

Special meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Village of Brockport was held in the Conference Room, Municipal Building, 49 State Street, Brockport, New York, Monday, October 20, at 6:00pm.

PRESENT: Mayor Josephine C. Matela, Trustees Morton Wexler, James E. Whipple, Norman J. Knapp; and Peter C. DeToy, Clerk Leslie A. Morelli.

ALSO PRESENT: Deputy Fire Chief Christian A. McCullough, Fire Department Consolidation Committee Chair Bill Bird, and Member Larry Siegfried.

TOPIC: Consolidation of the 5 Fire Companies into 1 Brockport Fire Department

Trustee Knapp had prepared a memo with questions as follows:

1. Communications
 - a. Written minutes of meetings held, progress to date
 - b. Issues discussed with legal counsel (R. DiRaddo) action items addressed
 - c. To BFD Fire Council and current fire companies with company reps providing feedback to committee of issues of concern of membership
2. Benefit of Consolidation
 - a. To BFD
 - i. Members
 - ii. Companies
 - iii. Service delivery improvement
 - b. To community / taxpayer
 - c. "Real" underlying benefit
3. "Draft" By-Laws status
 - a. When available for review? Tabled for ??? days? Membership vote?
 - b. Feedback process established?
 - c. Vote by membership? When?
4. Company disbandment process
 - a. Vote by companies individually or entire BFD membership?
 - b. Company assets
 - i. Liquid assets / real estate
 - c. Function of remaining "fire company" organizations
5. Department election process
 - a. Civil (administrative)
 - b. Line (operational)

Regarding point number 1, L. Siegfried said there are no minutes of meetings of the Consolidation Committee. They have been reviewing the work in progress of the draft by-laws. Regarding point number 2, there has been low attendance at company meetings. Sometimes it is hard to get a quorum. Trustee Knapp said if the by-laws call for a quorum and they do not have one, they should not meet. Trustee Wexler said quorum could mean a percentage of the whole or a percentage of those present. If all 5 companies gathered at once it could be run as one big meeting. There would be better attendance; more ideas, better understanding and all business could be conducted at once. It would reduce the stress on volunteers by not having to find as much time for additional meetings. The paperwork process would be easier since there would be one focal point for all members. C. McCullough said it is tough filling administrative positions in each company. It is a struggle to get them filled by people who have the desire and time to really do the job justice. W. Bird said the same goes for line officers. If we elect all department officers we are apt to get a bigger pool and select the best qualified. Trustee Knapp questioned the streamline in efficiency and stated that the current system has worked for 127 years. W. Bird said the biggest concern is that the Chiefs office is overloaded with administrative duties. They need to put some of the responsibilities onto the civil officers.

L. Siegfried said the benefits to the community / taxpayers are that they hope to get more people involved to volunteer since the process will not be so complicated. It currently takes quite a while to get through the process. This will be faster and members can be voted in as one body.

C. McCullough asked what Trustee Knapp meant by "Real" underlying benefit. Trustee Knapp said he is not accusing anyone of hidden agendas, but was curious as to any underlying benefit. C. McCullough said it would reduce the burden, simplify, and be more efficient.

Regarding point number 3, W. Bird said the proposed by-laws will help get everyone involved rather than 5 bodies trying to satisfy everyone. The by-laws committee would be on going in case changes are needed. Trustee Knapp asked when the proposed by-laws would be ready for review. W. Bird said he hopes to put a copy in the mail to all members and then have the companies vote at their December meetings. He said he does not believe there will be a lot of suggested revisions since they already ran them past a cross section of 6 members include older, newer and EMS as well as a past chief from another district.

W. Bird said he hopes the roster is up to date since he does the points for the department and the roster

is always changing. C. McCullough said the individual companies do not always have a secretary to keep them up to date. He said Betty Coopenberg and Bill Menear have worked hard to update the **MINUTES OF MEETING HELD October 20, 2003 continued.....page 2**

roster. Trustee Knapp asked the purpose of keeping companies if so desired. B. Bird said historical. J. Whipple added social.

