

**Town Board Meeting
August 8, 2017, 4:25 pm
Township Hall
Special Meeting Minutes**

1. **Call to Order** by Rob Manigold
2. **Pledge**
3. **Roll Call**: Present--Manigold, Westphal, Bickle, Achorn, Sanders, Wahl, Wunsch
4. **Approve Agenda**: Moved by Westphal; seconded by Bickle **PASSED UNAM**
5. **Brief Citizen Comments** None
6. **Conflict of Interest** None
7. **Business**
 - a. **Interview Fire Chief Candidates**

Bickle outlined the interview process for each candidate. He stated that the interviews today were part of a thorough vetting process that lead to the current five candidates being interviewed today. He emphasized that the candidates should be aware of the qualifications that were outlined in the job description. This is a job based on our Personnel Policy (90.2), with the expectation that the Fire Chief is available Monday through Friday from 7am to 3pm or later as needed, and he is “on call” as needed at other times of the week. The other part of the job description was the clear understanding that the Chief is responsible for budgets, reports to the Town Board, and presence at public events & venues.

First Candidate—William Harrison

Sanders opened the interview process with Harrison by asking “Outside of the amazing opportunity in Peninsula Township, what is your desire to move north to Michigan?” Harrison responded by saying he is from Michigan, and he desires to return to the state upon retirement. He then provided an account of his childhood memories in the state.

Bickle wanted to focus on his special skills areas—especially staff development. How do you go about rebuilding a staff? Harrison stated that he would start by working close with staff to get a sense of operation and to identify gaps in personnel. He then would look at the roster and seek ways to upgrade volunteer skills; he might consider paid part time fire-fighters for a time to bring the department to a full complement of fire fighters. Another option is to work with the Fire Department in Traverse City to secure coverage by Fire Fighters I and II. Other options involve creating a more attractive work environment like creating paid child care during emergencies, creating tax incentives, etc. **Bickle** asked about staffing 7 fire stations during a time period in Florida, and how that was accomplished. Harrison responded by saying he managed 210 employees; he accomplished the coordination by identifying shortfalls, move people according to those shortfalls, and considering skills levels by coordinating schedules, etc.

Manigold—are you a licensed EMT/paramedic? Harrison replied affirmative; he is licensed on the National Registry. **Manigold**—we are looking for a “hands-on” person for calls; we are trying to raise our level of service to ALS (advanced life support). Harrison said he would get involved by determining if the individuals on call were qualified to respond to an emergency; if yes, he would let them respond to the situation because he does not want to micro-manage his personnel. But if the situation suggests that someone with more training in EMS is necessary then he would get involved directly. **Manigold** asked if Harrison has written any grants. Harrison said he has worked in cooperation with others to write grants that were successful.

Achorn—“what is the size of your budget currently?” Harrison--Initial operating budget is \$500K; overall, annual budget is \$600-800K. **Achorn**—“How many ambulances are in your department?” Harrison—none, we depend on our local hospital to furnish ambulances and service. If they need assistance we provide it.

Westphal—it looks like you are about to retire from the military. Harrison—in 23 days. Westphal—how active do you think you want to be in retirement if you come up to this community? Harrison—my wife and I are looking for a place to have a home and be active in all forms of community involvement.

Wunsch—my only concern with your resume is that you have worked primarily in large communities. How do you keep yourself happy in a smaller community and department? Harrison—I am personally capable of keeping myself happy in a variety of situations, from large to small departments, with lots or little funds.

Bickle—have you recently been involved in budget development? Harrison—absolutely. In his currently situation, he has had to address a situation that was in arrears as well as project future budget needs of his department.

Wahl—do you have any experience or training in getting your people ALS certified? Harrison—I don't. It may not be an appropriate area for fire chief, but rather his role should be on creating situations that encourage that type of training.

Manigold asked if the candidate had any questions for the Board. Harrison asked what happened to the current fire department that leaves it so short of personnel. **Manigold** said it is a long and complicated story, with various factors entering into it. He thought that it will take a lot of hard work to bring it back to the strength it once was. Harrison closed by saying if he was Chief he would work on the culture of the Fire Department to improve volunteerism; he would spend 1st month evaluating the programs presently in place and the personnel supporting them.

Candidate-Fredrick Gilstorff

Bickle—reviewed the interview process and role of the chief with the candidate. Any additions or changes to your resume?

