

VILLAGE OF LYNDON STATION  
Special Board Meeting minutes  
March 22, 2012

The meeting was called to order by President David Klicko at 7:04 p.m. The roll call was taken by the Clerk. Present were President David Klicko and Trustee Rebecca Coley. Absent was Trustee Earl Verette. Also present was Clerk Lori J. Scully, Fire Chief John Krus and Assistant Chief Troy Madland. Citizens present as per the sign up sheet.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss and approve the 2012 Fire Department Operating Budget. The proposed 2012 Fire Department Operating Budget presented October 2011 had the Fire Chief requesting to be paid \$4,000.00 and the EMS Service Director to be paid \$1,800.00 annually. The 2012 Fire Department Operating Budget presented in January, 2012 had all officers requesting annual salaries, the Service Director \$1,800.00 and the Fire Chief to be paid \$2,000.00 annually. President Klicko told Fire Chief Krus that the request for changes in the wages should have been presented to the Village Board prior to the annual budget in October, 2011 not during the Operating Budget so that it could be discussed further.

President Klicko said in October, 2011 the Village Board did approve the Fire Department allowance of \$23,300.00 for the Village. The change in the wages for the officers was not approved because the request needs to be discussed before budget time so the Village Board has an opportunity to review funds and make changes to what fees are charged to Township of Kildare and the Township of Lyndon. The Fire Chief said the amount of the Operating Budget will not change. The Fire Chief further stated that the Board approved the Fire Chief wages of \$4,000.00 for 2011. President Klicko corrected the Fire Chief that the Village Board approved to pay the Fire Chief \$1,500.00 per year for that position. Also, Trustee Coley and Trustee Verette approved to pay a \$1,500.00 bonus for the Fire Chief for 2011. President Klicko repeated that wages need to be discussed as a separate item and not be approved just because the Fire Chief adds them on the Fire Department Operating Budget. The Village Board determines the wages and Fire Chief Krus may request changes outside of the Operating Budget.

President Klicko said he had contacted other municipalities of similar size and tax base as the Village. President Klicko stated that the Fire Chief in Reedsburg, where the tax base is \$2 to \$3 million, pays their Fire Chief \$2,500.00 per year. The Village of Lyndon Station has a tax base which is approximately \$54,000.00. The Village contributes \$23,300.00 to the Fire Department budget. President Klicko further stated obviously the Fire Chief has reduced some of the other categories of the Operating Budget to balance for the increase in wages. President Klicko said his concerns are that with fuel prices going up and the weather conditions will cause the expenses for fuel and heating fuel to be higher than last year. The Village is not in the position to cover any overages in the Fire Department budget. President Klicko said that he was more than willing to sit down and discuss revising the way the fees are decided for the service to the townships. There has to be a more equitable way to decide what is paid, by population or property values. President Klicko said the Fire Chief was just approved \$1,500.00 last year and as of January, 2012 is requesting \$500.00 more. Fire Chief Krus asked where President Klicko got the wage information on the Reedsburg Fire Chief. President Klicko stated

that it was from the Reedsburg's Clerk. President Klicko also stated he got the same information from Wonewoc, Camp Douglas, Wisconsin Dells and Mauston. Fire Chief Krus didn't agree with President Klicko information. President Klicko presented the e-mails from the Clerks with the information. Fire Chief Krus stated that the President was blowing the meeting out of proportion and you have January, 2012 Operating Budget and now you want to do things differently again and you are bringing up Kildare and Lyndon Townships which have nothing to with this budget. President Klicko said he was not going to approve any wage changes from the Fire Chief just entering them in the Operating Budget without discussion. Fire Chief Krus asked why it wasn't discussed at the January, 2012 meeting. President Klicko stated the January, 2012 agenda was set up to discuss the Fire Department plan in conjunction with the Village Capital Improvement Plan. This plan is to present any capital expenditures expected or planned for five years so proper budgeting can be applied. The Fire Department was to present their five year plan contribution. At the January, 2012 meeting the Fire Chief presented a list of the trucks and their conditions. President Klicko presented the use of renewable energy and insulation to bring down utility costs. Also at the January, 2012 meeting the Fire Chief presented copies of revised duties for the Fire Department Officers. The Fire Chief also presented the Operating Budget, which could not be acted on as it was not on the agenda. At the January, 2012 meeting this meeting was scheduled to discuss the Operating Budget.

