

**VILLAGE OF EPHRAIM
COMMUNITY PROTECTION COMMITTEE MINUTES
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 2024 – 3:30 PM
9996 WATER STREET**



ACTION ITEMS:

Dukehart moved, Cox seconded to approve the minutes of January 4, 2024, all ayes. Motion carried.

Dukehart moved, Krist seconded to recommend to the Village Board of Trustees to increase the contribution to the capital reserve account line item “Fire Department Equipment” by ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) so that the annual contribution will total approximately sixty thousand dollars (\$60,000), all ayes. Motion carried.

Cox moved, Krist seconded to approve and recommend the proposed 2025 Community Protection Committee budget to the Village of Ephraim Board of Trustees, all ayes. Motion carried.

Mulliken moved, Cox seconded to adjourn at 4:51 PM, all ayes. Motion carried.

Present: John Cox, Tad Dukehart, Laird Hart, Keith Krist, and Carly Mulliken - Chair.

Absent: None.

Staff: Justin MacDonald – Village of Ephraim Fire Chief and Kim Roberts - Deputy Clerk.

Guests: None.

1. **Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order by Mulliken at 3:30 PM. A quorum was present for this meeting.

2. **Changes to the agenda:** There were no changes.

3. **Approval of the previous minutes:**

Dukehart moved, Cox seconded to approve the minutes of January 4, 2024, all ayes. Motion carried.

4. **Visitors’ Comments:** There were no comments.

5. **Discussion on the Purchase of a New Fire Truck:**

MacDonald provided the committee with general pricing details for a new mini pumper truck to replace the 1999 mini pumper truck. He stressed that it was not a custom truck they were looking for, it would be one straight off the assembly line as a rolling stock. The early price estimates are six hundred thousand dollars (\$600,000) to seven hundred thousand dollars (\$700,000) for a rolling stock truck compared to over one million dollars for a custom truck. He noted that the replacement truck was being considered due to age, manual transmission, and the ability to carry four (4) personnel compared to the current capacity of two (2). He stressed that there are only four (4) members of the fire department that can drive the current mini pumper, the rest of the department does not know how to drive a manual transmission. Further, the rescue equipment could be put on the new truck so that the mainline engine does not have to be used for accidents but would still be short in length and height to maintain the same usefulness to the department to access smaller driveways. The replacement truck would have a slightly larger water-carrying capacity at approximately one thousand (1,000) gallons.

A discussion was held regarding the purchase of a new fire truck. Cox and Dukehart recommended looking for a used truck to re-outfit. MacDonald noted that the current truck had approximately fifteen thousand (15,000) miles and is used for approximately twenty (20) to twenty-five (25) calls annually. The Committee further discussed that the main engine is twelve (12) years old and that the standard replacement cycle for engines is twenty-five (25) years. Given that there is an engine replacement on the horizon, in addition to the replacement of all portable and mobile radios and pagers that will likely be required by the county by 2028, and discussion of a new firehouse or addition to the current building, the committee felt that the purchase warranted more discussion. MacDonald noted that 2026 or 2027 would be the target year for replacement. Mulliken stressed that the needs of the department to function and provide safety needed to be balanced with financial choices. She noted that more information would be gathered to continue the conversation in the future.

6. **Discussion and consideration of Animal Control:**

A discussion was held regarding animal control in the Village. Mulliken explained that there had been a recent incident when a stray, sick kitten required relocation off private property. Justin took care of the situation by delivering the kitten to a local veterinary practice. The incident revealed that most Door County municipalities have an agreement in place with Mark Richards. If such an agreement were desired by the Village, under State Law there would be a need to establish a local ordinance to appoint an animal humane officer pursuant to §173 Wis. Stats. Animals; Humane Officers.

The committee discussed that the statute was permissive therefore it was not mandatory that the Village appoint a humane officer. Moreover, since this was the first issue it could be revisited if further issues develop. The committee further felt that it may be more appropriate for the Village Board to address the issue in the future if warranted.

7. Discussion and consideration of the 2025 Budget:

MacDonald discussed the 2025 Fire Department budget. The first portion for discussion was the replacement of all portable and mobile radios along with pagers between 2026-2028. MacDonald explained that the County has been working for a few years on developing a replacement system to upgrade the current analog radio system. The current system is old and outdated, and replacement parts are becoming more and more difficult to source. MacDonald explained that about a month ago Fire Chiefs received a letter from County Technology Services explaining that the current analog radio safety system will reach the end of its useful life in 2028. The system will require an upgrade and requirements from the Federal Communications Commission "FCC" make an upgrade to the system a necessity. This will require all new equipment across the Door County system as well as the construction of new additional tower sites to achieve the required coverage percentages per municipality. The project will be broken into three phases: land acquisition/site testing; civil/shelter/site work and tower construction; and FCC licensing acquisition and tower/radio equipment purchasing and implementation. The total project cost for all three phases is estimated at \$26.3 million. MacDonald reviewed that the Village is part of the user system and based on 2024 pricing the complete replacement of all portable and mobile radios along with pagers, our rolling stock of what is currently in use, breaks down as follows:

- 30-Portable Radios \$183,300.00 - \$6,110 each- (Carried by Firefighter and EMS providers as the main source of fireground communication)
- 20-Mobile Radios \$99,000 - \$4,950 each- (Used in all Fire Department vehicles)
- 25-Pagers \$25,000 - \$1,000 each - (Main source of alerting Firefighter and EMS providers of a Call)

MacDonald explained that the county-wide radio system will move from analog to a 700-800 MHz digital system. The proposed digital system will establish a public safety network in which counties, departments within the counties, law enforcement, school systems, and local emergency personnel can all communicate on the same system. The purpose of this discussion is to start the budget planning process for the Village's portion of the user system based on the 2024 numbers, which he cautioned will likely increase.

A discussion was held regarding the replacement of the county-wide radio system. Cox felt that the total project cost was too much for the county to absorb and was in contradiction with how local government operates. He suggested reaching out to our county representatives to express concern regarding how the county is dictating local municipal spending. Dukehart was flabbergasted and wondered how the county could justify such an expense. MacDonald noted that the County will be holding meetings in early 2025; they have been talking about an upgrade for years and are giving communities time to plan and budget. Cox and Dukehart felt that there had to be grant money available for public safety. Moreover, the cost was a lot for a small village of three hundred forty-five (345) to absorb. Cox expressed concern over geographic limitations, technology becoming obsolete quickly, and encryption issues. The Village Board should get involved and communicate their disappointment regarding the spending of others' money and the lack of frugality in going after top-shelf technology. MacDonald explained that the upgrade is going to go forward regardless due to the current system being on borrowed time. Dukehart felt that this expenditure belonged in the state budget. Hart explained that it was good that it has been brought to our attention for planning purposes, research needs to be completed on the mandate to participate due to the huge expense. He recommended continuing to research why it is necessary and options to pay for it such as grants but the Village has to start to plan and prepare for the expense. Mulliken noted that the radio system upgrade would be a continued future agenda item to obtain more information.

MacDonald reviewed the 2025 budget. Overall he noted a 1.1% increase over the 2024 budget. Items of note were an increase to the Assistant Fire Chief's salary to one-half (1/2) of the Chief salary, a one thousand four hundred dollar (\$1,400) increase to the 2025 equipment purchase list, and the first responder coverage for 2024 because 2023 was a training year and the training fees are paid in arrears.

A discussion was held regarding the 2025 budget. Cox inquired about department reviews. MacDonald confirmed that they were conducted annually. Cox suggested that the Chair of the Committee be present for the reviews. Cox inquired about unforeseen maintenance. MacDonald noted that in two (2) weeks annual pump testing would be conducted. MacDonald provided details on the equipment list: Forced Entry Prop – provides a prop to train on forceable entry, Crane – functions with a stokes basket for the boat, and Stabilizing binoculars – for use on the fire boat.

Further discussion was held regarding building a new fire station or adding to the existing one in relation to budgetary planning. MacDonald noted that it was last on the list of prioritized Capital Projects. Cox provided background on the

difficulty of getting the current station built; it was a battle. It was an issue due to the interpretation of the Village's Zoning Code. It might be even more of an issue now if it were to be enlarged. The impact on the neighbors will also have to be considered. MacDonald explained that the project is conversational at this point. Krist felt that the post office should be moved to the fire station so that there is a revenue stream stemming from rent paid by the post office.

Further questions about line items on the budget were discussed. 100-50-52200-102 – Retirement: Wisconsin retirement (ETF) portion of Chief's salary. 100-50-52200-335 – Professional Dues: Membership in State Fire Association.

The committee discussed the capital reserve account for the Fire Department which historically has had an annual contribution of approximately fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000). Some members of the committee recalled that portions of this fund were previously earmarked for specific items such as a new fire engine. Dukehart suggested looking to the future and recognizing that the annual contribution of fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000) might not be sufficient. He felt the committee should consider requesting an increase in funding of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) to account for the replacement of larger items in the future as well as inflation for a total of sixty thousand dollars (\$60,000) contributed annually.

Dukehart moved, Krist seconded to recommend to the Village Board of Trustees to increase the contribution to the capital reserve account line item "Fire Department Equipment" by ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) so that the annual contribution will total approximately sixty thousand dollars (\$60,000), all ayes. Motion carried.

Further discussion was held regarding 100-50-52200-304 - LP Gas – MacDonald is currently working on a new contract for LP, 100-50-52100-301 – Law Enforcement – MacDonald explained this line item was for anything law enforcement related such as hiring reserve deputies for extra patrols if needed. Mulliken asked the committee if there were any changes to the 2025 budget. There were none.

Cox moved, Krist seconded to approve and recommend the proposed 2025 Community Protection Committee budget to the Village of Ephraim Board of Trustees, all ayes. Motion carried.

8. Discussion of general safety issues in the Village:

Cox discussed excessive speeding on Settlement Road, Town Line Drive, German Road, and Hoganson Lane. He stressed that it is still an issue and we need some help. He noted that people were using German Road to Hoganson Lane to Brookside Lane to avoid stop signs, as a shortcut back to Water Street/STH 42.

Cox further discussed the need for brushing the roads in the Village. The work on Moravia Street barely touches what needs to be completed. He asked if the issue was going to require someone to be hired to do the work. It is a safety and maintenance issue; perhaps it is an issue for the Physical Facilities & Utilities "PFU" Committee.

Krist expressed concern about people cutting the corner at German Road and Hoganson Lane. He fears that it will result in an accident but he doesn't have a solution to the problem.

9. New business for the next meeting:

- a. German Road
- b. Brush trimming of Village roadways.

The next meeting of the Community Protection Meeting will be held on, Thursday, October 3, 2024, at 3:30 PM.

10. Adjournment:

Mulliken moved, Cox seconded to adjourn at 4:51 PM, all ayes. Motion carried.

Recorded by, Kim Roberts – Deputy Clerk