Gilstorff—I would like to add that have just received my Fire Inspector II which was not on my resume.

Manigold—presented a short history of the department and expressed his interest in a Fire Chief who was willing to be on-call. He also mentioned that the Board is interested in someone who was willing to support ALS in the fire department as a personnel goal. Upgrading the fire stations and greater community involvement is another priority in hiring the Fire Chief. Additional hiring is expected.

Manigold--By the way, we use water points for our water supply in fighting fires. Gilstorff said he has had experience in using equipment that draws water out of a surface water source.

Wahl noted the candidate's advancement to Deputy Fire Chief for the City of Wayne this year. Why are you looking for a new job? Gilstorff replied that it was both an aspiration to be a Fire Chief but also a practical matter. The City of Wayne is facing significant budgetary shortfalls. It is unlikely that the city would fire their Fire Chief and retain their Deputy Fire Chief if the budget requires the firing of personnel. This position appeals to him because he is looking for a Chief's job, which would insure more stability for his family. Gilstorff went on to say--there is a potential \$2M shortfall in the City of Wayne currently, and it may mean the Wayne Fire Department would outsource their fire protection needs to save money.

Bickle—what would be the options for Wayne if they have to outsource fire protection? Gilstorff said that the city may seek an agreement with Westland for additional fire protection if they have to cut back on their own fire staff.

Wahl—have you done your grant writing experience on your own? Gilstorff replied that some of the grants were on his own, but several others were a collaborative effort with internal fire staff. He gathered the fact finding portion for the grants, and the Wayne City Manager helped put the packages together by writing and reviewing them.

Achorn asked what the size of his fire department budget was. Gilstorff said the current budget is \$2.4M. **Achorn** asked how the budget was funded. Gilstorff said it is all through tax dollars—residential and commercial taxes. **Achorn** asked if they had a special millage to fund the department. Gilstorff said no; they were unsuccessful in getting a millage passed over the past 5 years. **Achorn** asked how many ambulances were in the fire department. Gilstorff said two. **Achorn** asked how many fire houses. Gilstorff said one. **Achorn** asked how many individual staff members are on each shift. Gilstorff said we have two shifts—one is assigned six people and one has five because when he moved up, it shorted the second shift. Six people are on a “safer” grant which runs for about 14 more months. He has researched the history of the fire department here, and purposely came up early to visit the fire department facilities and get more insight on the history. **Achorn** noted that Gilstorff provided a “30, 60, 90 day plan of action” in his resume for revitalizing the Peninsula Fire Department. Gilstorff said that he thought the plan would provide a good base of action to start gathering the information needed in the rebuilding process.

Bickle—how did you formulate the 30-60-90 day action plan? Gilstorff said it is a practical set of steps—e.g., what do I need to do when I first come in. I need to become familiar with the surroundings, and the fire department. I cannot come in and say we need to change this, this, and this, without any backing. It's a process of building my base, getting things in order, and then prioritizing the problems so that I can pick them off one by one. **Bickle** asked if he has viewed the two fire houses. Gilstorff said only one—Station 1. His first impression was that you need staff; apparatus is decent but will need to be replaced. The station will need sleeping quarters. Going ALS will allow you to bring the ER

(Emergency Room) right to your residents' doors by having paramedics; when saving lives, it is all about time to get to a scene and provide help—the 4-6 minute rule.

Westphal asked about the special skills he would bring to the Fire Department. Gilstorff said he has the certifications that we are looking for; he also would bring the energy and know how to get ALS up and running; and he would be instrumental at getting the Fire Department integrated into the community. He would do the research needed to make sure the plans for the Fire Department match the needs of the community.

Wunsch—is your FD primarily focused on fire or emergency service? Gilstorff said 85% of the runs are EMS and 15% fire. His department makes about 4000 runs/year. He notes that fire services take both a reactive and proactive stand—with programs in the community that are designed to prevent fires through home inspections, etc. Fire prevention is an important force in the community and it takes a strong force in the community to do it.

Sanders asked whether there was a professional award that he valued more over his 27 years as a fire fighter. Gilstorff—to be honest, just a kid saying “thank you” is the best reward I can get...or a youngster asking about the job. Kids have no ulterior motives in raising questions; they just tend to enjoy the moment and show appreciation through engagement with us.

