

North Township - LaPaz Fire Protection Territory, Public Meeting
Wednesday, April 7, 2025 at 6:30pm
LaPaz-North Township Fire Station

Present:

Roger Ecker, Town of LaPaz
Cathy Welch, Town of LaPaz
Steven Davenport, North Township
Stephen Barber, appointed by Ms. Haskins, Trustee
Lisa Knepp, appointed by Town of LaPaz

Also present:

Emily Haskins, Trustee
Mathew Haskins, Fire Chief
Please refer to the sign-in sheet for additional attendees.

The meeting consisted of the following:

1. The meeting was called to order by Mr. Davenport at 6:30pm.
2. Approval of 3/17/25 Meeting Minutes. Mr. Ecker moved to accept the minutes, seconded by Mr. Barber, and passed 5-0.
3. Billing service update: Ms. Haskins reports that the "Go-live date" for billing with EMS/MC is anticipated for May 1, 2025.
4. Employee Benefits Discussion
 - a. Mr. Haskins desires to hire 4 full-time employees
 - i. \$47,500-55,000 = \$309,470 (with full benefits including salary, taxes, insurance, PERF)
 - ii. Ms. Haskins explains the health insurance options.
 1. Legally, we are sufficiently small enough employer that we do not have to offer any health insurance plan. However, if we want to attract potential employees, offering health insurance would be a great part of the benefit package.
 2. If the township offers group insurance
 - a. We must pay 50% of the employee premium, by law
 - b. We do not have to pay for spouse or children
 3. HRA (Health Reimbursement Arrangement)
 - a. We would be giving the employee money each month to purchase their own insurance.
 - b. For the employees, if they are offered and HRA, the employee is not eligible for any subsidies on the Marketplace.
 4. HSA (Health Spending Account)
 - a. They have to be in an HSA-approved health insurance plan.
 - b. Many group health insurance plans are HSA-eligible
 - c. Other area departments tend to offer group insurance.
 - b. Mr. Haskins identifies his goal is: 2 per shift, 12 hours per day, for 7 days per week.
 - c. Volunteers would continue to cover the nights.
 - d. Minimum Requirements:
 - i. Basic EMT, Firefighter II preferred.
 - ii. FF II and Advanced EMT within 2 years of employment
 - e. Complete a physical agility test

- i. Mr. Haskins indicated that he would do a physical agility test here that assures that the prospective employee is able to adequately perform the typical physical tasks the job requires. Mr. Lampkins adds that the CPAT is typically utilized for departments who are utilizing a 77 Retirement Fund for career emergency workers. And any department that is not in this program, "does their own physical agility test." As of today, our volunteers are not required to perform physical agility tests.
 - ii. It was clarified that completing a medical assessment of some type is different than the physical agility test.
 - iii. Mr. Barber expresses his desire to complete some type of physical agility test and a medical assessment to ensure that new hires can perform the job requirements under duress. He considers this to be a safety issue. Mr. Lampkins indicates that there is a standard for determining medical fitness for firefighters and that only certain physicians are certified to perform these assessments.
 - iv. A discussion ensued regarding whether what a medical assessment would include, who would be able to do this, who would pay for it, and if it is something that is only done upon hiring or periodically.
- f. Pass background checks, including criminal, driving, and work history
- g. Pass a drug test
- h. Mr. Haskins suggests a change in how vacation time is earned (see attached).
 - i. Mr. Haskins is wondering if we want to offer volunteers PTO considerations for their time of service as volunteers IF they make the switch to full-time employment. He also asks whether these volunteers who request to move to full-time status should have any consideration in the hiring process, salary, vacation time, or longevity time. Mr. Barber speaks in favor of some type of consideration for those volunteers who have been active volunteers with the desire to reward those volunteers who have been more active as differentiated from those who have not been very active. No decisions were made about this. Mr. Davenport suggests the utilization of years of experience in the determination of salary for new hires.
- i. Please refer to the attached for changes to Personal Time and Sick Time.
- j. Mr. Haskins suggests that he be given permission to begin the hiring process. Concern was voiced about doing so when we have not yet fully ironed out all the details. Mr. Haskins indicates that these do not have to be finalized before advertising the positions.
- k. Mr. Grolich confirms Mr. Haskins description of the physical agility test to determine if a potential hire can perform the necessary duties. He describes some of the components of the medical assessment to determine physical fitness including baseline vital signs, maybe a 12-lead EKG, a pulmonary function test. We could obtain a breathing apparatus to screen pulmonary function from the state for free. Regarding volunteers, there are some who will be able to function in a "hot zone" and some who cannot function in this environment. This is quite common. Both the individual firefighter and the chiefs should have this knowledge about one's abilities and limitations. "It is a good idea to have a baseline physical for even your volunteers. But you need to be conscientious about what that baseline physical is. That would include things like baseline vital signs, if you have someone that shows up for a test and has a blood pressure of 180/120, they're not a good candidate. They need to be referred to a physician before you take those folks on. And then those folks can then be put on medication and control that. The last thing you want is for someone to have a stroke at a fire." He also suggested a 12-lead EKG. "I don't think you need a \$500 medical physical for that." Mr. Haskins is in favor of utilizing an in-house physical agility assessment and a basic medical assessment (as described by Mr. Grolich) for new full-time hires.

