

**SUGAR GROVE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
TRUSTEE'S MEETING
OPEN MINUTES**

DATE: June 21, 2021
TIME: 5:30 pm
PLACE: Sugar Grove Fire Station

Board of Trustees: Mike Fagel – President
Tim Cicero – Secretary
David Blankenship – Trustee
John Guddendorf, Jr. – Trustee
Nicole Lamela – Trustee

GUESTS: Chief Perkins, Attorney Shawn Flaherty

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call – All Trustees present

Bid Opening – Shawn Flaherty opened the one bid that came in. American Fire Training Systems Inc., in the amount of \$322,900. Chief Perkins stated he will continue with this when it comes up later on the agenda.

Public to Address the Board – Anthony Blazina from Sugar Grove Local 4748 stated the Union would like to make it clear; we are 100% against the bringing in of an outside consultant to 'review' this department as noted as item 'D' under New Business. The local views this a form of retaliation for expressing its concerns and fears caused by the actions of this Board at the May 17th meeting, and the agenda items listed for the May 27th special meeting. Bringing in an outside consultant is unnecessary and a waste of taxpayer money.

Approval of Minutes –

It was motioned by Blankenship and seconded by Lamela to:

'Approve the May 17, 2021 open session meeting minutes.'

Roll call vote – All in favor – Motion carried

It was motioned by Lamela and seconded by Guddendorf to:

'Approve the closed session minutes for May 17, 2021, with amendments to times of when people where in and out of the meeting and keep them closed.'

Roll call vote – All in favor – Motion carried

Correspondence – Chief Perkins read a letter from Amita Health congratulating SGFD for May's "Run of the Month". Employees on the call were Jared Beckmann, Robert Cahill, Anthony Cudio, Kevin Schramm and Alison Van Horn. Chief thanked the officers and paramedics for a job well done, and stated that this is what we are here for, to provide excellent care for our residents, it is a great reflection on our Department. The letter from Amita Health will be attached to these minutes.

Treasurers Report –

Approval of Cash Balances and Budget vs Actual Reports

Operating Fund – \$3,099,277.75, Capital Account – \$1,376,912.00, Total – \$4,476,186.75

The budgets will show up on the reports after we have the B&A hearing.

It was motioned by Guddendorf and seconded by Cicero to:

'Approve the May 2021 Cash Balances and Budget vs Actual Reports.'

Roll call vote – All in favor - Motion carried

Approval of Expenditures –

Chase Checking- \$499,032.81, Chase HRA-\$5,604.30, Total Expenditures-\$504,637.11

Chief stated \$242,399 was for the new ambulance. Ambulance is on track for February 2022.

It was motioned by Guddendorf and seconded by Fagel to:

‘Approve the Expenditures for May 2021 in the amount of \$504,637.11.’

Roll call vote – All in favor - Motion carried

Consent Agenda –

TeleFlex - EZ-IO Needles - \$1,285.00

RTA - SaaS Hosting - Updating Fleet Management Software - \$1,332.38

Air One - Gear Dryer - \$8,395.00

Chief Perkins stated that after the consent agenda was completed, Genesis Extrication Equipment came in, needed to get the ram kit. This will be on next months consent agenda. Guddendorf stated that he thought they approved enough to cover things like this. Chief will look into that; he will add it to consent next month if it exceeds it.

Fagel – RTA – questioned the odometer updates mentioned – what is being tracked. Moran stated that it is for the maintenance on the vehicles. Lamela questioned the training – Moran stated they do webinars and help with the actual set up.

It was motioned by Fagel and seconded by Cicero to:

‘Approve the Consent Agenda Items for June 2021, in the amount of \$11,012.38.’

Roll call vote – All in favor - Motion carried

Trustees Report –

Trustee Lamela – Handed out a pamphlet to the Trustees; this will be attached to this email.

