

June 17, 2014

State of Illinois

County of Cook

Village of Stickney

The Board of Trustees of the Village of Stickney met in special session on Tuesday, June 17, 2014 at 5:00 p.m. in the Stickney Village Hall, 6533 W. Pershing Road, Stickney, Illinois.

Upon the roll call, the following Trustees were present:

Trustees De Lesch, Gomez, Lazansky, Savopoulos, Sleighter and White

Mayor Morelli explained that the purpose of this meeting is a discussion concerning the possibility of an intergovernmental agreement with the Stickney Fire Department taking over a part of Forest View's Fire service. She went on to explain that this is something that was brought to her attention. This was not something that Stickney has gone to Forest View requesting.

With that said, she noted that the Forest View Mayor and manager were in the audience to answer questions.

Attorney Donald Kreger explained that this was presented in a letter from the attorney of Forest View that we consider covering the fire and mt service north of I-55. He felt that there is no reason to discuss this in closed session. . . . to keep this transparent. It is up to the board. This way the board can become informed. It is not on the agenda to vote in favor or against it. This is an information session.

Mayor Morelli asked if the board had any questions. Trustee De Lesch asked for an overview. The only thing he had was a letter dated April 1. Donald Kreger said that he needs to know the effects on this fire department. The Forest View fire department has three full-time members. Trustee De Lesch said the information is very generic.

Note that statements and quotes are condensed due to the length of the presentation:

Mayor Morelli asked the Forest View mayor to fill in the information. Mayor Grenvich said it is all about one thing and that is money. He felt that there was a misunderstanding. He was not looking for Stickney to underwrite. They are looking to cut costs and give Stickney

revenue. It would cover a two by four block area. Stickney would have to add a position (that is up to us) and Forest View would pay for another one plus 25% in essence that would be \$330,000 coming into the village. We would not be responsible for the expressway or south of the expressway. The count of the yearly calls was given. He stated it is two to three calls per week.

The Forest View mayor said that they put \$550,000 into the police and fire pensions just to pay catch up. They lost a pumper and an ambulance in the flood last year. They can't live without a second pumper. It would cost \$400,000. They will not see a state grant for that.

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The last fiscal year, it cost them \$1.1 million to run the fire department for 270 calls. Last year there were 73 requests for backup. That amounts to every five days they get a call. Last year they raised the tax levy by \$200,000 that was all for police and fire pensions. A couple of years before that they raised property taxes by \$300,000 just to keep up. They cut salaries by 10% for a period of time. They can't continue to raise taxes.

Finally, Hartney Fuel Oil was explained to the audience. In short, this was a situation where this company was located in Forest View but was using an address in another location for their sales office a hundred some miles away where the tax dollars were advantageous. Forest View sued and would have received \$8 million. The judge from the Illinois Supreme Court ruled in favor of Forest View but felt that it wasn't fair that this company would have to pay back taxes, so Forest View received nothing.

It was Mayor Grenvich who approached Stickney Mayor Morelli with his proposal. He continued to speak to the plan. The details were given. Some highlights include: the use of their firehouse; their firehouse is closer to residents of Stickney; the use of their pumper (15 years old) and ambulance (8 years old); use of their chief who could also do fire code inspections and advanced computer work.

Mayor Grenvich enforced that the reality is about money. Things are not going to get much better. The Mayor explained that he works with the Illinois Department of Employment Security representing them in court. That is unemployment benefits. The economy is not getting better.

Trustee Lazansky asked about backlash from the union. Mayor Grenvich said the reality was they can't raise taxes again. In summary, they can't keep spending that kind of money.

Trustee Sleighter asked about their ISO rating. He was told it was at 5. Trustee Sleighter also asked who would maintain their firehouse. It would be maintained by them as well as the pumper and ambulance and a couple of other vehicles. Sleighter asked who would support your pension fund. Forest View would support the fund. This plan will give them \$300,000. They could then use that money toward police and fire pensions.

A continuation of the plan what discussed. We learned that the equipment was lightly used. Trustee Lazansky described the Stickney Fire Department and how well it runs. Mayor Grenvich explained that the Forest View Fire Chief will be an employee of Forest View. If you don't want to use their equipment you don't have to. Trustee Sleigher asked what it would do to our ISO rating. Mayor Grenvich didn't think it would affect us at all. He continued to say, "We are going out of business." Trustee Sleigher also asked about the area south of I-55. He was told that Central Stickney is interested in doing it. Trustee Savopoulos asked where the calls will go. Mayor Grenvich said that it would have to be worked out. During the flood the calls went here (Stickney). They get a call every two to two and a half days.

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Police Chief John Sladetz addressed the mutual aid agreement with various municipalities. He wanted to know if Central Stickney would be going on those. The Chief asked if we would be dispatching here. Mayor Grenvich felt that if there is staffing at their fire house and a call comes in they could relay it to Stickney. It was a technical thing and Stickney would have to decide. Contrary to that, Chief Sladetz said it was an issue. Stickney's dispatchers would be caused an undue burden to dispatch for another town. He understands that this is in its infancy but, you will have to figure something out. Deputy Chief Rich Jaczak felt that calls could be bounced around and gave examples of such.