Westphal followed up on her earlier question by adding “why should we hire you instead of some of the other candidates”. Gilstorff said because you want the best. I have all the qualifications that you have asked for, and then some. I have a broad base of experience at every scale and in every aspect of fire-fighting. You will have a hard worker in me—on the clock 24/7, every day of the week. I will always look to make things better. I also am big on safety, especially of my fire fighters. I have taught rapid intervention teams and survival practices. If there is a way to do something better, I will seek it out so we can do it better. No status quo. **Westphal** asked if the City of Wayne was union. Gilstorff said yes, and he is a union member.

Bickle asked how soon he could come up here to start work and what his salary range was currently. Gilstorff said it will take a little while to move. He would have to retire from the department down state—probably 2 months; the offered salary up here represents a \$20K gap. He believes that his retirement would allow him to make up any shortfall. Gilstorff asked if this would be a contract situation. **Bickle** said yes.

Candidate—Troy Holliday

Bickle began with the process and procedures for the interview, following the same preamble as was done for the other candidates.

Manigold discussed the community and the characteristics of the citizens. Holliday responded by saying that he enjoys community outreach and would be an active “hands-on” fire chief if selected for the job.

Ahorn asked Holliday about his current budget at the firehouse that he oversees. Holliday responded that the city has a \$7M budget for the Fire Department. His firehouse has a portion of that budget, but

he could not tell the Board specifically what share he has. He did not have a dollar number. **Achorn** asked how many ambulances he had at his station. Holliday said none; all EMS work is performed by North Flight or the mutual aid EMS services like Blair Twp. **Achorn** asked how many full time fire fighters were at his station. 3 of the 5 fire stations have 2 EMS firemen 24/7; 1 station has an EMS person for 24 hrs/day; and the 5th station has an EMS man for three days/wk for 8 hrs/day.

Westphal asked about Holliday's role in developing, maintaining, and implementing the fire fighters accountability system listed in his resume. Holliday responded that there was a company that developed a bar code system that fire fighters could "tag in" when they arrived at the site. The system did not work the way it was supposed to over time. His team took away the bar code system and scanners portion of the program to make the system more manual. Holliday observed that the system was supposed to protect the fire-fighters, but the men were actually focused on checking in and out rather than focusing on the fire. **Westphal**—what percent of your runs are fire versus EMS. Holliday said 30-70, respectively. Out of the 30%, actual fire is very low. We do a lot of fire prevention--safe neighborhoods campaigns, fire prevention bureau that handles commercial building inspections, company inspectors that look at small business locations, etc.

Bickle—have you had a chance to come out and visit our fire stations? Holliday said he had. Randy took him around yesterday. **Bickle** asked what his impressions were of Station 1. Holliday said the station is very packed, while station 2 has only two vehicles. His concern resided in having only 2 guys at Station 1; if something happened where the fire fighters are not available, there is no one else to respond to a crisis. **Bickle**—how would you resolve this problem if you were Chief? Holliday said he would hire two more fire fighters at least. A look at the roster indicates that there are 18 fire fighters on it, but only four live in the township. That should be a concern. **Bickle**—how comfortable will you be in hiring new staff. Holliday—very comfortable. **Bickle**—what is your impressions of our fire department in terms of top challenges beyond personnel. What do you see in terms of course corrections? Holliday—some of the fire department equipment is over 20 years old, and that should be updated. Looking at the size of some of the homes, it may be appropriate to consider a ladder truck for the fire department. The downside of more equipment is the need to have more personnel to handle it.

Manigold—asked about the new "green" fire station that Holliday occupies. Holliday replied that the environmental and economic sides of LEED fight each other in the building. An example is the snow melt feature of the sidewalk in front of the building. It costs \$2K more in gas to heat the sidewalk to keep snow off of it.

Wunsch—asked Holliday about his view on upgrading the department to ALS standards in terms of actual implementation. He replied that he would first do a study on EMS calls to see how many of them were ALS calls. Going to an ALS service can be costly in terms of upgrading the rigs as well as the personnel to use the rigs.

Manigold—asked if the candidates had any questions for the board. Holliday asked about the benefit package that goes with the job. **Bickle** said there is health insurance that includes dental and vision that the township pays 85% of the cost; **Achorn** added there is a pension package that the township covers at 13% of base salary and a life insurance policy at 100% for coverage at \$50K. **Westphal**

added that the fire fighters are required by their union contract to put in an additional 3% into their retirement program from their payroll bi-weekly.

