



Rochester Hills Minutes Public Safety Committee

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Adam Alleman, Jim Duistermars, Louis Eble, Gregory Formanczyk, Andy LeBlanc, Linda Raschke, Gerald Robbins, Andrew Roscoe, Bob Smith, Gregory Walterhouse

Monday, November 8, 2004

7:30 PM

1000 Rochester Hills Dr.

DRAFT

Meeting Rescheduled from November 1, 2004

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Duistermars called the Public Safety Committee meeting to order at 7:40 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Jim Duistermars, Linda Raschke, Gerald Robbins, Louis Eble and Gregory Formanczyk

Non-Voting Members Present: Greg Walterhouse, Adam Alleman, Andy LeBlanc and Andrew Roscoe

Non-Voting Members Absent: Robert Smith

Others Present:

*Bryan Barnett, City Council Member
Tom Boyer, Labor Attorney
Nicholas Burgess, Paid On Call Fire Fighter/EMS
Ron Crowell, Assistant Fire Chief
James Donnelly, Paid On Call Fire Fighter - District Chief
Barbara Holder, City Council Member
Michael Kiebusch, Paid On Call Fire Fighter - Captain
Pam Lee, Director of Human Resources
Pat Somerville, Mayor
Steven Swann, Paid On Call Fire Fighter/Light Equipment Operator
David Wood, Paid On Call Fire Fighter - Captain
Gerald Yurgo, Fire Fighter*

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

None.

COMMUNICATIONS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

2004-0912

Discuss Full Time and Paid-On-Call Firefighters Staffing Concerns

Chairperson Duistermars explained the purpose of the open forum-style of the meeting indicating that the Public Safety Committee hoped to promote open communication between the Committee members and the Fire Department personnel in attendance. He noted that the intention of the Committee was to address issues and concerns regarding Fire Department staffing.

Members of the Committee expressed their concerns that Fire Department staffing is inadequate to meet the emergency needs of the community and questioned the use of mutual aid from neighboring communities, as well as perceived animosity between the full-time firefighters and the paid-on-call firefighters.

The following personnel addressed the issues noted above, as well as additional questions from Committee members:

- * Nicholas Burgess, Paid On Call Fire Fighter/EMS
- * Ron Crowell, Assistant Fire Chief
- * James Donnelly, Paid On Call Fire Fighter - District Chief
- * Barbara Holder, City Council Member
- * Michael Kiekbusch, Paid On Call Fire Fighter - Captain
- * Steven Swann, Paid On Call Fire Fighter/Light Equipment Operator
- * David Wood, Paid On Call Fire Fighter - Captain
- * Gerald Yurgo, Fire Fighter

The following issues and comments were discussed:

- * The system for dispatching ambulances and/or Firefighter/Paramedics to a medical emergency range from Alpha calls (the least severe emergency) to Echo calls (the most severe emergency):

- Alpha Call (Respond with no lights or sirens)
- Bravo (Nearest unit responds with lights and sirens)
- Charlie (All units respond with lights and sirens)
- Delta (All units respond with lights and sirens)
- Echo (All units respond with lights and sirens)

- * Response times vary depending on the severity of the emergency, as determined by the standardized dispatch system. Less severe emergencies, not requiring a response with lights and sirens, will have longer response times.

- * Firefighter/Paramedics typically respond in a fire engine or a Suburban SUV, both of which are fully equipped to respond to the most severe emergencies. Often they are able to delegate "basic calls" to EMTs on the scene.

- * Paid-on-Call Firefighter/EMTs respond in the ambulances, all of which are equipped for basic medical calls and for safe transport of patients.

- * It is considered unnecessary for Firefighter/Paramedics to respond to medical emergencies with the ambulance, as transport of the patient can often be handled by the EMTs, thus allowing the Firefighter/Paramedics to be available to respond to other emergency calls including fires.

* Mutual aid between communities results in lowered costs for all communities and is a standard practice.