Fire Chief Krus said he doesn't get paid to do administrative work. President Klicko said you are on a Volunteer Department. Fire Chief Krus said the President gets paid, Greg Jessen gets paid. President Klicko said that the Fire Chief is paid \$1,500.00 per year. Trustee Coley questioned that this wage was only approved for 2011. President Klicko said that the \$1,500.00 bonus was a one year item. Clerk Scully said the Fire Chief's wage is \$1,500.00 per year. Fire Chief Krus said that he is not doing the work for \$1,500.00 a year and you're telling me that someone is going to do all this for \$1,500.00. President Klicko said the Wonewoc Fire Chief does it for \$800.00 and Camp Douglas Fire Chief does it for \$1,000.00 and those municipalities have a larger budget. Fire Chief Krus stated all the time he has put in the last three years. President Klicko asked the Fire Chief that when he joined, did he know it was a Volunteer Department.

Fire Chief Krus asked what President Klicko did with his wages when he was on the Fire Department. President Klicko said he donated his wages back to the Fire Department and that it was more than fair being paid \$1,500.00 per year. What you do while you are Fire Chief is up to you. President Klicko also stated look at Wonewoc and Camp Douglas and they have a little bigger tax base and about the same coverage area and they pay their Fire Chief \$800.00 or \$1,000.00. so why should the Village pay you \$2,000.00. He continued to say Reedsburg is paying \$2,500.00 with a much greater tax base. When you were asking for \$4,000.00 come on, I realize you do similar jobs but you also have to look at where the money is going to come from. Right now the Village tax base is approximately \$54,000.00 and the Village pays \$23,300.00 to operate the Fire Department. Also, the Village pays another \$54,000.00 for hydrant rental concluded President Klicko.

The number of calls per year was discussed.

President Klicko stated he has no problem with paying something but it will be within the financial capabilities of the Village and so as not to take away from other needs of the Village.

Discussion took place that the Fire Department has not changed the allocation levels in the last three years. President Klicko said the allocations need to be monitored to be sure that none run over and if they do, to have the Village Board approve the moving of funds from one allocation to another. President Klicko asked the Fire Chief where the money was taken from to offset the wages. Fire Chief Krus said where he had allocated the \$4,000.00 for his pay last year and then changed to \$2,000.00 in January, 2012 the remaining \$2,000.00 was divided up between the officers. The question of where the money was coming from to cover the original \$4,000.00 was not addressed.

Previous wages paid in past years was discussed and the number of people who respond to calls.

Fundraisers were discussed by Chief Krus. President Klicko said this has nothing to do with the Operating Budget. Fundraisers are not mandated by the Village and are strictly volunteer projects. President Klicko asked Fire Chief Krus why the Village should pay him more than other communities who have higher budgets. President Klicko said why not put this money in the budget where it is needed more instead of wanting more pay. Fire Chief Krus said for the Village Board to come up with a schedule of what the Fire Department needs to do, tell them what the dollar amount needs to be to cover that work and that's what they'll do. Fire Chief Krus said look at the Village Fire Department budget, it is one of the lowest around. President Klicko agreed and said that it is because of the tax base the Village has. The Village can not have a budget the same as Mauston, Reedsburg or the Dells because we don't have the same amount of revenue, which means that the Village Fire Department cannot be expected to operate at the same revenue levels. He continued to say that's the purpose of mutual aid; these were set up years ago to allow the smaller communities to provide fire protection within in their fiscal abilities.