Trustee Lamela stated that since she was sworn in last month, she has noticed a couple issues just in the last 30 days and it seems like it starts from their section down and wants to make sure they are looking at things as a whole. As a Board, (Lamela) feels that no matter if it is in open session or wherever they are at, they need to maintain professionalism. Some emails that have been sent by Board members; she feels concerned about because she feels there is some bullying going around. The Facebook page that was sent out from the Union over last month, felt that in an unprofessional manner she was being called out over things that they are trying to do by looking at things and making sure everything is running smoothly here, she wants rules in place, wants to make sure everyone is safe. Trustee Lamela stated on June 2nd there was a Firefighter shot in CA over a workplace dispute; A Firefighter was lost in Hinsdale, they found her in a vehicle, a chemical suicide. The bullying and unprofessionalism, we need to get a hold on it. Mental health is a crisis right now, there is a Bill at the state level, that they want to make us all counselors; we have to do better. Trustee Lamela stated we need to look at how we present ourselves to the public, to the residents of Sugar Grove, and we need to be professional. Trustee Lamela stated she wants to make sure the department is doing yearly training, the state requires it for sexual harassment, but she would like to take it further and add bullying and in general, harassment. We are here to serve the citizens; we are not here to smear people in public. Trustee Lamela hopes we can start over; she wants to be an advocate for change; the fact that the department got that award is a sign that the people here are doing what they are supposed to be doing, which is serving the residents. Lamela stated that she promises communications will be open.

Trustee Fagel – prepared a statement – Trustee Fagel read this statement at the meeting. This statement is attached to this email. Trustee Fagel asked if the other Board members had something to say.

Trustee Cicero – does not have anything written but stated he has been on this Board for over 2 years and has been on more phone calls and personal talks with other union members from other districts, from this district all the up to the Vice President of AFFI, and received a call from the police chief today, which will be talked about in closed session. Trustee Cicero stated that he got on this board, because he used the services of this district and felt like he was in debt to the members, and that is the reason he is here, to support the members, the chief, all the way down to the new guy or girl, along with every citizen. Trustee Cicero wants to do the best for the citizens of this town and then will take care of everyone who is employed under this roof.

Trustee Guddendorf – has done 40 years of service in Kane County. Trustee Guddendorf stated he got on this Board because he was asked by citizens to get involved. Trustee Guddendorf stated that we need five individuals working together, to communicate with each other, and not have decisions made with some and not

others. Bullying comes in many forms and fashion. Guddendorf stated that if the five of them cannot work as a group, they cannot accomplish anything for this district. Trustee Lamela agreed and stated she cannot expect anyone below them to act any better than they do.

Trustee Blankenship – was on this Board when it was a POC Department – this department has gone through a lot of struggles and changes, some good, some bad. Have seen what happens when officers, and members don't follow the chain of command, how it tears a department to shreds. Most of the stuff on this agenda has been dealt with in the past, not to everyone's liking, and that is why it is back on this agenda. Blankenship stated as a trustee he has never seen this department in a better financial situation, or the camaraderie in better shape. Blankenship appreciates what everyone has done for this department. Blankenship stated that if you want to keep this Chief you need to stand up for him and fight for him, that there are people who want to get rid of him, and he will fight tooth and nail to keep him. Blankenship stated the Chief has never given him a reason to doubt him.

Report of the Fire Chief – 124 calls – up about 60 calls for the year. Narrative report was given to Trustees, summary of bills is attached.

Tower has already been approved from the Planning Commission for special use and variance; tomorrow was supposed to be the Village Board meeting, no quorum, will not happen now until July 6th. At Shawn's recommendation do not award bid until we have final approval from the Village. Discussion was held on the special use permit and where it shows it expires; Guddendorf is going to take this up at the next Planning Commission meeting.

Trustee Lamela brought up Division XII and them losing the majority of their specialty team. Discussion was held on this.

Attorney's report – Shawn said if any trustee still needs training there is 3 hours this weekend in Champagne. The next will be around October.

Attorney General website has been hacked.

All Bills passed the house – believes this Governor will pass them all – included is Part time and POC firefighters over age 34 can take test for the department they are already on.

Old Business –

Updating Door Access Control System – A meeting is scheduled Friday with ADS. Will report back next month. This is to update the firmware on old system – new software – maintenance agreement for software.

Budget – nothing new to report – will be on agenda next month for approval.

Side Letter Agreement with Local 4748 – This would be considered a roving position – if there was a long-time vacancy on a shift, they would fill in. The Local is not in opposition of hiring another Firefighter, they just believe the different rules for one employee could become confusing. Chiefs' recommendation is for the Board to authorize the Fire Commission to hire one additional Firefighter/Paramedic that will fall under the same CBA that we currently have.