- l. Mr. Barber identifies three variables which still need to be determined before completing the hiring process:
 - i. The physical agility assessment and the medical assessment,
 - ii. Which insurance option we want to utilize, and
 - iii. What type of consideration we want to offer to volunteers who want to apply for full-time positions.
 - m. Mr. Barber moves to recommend to the Township Advisory Board, that Mr. Haskins be permitted to advertise for 4 full-time positions, with generic statements about the above variables and that the salary range will be between \$47,500 and \$55,000. Mr. Ecker seconds the motion. Motion passes 5-0.
5. Trustee update
- a. Ms. Haskins clarifies that the sign out front mistakenly listed tonight's meeting as starting at 6pm (it started at 6:30pm). She also says that the sign also listed a meeting for April 14 (which is not accurate).
 - b. Ms. Haskins presents the estimate from Siefer Services which would supply the hardware, less the cost of a whiteboard, to enable the Board to comply with streaming requirements for our meetings – see attached. Mr. Ecker moves to recommend this estimate to the Township Advisory Board. Mr. Haskins adds that he has checked into Surf Internet, which will be needed to handle the increased bandwidth requirements for streaming. The cost of this will be about \$100/month. This will be an expense for the Township, not the Territory. Motion passes 5-0.
 - c. Ms. Haskins hands out the list of volunteer compensation for the first quarter. See attached.
 - d. Financial report to date is attached.
6. Update to Next Meeting Date(s):
- a. Wednesday, April 23 at 6:00pm
 - b. Monday, June 16 at 6:00pm
7. Good of the order announcements or updates as necessary
- a. Mr. Haskins reports that the County Council has passed the 3rd reading of the \$50,000 grants for county fire departments. This would be a reimbursement arrangement, and they may begin the application process in May 2025. Mr. Haskins is considering using this grant for SCBAs. Our department has 20 SCBAs, which are all out of date. The bottles will need to be purchased as well. The grant monies would be reimbursed to the Township. The quote is for 20 new units each with one bottle, 20 spare bottles and 20 masks = \$8,588.70 per set.
8. Public Comment (Limited to 2 minutes)
- a. Patron asks about housing status. Mr. Haskins reports that the remodeling upstairs passed the rough inspection last week. They are now working on the drywalling.
 - b. Patron asks if we need housing since we are doing 12-hour shifts. It was stated that this is one of the reasons we are doing 12-hour shifts at this time.
 - c. Patron asks for better notification of meetings. Ms. Haskins reports that current notification protocol includes: posting on the door, posting on the sign out front, in the Pilot News, on radio station WTCA, and on the northtownship.org website. Patron requests that it be sent to the TV stations. Ms. Haskins indicates that she will send notifications to 16, 22, & 28 and see if they post it.
9. Adjournment: Mr. Ecker moves to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Barber. Motion passes 5-0.

Respectfully Submitted,
Stephen Barber, Secretary

Approved:

☒ As written

☐ As Amended

☐ As Corrected



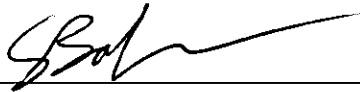
Steven Davenport, President

4-23-25
Date



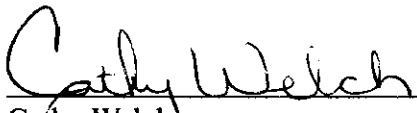
Roger Ecker, Vice President

4-23-25
Date



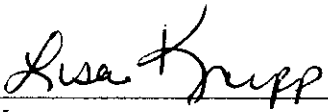
Stephen Barber, Secretary

4-23-25
Date



Cathy Welch

4/23/25
Date



Lisa Knepp

4/23/25
Date

LaPaz-North Township Fire Protection Territory Public Meeting

Monday, April 7, 2025 at 6:30pm

LaPaz-North Township Fire Station

Sign-In Sheet

1. Steve Barber
2. Don Smith
3. Justin Bowen
4. Sandy Robertson
5. Al Robertson
6. Menta Vogt
7. Lisa Guepp
8. Tom Dault
9. Roger Epper
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- 20.
- 21.

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- 3. Employee Status Update & Proposal**
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