Candidate—Christopher Beauchamp

Bickle—introduced the process and procedure surrounding this round of interviews, and expectations for the Fire Chief.

Manigold—queried about using water points to fight fires. Beauchamp responded that he is very familiar with water point systems to fill tanker trucks...this is what he uses in Suttons Bay where he has worked the last three years. **Manigold** then asked about his continuing education at Lansing Community College. Beauchamp said he is continuing his online course requirements, but it has been difficult because his wife also works multiple jobs. **Manigold** asked Beauchamp about being a “hands on” chief. He responded that he is a “working man’s chief”. He learns by hands-on. He doesn’t like sitting behind a desk, although he realizes that paperwork does have to be done. But he prefers to be out on call at least several times a week, just to learn about his men and the types of challenges that they are facing. **Manigold**—how about grant writing? He responded that he assisted with writing grants at Hazel Park, but never actually wrote one himself.

Achorn—asked what size is your budget for the current fire department that you serve; how is it funded; and how many ambulances does it have. Beauchamp responded \$1.3M that is strictly tax-based millage, specifically for the fire department. We have two ambulances, with 3 full-time fire fighter-paramedics/ shift, plus the Fire Chief. We are supplemented by “pay on-call” individuals. We work 48 hours shifts—2 full days on with 4 full days off.

Wunsch—how do you think your experience in Suttons Bay will prepare you for work in Peninsula Township? Beauchamp stated there are a lot of similarities geographically, topographically, and in terms of population. Suttons Bay’s run volume is about double the 450 runs that the Peninsula Fire Department makes. We used to do intercepts with North Flight, which we no longer do because of the ALS training of our full time fire fighters. This is a unique area, and most people downstate do not appreciate it until they move up here. The communities are very tightly-knit; everyone knows everyone else. **Wunsch** asked if the candidate would be relocating if he got the job. He said relocation is a definite possibility if he got the job. Delegation of responsibilities would follow standard operating procedures when he is not around.

Bickle—what are your impressions/understanding of the current Peninsula Fire Department and what are your thoughts on how to improve the organization? Beauchamp had not been to either of the fire stations, but he has spoken to several part time people who work here. In terms of the direction of the department, it is clear you want to go to ALS; he has worked in two locations where he helped the transitions from BLS to ALS. Beauchamp thought he could be valuable in that respect. Licensing and rules that you have to address when you convert from BLS to ALS will be an important aspect of the transition. Records on budgets, equipment, and personnel would need to be examined in order to prioritize the actions of the Fire Chief. Dealing with the State can be a challenge in the transition from BLS to ALS.

Wahl—what is your role in the Suttons Bay Fire and Rescue? Beauchamp said he is a fire fighter/paramedic and a Fire Inspector I, II, and plan review. **Wahl**--Do you have any managerial experience? Beauchamp said that at Hazel Park he was the Fire Marshal for 3 years, which put him second in command over 23 fire fighters. He had to deal with personnel and administrative issues.

Achorn—did you deal with budgets? Beauchamp said he assisted with budgets, although the Chief actually set the budget. As union representative, he had to be involved in the budgetary process. He has a good knowledge of municipal budgetary processes.

Bickle—when you were given the budget at Hazel Park, who assisted you with it? Beauchamp said the Treasurer prepared the budget and gave it to the City manager. The manager would then give it to the Fire Chief, who gave it to me and another individual in the Fire Department to bring it into line with the allocation. The Chief did 75% of the work.

Westphal—what section of the budget did you take care of? Beauchamp said he focused on all the safety equipment, EMS supplies, communication equipment, and some of the vehicle maintenance.

Wahl—what prompted the move from Hazel Park to Suttons Bay? Beauchamp said the relaxed lifestyle here made the area very attractive. We bought land here about 5 years ago.

Westphal—what would you bring to the Peninsula Fire Department that would make you the best candidate? Beauchamp said flexibility and communication. I am very easy to work with; I will try to achieve the goals set by the Board and the department. I came from a station that had 3000 calls/year, with 2 convictions in arson. There is only one other inspector in the area with experience in arson. I am a certified Fire Inspector, so I bring skills that are not very common up here. I have done over 2000 inspections, so I have a wealth of experience dealing with the public.

Manigold—do you have any questions for us? Beauchamp asked where the Board would like to see the Fire Department in four years. Manigold said there is a real desire to have ALS coverage in the Fire Department. That will mean having sleeping quarters in both stations; full time staff of six; more part-time people on call, who live out here. It's kind of a re-build. Beauchamp said he likes a challenge and reiterated what he thought were important priorities. He would consider a strong mutual-aid program for the township.