Mayor Grenvich did announce that their village attorney was also in the audience.

Stickney Attorney Donald Kreger said that whether we staff that station it is up to Stickney and whether to staff it at all. The contract that has been presented to Stickney is suggested for four years. It is the type of contract that generally lasts longer because once you get it going and their needs are there, and now they don't have anybody to do it. He reflected that in 1967 our fire department was started. Berwyn had been doing our service up to that time. This board needs to consider more than just a four year contract. Yes, you can end the contract if you want, but politically you do not want to leave people without fire protection. So, when they say they are no longer a fire department, they are still answering the calls. The whole purpose of this meeting is for this board to understand negotiations and to go forward with the negotiations. He didn't think this board had enough time with this information to vote on it tonight and that is why it is not on the agenda.

Trustee Jeff White said that this impacts two communities and is larger than a seven member board. He felt it was a referendum item. He felt for the community of Forest View. Our obligation is to our community. His opinion is that this is larger than this board. Attorney Kreger said from a legal point of view, you can have an advisory referendum because Stickney is Home Rule and you have the power to do it without it.

Trustee Sleigher asked the coordination efforts with Central Stickney in this matter. Mayor Grenvich said that they are very anxious and get frequent emails asking about it. With that said, Trustee White remarked that they just learned about this. They started seeing bills from attorneys and knew something was going on. We were left in the dark. Attorney Kreger said he distributed the letter on April 1. Contrary to others, Trustee White never saw this letter dated April 1. Trustee Savopoulos surmised that they should have had this discussion prior to any negotiations. Mr. Kreger said that he didn't negotiate this letter. He made copies and distributed it when he got here. There was one phone call. Mayor Grenvich explained that he met once with the Mayor in November and once (he believed) in March. There has not been a whole lot of discussion. He wanted to see if there was any interest.

Fire Chief Larry Meyer said he had a copy of the April 1, letter and held a meeting with the officers. They discussed it and weighed the pros and cons. The pro they determined was that if they staffed that fire station with three people not two, because a two-man engine company is just not safe, the advantage would be that on

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that side of town they would have a quicker response time. Beyond that everything was negative. One person staffed 24/7, 365 takes 12 to 15 of our part-time people. We would have to hire that many people. They would have to be trained, have physicals, and take ability tests and so on. All of this costs and takes about six months. In addition, we don't have that type of people to do it. There was no type of advantage.

Chief Meyer also spoke about a wedge of land located beyond I-55 that contains several businesses. So it is not just a 2 by 4 block area. His recommendation is not to do it.

Trustee Sleigher asked Mayor Grenvich the following: "You can maintain the firehouse, maintain the equipment and maintain the pension fund, what can't you afford." Mayor Grenvich explained that by ceasing the village fire service we can cut costs and not only salaries but pension costs and if we continue with full-time fire in our own fire department the way it is the pension costs will only increase. If you stop the fire costs within the village, that cuts the cost of pensions. It doesn't eliminate the costs of the pensions. We still have pensioners. One of the two people we have would still be eligible for a pension. We learned that they have ten or eleven pensioners.

In addition, Mayor Grenvich explained that they might be looking at a new pumper and probably a new ambulance for very few calls. They would have to spend over one-half million dollars in new equipment. Add in increasing cost, it is a spiraling cost. They have a total of 160 to 170 calls per year.

Chief Meyer stated that Stickney answers 1000 ambulance calls per year. He elaborated on the fire fighter progression through certification and advanced training.

Fire Captain Jeff Boyajian asked if they have reached out to their guys to ask for concessions to try to save your department. Mayor Grenvich didn't know what kind of concessions. There is nothing we can do about the equipment. He said that they pay pretty well. We don't have the staffing that Stickney has. I don't know about concessions when you are looking at the total package. Jeff also remarked that it was his understanding that they just found out about this on Friday. Mayor Grenvich responded that that wasn't true. This has been talked about.

Trustee Gomez asked about the residents of Forest View. Mayor Grenvich explained that they had a town meeting two weeks ago and laid this out. The only thing that got back to him was that "Wow, we have a nice fire house." Without some sort of change, the taxes are going to be band-aided to rise. They raised the taxes a year and a half ago by \$200,000 for police and fire pensions. There were about 50 people at the meeting and not one person asked anything.

Fire Chief Meyer remarked that Harvey fire recently took over Dixmore. And Crestwood is looking to outsource their fire service.

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Mayor Morelli felt that she wanted her board to hear about it. This was the best thing to give information to our board. She knows that there has been not been a whole lot said about this. Mayor Grenvich kept asking her if she heard anything yet. She hadn't

heard nothing yet. She had nothing to tell him. She felt this was the best way to get information to our board and those interested in hearing about it. That was her plan. There is no other reason other than to get information going with it. She thanked the audience for coming.

There being no further business, Trustee Lazansky moved, duly seconded by Trustee Gomez that the meeting be adjourned. Upon which the Board adopted the motion at 5:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Audrey McAdams, Village Clerk

Approved by me this 2nd day of July, 2014

Deborah E. Morelli, Village Mayor