

## Safety Services Committee Meeting Minutes December 8, 2020

Called to Order: 5:00 pm by Sandy Russell

**Present:** Sandy Russell via phone, Lisa Evans, Kyle Mitchell

**Staff:** City Manager-Michael Doss and Administrative Assistant Jackie Bain

**Visitors:** Chief Mark Baird of the MCFD, Laura Whalen, Member MCFD Board of Trustees, Steph Haight

**Proceedings:** Ms. Evans made a motion to *approve the proceedings from the November 9, 2020 Safety Services Committee Minutes* Mr. Mitchell seconded the motion All yes

### CITY OF MILFORD CONTRACT WITH MCFD FOR FIRE/EMS SERVICES

Mr. Doss distributed the proposed contract for Fire and EMS services between the City and Milford Community Fire Department (MCFD) for 2021. Mr. Doss reviewed the two- year contract. There is an increase in the contract amount which is reflective of the levy that was passed over a year ago for those amounts. The new information in the contract to be discussed is section 11 of the contract. Mr. Doss stated the language from previous Safety Services committee meeting from November 9<sup>th</sup> is the section stating:

11. City shall approve all capital purchases and improvements exceeding \$10,000 in total as related to the firehouse structure and property grounds located a 687-B U.S 50. MCFD is to provide to the City, at minimum, three quotes for capital purchases and improvements as related to the firehouse building and property grounds.

This information was shared with the MCFD Board of Trustees. The board came back with some language that they would like the committee to consider

In regard to the firehouse structure and property grounds located a 687-B U.S 50 MCFD shall obtain, at minimum, three quotes for any capital purchases and improvements. The MCFD Board of Trustees shall review and approve any such capital purchases or changes to the firehouse structure. In addition, the City shall review and approve, and such approval shall not be reasonably withheld, all capital improvements exceeding \$50,000 in total as related to the firehouse structure and property grounds. Such review and approval by the City will not be required for any standard structural maintenance topics such as non-structural interior updates, roof replacement, repaving of the parking lot, exceeding the \$50,000 threshold

When this information was received from the Board of Trustees, this was conveyed to the committee and the Law Director, Mike Minniear. Mr. Minniear followed up with the following recommended language for the contract:

All proposed capital purchases and improvements to the firehouse structure and grounds located at 687-B US 50 exceeding \$10,000 shall first be submitted to Milford City Council for review and must first be approved by Council. For all such proposed capital purchases and improvements exceeding \$10,000, the MCFD shall provide to the City a minimum of three quotes.

Mr. Doss stated that the original committee section and Mike Minniear's section are similar in language as they both do mention \$10,000 threshold. They both mention three quotes which is a standard practice that we do as a City with all our other city departments in excess of \$7500 and is approved by the City Manager. Mr. Doss wanted to deviate away from Mr. Minniear's language of \$10,000 amount and to take into consideration the \$50,000 that was proposed by the MCFD Board of Trustees and to meet halfway.

Mr. Doss recommended to the committee to use Mr. Minniear's language except change the exceeding \$10,000 amount to exceeding \$25,000.

The committee discussed the amounts and the process for purchases within City Departments and with the MCFD Board of Trustees in detail.

Laura Whalen – MCFD Board Member Board of Trustees MCFD and Milford Ohio resident

Ms. Whalen addressed the committee regarding information that may help the committee with their decision. The board has zero issues with providing and sharing three quotes that they receive for anything over the dollar amount that they agree on. It is already part of their process and follows what the city does in other departments. The dollar amount was discussed with the committee and why the board felt that the amount is best set at \$50,000. The biggest difference that the board saw was in Mr. Minniear's language vs. what the board recommended are the services to the city are managed differently than the other departments in the city. The MCFD is contracted and have a board of trustees that manages the budget. This information is not recognized in the section provided by Mr. Minniear. Ms. Whalen stated that they should be the first layer for review, and it feels like they are being cut out of the process. They ask to have the language reinserted. The board fully understands that the building is owned by the city and to appease the potential questions from citizens on how the dollars are being used. Council has been a great partner with the CARES Act Funding and helping them do some improvements to help provide better services for the city.

Mr. Doss informed the committee that they have the option to take section 11 out of the contract as the committee's recommendation to council.

Committee felt that the board is like council and should be trusted to oversee the Fire Department. But that council should be informed regarding advance notice of capital expenses.

Ms. Whalen stated that the board was already transparent about making any changes

The committee would like to see the MCFD agenda for board meetings so that they may have a heads up on expenses being discussed

Chief Baird spoke about how years ago he started making presentations/reports to council, usually the first or second council meeting in January regarding what the board has approved as far as the budget for the year. Chief Baird also mentioned that he could have a water heater at the station fail for \$12,000, which happened. He would then have to go through hoops to get that replaced. The board could recommend a million-dollar purchase of a Ladder truck and you would not care about that. There is a level of trust here. Chief Baird did not know how much more transparent they could be. They have told everything there is to tell. He is speaking on behalf of Chief and not in behalf of the board. He pledges his reputation on the way he conducts business. He believes that this goes back to control of the Fire Station addition of the Dayroom. They clearly understand that this is the city's building and that the city is going to conduct the affairs related to the building of the addition. He only asks to have the opportunity to be for the fire department staff to, as much as possible, be partners in managing that process. They are the ones that have to work and live in that building.

Ms. Evans was in favor of taking Section 11 out. She felt that she could justify to any resident how the money is spent at the Fire Station. And if she didn't know, she could direct them to the MCFD Board of Trustees or Chief Baird for explanation.

Ms. Whalen proposed something that she would still have to take back to the board for approval: propose potentially that there is detail on the Capital spends that effect the building structure and have it be pointed out to council. And upon them making any changes to what they planned in January, to make council aware of those changes to that budget line item in a timely manner. In consideration of those on this committee and those of us in this room, and those on the board and on council, we are not going to be here forever and people have to take this on in the future, if you would want to, in this contract, put in some basic language about annual budget will be shared, line items pointed out or major capital changes and council will be given advanced warning of any changes to those budget line items during the course of the year. It is reasonable since it is your building and feels that this could be considered the longevity of trying to manage

this, but, is this necessary now? This is a two-year agreement. Ms. Whalen plans to be here for the next two years and you have her commitment.

Ms. Russell said that she appreciates that Ms. Whalen recognizes that this is something that could happen down the road in the future. Ms. Russell said that she appreciates that the board is willing to make that adjustment and she is alright with taking this section 11 out and recognizing the fact that down the road at some point there might be additional adjustments that might need to be made with future council members or board members as people come and go.

Mr. Mitchell and Ms. Evans agreed to take the proposed Section 11 out and revisit later if there is a reason to.

Ms. Whalen stated that this was the only point of contention for the board so if Section 11 was to be removed, the board of trustees could move forward with signatures.

**The Committee agreed to make a motion for the Law Director to draft an ordinance authorizing the City Manager to enter into a contract agreement for two years with the Milford Community Fire Department, Inc for Fire and Emergency Medical Service Protection.**

There being no additional business Ms. Russell made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:33pm Seconded by Ms. Evans All yes

Respectfully submitted,  
Jackie Bain, Administrative Assistant

"These minutes have been approved and adopted by Sandy Russell, Lisa Evans and Kyle Mitchell via email this 10 day of December 2020."