

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of

Greenfield Township Trustees

Meeting

Held 2:00 PM

2-1-16

The Greenfield Township Trustees met in special session at the firehouse to have a work session to start the process of hiring a new fire chief. Dave Cotner called the meeting to order Dave Cotner, Lonnie Kosch, John Reef and Chief Morris were present.

Chief Morris wanted to say a few things he has written down so he wouldn't forget them. Chief Morris said he's done a pretty good job of running this department he's kept spending under budget every year and kept the equipment and the building as up to date as possible. This is his fifteen year anniversary. Chief Morris said he's had a lot of support from his firemen and the surrounding departments.

Chief Morris said his biggest mistake was running this department as if he would never leave. Chief Morris wasn't able to delegate the administrative jobs to his officers due to the lack of time available to complete all that is required with all they have to do in their respective jobs. Chief Morris has a plan that would allow training within the department and save the township money at the same time. Chief Morris stated he is a firm believer that promotions in the fire service should be done within the department whenever possible. That's the way the majority of departments work in our area, including Columbus, Lancaster, Violet, Basil, Pleasant, Millersport, Bremen, Amanda Clearcreek. All their promotions have come from within. There have been some other departments that went outside and had some horrific issues. Madison Township, up in Canal Winchester, went outside the department and hired a chief the union did not get along with and the union filed for a vote of no confidence. The township trustees voted to get rid of that chief and they hired the assistant chief that was there prior. They haven't had any issues since. West Licking hired a chief that was not from this area who had all kinds of credentials. It took them over a year and half with him on paid leave to get rid of him and cost them hundreds of thousands of dollars between legal fees and his pay. They ended up hiring within and that solved their problems.

Chief Morris has discussed this with Peg and Mary and they feel bringing someone in from the outside that is not familiar with the relationship and methods of doing business that is established between the fire department and the fiscal office will cause a lot of turmoil and confusion. It will take a while to make this a cohesive unit.

So with all that said, there is an officer that wants this job. Captain John Schwinne would like to be chief of this department, he's been part of this department since way back in the volunteer days before there were paid people. John lived in Columbus at that time but he was so dedicated to the fire services down here, he came down and stayed in that old station sleeping in a recliner. It was probably close to two years back then that Chief Morris and Captain Schwinne were the only one's taking runs at night. Captain Schwinne did leave for a short period and decided that was not what he wanted to do and came back to the department.

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Chief Morris presented a plan for the trustees to consider where the Chief would go off of OP&F the week of April 23, 2016; he would still be Chief of the department, but on a part time basis. This will save a lot of money because it will cut down the chief's pay and especially benefits drastically. At that time Chief Morris would like to promote Captain Schwinne to assistant chief, he would get about a 10% pay increase. At that time one of the full timers would have to be promoted to Lieutenant to replace Captain Schwinne as officer on that shift and also hire a new full time fire fighter. Chief Morris presented the figures for review to compare employee costs. Chief Morris estimates about six months for the interim training period to complete the transition. The chief estimates approximately a \$15,000.00 savings for the first six months. There should be approximately \$25,000.00 savings per year at the transition. This savings will go down over a three year period. This will give Chief Morris time to train Captain Schwinne on the administrative part of the job for approximately 25 hours per week and this should create a smooth transition within six months.

Lonnie asked about the qualifications required by the Job Description and who would qualify. Chief Morris presented the Job Descriptions for review and discussion. If there was a Bachelor's Degree required for the Chiefs position the pay rate would increase substantially. There was discussion about the probationary period requirements and how long and who they would apply to. Lonnie asked if the other departments have used this scenario. Chief Morris stated the other departments have hired from within with good results. Chief Morris did not know what the requirements were at other departments. Chief Morris stated that the majority of the Chief's in the area do not have degrees.

There was discussion of the previous hiring and the issues that were encountered. The chief recommended interviewing Captain Schwinne before making decisions.

There was discussion that the Levy ends in 2017 and how to proceed with the renewal with a permanent levy. Chief Morris stated that Captain Schwinne is well liked in the community.

Dave Cotner stated he has spoken with some of the other chiefs and they made several suggestions. There is also the Ohio Fireman's Fire Chief's Association that can provide information for prospective hiring at a cost. There are several options.

Dave felt Chief Morris's proposal sounds like a good plan, but he needs to collect a lot more information to make an informed decision. The trustees want to make sure there is no question as to their fairness in the hiring procedures. Dave Cotner felt the trustees should discuss this with the fireman to get their input. John Reef didn't want to involve the firemen. Dave would like to see what the Ohio Fireman's Fire Chief's Association can provide and at what cost. After discussion, it was decided to investigate all avenues.

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Business concluded; meeting adjourned.