

March 16, 2023

6:00 PM

A joint workshop of the Monroe Township Supervisors and Monroe Fire Company was called to order by Chairman Kehoe. Workshops are for the purpose of discussion only; no action can be made.

Attendees:

Monroe Township – Phil Kehoe, Phil Paetzold, A. W. Castle, III, Karen Lowery and Holly Wood

Monroe Fire Company – Mike Zeigler, Justin Eberly, Tyler Heckert, Randy Watts, Ron Bouch, Laura Watts, and Mark Cekovich

The purpose of the joint workshop is to discuss the request for financial assistance to the fire company for the replacement of air packs and radio upgrades.

AIR PACK DISCUSSION

Mr. Paetzold reached out to Representative Kutz who suggested the fire company apply for a DCED grant for \$250,000. Mr. Zeigler and Mr. Eberly spoke with Rep. Kutz and said they will be applying for the grant on Friday. They aren't sure how soon they will hear back about the grant, but Mr. Paetzold said he would keep in touch with Rep. Kutz regarding the status.

Mr. Kehoe asked if competitive bids were obtained for the air packs and if the 30-year life span of the one air packs was known and approved. Mr. Watts said that competitive bids were obtained the life span is 30-years. Mr. Cekovich said the company is in the last part of testing with the cylinders to be able to certify the 30-year life span. Mr. Kehoe mentioned that depending on the life span of the cylinders the fire company should start saving \$10-\$20,000 per year to be ready for the next replacement round. Mr. Watts said there won't be a volunteer fire company in the next 5 years and if the planning was done we wouldn't be sitting here tonight.

Mr. Kehoe said the air pack discussion is done at this time as we wait to hear about the grant. Mr. Eberly stated that they have already applied for a federal grant for the air packs, but won't get a response until the fall. He would like to write the DCED grant more broadly to cover the air packs, if needed, but that it could also be used toward the radios or other capital expenses. Mr. Kehoe thought the federal grant was rejected. Mr. Zeigler said the past 3 years

grants have been denied, but they are waiting to hear back on the 2023 application. Mr. Cekovich added that the grant is in a multi-step review process and he can check the FEMA website for status updates. They feel they may be higher on the list this year and are hopeful the grant will be awarded to them. Mr. Kehoe understands Mr. Eberly's suggested approach to applying for the DCED grant, but is concerned that if you get too creative asking for the grant to cover too many items, it could be harmful. Mr. Eberly said he has spoken with Rep. Kutz a month ago and explained all of their outstanding needs. Mr. Paetzold said he didn't specify what the grant was for, he just asked for help for the fire company.

RADIO DISCUSSION

Mr. Kehoe suggested to wait to further discuss the radios until we know the status of the 2 grants. Mr. Bouch stated the deadline to order the radios is April 28th to get the biggest discount. They are going from 51 portables to 31 portables. The system isn't to go live until the summer 2024, which is when the radio payment would be due. Mr. Kehoe asked about the details of the contract or agreement and Mr. Bouch said no contract or agreement has been provided. Mr. Eberly added that when they do ask questions the answer seem to change and a lot of fire companies have raised a red flag on how they are to budget for the radio upgrade when the true costs aren't being provided. Political pressure may help get answers. Mr. Paetzold said he will reach out to the county commissioners to see if he can get any answers. Mr. Kehoe added that once a contract or agreement is received it may be worth having Mr. Pykosh review it. Mr. Eberly suggested the fire company and Supervisors attend a county meeting to publicly request more information.

There was discussion of how to do the most work if both grants are approved. Could the air pack purchase be delayed 6-months to see if the federal grant was approved for air packs? This would then free up the DCED grant to be used for the radio purchase. The fire company said they could purchase used cylinders to get them to February 2024, but there will be a \$35,000 increase on the air pack cost if the order delayed.

MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

Mr. Kehoe mentioned that Mr. Rogalski and Mr. Hertzler had a fire company walk through with Lobar several months ago and started a list of categorizing who is to be responsible for what items since the current lease is very vague. He suggested the list be finished to help improve and define responsibilities and then be shared with the fire company for input.

Mr. Zeigler mentioned that there is another leak in the roof. Ms. Lowery will share this with Mr. Rogalski and Mr. Hertzler.

Mr. Zeigler mentioned the public bathroom is still out of service.

Mr. Paetzold suggested holding a gun raffle fundraiser event. It could raise \$20-40,000 and he has volunteers to run the event. It could be held at the Mechanicsburg Club Picnic grounds. Mr. Cekovich said the biggest problem is that the area is getting oversaturated with them and you have to choose a time when another one isn't being held. They did hold a Night Golf fundraiser last year and made \$1,000 for 8 teams. They did look at holding a gun bingo, but you need to broaden the prize pool. Mr. Watts added that there is a lot of liability with the gun raffles due to intoxicated people, plus they are very labor intense. He added volunteers are willing to give their time for training and responding to calls, but not to do fundraisers. They may be able to help with parking cars or selling tickets, but not run the entire event. Mr. Kehoe agreed that large scale fundraisers need a multiple fire companies involved.

Mr. Kehoe asked if the DEP violation notice has been reviewed, as this is a real issue that needs to be addressed. Mr. Zeigler has not looked at it yet. Mr. Kehoe stated that Mr. Hertzler has started to work on the well issues and the fire company needs to address the UV light and sink signage. Mr. Watts stated that the DEP representative asked him questions, he didn't offer information, but he is sure that the story the Supervisors heard was changed.

There was a discussion about raising the fire tax to cover capital expenses in the future, but the township would hold the money until it was needed. And contacting a 3rd party to review the status of the fire company operations and equipment to see if changes could be made.

The workshop was adjourned at 7:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen M. Lowery, Secretary