

# Southwest Shiawassee Emergency Services Alliance

## Serving Residents as Perry Area Fire Rescue

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### Meeting Minutes

May 20, 2024

7:00 p.m.

Perry Township Hall

### Call to Order

Chairman DeLau called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

### *Present:*

**SSEA Board Officers:** Chair-Tim DeLau (City of Perry), Vice Chair - Janet Sprague (Vernon Township) and Treasurer-Troy Parmalee (Perry Township)

**SSEA Trustees:** Tom Deming (Burns Township), Phyllis Dickerson (Village of Morrice), Bob Peterson (Village of Morrice), Bob Porter (City of Perry), Mark Fraser (Perry Township) and Jeff Harris (Member at Large Perry Township)

**Also Present:** Interim Emergency Services Chief Trent Atkins, Deputy Chief of Fire Scott Grinnell, Deputy Chief of EMS Dan Munro, Assistant Chief of Fire Brian Pfeifle and Legal Counsel John Gormley

**Absent:** Secretary - Lori Godfrey (Antrim Township) and Trustee-Nick Spaniola (City of Durand)

### Approval of the Agenda

*Motion made by Mr. Deming to approve the meeting agenda as presented. Second by Mrs. Dickerson. All in favor. Motion carried.*

### Approval of April 15, 2024 Regular Meeting Minutes

*Motion made by Mr. Fraser to accept the meeting minutes as presented. Second by Mr. Porter. All in favor. Motion carried.*

### Correspondence/Public Comments

None

### Burns Township Clerk - Shirley Riley

Shirley Riley - Clerk and Casey Glass - Supervisor of Burns Township were present. Explained costs they have incurred for change in the unit charge of ambulance service and defending the change for campgrounds at the Michigan Tax Tribunal. It was noted that neither campground appealed the

assessment at the hearing Burns Township held for these changes as is required by law to appeal. Even though they did not appeal locally they have appealed to the Tax Tribunal and one has been dismissed and they have appealed to the Full Tribunal which is a more extensive hearing and costs more to defend. Burns Township deducted the expenses they felt they should be reimbursed for from the monthly payment as they wanted to do it before the end of their fiscal year, similar to how the MFR contract reimbursement has been done. Clerk Riley apologized for not communicating with us about this and indicated that they would send a check for the shortage. During the discussions it was learned that Burns Township had also felt they were entitled to deduct from the bill the expenses associated with conducting Special Assessment Hearings and paying their Representative for attending the SSES Board. The Board communicated to Burns Township that under no circumstances should they be reimbursed for paying a representative for attending a meeting or conducting Special Assessment Hearings as those are the responsibility of each municipality that participates. The Board indicated that a closed session is on the agenda this evening to discuss an Attorney Client Privilege letter on the issue regarding the legal fees for the campgrounds. The Board also stated that even if the legal fees are looked at they must separate out fees for the campground appeal issue from the regular Special Assessment Hearing bills. No action taken.

### **Committee Reports**

**Personnel Committee** – Did not meet..

**Finance Committee** – Did not meet but Treasurer Parmalee communicated the Budget to Date to the committee and updated the Board on the Fuel Tax Exemption process with Wex Bank and the Truck Stop in Perry. Have received refunds from the Federal Government for the past 3 years of Federal Fuel Excise Tax as well as the past 4 years from the State of Michigan on Sales Tax. Have completed the Workers Compensation Audit with Accident Fund, our estimated wages were under-reported by \$262,000 for 2023. Expecting an audit premium adjustment. Many areas in the budget are getting tight.

**Organizational Review Committee** – Did not meet..

### **Emergency Services Chief Reports**

Chief Atkins presented the EMS Revenue Report along with the Statistics Dashboard for the month, nothing out of the normal. No collections report was available.

Chief Atkins noted that Assistant Chief of Fire Brian Pfeifle is retiring at the end of the month with many years of service. He will be officially recognized at the Annual Christmas Party in December but also received applause for all in attendance at the meeting.

Bills and Payroll report was presented, bill for utilities and the Station in Durand was questioned on the amount. It was noted it was for last January and February when a unit was stationed there. Quarterly payroll for Paid on Call Staff was also on the payroll report.

***Motion made by Mr. Porter to accept the financial report and pay the bills in the amount of \$244,694.21. Second by Mrs. Sprague. A roll call vote resulted in ayes from all voting members present. Motion carried.***

### **Old/Ongoing Business**

#### **Update on Municipal Contracts**

**Durand** has been billed for April per the new contract, have not received payment as of meeting time.

**Shiawassee Township** will be discussed in Closed Session with an Attorney Client Privilege Letter.  
**Vernon Township** MFR - Vernon Township Attorney changed a few things and our legal counsel needs more time to review. Paragraph on indemnification was added that is not allowed. Hopefully ready next month.  
**Burns Township** MFR - Still working with Burns on some details. Burns has not approved yet. Chief Atkins will follow-up.

### **Ambulance Assessment/Fire Millage Rate Increase**

Several meetings have been done, a few more to go. Bennington had some concerns with the increase. Chief Atkins to attend another meeting with Chair DeLau. It was strongly suggested to Bennington Township that they appoint someone to sit on the SSES Board to help with communication.

