

**MECOSTA AUSTIN FIRE BOARD MEETING**

**MAY 19, 2016**

- I. Meeting called to order at 7:04 p.m.**
- II. Roll Call: John Boyd, Michele Graham, Elizabeth G Carr, and Susan Sikkema. John Brockway and Greg Babbitt were absent.**
- III. Additions to the Agenda: Moved by Michele Graham, supported by Susan Sikkema to add Fire Officer Positions as #6 under New Business and to approve the agenda. Motion carried.**
- IV. Minutes: Moved by Susan Sikkema, supported by Michele Graham to approve the minutes as presented. Motion carried.**
- V. Treasurer's Report: Moved by Michele Graham, supported by Elizabeth G Carr to move \$350.00 from 206-334-989 Contingency to 206-334-726 Social Security Match. Roll Call Vote:**

**Susan Sikkema-yes**

**Michele Graham-yes**

**Elizabeth G Carr-yes**

**John Boyd-yes**

**Donations has its own line 208-000-697 in the Fire Fund. Budget settlement was \$75,220.16 with \$2895.69 going into their Money Market account.**

- VI. Approval of the Bills: Moved by Michele Graham, supported by Elizabeth G Carr to approve for payment invoices totaling \$1,401.24 for the First Responders, \$19,139.42 for the Fire Department, \$3,398.37 in Payroll, and \$12.84 to EFTPS for Withholdings for a total of \$23,951.87. Roll Call Vote:**

**Susan Sikkema-yes**

**Michele Graham-yes**

**Elizabeth G Carr-yes**

**John Boyd-yes**

- VII. Public Comment: N/A**

- VIII. Old Business:**

- 1. Fire Chief's Report:**

**\*Moved by Michele Graham, supported by Susan Sikkema to allow Chief Palmer to draft a letter from the Mecosta Austin Fire Department to the City of Big Rapids to request that the City of Big Rapids Fire Department will be the automatic mutual aid for the Mecosta Austin Fire Department. Motion Carried.**

**\*Mr. Cooley, who passed away on the Muskegon River was Mr. Walch's uncle. Grief counseling and support services have been made available to the Fire Department. There will be no billing for this incident. The Mecosta Austin Fire Department expresses its sincerest thanks to Muskegon County for their assistance with their sonar in this incident.**

**\*Generator: There is no company willing to install a natural gas generator without a \$20,000.00-\$30,000.00 price tag because of all the conversions and specifics involved. We will need to find an alternate way to use the generator we have. The most viable option would be to move the generator to a separate building. It wouldn't be that difficult to add a room on the back of the Fire Hall to house it. We will continue to explore our options.**

**\*New Pagers: Our pagers are aging and falling apart. At the last couple of calls we have had several that didn't work. They are \$450.00/pc. Rescue will pay for three and the Fire Department will pay for two.**

**\*We will be testing four radios tomorrow through Fire South. There will be a \$200.00 fee for reprogramming.**

**\*Drone: Big Rapids Township has acquired a drone. They will be under stringent restrictions about where they will be allowed to fly. The DNR, Coast Guard, and Air Med will not fly in the same space, 200-400 feet of altitude, with a drone. They will not be allowed to operate at any of our incidents without our permission.**

**\*Fire Reporting Systems: The upgrade is working well. Our software for the next year will be free.**

**2. Training: There was Tender truck operation training, and Pump Draft training at Brower Park.**

**3. Maintenance:** We have been having trouble starting the grass rig. Parts have been ordered to fix that. Engine 3-11 has been having brake problems. Sometimes they work fine and sometimes they don't work at all. We were unable to stop at an intersection at one of our last runs. Fortunately, there was no one was coming.

**4. MFR Report:** There have been 41 runs since May. We were down one run in May and three runs in June. The MFR Board will be meeting tomorrow night, July 21, 2016 The meeting was delayed one week because of the Mecosta County Fair.

**5. Fireman's Fund:** The auditor's conclusion and recommendation is that the Firemen's Fund should not be part of the Fire Department Budget. It should be a stand-alone Fund administered by the Fire Department. The Fire Chief thinks that for the Fire Department to administer the Fund itself they would have to complete a lot of paperwork and possibly have to be set up as an independent 501c3. More research will be done to determine the best course to take.

**6. Fire Department Officers Positions:** Ron Palmer-Fire Chief, Alan Palmer-Assistant Chief, Steve Cook-Maintenance Chief, Nick Goodfellow-Safety and Training Chief.

**IX. Public Comment:** Mary Quinlan-Mecosta Township Treasurer: The Michigan Unemployment Agency will not allow to continue to only file once a year because of our annual salary disbursement. If we pay the Chief's wages quarterly, they will not shut down our EIN. Because of the way the Fire Department and First Responders were organized and set up, the First Responders cannot have their own FEIN. They are also not allowed to make their EFTPS independently of the Fire Department. At this point the withholdings for the First Responder quarterly wages are paid out of the Fire Department account and the First Responders reimburse them.

**Adjourned at 8 p.m.**