

Whitewater Township Emergency Services Subcommittee  
December 29, 2009 Minutes

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Boyd at 7:00 PM.

Present: Dave Galligan, Tom Emerson, Lois MacLean, Paul Acker, John Goss, Rod Kuncaitis, Samantha Blakeslee, Arnell Boyd, Recording Secretary Meyers and 6 members of the public.

Boyd explained that the purpose of tonight's meeting is to review and discuss future emergency service needs, Township fire affiliation(s), and future facility needs. He is interested in determining what the Township has, what we need, like and dislike. Should we stay with Rural Fire? Metro? Stand alone? Forge a new alliance with bordering communities?

With respect for facility needs, Boyd would prefer a short-term approach such as 10 years into the future and stressed that their goal should be to determine what the Township needs and must have, not what we would like.

The Fire Chief forwarded a preliminary list of what equipment we are required to have and the costs associated with such. Most of the equipment is currently owned by Rural Fire. As it is too early in the process, the list was primarily for information purposes.

Goss asked about the rumors that had been circulating about Whitewater Township joining Metro Fire.

Boyd stated that this is untrue and that one of the charges of this sub-committee is to make recommendation to the Township Board about future affiliations.

Jim Snider, member of the audience, asked about Blair Township – what did they do after leaving Rural Fire? Boyd explained that they (Blair Township) have started their own department and it may be of interest to invite them to share their experiences at a future meeting.

Galligan asked that a breakdown of what exactly Rural Fire provides to us and at what cost. This information will be provided prior to the next meeting.

Kuncaitis asked for information regarding what services are mandated by the State of Michigan for the Township to provide. This information will be provided prior to the next meeting.

It was the consensus of the sub-committee that Emergency Services should be treated as a business and we must determine where we will get the most bang for the buck and that once it has been determined which services are needed that facility needs can be determined.

Goss suggested that the Grand Traverse Band should be included in the sub-committee as they do utilize Township Emergency Services.

Cheryl Walton, member of the audience, stated that the costs of all Township Emergency Services should be borne by the Band and not on the taxpayers. A brief discussion followed and it was determined that the Township is required to provide services to all property owners.

Kuncaitis suggested that Rural Fire and Metro present to the sub-committee at the appropriate time.

MacLean stated that the Fire Chief and Supervisor presented to the Planning Commission in November and that the members could find the information quite interesting. This information will be forwarded prior to next meeting.

Jim Snider, member of the audience, asked that the Township send all agencies letters and have them state the statutory duties of the Township.

MacLean asked about Disaster Planning. It was explained that the Township is currently working on a disaster mitigation plan that outlines what needs to happen to prepare for and recover from a natural or man-made disaster. Limited discussion was had regarding potential disasters the Township might face.

Kuncaitis asked about the open meetings act, its requirements and the sharing of information amongst the sub-committee. It was explained that the township Board recently adopted a policy that requires sub-committees to post their meetings and take minutes of such. Further, committee members can meet/talk/share information as long as a quorum of the group is not present. Also, that all information provided to the sub-committee will be posted on the Township website for all interested.

Emerson briefly discussed mutual aid amongst Metro and Rural on behalf of the Township and feels that Metro is not providing enough support to Whitewater.

Acker feels he will be of best use to the sub-committee once it determines its facility needs and associated costs, not with the establishing priorities phase.

Galligan asked that consideration be given (at the appropriate time) that if a new building is necessary, combining it with a new Township Hall.

Boyd added that there are lots of wheres, whats and whys that need to be determined.

Meyers was asked to contact the Band for a representative to the sub-committee and provide a brief overview of all emergency services that are currently provided by the Township.

Jim Snider, member of the audience, commented that all information should be documented – no verbal considerations should be taken.

Boyd again reiterated that the goal is to determine our needs not our wants.

Vaughn Harshfield asked if our affiliations included TC-TALUS. While the Township is a member of TC-TALUS, it has nothing to do with Emergency Services. Our affiliation currently is with Rural Fire, but we will be looking at possible affiliation with Metro, creating a new alliance with neighboring communities and/or forming our own department.

Brief discussion was had regarding certification of our Ambulance staff to be able to eliminate the need for North Flight Ambulance Services. What are the liabilities? Insurance needs? This information will be assembled for future discussions. What are the chances of a satellite facility for North Flight closer to the Township?

WWTESS 12/29/09

Tim Schafer, member of the audience, offered to forward a historical perspective for the Ambulance Services.

Acker excused himself at 8:10 PM.

Emerson stated that he wants the Township to get the best bang for the buck for the interests of his family and the residents.

The next meeting was scheduled for January 12, 2010 at 7:00 PM.

Meeting adjourned at 8:26 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Leslie Meyers, Recording Secretary