

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING
OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
OF THE ROCHESTER FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

On the twenty eighth day of January, 2022, a special meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Rochester Fire Protection District was held at 6:00 p.m., pursuant to notice, 700 East Main Street, Rochester, Illinois. In attendance were the Trustees of the District: Trustee Fairchild, Trustee Ritterbusch, Trustee McBride, Trustee Romadka and Trustee Spurgeon. Also present were members of RFPD and the Public.

The first order of business was the taking of the roll call. All Trustees present and a quorum was established.

The next item of business was Old Business.

1. Discuss/Authorize the Chief to borrow SCBA bottles from neighboring departments. President McBride checked with the District Counsel and the insurance provider. He was informed that if there was an injury to a firefighter while using an expired SCBA bottle, the resulting judgement against the District could be substantial. Therefore, President McBride would like to authorize the Chief to get some SCBA bottles from other nearby departments. Trustee Ritterbusch asked the Deputy Chief Polley how many bottles does the department need. He replied 10/15 bottles, maybe. He goes on to say that the department still has some good bottles. Trustee Ritterbusch stated that she would like the Board to be better informed about issues that involve liability and safety. Deputy Chief Polley stated that the members were under the impression that Trustee Fairchild has requested that the department get bottles to use for short term. Trustee Fairchild clarified that he had asked the Chief about the disposition and the number of SCBA bottles that the department owned, but did not order the Chief to comply. Trustee Fairchild went on to say that he had conveyed to the Board the possibility that the department was checking into borrowing bottles to use but that could be just a rumor. Also if the Chief decided to borrow SCBA bottles from another department, that action would be well within his authority as Chief. Although, it would be nice to tell the Board of his plan, he would not need the Board's authorization to do so. After some more discussion about improving communication between the Board and the command staff of the department, President McBride asked for a motion to authorize the Chief to borrow SCBA bottles from neighboring departments until the new air packs and bottles arrive. Motioned by Trustee Romadka and seconded by Trustee Spurgeon. Polled the Board and all in favor.

The next item of business was New Business.

1. Discuss/Approve the Annual Treasurer's Statement of Receipts and Disbursements. President McBride asked for a motion to approve. Trustee Spurgeon motioned and Trustee Romadka seconded. Polled the Board and all in favor.

2. Discuss/Approve Not Micro-managing the Department. President McBride feels that some of the Board members are micro-managing the department. He provided three examples. One pertained to a tire purchase for one of the fire trucks. Second example was about the air pack purchase. Third example was I regard to the expired SCBA bottles being replaced with borrowed bottles from neighboring departments. President McBride would like to get a motion to have the Board agree to not micro-manage the department and if it passes he would have the District's Counsel draw up a resolution to codify the action. Trustee Fairchild stated that he could not speak to the tire situation. Trustee Spurgeon stated all that he did was tell the tire salesman to make sure that the District got the state bid on the tire purchase and that is all he said. Trustee Fairchild responded to the second allegation by stating that he simply had some suggestions that he thought had some merit based on thirty plus years of Fire/EMS experience. However, they were just "suggestions". Nobody got ordered to do anything and it was ultimately up to the committee to request what they wanted in regard to the air packs. The Board voted unanimously to purchase them. Trustee Fairchild responded to the third allegation listed by President McBride by stating that he felt like he answered that example earlier in the meeting but to clarify the situation further. From an operations standpoint, the Chief, the command staff are expected to run the department as they see fit. When they come before the Board requesting to purchase equipment for use by the department, they should welcome a healthy dialogue with the Board with the ultimate goal of serving the District better. After much discussion and a general better understanding of various positions and a shared goal of better communication. President McBride asked to table the micro-managing resolution. The Board agreed.

The next item of business was Member and Public Comment. A member of the department asked about the status of the Policy/Procedures manual. President McBride answered that the Board has had it about a week and we're working on it. A member of the public asked about the additional manual. President McBride stated that the attorneys are aware of it. Also, the public member asked if it could be added to the agenda at the next regular meeting. President McBride said that it could.

During the Public Comment time slot of the January 28th special meeting, a member of the public was interrupted and subsequently argued with by a member of the Fire department when she was questioning the Board regarding the Policy/Procedure Manual. The public should be allowed to address the Board without fear of argument by other members of the public and/or members of the Fire department.

The next item of business was Announcements. President McBride asked for a motion to adjourn. Trustee Spurgeon motioned and seconded by Romadka. Polled the Board and all in favor. President McBride stated the next regular Board meeting will be held Wednesday, February 9, 2022, at 7:00 p.m.

There being no further, or other, business to come before the meeting, upon motion duly made, seconded and unanimously approved, the meeting was adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

Secretary

APPROVED:

Being all of the Trustees of the
Rochester Fire Protection District

