “needs list” for the coming year. The growth quotient of available tax dollars is unknown at this time. Baker-Tilley is being contacted to get an update.

The volunteer fire department has been disbanded and the estimated savings is \$100,000. There are still three volunteers, one active and two inactive. They are more-or-less handled as part-time employees when they are active.

Halfway through the fiscal year, the fire department is under budget. Approx. 42% of the budget has been spent thus far. “We are in a good place,” states Josh Schweizer.

Josh Schweizer states the territory is trying to get away from its cash-flow loan to save approx. \$3,000 in interest charges. It is a tax-anticipation loan.

Brian Gray asks the total loan amount; Josh Schweizer isn't sure, because he only sees interest charges.

The Kelley Building needs masonry repairs, which could be substantial. Brian Gray asks if it wouldn't make more sense to just tear down the building and put up a pole barn. He states maintenance on a pole building would be cheaper, as the current building is always under repair. He states we should get two quotes, one for repairs to the old building and one for a new building. "This is a full-time manned fire department now. It would be very nice to make those facilities more full-time appropriate," states Brian Gray. A new building would also allow for locker areas, etc., he says.

The fire department is looking into grant opportunities, especially for tools, according to Josh Schweizer.

ADDING PERSONNEL: Josh Schweizer states he and Chad Hess are discussing whether we should add three more full-time employees to the department. This would cost approx. \$300,000.

Chad Hess suggests adding a permanent part-time spot at a cost of approx. \$60,000. This would be \$20/hour. Josh Schweizer says a pool of approx. five to 10 part-timers would work. It would allow flexibility for the staff when a full-time employee calls off. A part-timer must meet the same requirements as a full-timer.

Brian Gray asks if the union would have objections. The consensus is 'no.'

Chad Schweizer says the overtime budget is almost used up. The department just lost a full-timer who is going to medical school. They are currently sorting through six applications to fill the spot.

PUBLIC RELATIONS: Chad Schweizer says the fire department is trying to be more visible. The union will have a tent at the Hometown Days festival. The Facebook presence is being upgraded. The three fire captains and Chad Hess have access to social media.

There will be a fire department pancake breakfast on Oct. 7.

Bob Middlebrook suggests cleaning the sidewalks in downtown New Carlisle would be a good PR vehicle.

GM/SAMSUNG BATTERY PLANT: "We're in an excited/nervous phase," states Josh Schweizer.

Equipment and training must be supplied to affected fire departments, including New Carlisle.

Brian Gray expresses about what happens if water is sprayed around the plant in a fire situation. Josh Schweizer expresses concern over how the batteries will be stored. "We have to be prepared," he says.

Josh Schweizer states St. Joseph County will have a trailer on site for daily inspections. The Indiana fire marshal's office has supplied valuable assistance.

"In the end, we have a lot of authority," said Josh Schweizer. He states New Carlisle Fire Department has jurisdiction over the factory property.

Coincidentally, there have been three medical calls to the solar farm thus far.

BUILDING RENOVATION: Will Miller estimates \$20,000 for the fire department building renovation. Marcy Kauffman doesn't think a lot of money needs to be spent on beautifying the exterior. "The building is what it is. I don't think it looks that bad. I think it needs a fresh coat of paint, here and there," said Marcy Kauffman.

The location of the fire department may have to be reviewed as the industrial park grows, said Josh Schweizer. This could be several years down the road. We may have to consider what the fire territory can effectively protect. There could potentially be consolidations with other departments sometime in the future.

ZONING: Marcy Kauffman says there is an upcoming zoning hearing to consider storage units on the east side of New Carlisle.

TRAINING MONEY: Bob Middlebrook asks if the fire chief and asst. fire chief receive additional money for training they receive. The fire chief is not included, according to Josh Schweizer. Bob says money for training should be included in the budget for the chief.

Motion to adjourn made at 6:29 by Bob Middlebrook. Second by Tim Creason. Approved 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Tim Creason
Secretary

Bob Middlebrook, Territory Member

Brian Gray, Board President

Marcy Kauffman, Territory Member

Jerry Colanese, Territory Member

Tim Creason, Territory Member