Candidate—Randy Rittenhouse

Bickle—repeated the process and procedures surrounding the interview and the requirements of the Fire Chief in terms of his/her role in the community.

Manigold—asked if the candidate would provide some of the most important needs that he sees for the Fire Department. Rittenhouse responded that he thought staffing is the greatest need, followed by adequate space/housing at the fire stations, and on-site staff at Station 2 (South end). The latter need would allow quicker response time at the south end of the peninsula; currently, it takes about 10 minutes to respond to a call that comes into Station 1, if the caller is on the south end of the peninsula. Additions to the buildings could be done easily to provide more space. Temporary accommodations using a trailer are a strategy that could provide an immediate solution until something more permanent could be constructed.

Bickle—inquired on how Rittenhouse would go about the staffing process in terms of time and staffing levels, especially for ALS. Rittenhouse responded that he has already purchased ALS monitors, which he got at a great deal. He said the monitors could be up-graded in a few years as a part of the package. Staffing in the south end should be 4 full time fire fighters, along with a part time pool to keep the cost down—an ALS medic, a part time staff and two fire fighters at Station 2 could be at the south

end. An ALS medic and part time staff member at the north end as well. He would monitor that over 3-4 months to see if the distribution of staff was appropriate (depending on the runs and location).

Manigold—asked how well equipped are the ambulances to put them into ALS service. Rittenhouse said there are a lot of loose end materials that need to be put in place to make them ready for service (e.g., IV lines, pumps, etc.). Also need to get the paperwork ready to get approval to conduct ALS runs—he sees getting these needs addressed and getting approval within 6 months.

Achorn—where do you see us in 5 years? Rittenhouse said he sees us with additional staff—2 and 2 at both Stations. He sees us working closer with the community, teaching CPR (cardio-pulmonary resuscitation), purchasing vehicles that need to be replaced, building additions, working with the community to determine what is best for the community and ourselves, etc. He would look into community para-medicine, where the Fire Department actually prevents a patient from going to the hospital by providing healthy lifestyle information, checking wounds, hospice transfers, and non-emergency trips from the hospital for our patients.

Wahl—how would you rate your interim performance as the Fire Chief? Rittenhouse said he would not rate it as a 10 or a 1. He said he would give himself a 3-4, because he is not here Monday through Friday. Therefore, he cannot give the full service that the job demanded. **Wahl** asked what would be the biggest change if Rittenhouse was to become Fire Chief. He responded that he would be here Monday through Friday working with the community, trying to set up CPR classes, and other types of community activities.

Bickle—what are some of the tasks that you are currently undertaking as Interim Fire Chief (e.g., budgets, etc.)? He stated that the other guys at the station help him with payroll. Budgets are something that he depends on others to formulate.

Achorn—how much do you think it would cost to take the first step up to ALS? The first step will involve the staffing, and then the housing (it will take about \$1K/month to secure the housing to rent a trailer). I figure it would cost about \$200K to secure ALS staffing and equipment. **Achorn**--What additional fire equipment is needed? Rittenhouse stated that we already have all of the equipment; we just need to re-assign equipment and staff to both stations. **Achorn** asked how we would get the ALS. With your four medics and what we have in terms of EMS, we can go from there to build up the staff. Rittenhouse said there have several fire-fighters who are already paramedics who would love to work out here.

Bickle—on grant writing, how comfortable are you with this type of activity or do you have to rely on others for this service. Rittenhouse said he already has several small grants from DNR and travel grants. For larger grants, he would go to someone who knows more about grant writing.

Westphal—what could you bring to the Peninsula Fire Department that others could not? Rittenhouse—compassion. He goes the extra mile; he was taught as a child to respect others. The fire service is not just about putting out fires; it is about serving others.

Manigold—asked if the candidate had any questions for the Board. Rittenhouse observed that whoever becomes the next Fire Chief needs to go beyond staffing and equipment, and have the fire service grow with the community. Community involvement is a huge part of the Fire Department.

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8. **Citizen Comments** None
9. **Board Comments** None
10. **Adjournment** Manigold adjourned the meeting.

The minutes were respectfully transcribed and completed by Joanne Westphal, Clerk, on 08/17/2017, 5:44 pm.