It was motioned by Blankenship and seconded by Cicero to:

'Authorize the Fire Commission to Hire an Additional Firefighter/Paramedic'

Roll call vote – All in favor - Motion carried

Box Cards update – Chief stated he talked with a new Chief in the area, and nothing will be changing with them. Chief stated there is always things you have to look at; it is a work in progress.

Fagel questioned how the box worked on Wednesday's fire – Chief stated it went great.

New Business –

Resignation of Appointed Treasurer – Trustee Fagel stated he has the resignation of Dave Linden.

Appointing Treasurer from Board of Trustees –

It was motioned by Fagel and Seconded by Blankenship to:
'Nominate Nicole Lamela as Treasurer.'

Roll call vote – All in favor - Motion carried

Reevaluation of Resolution 2020-02 Employee Complaint Procedure – after much discussion Attorney Flaherty reiterated that this resolution does not stop a Trustee from coming in and talking to an employee, but it does require a Board member to tell the employee to stop if the conversation can be construed as a complaint.

Review of Complaint and Social Media Posting, Outside Consultant to Review Department – Trustee Blankenship does not believe that this department needs an outside consultant. Trustee Fagel believes that there are always things that we can do better. Blankenship stated this was brought up before and it was voted down. Chief Perkins stated he believes this can have a bad consequence on moral; Chief stated if we need it down the road, it can be looked at again. Trustee Cicero stated that before we derail, we need to get in line, and communicate with each other, and maybe look at it 3-5 months down the line if it is needed.

Command Staff Job Descriptions, Assignments and Duties -

Fagel wants to know who is backing up chief when he is not here – who is the next in command. Chief stated that the three Battalion Chiefs have been doing that job for at least a decade; they know how to run things. Trustee Lamela stated that when she read it, she did not read it as there were not capable people in place, she read it as there was no job description for BC's. Chief Perkins stated that there is, it went through the ordinance when they created Battalion Chiefs. Chief will give copy to Trustee Lamela.

Administrative Job Descriptions, Assignments, and Duties – Trustee Cicero wanted to know if Kellie had specific times that she is here. Chief stated that it varies, payroll days we want her here, the rest goes by workload, if she is teaching CPR, things like that, they just vary. Cicero stated she is here to backup Paula; Chief stated the purpose was that the Board wanted staff that could fill in when others are not here. Cicero question Paula if she was retiring soon – Cicero wanted to make sure Paula can take her time off.

Website, Postings, News Releases, Resolutions, Minutes, Community Outreach

Trustee Fagel questioned if Chief issued a news release that could have been a training tool for the neighbors, i.e. check your smoke detectors. Chief stated he issues a press release stating the facts of the call. Fagel questioned could we use the website where we put more things on the website, tornado month, tornado sirens, fire extinguishers. Discussion was held on the newsletters, website during fire prevention month, Nixel, Nixel for Montgomery area, education tools, public service that can be used on there. Fagel wanted to know if there is anything Chief would like to add to the website. Chief would like to look it over and get back to the Board.

Building Permit-Special Use Permit for Proposed Training Tower, Bid Package Review, Training Tower, Decision Package, Sites, Review – Chief Perkins stated that he would like the board to have him award the bid following review of the bid, and after consultation with legal counsel, and once the special use permit is approved by the Village of Sugar Grove. Trustee Fagel questioned how this expanded from \$100,000 x 15% = \$115,000 to \$322,000. Chief Perkins said that he listened to the Board, there were questions about new containers vs old containers, thermal reading system to monitor, addition of pre-burn area so cans are not getting ruined, buffer zones, different props, roof train simulator; the original one was just 5 old cans with holes in them and access for stairs. Guddendorf questioned Chief if bid came in under his estimate. Chief said he thought it would be between \$320,000 and \$350,000 with the concrete. Fagel questioned if the \$322,000 is with or without concrete. Chief stated this is without concrete.

Discussion continued on the concrete, trench footings, live burns – how often-who can do them – these will be quarterly and could bring other companies in to work together, EPA permit, other agencies training – will have multicompany training, hours and days tower can be used – 7 days a week from 8 am to 9pm, and requirements of personnel for safety – we have personnel to fulfill those roles.

