

HEALTH & SAFETY COMMITTEE MINUTES
OF NOVEMBER 9, 2020
VIA ZOOM

In Attendance: **Vermilion City Council:**
Steve Herron, President of Council; Monica Stark, Council at Large; F. Loucka, Ward Two; Steve Hlovacs, Ward Three; Barb Brady, Ward Four; Brian Holmes, Ward Five; Gwen Fisher, Certified Municipal Clerk. Absent: Emily Skahen, Ward One

Administration:
Jim Forthofer, Mayor; Chris Howard, City Engineer; Captain Graham; Amy Hendricks, Finance Director; Tony Valerius, Service Director; Chris Stempowski, Fire Chief

Call to Order: Chairman, Brian Holmes, RESOLVED THAT this Health & Safety Committee comprised of the committee of the whole does now come to order.

TOPIC ONE: Police Chief's Report

Captain Graham reported that two officers came down with the COVID virus and one is back working, and the other officer should be back to work shortly. They did have the building and cars fumed, so hopefully there will be no further cases.

He stated the Police Department is up to date with the state collaborative and they received their certification last week, so they are certified with the standards of the state as of now.

TOPIC TWO:Fire Chief's Report

Due to audio technical difficulties, Mayor Forthofer gave the report on behalf of Chris Stempowski. He reported there were 12 fire responses in October for a total of 152 year to date. He said there was not much participation at their Open Houses and noted they had tables outside with literature.

He said due to COVID, hose testing has been rescheduled for the first week in December. The Vermilion Fire Department applied for a fire fighter grant for scuba replacement equipment. He stated they are anticipating the new fire station to be completed around the first or second week of December. The Fire Department is pre-planning for the relocation.

He noted that Chief Stempowski received a grant notice from Brownhelm Township. He said Brownhelm Township received some CARES Act Funding and through their benevolence and good spiritedness they have chosen to give \$100 per fire fighter to the Vermilion Fire Department who cover part of their territory. He said this is pending per the approval of City Council. There are other things attached to the \$100 that may be given by Brownhelm which

includes pension information. A. Hendricks said they received what would be allocated towards the payment, but nothing against the fringe benefits. She is still contacting the pension system to determine if the amount would not be pensionable, but she wants this confirmed in writing. She noted the Medicare and Bureau of Workers Compensation contributions is another thing to look at, so it could be that the expense to the city from the fire operating levy to cover those things could be as much as \$750.00 or as small as \$25.00 or \$30.00 based on whether it's pensionable or not. She indicated there are 30 fire fighters. Mayor Forthofer said the Chief also noted that the Brownhelm's CARES Act Funding goes towards other things, such as sanitizing backpacks, paper towel dispensers, and other things that are CARES Act certifiable. However, since this deals with income the administration felt they needed Council's approval since it deals with a form of compensation.

B. Brady asked if every fire fighter will get this money even if they did not serve during this period – just being a fire fighter will get them a \$100 bonus? A. Hendricks said there is a provision in the ordinance that they must have served between a certain period of dates, and she believed it was around late March through late September.

B. Holmes asked how soon Council needs to give an answer. A. Hendricks believed it was November 20 because of the date they must return the money back to Lorain County. However, there is a provision in the ordinance they passed that if Council did not approve the compensation component that the monies could be expended towards other COVID compliant uses. B. Holmes asked if there was any need for this equipment at the Fire Department. Mayor Forthofer said absolutely since they will be moving into a new station and the Chief has been accepting it. The Chief is aware of the CARES Act rules as well.

M. Stark asked if a motion was required by City Council. G. Fisher said she can put a motion under 'New Business' at next week's meeting if that was Council's desire. B. Holmes said he would like the Chief to attend the meeting on November 16 to let them know what else he could get as far as equipment. Mayor Forthofer proceeded to call Chief Stempowski and put him on speakerphone since he was having audio difficulties. B. Holmes asked how this would be different from other CARES Act money the police department would receive or other full-time safety services. B. Holmes asked the Chief was his views were on the \$100. Chief Stempowski thought it was great that Brownhelm Township was thinking of the fire fighters and if this is the way they choose to spend those funds, then he is okay with it.

F. Loucka asked if this would need an ordinance. A. Hendricks said after preliminary conversation with legal counsel it was determined that since it is a matter of compensation, it would need to be approved by City Council so an Auditor wouldn't make a Finding for Recovery for paying compensation that had not been authorized. G. Fisher suggested that council make a motion to have legislation prepared.

S. Herron MOVED; M. Stark seconded to have legislation prepared to authorize Brownhelm Township to distribute money in the amount of \$100 from the CARES ACT Funding to all qualifying fire fighters in the Vermilion Fire Department. Roll Call Vote 6 YEAS. **MOTION CARRIED**.

B. Holmes adjourned the meeting after no further discussion came before the committee.

Next Meeting: December 14, 2020 – Time and Location TBD

*Transcribed by:
Gwen Fisher, Certified Municipal Clerk*