

Berlin Township 2009 Fire Committee
Meeting December 8, 2009

1 This meeting was held at the Berlin Township Fire Station 2708 Lackey Old State Road,
2 Delaware, Ohio, 43015

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4 **CALL TO ORDER**

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6 The 2009 Fire Committee meeting was called to order by Mr. Spangler at 7:00 PM.
7

8
9 **2009 Fire Committee Members Present:** Steve Spangler, Joe Korleski Elizabeth Kline,
10 Pat Paykoff, Craig Hall; Assistant Fire Chief, Joe Holehouse, and Jim Hahn.
11

12 **2009 Fire Committee Member Absent:**

13
14 **Attendees:** Phil Panzarella, Trustee; Bill Bechstein, Fire Chief Fire Department;
15 Joe Pichert, Lieutenant Fire Department
16

17 **PROOF OF PUBLICATION**

18
19 Zoning Secretary Cathy Rippel provided proof of publication for the legal notice for this
20 meeting, which was published on December 4, 2009 in the Delaware Gazette, providing
21 notification of the meeting date, time, and items for discussion.
22

23 **LEGAL NOTICE**

24
25 Berlin Township Fire Committee Meeting Berlin Township Fire Committee will meet at
26 the Berlin Township Fire Station, 2708 Lackey Old State Road, Delaware, OH
27 on December 8, 2009. Purpose of the meeting is to review fire department operations and
28 make recommendations to Berlin Township Trustees. The Public is welcome to attend.

29 By order of the Berlin Township Trustees,
30 Theresa Cannon, Fiscal Officer
31

32 Mr. