Safety Committee Meeting

August 11, 2022

Those present were Council Members, Buxton, Clausen, Fleck and Sovinski; Mayor Hazel; and Fire Chief Doug Wolters.

Committee chairman Sovinski called the meeting to order at 5:03 pm to review the upcoming fire protection agreements with Hopewell and Center Townships.

Doug Wolters gave a vocal presentation about the ongoing discussions with Hopewell Township, Rockford Fire Department and the County on the existing and proposed fire agreement with Hopewell Township. Doug with the help of the Mayor reviewed the history of the existing agreement and some of the issues associated with it. The existing agreement called the township to pay the city $41,500 per year for fire protection. Somehow when the last fire levy was approved in the township, they ended up paying the city $49,000. They are not contesting these payments. There has been some discussion and changes as to which sections of the township are covered by Celina and Rockford. Presently Celina covers 17 sections.

The Mayor brought up a discussion on the ratio of city costs verses agreement payments and what appears to be a trend of these getting further apart. For example, the City’s costs for the past year in fire run costs for Hopewell Township was around $66,000. Ambulance squads are addressed through the County. There were discussions on the needs to protect life and property being the prime motive for these emergency services and on the mutual aid agreements the City has with surrounding fire and ambulance service providers.

The fire chief brought up a problem he is having in preparing for the fire agreement negotiations is the difficulty in getting information on property valuations and fire runs by Rockford in Hopewell Township. The county auditor’s office, the township and the Rockford fire department are not cooperating very well with him.

While most of the discussion was addressing Hopewell Township agreement negotiations, Center Townships fire agreement will also be coming up soon, so much of the discussions may also apply to it.

Following discussions, the committee members all agreed that the city administration proceed with the following; pursue records requests to get the information needed for the city to make informed decisions on the two upcoming fire agreements, and prepare a plan for negotiating these agreements that will allow the city to cover as much of its costs as possible and also show the cost of services that the fire department has address in its operations. While we may have to anticipate that all these costs cannot be recovered through the agreements, we and the people receiving these services need to know their costs and benefits. It was also agreed that one further item the administration needs to look in to is to find a way to collect from insurance companies for fire runs.

Chairman Sovinski adjourned the meeting at 5:43 pm.

Submitted by Michael Sovinski, Committee Chairman