

Walworth County Fire/EMS Study Committee
September 21, 2017 Meeting Minutes
Walworth County Government Center, County Board Room 114
100 W. Walworth Street, Elkhorn, Wisconsin

The meeting was called to order by Chair Dale Wilson at 1:03 p.m.

Roll call was conducted, and a quorum of members was present: Chair Dale Wilson, Vice Chair John Peters, Lowell Hagen, Dave Nelson and Denise Pieroni. Bruce Vander Veen and James Weiss were excused.

Dr. Steven Andrews, County Administrator David Bretl and Nicole Hill, County Administration Office, were also in attendance.

Members of the public in attendance: Village of Darien Administrator Rebecca LeMire; Village of Darien Trustee Cheryl Kaufenberg; and Delavan Fire Chief Tim O'Neill

Vice Chair John Peters made a motion, seconded by Dave Nelson, to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried 5-0.

Dave Nelson made a motion, seconded by Vice Chair Peters, to approve the August 10, 2017 meeting minutes. Motion carried by voice vote.

Public comment period – There was none.

Final Approval of Citizen Survey

Chair Dale Wilson said the citizen survey was submitted to the Executive Committee and it was approved, with authorization to make modifications as necessary. **Wilson introduced Nicole Hill from Administration, who has been working with Polco on developing the survey format. She gave a presentation on the layout of the survey and showed those questions needing adjustment in Polco.** Only 30 choices for answers can be listed, and adding any more choices would exceed the limit. She added that Polco provides the option to require answers to questions on the survey. Discussion ensued on changing and eliminating some questions, and Hill will check if certain questions could be linked to one another.

Consensus on the final survey choices was:

- Eliminate draft questions 1 and 2. The first question will read: “Do you reside or own property within Walworth County?” This will be a required question. The new question 2 will read: “If yes, please select the municipality in which you reside or own property.”
- Eliminate demographic questions numbered 15, 16 and 17 on the draft.
- All recommended survey modifications will also be made to the hard copies to be mailed to non-resident property owners. Surveys will be mailed to a random sampling of 1,000 people who own property in Walworth County but are not residents.

The sample postcards were reviewed, and Hill said the \$2,014 quote she included with the postcard was for in-house copying and cutting of 57,000 postcards. She said a bulk rate for the postage may be available. Lowell Hagen asked if other cost options were researched and Hill said she would contact the post office and the company that prints the tax bills for municipalities for quotes. Dr. Andrews requested that verbiage be added at the bottom of the postcard directing potential volunteers to the fire/EMS webpage. **Denise Pieroni made a motion, seconded by Chair Wilson, to proceed with the posting of the survey with the modifications made above herein, and the mailing of the postcards, at a cost not to exceed \$24,500, subject to staff soliciting pricing quotes and using the most-cost effective option. Motion carried 5-0.**

Approval of the list and number of out-of-county property owners to be surveyed – Covered above herein.

Discussion on additional publicity efforts to promote the survey

County Administrator David Bretl said he would do a newspaper column to promote the citizen survey when the postcards are mailed. Vice Chair Peters said he would inform the fire chiefs at the next division meeting that the citizen surveys are going out and encourage them to promote the survey. The Intergovernmental Cooperation Council (ICC) meets at the end of October, and Pieroni and Bretl will ensure the information is provided to the municipalities. The timeframe for survey responses was discussed. **Denise Pieroni made a motion, seconded by Dave Nelson, to give respondents 30 days after the estimated date of the receipt of the postcards to complete the surveys. Motion carried 5-0.**

Consensus was to add “Your Input is Needed” on the postcards, if feasible.

Discussion regarding communities contemplating referendum to increase levy limits for fire/EMS expenditures

Bretl said he requested this be on the meeting agenda and asked if any members were aware of municipalities considering putting a referendum to the voters on increasing the levy limits for fire/EMS services. He said most of the municipalities, like the County, are at their funding caps, and if individual municipalities would undertake fire/EMS funding initiatives themselves, it would change the focus of this study committee. Vice Chair Peters said the fire chiefs will be meeting with state legislative leaders in November. Currently, EMS volunteers are at the lowest numbers ever within the state.

Vice Chair Peters said there are 7 – 8 departments and 11 municipalities who have not yet submitted their responses to the surveys. He will reach out to those departments that haven’t responded. Bretl said he will contact the municipalities that haven’t responded, and encouraged committee members to do the same.

Public comment period – There was none.

Wilson asked if there was any other business for discussion. Pieroni suggested surveying private EMS service providers to gain information on availability of services, what their challenges are, and what they could add to countywide service provision. Hagen suggested contacting a municipality who uses solely private providers for EMS service to see how it has worked for them. Pieroni will arrange for someone from the City of Delavan to come to the next meeting to discuss their experience with private providers. Discussion ensued about sending a survey to private EMS providers, and Bretl said he could adapt the existing surveys to private providers and would present it at the next meeting. The October meeting agenda will also include an update on survey responses from the departments and municipalities.

Confirmation of next meeting date and time: Thursday, October 19 at 1:00 p.m.

Adjournment

On motion by Dave Nelson, seconded by Vice Chair Peters, Chair Wilson adjourned the meeting at 2:03 p.m.