

Special Meeting of the
Board of TFD Fire Commissioners
DRAFT -- Meeting Minutes – March 26, 2019
Thompsonville Fire Station, 35 N. Main Street

1. Call to Order: by Comm. DuFour at 6:00 pm.

2. Roll Call: present were Comm. DuFour, Comm. Perry, Comm. Dodd. Absent were Comm. Reidy, and Comm. Crowley. Also present was Dept. Secretary Wawer.

3. 2019-2020 FY Budget Workshop:

Comm. Dodd said she did speak with Della and she has the right figures. I also have the formula on how the mill rate is calculated. The tax revenue does not include the motor vehicles. That is a separate line item. The tax revenue is from real estate and business personal property. The grand list totals \$523,336,700.

Comm. Dodd said there are 3 different proposals. The first column is the Chief's proposal. There are 2 options proposed by the Commission. The columns in blue show our current year's budget, the year to date expenditures, and the balance between the two.

Comm. Dodd said the Commission is proposing an increase in the Fire Marshal fees revenue. The budgeted amount for this year is \$33,000 and so far, we have collected over \$56,000. And we still have four months to go.

Comm. Dodd said last year's pension contribution was \$905,000 because of the extra funds collected over the past couple of years. Both options have reduced the contribution to \$500,000. Everything else on the first page is the same as the Chief's.

Comm. Dodd said both options on the second page reduced the legal fees to \$40,000. We budgeted \$80,000 last year because of the contract negotiations.

Comm. Dodd said the contingency funds differs between the two options. I looked at the Charter and it doesn't state that we have to fund it. We have budgeted \$48,618 and have only used \$4,799. Option 1 has the contingency fund funded and option 2 does not.

Comm. Dodd said the Chief has proposed gym equipment and a battery-operated cutting tool. Both options have them taken out. So far in option 1 is we are funding the contingency account.

Comm. Dodd said the last page shows the apparatus and building fund. Once again, we are funding something that we don't have to have. Option 1 includes funding and option 2 does not. We currently have it funded but we have not used any of that money. Comm. Perry said the money in the building fund will be used to replace the roof. The roof is new but not good. We will have to do some big repairs to it in the future. I know we would like to have as much money as possible if we have to buy a new piece of apparatus but we will probably have to lease it. Comm. Dodd said we are hoping that the savings we are putting into place this year will allow us to fund the items we are cutting for next year.

Comm. Dodd said the mill rate would be 9.54 if we used the Chief's budget. The mill rate would be 8.66 for option 1. The mill rate for option 2 would be 8.44. Anything that is added to option 2 will cause the mill rate to increase. Comm. DuFour asked what the mill rate was two years ago. Dept. Secy. Wawer replied 8.34. Comm. Dodd said the budget is pretty much bare bones at 8.44. There are some changes this year but next year we will be at the same mill rate and be able to fund the things that we can't fund right now. Comm. DuFour said I think people might not have a hard time approving a mill rate of 8.44 considering it was 8.34 a year ago. Comm. Perry said the mill rate was lowered too much last year. Comm. Dodd said lowering the mill rate is what had to happen. We were stockpiling money for three years in a row. Comm. DuFour said the cost of things usually increase.

Comm. Dodd said I came up with the two options to show that there isn't much left to cut. Comm. DuFour said I'm having a hard time funding the air packs. I could be wrong but I don't think our air packs are out of date. I don't know if our air packs are expired. Comm. Perry asked is there any way to find out quickly. Dept. Secy. Wawer said the Chief or one of the captains would know.

Comm. Dodd said if the Board decides to go with option 2, there is nothing really to cut from it except for the air packs. If we choose option 1 then there is some room to get rid of something. The public will want to cut things from line items that we can't cut from such as payroll or overtime. The Board can cut funding to the contingency fund and the building & apparatus fund. Comm. DuFour said people will have an easier time paying \$160,000 if it is spread over a couple of years.

Comm. Dodd said the Chief has already looked at the budget and dialed back where he could. He certainly hasn't padded anything. Comm. Dodd said if you net out these numbers, the budget is pretty tight.

Comm. DuFour said the Chief texted him saying the air packs are not expired. It is not practical because the rest of the town has different bottles. Comm. Dodd said we have time to decide. I think the Board should present option 1. Now the Board is prepared for cutting. Who knows? The public could say that option 1 is great. Comm. DuFour said I don't like it but this is the reality that we are facing. There really isn't any other option. Comm. Perry said we aren't doing this because we like everyone down here. Anyone else couldn't do any better unless we cut things from the employees. And we

can't. Comm. DuFour said if we do that then we better increase the legal fees. Comm. Dodd said then we would have to close the station. That is when the employees would have to start making some cutbacks. If the proposed budget doesn't pass, then we have to go back to the original budget. Comm. Perry said there is a time where the public can cut the original budget even lower. Comm. Dodd said no, they can't. Comm. DuFour said the public could vote the budget down and then they could cut line items by show of hands. Comm. Dodd said then if that doesn't pass, it goes back to the original budget. What are they going to cut? They cannot cut the employee. They cannot cut the heart & hypertension section. Option 2's total expenditures are \$4.4 million. The employees' wages and benefits cost \$3.2 million. Everything else costs \$1.2 million to run a fire station for a year. There is nothing to cut. We could cut the pension but people were angry because it wasn't being funded. Comm. Perry said what I heard was let's just see what next year brings. What is wrong with having a five-year plan? Comm. Dodd said this is where we are supposed to be. We had to use what the previous commissions had been stockpiling. Comm. Perry said the Commission knew the money was there. It was there before I was there.

Comm. Dodd asked how the Board would like her to present the proposed budget. Comm. DuFour said present the Chief's budget and option 1. Also include the 2018 budget. Comm. Dodd said she will have the budget ready to be presented tomorrow.

MOTION to accept the proposed 2019-2020 budget of \$4,533,523 for public presentation on March 27, 2019 made by Comm. Perry, seconded by Comm. DuFour. Discussion: Comm. Dodd asked should we put what the mill rate will be on the presented budget. DuFour said yes. Roll Call- Motion passed 3-0.

4. Adjourn:

MOTION to adjourn made by Comm. Perry, seconded by Comm. DuFour. All in favor by ayes at 6:22 pm.