It was motioned by Fagel and seconded by Cicero to:

'Authorize award of bid on the Training Tower in the amount of \$322,900, subject to the following: Approval by Village of Sugar Grove for Special Use Permit and Building Permit, Approval by Legal Counsel, and Compliance to Specification.'

Roll call vote – All in favor - Motion carried

Annual Training Plan - Trustee Fagel stated this is about the tower and use for that – can the tower be used for EMS operations. Chief Perkins stated yes, they can practice with stretcher, carrying people up and down.

Professional Development for Command Staff – Trustee Fagel questioned if we are giving the employees every opportunity for school that makes them better command. Chief Perkins replied yes, he has one of them in the Chief Fire Officer program, it is his intention to send the other two through it also. Chief stated that when a class comes up and they ask to go to it, he never denies them. Trustee Lamela asked if there is a list of minimum requirements that need to be done for promotions. BC Lopez said yes.

Airport Response, Fees, Inspections, Training, Update Airport Contract and Review – Trustee Fagel Airport contract is up in four years, five years. Fagel stated he read the contract (he handed a list to the Trustees) and he knows that Chief made an agreement with Aurora about no crash truck but it shows that in the contract, does it need to be modified. Chief stated that he has a letter from Aurora’s Chief stating we did not need one. Discussion continued on the airport, including who we get a crash truck from – depending on level- Dekalb, West Chicago, and Lockport, Airport firefighters – with Covid, things were at a standstill but just recently talked with the new FAA director and are going to move forward with this. Attorney Flaherty stated that he would like to come back to this, have a report next month, there is a lot to go over. Fagel questioned if AC Parson helps with inspections – AC Parson said he inspects them all. Fagel questioned if the fire companies go and inspect for familiarization, Chief stated yes, they have gone. AC Parson stated when he sees something unique, he brings them over.

Vacant Property Lease for Farming, etc. – There was discussion on whether we charge rent to the farmer who farms on the land – do we have a letter of indemnification with them, are we losing income from this. After much discussion – Attorney Flaherty stated have Chief do some investigating on who is farming it, the terms, etc, put it in his Chiefs reports and Board can come back with ideas and options on what to do with it.

NFPA 3000, ASHER Training, PPE Purchase & Implementation - Trustee Fagel handed out a book to the Trustees - Fagel stated where do we go with PPE. Trustee Blankenship stated this was voted down already and we are not going to send our crew into a situation like that. Trustee Lamela asked Chief Perkins what the policy is here. Chief stated that it is modeled after the JOG – but basically it states we will not be part of the rescue task force. Chief stated on bullet proof vests in the rigs – how does one size fits all fit all, to be 100% effective they need to be fitted for each individual person. Discussion included the need for PPE, how the employees feel, training they have had; going to have, manpower and resources.

Closed Session –

It was motioned by Guddendorf and seconded by Fagel to:

‘Go into closed session at 7:43pm for Pending or Threatened Litigation,
all Other Matters as Permitted by the Open Meetings Act (5 ILCS 120/2(c))’

Roll call vote – All in favor - Motion carried

It was motioned by Guddendorf and seconded by Blankenship to:

‘Go back into open session at 8:27pm’

Roll call vote – All in favor - Motion carried

No action taken in closed session.

ANY OTHER MATTERS THAT MAY LAWFULLY COME BEFORE THE BOARD- Nothing Heard

It was motioned by Blankenship and seconded by Lamela to:

‘Adjourned at 8:30pm’

Respectfully submitted,


Timothy Cicero, Secretary


Paula Lacey, Recording Secretary

TRUSTEE'S REPORT



June 2021

Workplace Bullying/Harassment

What are we doing to keep our Firefighter's safe? – Trustee Lamela

Trustee's Report

WORKPLACE BULLYING/HARASSMENT

CALIFORNIA FIRE STATION SHOOTING | JUNE 2, 2021

A Los Angeles County firefighter appeared to have a longstanding job-related dispute with the colleague he fatally shot at their small, rural fire station in what was California's second deadly workplace shooting in less than a week. The gunman also critically wounded a fire captain at the station about 45 minutes north of Los Angeles on Tuesday before setting his house on fire in a nearby community and apparently killing himself, officials said. Preliminary interviews with other employees at Fire Station 81 indicate the shooter and the fellow veteran firefighter who was killed had "some workplace beef".

2021 WBI U.S. WORKPLACE BULLYING SURVEY

In the survey, it was defined as "repeated mistreatment; abusive conduct that is threatening, intimidating, or humiliating; work sabotage or verbal abuse. ". It is estimated that 48.6 million workers have been bullied at work.

Some staggering headline results:

- 30% of workers are bullied (compared to 19% in 2017), and 19% witnessed it
- 67% chance of losing job when targeting for bullied at work
- Managers compromise 40% of those bullied

Workplace bullying involves multiple, repeated, intentional acts of aggression, hostility, social isolation, or disrespect. These acts often happen in person but also can occur through email, text messaging, and social media.

The cost of Workplace Bullying

Bullying used to be considered an issue that mostly impacts children. This is no longer true. More and more adults report experiencing mistreatment and hostility at work, turning into a costly problem for employers.

Common examples of workplace bullying are:

- Intentionally sabotaging or undermining a coworker's performance.
- Giving a co-worker constant and unwarranted criticism.
- Cursing at, threatening, or humiliating others.
- Spreading gossip or rumors about a person.
- Willfully excluding or ignoring a colleague.

Trusica's Report

- Suggesting a coworker quite or transfer to a different department in the company.

Certain work environments are more likely to foster bullying, such as those with high stress, demanding workloads, and those in which employees feel high levels of job insecurity or boredom.

Workplace bullying can harm a company's reputation, weaken employee morale, and strain finances.

EFFECTIVE WAYS TO ELIMINATE WORKPLACE BULLYING

Bullying is a manageable problem. Despite its cost, employers can take action to stop workplace bullying. Rather than turn a blind eye, employers should adopt these strategies to effectively stop workplace bullying.

1. **Acknowledge that workplace bullying exists, is real, and is a problem.** Being dismissive and unsupportive only exacerbates the problem.
2. **Don't normalize bad behavior** by dismissing it as "healthy aggression" or competitiveness between coworkers. If the phrase survival of the fittest describes your company's culture, it's probably time to adopt a new approach.
3. **Develop guidelines identifying acceptable company standards of conduct that defines bullying and the consequences.** These should:
 - a. Be clearly written and shared with all employees.
 - b. Include procedures for responding to and reporting bullying.
 - c. Include zero-tolerance policy toward aggressive behaviors.
4. **Provide employee and management training programs on workplace aggression.**
5. **Consider a workplace mediation team** for incidents involving employees with a clear power imbalance.
6. **Foster a positive and supportive work culture.**
7. **Remind employees about your organization's Employee Assistance Program and how to access these services.**
8. **Develop social media policies.**
9. **Know the difference between bullying and harassment.**

It is important to note that expected behavior should be modeled by those at the top and it should filter down. The Board, the Chief, and the Battalions should all be modeling the expected behavior and training on this yearly with the firefighters. It is unacceptable in this day and age to be disrespectful to your colleagues, subordinates or peers. We must look to find solutions to staff this department with professional employees and ensure a safe and non-hostile work environment.

While the State of Illinois requires yearly sexual harassment training, we should be taking that a step further and also training on all types of harassment and workplace bullying.

Establishing expectations for professional behavior and interaction as Board members is vital as we collectively begin a new chapter on the Board with new members and officers.

I understand and respect that differences of opinion between Board members will be present.

Discussion on items of difference should be conducted professionally without personal attacks on any Board member.

Each of us on the Board was elected to serve our community, providing direction and oversight on the administrative functions of the SGFPD.

We collectively have the ultimate responsibility for our community safety through the extension of the department management and workforce.

Disagreements should be discussed with a foundation of consensus building to develop solutions in increasing safety while ensuring organizational accountability and transparency.

My intent is to provide us a reminder and new path forward for meeting our elected responsibilities morally and ethically, which acts as a model for our department.

Collectively through a collaborative process, we are liable and answerable to the tax-paying members of the community.

Our professional demeanor sets a tone that is expected to be embraced by department management.

Valuing each Board members opinion and perspective on issues and items of discussion will construct the framework to enhance the climate and performance of all members.

I thank each of my fellow Board members for their community service and commitment to community safety through proactive governance actions.

Mike Fagel June 21, 2021