The Fire Chief brought up fundraisers, and why should the members do them. President Klicko said fundraisers are done to help raise money to supplement the Fire Departments budget because a community doesn't have the finances. He further stated fundraisers are not mandated by the Village to do, but said that with the support our community gives they would be foolish not to. President Klicko said not to use the time put into fundraisers as an excuse for more pay and they are separate issues, if they want to start getting paid for their time doing fundraisers that is not the Village responsibilities. Fire Chief Krus said that the fundraisers have went toward the purchase of many of the trucks and if not the taxpayers would have had to come up with the money. President Klicko agreed and said that was the whole purpose of fundraisers even when he was on the Fire Department and there would be less need for fundraisers if the Fire Department was run differently than it has been in past years. Fire Chief Krus asked President Klicko if there is a truck fund set up. President Klicko said no and that one third of the Fire Department budget goes to paying off debt which totals \$27,000.00 and there is nothing being allocated for vehicle replacement. He continued to say that is why last year he proposed that the Village pay extra on the Building loan from the Interstate Income to help pay off the loan early. Once the loan is paid off, use that \$15,000 (Building Loan Payment) and add to the \$12,000 (Fire Department Truck Loan Payment) to pay off the vehicle loan early said President Klicko. He continued to say this not only saves the Village money but it would allow a portion of the \$27,000 to be allocated for vehicle replacement. This idea of continually spending more when there is substantial debt is not good fiscal management said President Klicko.

Trustee Coley asked if the other municipalities Fire Chiefs received any more above the \$800 or \$1,000. President Klicko said the Clerks who responded with this information stated the Fire Chiefs were paid that fee to do the Fire Chief position and they also received the same as the other Firefighters for calls, practices and meetings. He continued to say the Fire Chief position is to manage the department which includes the necessary paperwork.

President Klicko said he didn't understand why our department thinks they should get paid more especially when our community doesn't have the money. The Village has other fiscal responsibilities other than just the Volunteer Fire Department and I don't think the taxpayers would agree to not fund some of the other Village projects just to have bigger Fire Department. Fire Chief Krus said that the Fire Department has a Board set up where the members have been writing down their activities at the Fire Station, such as washing trucks, taking out garbage, cleaning the station which is above and beyond their duties. President Klicko said that it sounded like a Volunteer Fire Department at its best, that's what community service is.

President Klicko said he thought a salary of \$1,500 for Fire Chief for our size community was more than fair and \$1,800 for the EMS Service Director was more than some communities our size pay for the same position that run an ambulance. He continued to say it is the Village Board responsibility to compare rates from similar communities, along with what we can fiscally afford and not base it on personal relationships or feelings.

President Klicko said the Village needs to revisit the rates we are charging for our fire services to the townships and look at a more equitable schedule. Trustee Coley asked if we raise rates would we stand the chance of losing the coverage. President Klicko said the question should be why the taxpayers of the Village should supplement the townships coverage. He continued to say you have to charge enough to be able to afford the equipment and services. Presently the Village pays \$23,300 and the townships each pay \$26,300. The Village supplies the vehicles, buildings, insurance, and hydrant fees (\$54,000.00/year). If a fire fighter were to get hurt it is the Village that will be paying out. President Klicko said that the way some of the processes were done in the Village in the past need to be changed, not only because of the legality and ethical reasons, but to allow the Village to grow. We know the economy isn't the best, as can be seen from the number of unemployment claims from the volunteer Fire Department, that money is an issue said President Klicko.

President Klicko stated the need to break down the Fire Department budget so that we can be confident that the Fire Department will not run over budget at the end of the year. He continued to say by increasing the wages you will be taking money from some of the other categories of the budget. If you do go over budget, the Village ends up having to come up with the money which means taking it away from some other project concluded President Klicko.

More discussion took place what other departments receive and if the Fire Chief should get this information. President Klicko said he already has the info from the Clerks of Mauston, Wonewoc, Camp Douglas and Wisconsin Dells.