* Mutual aid is only used in instances when City units cannot respond in a timely manner due to other fire or medical emergencies.

* Response times fall within the prescribed amount of time, typically within four (4) minutes.

* It is extremely rare that Firefighter/Paramedics must leave a fire engine unattended at the scene of an emergency and accompany a patient to the hospital in an ambulance. In such cases, dispatch is notified and the appropriate Fire personnel are sent to retrieve the engine.

* The working relationship between full time Firefighter/Paramedics and Paid-on-Call Firefighter/EMTs has improved substantially through a concerted effort by Fire Department administration.

Several audience members noted that no formal invitation was sent to Fire Department staff requesting that they attend the night's meeting nor informing them as to the purpose of the meeting. Committee members apologized for this oversight.

It was suggested that Committee members arrange to ride along with emergency units to gain first-hand knowledge of the systems employed by the Fire Department. Mr. Robbins stated that he has attempted to do so, but has been denied access by City Administration. He further noted his frustration at being unable to gain up-to-date data on emergency response times from the Administration.

Discussed

(Recess 8:58 p.m. - 9:16 p.m.)

2004-0761

Discuss Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) Hiring

Attachments: Duistermars Memo dtd 10-15-04 to CC.pdf; Draft 2005 Fire Dept Budget.pdf; Fiscal Team Memo dtd 9-03-04 - Budget Issues.pdf; Fiscal Team Memo dtd 9-20-04 - FTFF Salary & Benefits.pdf; Fiscal Team OT Pay Reports dtd 9-22-04 re FTFF OT 2003 to Sept. 2004.pd

Mr. Lee Zendel, 1575 Dutton Road, discussed the number of full-time firefighters assigned to each fire station and expressed concern that, assuming sick time and vacation time, Fire Department personnel is stretched too thin, resulting in reliance on mutual aid from other communities. He expressed his fear that other communities will "get tired of furnishing mutual aid" to Rochester Hills.

Committee members discussed their recommendation to City Council that two (2) full-time Firefighter/Paramedics be added to the two (2) EMT positions that the Fire Chief requested be added to the 2005 budget. City Council consensus was that the Public Safety Committee recommendation would be too costly and was not necessary according to Fire Chief Walterhouse.

Mr. Robbins noted that the Committee and City Council have received inconsistent information regarding the actual cost to the City for a full-time Firefighter/Paramedic.

The Committee moved to have the City's Fiscal Department provide a definitive answer to the cost to the City for a full-time Firefighter/Paramedic.

A motion was made by Robbins, seconded by Raschke, that this matter be Approved.

Whereas the Public Safety Committee has received inconsistent data regarding the cost to the City for a full-time Firefighter/Paramedic.

Be It Resolved that the Rochester Hills Public Safety Committee respectfully requests that the Rochester Hills Fiscal Department provide accurate and up-to-date data indicating the total cost to the City of Rochester Hills for a full-time Firefighter/Paramedic.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Duistermars, Raschke, Robbins, Eble and Formanczyk

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

YOUTH COMMENTS

Mr. Roscoe, Mr. Alleman and Mr. LeBlanc all expressed their belief that mutual aid between communities seems to work and is reciprocated by the Rochester Hills Fire Department. Mr. Alleman noted specifically that, unless the City were to substantially "over-staff" the Fire Department, mutual aid is necessary. He stressed, "no matter what, you always have to rely on somebody for a little help."

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Greg Formanczyk, Citizen Representative, gave notice that his term of office serving on the Public Safety Committee would be expiring at the end of the year and he did not intend to reapply for the position. He expressed his opinion that the work done in the Committee "goes no where" and he feels he is not able to express himself honestly. He concluded by stating, "If I can't be true to myself, I can't be true to the citizens."

NEXT MEETING DATE

Regular Meeting - Monday, December 6, 2004 at 7:30 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, Chairperson Duistermars adjourned the meeting at 9:41 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Margaret Strate.

Minutes were approved as presented/amended at the _____, 2004 Regular Public Safety Committee Meeting.