### **Health Insurance**

Insurance options for Full Time Staff - Advantage Group provides supplemental insurance to employees similar to what had been offered in the past with AFLAC. This is done through payroll deduction with no cost to SSES.

**Motion made by Mr. Fraser to allow Advantage Group Insurance to be available to Full Time Employees. Second by Mr. Deming. A roll call vote resulted in ayes from all voting members present. Motion carried.**

Blue Cross Renewal - Options were laid out previously and union has met to look at the options. By making changes our costs will only slightly increase compared to the large jump if we stay with the Gold Plan. Union has agreed to modify the contract to replace the Gold Plan with a Point of Service (POS) Plan and an HMO to allow options for our employees.

**Motion made by Mr. Porter to approve changing the Health Insurance Plan to the POS Plan and the HMO and removing the Gold Plan. Second by Mr. DeLau A roll call resulted in ayes from all voting members. Motion carried.**

It was noted that the transition will take a couple of months and will have the Gold Plan until changes are made.

### **New Business**

#### **Legal Opinions for Shiawassee and Burns Township**

**Motion made by Mrs. Sprague to enter into closed session to review Attorney Client Privilege Letters addressing issues with Shiawassee and Burns Township. Second by Mr. Deming. A roll call vote resulted in ayes from all voting members present. Motion carried.**

Entered into closed session.

Returned from closed session.

**Motion made by Mr. Fraser to have the attorney proceed as discussed in Closed Session in regards to Shiawassee Township. A roll call vote resulted in ayes from all voting members present. Motion carried.**

### **Meeting with County Prosecutor and Forensic Auditor**

After numerous attempts Chair DeLau and Secretary Godfrey were able to meet with the County Prosecutor on the status of the case and investigation. The County Prosecutor decided he wanted a forensic audit done before he would proceed. Estimate for forensic audit was \$10,000 - \$15,000 with a \$7,500 retainer and \$300 an hour for services. Treasurer Parmalee will reach out to County Commissioner Tom Emery to see if he can be of any help given his past experience in the Attorney General's office before we proceed with the audit. Will place on future agenda.

### **Full Time Vacancies**

We will have 2 vacancies this month and expect another next month. All employees moving on to other jobs.

### **Union Negotiations**

Will be starting soon. Chief Atkins has asked that all non-financial items be handled first and monetary items be visited in the fall when a more clear financial picture takes place. Tom Deming will join Chair DeLau and Chief Atkins in the start of negotiations.

### **ADP Overpayments**

Last August the week that ADP handled payroll some errors took place in regard to overpayments and underpayments. Employees that were underpaid were taken care of promptly, the extent of the overpayments were discovered in January while doing W-2 Forms. In January, Chief Atkins reached out to all affected employees and set up payment arrangements with them. During the transition to TruPay the deductions never occurred and it was recently discovered they had not happened when one employee, who was overpaid, was leaving and needed to close out the overpayment on their final check. During discussions involving the union it was noted that any payroll overpayments to employees must be handled within 6 months of the issue occurring and while the matter was discussed verbally, the repayment never occurred and it is now over 6 months since the occurrence.

**Motion made by Treasurer Parmalee to forgive the money overpaid to employees caused by the ADP mistake last August due to the time limit expiring. Second by Mr. Porter. A roll call vote resulted in the following:**

**Ayes: Parmalee, Porter, DeLau, Deming, Dickerson, Sprague, Fraser and Harris**

**Nays: Peterson**

**Motion carried.**

### **Safety Day**

A kids safety day will be held on June 8th at Station 1. Bike helmets will be given away, accepting donations.

### **Michigan Budget Supplemental Request**

A request has been sent to Representative BeGole's office for a Budget Supplemental request for an Ambulance Ree-Chassis and for EMS Equipment. Chief Atkins and Deputy Chief Munro are working on.

## **Grants**

A grant for \$200 had been applied for through Harbor Freight. State of Michigan Grants for Turnout Gear and EMS training have also been applied for.

## **Station #1 & #1 MIOSHA Compliance**

Electrical upgrades are being worked on for Stations 1 & 2 for MIOSHA Compliance. Station 1 is getting an upgrade for the entrance area as you come into the station and Station 2 needs electrical upgrades and the installation of the new washer and dryer for turnout gear. Received a bill from the Village of Morrice for half of the cost of building repairs involving the hose tower. No one at SESA recalls authorizing this expense. Chief Atkins will reach out to the Village about the additional work that needs to be done to the station and share the expense.

## **Fire Code Policy Documents**

Chief Atkins is working on policy and documents for municipalities to adopt for allowing the Fire Chief to enforce international fire codes for buildings and occupancy. This includes conducting fire code inspections. More information in the future.

## **Board/Public Comments**

None

## **Adjournment**

***Motion by Mr. Harris to adjourn. Second by Mr. Porter. All in favor. Motion carried.  
There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:35 p.m.***

Respectfully Submitted,  
Troy Parmalee, Treasurer