

Fire/Rescue/EMS Advisory Committee
Virtual Meeting Minutes
April 6, 2021 - 7:00pm

1. Call the Meeting to Order – John McHale

a. Record Attendance

i. John recorded attendance as members logged into the session; John solicits objections to sharing our information to the township via the directory. No one offers an objection or question.

b. Approval of Minutes from February 2020 and February 2, 2021 meetings

i. (Feb 2020) Committee moves to approve; all present vote in favor—minutes are *approved*.

ii. (Feb 2021) John presents one correction, solicits any additional edits—receives none. Committee moves to approve; all present vote in favor—minutes are *approved*.

c. Battalion Chief Introduction (BC on duty)

i. Per Chief Ponzi, duty BC could not attend due to workload. John discusses opportunities to meet with more fire fighters (i.e. officer staff) during committee meetings.

ii. Chief Ponzi suggests the committee meet with the duty crew during the April 2021 meeting. We expect this meeting to coincide with the appointment and promotion of three new Fire Department (FD) lieutenants.

2. Introductions of Committee Members

a. Three committee members introduced themselves as new members: Arun Chittur, Connor Hines (former Finance Committee member), and Frank Michell (also an active volunteer with Citizen Auxiliary Resource Team [CART])

3. Election of Secretary

a. John nominates Arun Chittur to serve as Secretary and solicits additional nominations. No additional nominations received.

b. John calls for vote; all present vote in favor—Arun Chittur elected Secretary and assumes responsibilities (including minutes for this meeting).

4. Review of Handbook – John McHale / Chief Ponzi

a. John solicits questions on the township handbook (previously distributed via email).

b. Frank Michell offers positive feedback, also several typographical errors (sent to John) for editing in the next revision.

5. Update on Current Issues – Chief Ponzi

- a. New Medic (“Ambulance”) – Chief Ponzi has met with the sales representative as the FD is looking to replace the 2010 vehicle. The current medic (operated from the fire house) has mechanical issues and incurs significant repair costs (>\$40k) on the turbodiesel engine. The FD took delivery of its newer medic spring 2020.
 - i. Chief Ponzi explains the FD’s billing and reimbursement process for patients transported to hospitals; no billing is accomplished for patients treated at their locations but *not* transported.
 - ii. FD may receive favorable trade offer on 2010 medic. Depending on market research, may opt to trade vs. auction or sell on the open market in order to offset costs to purchase replacement.
 - iii. Committee members ask several questions about how the FD vehicles are dispatched and used (medics, fire trucks, ladder). They discuss lifespan of both the 2020 vehicle and this second replacement; FD plan is to operate both in a rotational fashion in order to mitigate wear on components, chassis, and drivetrain and strain on the FD’s and township budgets.
 - iv. Chief Ponzi explains how the medic purchase works; the vehicle is built new then configured in accordance with the FD’s specifications. Customization affects how equipment is installed in the patient compartment but does not affect cost. Also explains new equipment FD has installed (and is looking to buy) for UV light decontamination of the patient compartment after transportation (i.e. for COVID-exposed or suspected patients).
 - v. Chief Ponzi discusses the review process to purchase the vehicles, including vendors in/around Ohio and how he will present those options and associated costs to the township.
- b. Replacement of Ladder Truck – Chief Ponzi begins discussion about the ladder truck replacement at 7:50pm. Current vehicle is a 2007 and in good shape; out for heavy maintenance then will be inspected for safety of its chassis, aerial (ladder), and to determine aftermarket value for eventual sale and purchase of new ladder. Value of current truck could be \$400-600k; price of replacement estimated at \$1.2-1.4M.
 - i. Chief Ponzi explains the utility of the ladder for the township, then discusses how the FD uses its three fire trucks regarding interoperability, access to parts and service, etc.
 - ii. Chief Ponzi describes previous issue when we blew an engine cylinder on an older fire truck during a call; this is part of why the FD is looking to replace the ladder sooner than later. He confirms the old truck will not be sold until the new ladder is purchased and delivered, ensuring no gap in coverage for situations requiring use of the aerial.

- c. COVID information – Before Christmas, the FD transported 1-3 patients daily who were possibly infectious. Frequency of those patients has dropped since Christmas. The FD has learned of a few patients who tested positive after the fact.
 - i. Chief Ponzi confirms township FD is at ~80% COVID vaccinated; remainder largely due to exercise of personal preference.
- d. Delaware County EMS Tax Issue
 - i. Chief Ponzi reviews long-standing tax revenue and reimbursement issue between Delaware County Commission and several municipalities that operate an EMS.
 - ii. County voters approved a 0.5% sales tax in 1973 intended to support EMS operations. However, at the time, no sales tax revenue could be earmarked; so operations are funded after money enters the county's general fund.
 - iii. For the past 15 years, other county EMS agencies have been lobbying for reimbursement to municipal EMS departments that perform services in their towns/townships.
 - iv. Liberty Township has entered into a new, 5-year agreement with the county that increased its flat-rate reimbursement projection to \$400k with a 3.5% annual increase. City of Delaware may follow; no other such agreements exist and the County Commission is so far reluctant to discuss the issue with any other municipal EMS/FD. The provisions of the sales tax and general fund allow that money to go elsewhere, in addition to EMS.
 - v. John asks Chief Ponzi what committee members and township residents can do to support the reimbursement position. George Schultz highlights Barb Lewis' current service as a commissioner (and long-time Genoa Township resident); the other commissioners do not appear open to talks. Legislatively, another option is to repeal the old tax and offer a new one on the ballot—politically a risk since voters may not approve the new one, restricting available funds even further.
 - vi. John asks new committee members to review an EMS study that was previously conducted in the county but never “formally accepted.”
- e. DelCo Medic 7 Relocation to New Building – County's Medic 7 relocated from the facility behind Kroger on Rte. 3 to a building off Frost Rd. (behind the United Dairy Farmers on Rte. 3).
- f. Q&A with Committee Members
 - i. Brief discussion over people on oxygen therapy and dangers of open flame; Chief Ponzi cautions anyone who is using portable oxygen *never* to smoke or get near an open flame since oxygen is highly combustible and dangerous when exposed to an ignition source.

6. Announcements

- a. Remaining Meeting Dates for 2021 (June 1, August 3, October 5, and December 7) – John confirms the meetings dates listed.
- b. Meetings will remain virtual until further notice – John confirms all meetings will remain virtual until further notice.
- c. Future field trip suggestion – Sutphen Fire Truck Manufacturers - John highlights the value of keeping this trip on the horizon since we are looking to purchase a new ladder truck in the future. Recommends invited FD to HOA meetings and other associations to help connect fire fighters to residents.

7. Adjourn – John McHale

- a. John adjourns the meeting at 8:33pm.