Chief Krus and President Klicko discussed Mauston.

Fire Chief Krus said he was not happy with working for \$1,500 annually if his officers were not getting paid. Discussion took place regarding officer's wages.

President Klicko proposed annual payment for the Assistant Fire Chiefs two positions be \$500.00, One Captain position to be \$300.00, two Lieutenant positions \$200.00 each and the EMS Service Director \$800.00 annually. The wages are in conjunction with the changes of the officer's job duties. Job description changes discussed and no new officer positions will be added. President Klicko said the Fire Chief has oversight of the EMS service and the Fire Department. President Klicko said the Fire Chief should be listed on the First Responder License as back up EMS Director. President Klicko asked Fire Chief Krus if the proposal was good. Fire Chief Krus said he wanted to take the offer back to Fire Department members for approval. President Klicko said this was a Board decision and will be decided tonight and the Fire Chief and fire department members are employees of the Village and that the Fire Chief is the manager of these employees. President Klicko said the Fire Chief will make the decision because he did not want to drag this out any longer, just as the Fire Chief have been complaining of the time it is taking.

Assistant Chief Madland asked if there were any other concerns about the way the Fire Department budget is broken down. President Klicko said his only area of concern was with the fuel costs with the prices rising. President Klicko asked Trustee Coley to comment on this proposal. Trustee Coley stated that she is not totally against it, but her concern of the EMS Service Director is that when you are looking at it comparing to the Chief that it can't be raised a lot. President Klicko interjected that it would be different if it was an Ambulance Service as there are different responsibilities with the upgrade of service. Trustee Coley said that in a lot ways this is fair but she fought hard for them because people have said we have one of the best Fire Departments around. Maybe that doesn't warrant paying them more but sometimes you get what you pay for. If you reduce what you are paying for maybe you're not going to have as nice of a department concluded Trustee Coley. President Klicko said we're not reducing any wages we are actually paying them something for once and he thinks it is a fair starting point. Again the Village Board should be looking at the other priorities in the Village which will require funding said President Klicko. Trustee Coley stated one reason she is comfortable with this as a starting point is that from personally knowing the people holding these positions and knowing their capabilities. She knows that they warrant these amounts and if not maybe more. Trustee Coley concluded at being comfortable with these amounts is down the road and if a different person takes over the position that these are fair amounts.

Discussion took place on the liaison position to the Mauston Ambulance Service held by Linda Churchill. The position is paid for from the Village Budget.

President Klicko asked Fire Chief Krus and Assistant Fire Chief Madland how they felt about the proposal. Fire Chief Krus said they will work with it. Fire Chief Krus said that they always used money from one area of the budget to cover any overages in other areas.

President Klicko said that is what the budget is supposed to do although any reallocation of funds needs to be presented to and approved by the Village Board, not by the Fire Department. Trustee Coley asked if that wasn't the Clerks job. President Klicko told Trustee Coley it is not the Clerks job but the Village Board to regulate and approve

where the Village's money goes. The new wages will be an increase of \$4,000.00. The budget items will need to be adjusted to allow for the \$4,000.00. It was agreed upon by all that the gas and electric will be \$4,330.00 and fuel will be \$4,750.00.

Motion was made by President Klicko; seconded Trustee Coley to pay the EMS Service Director \$800.00 per year, two Assistant Chiefs each \$500.00 per year, one Captain \$300.00 per year and two Lieutenant positions each \$200.00 per year as the wages are in conjunction with the changes in the officer's job duties' the Fire Chief wages remain at \$1,500.00 annually and the gas and electric will have \$1,000.00 added and fuel will have \$650.00 added with all other expenditures remaining the same; two ayes carried, one absent Trustee Verette.

A motion to adjourn was made by President Klicko, seconded by Trustee Coley; two ayes carried; one absent, Trustee Verette. Meeting adjourned at 8:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Lori J Scully, Village Clerk