Trustee Whipple said one of the first actions would be to dissolve the 5 fire companies as active firefighting companies. B. Bird said yes, Attorney DiRaddo has this as part of the process. Ideally, they would like to be known as the Brockport Fire Department, Inc. by the first of the year. Trustee Knapp said the 5 companies are on the books as serving as firefighters. The Village Board would need to make a resolution. B. Bird said yes, and they are looking for the Village Board to approve the continuation of the consolidation committee to move forward with the process of consolidation of the 5 companies to become the Brockport Fire Department, Inc. Trustee Knapp suggested that Attorney DiRaddo communicate with Attorney Riley and be sure all is well.

Trustee Knapp asked when the 5 companies would take action. B. Bird said most of the companies have already informally voted in favor, but would need to do so formally at their December company meetings. B. Bird said they have a consolidation committee meeting October 26th. If all is finalized by then, they can get the information mailed out to the membership for voting at the December company meetings. L. Siegfried said the company representatives are supposed to be keeping their companies informed. B. Bird said it would be based on a majority of companies. Trustee Wexler said so if four companies vote in favor and 1 votes against, the one cannot stop the other four. B. Bird said that is correct. He further stated that the Capens would be able to expand the fire museum by raising funds as an entire department. B. Bird said the only controversy he sees is whether to go with an EMS Chief. Trustee Knapp said it works well for a lot of other organizations. It could always be amended later if it didn't work out.

Mayor Matela said Town Supervisors Lester and Kimball received some of the documentation, but not all of it. She asked that they be given all of it. Mayor Matela said there has been some conflicting information regarding Third Party Billing. Ray DiRaddo is looking into it. Trustee Knapp said it is a hot button item at the New York State Chiefs Association Convention.

B. Bird said they have been working on this for four years. Trustee Whipple said the Consolidation Committee has done a long and thorough job and modeled the proposal after similar successful programs. He said it is probably 90 percent there. Trustee DeToy agreed and said there is no reason to hold this back if it is ready. Trustee DeToy suggested voting at the December department meeting. Mayor Matela asked if could be accomplished before Fire Department elections. Trustee DeToy agreed the new officers should implement the transition. B. Bird said there would have to be a special election for civil officers.

Chief McCullough said he thought it had to "sit" for 60 days. B. Bird said it does. Trustee Knapp said he doubts there would be much opposition. He thanked them for answering his questions and for the time and effort put into this.

Trustee Whipple asked if they would be looking for a resolution from the Village Board to go ahead with the process. B. Bird said yes. Trustee Knapp asked about the link with the Fire Council. B. Bird said the Fire Council is the communications link with the Village Board. He said they could provide a letter to the Village Board. Chief McCullough said the Fire Council has consistently been in favor of this. Trustee Knapp said sometimes the actual vote could turn out differently. He also stressed that it should be the company wishes, not that of the company representative.

Trustee DeToy said this is really just a paper change to streamline efficiency. Trustee Knapp said he respectfully disagrees and stated that it is a big change from what the forefathers set up 127 years ago. Trustee DeToy said it wouldn't be much of a change to the younger members who are used to decisions being made at the department meetings. Trustee Knapp said he would take part of the blame for that. There have been opportunities to make the individual companies strong and successful. Mayor Matela said there is no blame. It is similar nowadays to the many service clubs who are all hungry for volunteers and often coordinating with other service clubs. People have a limited amount of time these days. B. Bird said he thinks consolidation of the 5 fire companies into one Brockport Fire Department, Inc. will make it stronger.

I, Leslie A. Morelli, Clerk for the Board of Trustees of the Village of Brockport, do hereby certify that the Board met, and I further certify that no formal action regarding public funds was taken thereon.

Leslie Ann Morelli, Village Clerk

ADJOURNMENT:

➔ Mayor Matela moved, Trustee Knapp seconded, unanimously carried that the meeting be adjourned at 6:50pm.

Leslie Ann Morelli, Village Clerk