

**Special Village Board Meeting  
March 12, 2019**

Board Present: Trustee Benkowski, Trustee Stillman, Trustee Wanggaard, Trustee Martin, Trustee Wishau and Trustee Prott.

Absent: President Dobbs was excused.

Staff/Others: Village Administrator Tom Christensen, HR Director/Asst. Village Administrator Toni Muise, BC Henningfeld, and Chief Roeder.

**1. Call the meeting to order.**

Trustee Wishau called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m., at Village Hall, located at 5043 Chester Lane, Racine, Wisconsin.

**2. Fire Safer Grant.**

BC Henningfeld explained that he researched staffing options for the Fire Department as possible alternatives to the SAFER grant. He first explained Paid-on-call (POC) personnel, who are similar to volunteer personnel where they respond to the scene they're dispatched to from their homes or work opposed to the station. POCs' are not held to a fixed schedule, so the position requires flexibility and generally they must live within response boundaries. POCs' are paid a minimum of one or two hours per response at a rate that varies from \$9.00 to \$30.00 per hour depending on qualifications and typically receives no benefits. These candidates would be expected to meet Caledonia's current hiring standards (Wisconsin Firefighter two-level and licensed EMT – Paramedic) and would likely be paid the current starting wage in the Fire Department of \$17.56 per hour. Full time members from other fire departments are often hesitant to apply for these positions because of the lack of compensation or pressure from labor organizations and for those reasons it is challenging to hire experienced fire and EMS personnel. Recent graduates typically use these positions as a technical training opportunity and turnover is often likely. 3 POC personnel are equivalent to 1 full time firefighter. In 1999 the Village eliminated POC firefighters due to difficulty in maintaining qualified personnel, which caused high turn-over rates, and proved to be unreliable. Total minimum cost to implement POC would be \$172,417.00.

BC Henningfeld explained a second option, Part-time or Paid on Premises (POP) personnel, who are similar to full time firefighters, and work regularly scheduled shifts and are assigned to a station. POPs' are paid an hourly rate and typically work 12 hour shifts, and would likely be paid the current starting wage in the Fire Department of \$17.56 per hour. POPs' typically do not receive benefits and must remain under 1200 hours annually or the municipality would be required to contribute to the Wisconsin Retirement System. Qualified personnel are more likely to apply for a POP position opposed to a POC because of the security of income and risk to injury. Turn-over rates would still be high in this capacity, because most personnel will be seeking full time positions. Two POP personnel are equivalent to one full time firefighter; however additional savings could be realized when part time staff isn't needed. Total minimum cost to implement POP would be \$380,308.00.

BC Henningfeld and Chief Roeder both did not recommended these alternative options, and felt through their experience that these methods are historically unsuccessful.

BC Henningfeld explained some cost saving measures he has discovered. He explained anticipated savings through the turn-over of senior personnel over the course of the next two years, which total a possible savings of \$43,057. He further explained some additional revenue streams and how he contacted some ambulance services

and compared rates. He discovered that the Village of Caledonia is the lowest biller in any circumstance and he suggested some increases that the billing company felt were modest. He is proposing a 20% increase; he explained that Medicare fees are capped, regardless of what is billed there is a very small percent paid. The only actual revenue comes from the Commercial Insurance market, which we collect about 90% of what is billed. Our call volume is increasing on a yearly basis because of the aging community. He thought this revenue could help offset some of the cost in bringing on additional personnel.

Trustee Benkowski felt we needed to keep up with market standards in regards to ambulance fees, and not dictate these increases by modesty. He agreed the fee schedule should be increased by at least 20% if not more; he suggested an “elevator” scale in which it is increased slightly each year until we are consistent with surrounding communities.

There was discussion about different avenues of cost savings, a public safety referendum was discussed as a possibility in 2020.

Trustee Wishau thought there needed to be further analyzation and budget processing to include all and any options before any final decisions were made. He thought we should hold off on the SAFER grant, as he understood it had been extended through 2024 and the opportunity to apply would be available in the upcoming years. There was the suggestion of composing a sub-committee to discuss these options. Trustee Wishau, volunteered. It was discussed that President Dobbs would form the suggested ad-hoc committee.

Trustee Benkowski motioned to create a separate Ad Hoc Committee to work with the Fire Department to look at issues in income and finance and exhaust all possibilities to recognize potential staffing issues for consideration of the 2020 budget. Seconded by Trustee Martin. Motion carried unanimously.

Chief Roeder confirmed with the Board that they are denying the request for the SAFER grant at this time, which was correct.

### **3. Adjournment.**

Motion by Trustee Stillman to adjourn. Seconded by Trustee Martin. Motion carried unanimously.

Adjourned at 7:01 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joslyn Hoeffert  
Deputy Village Clerk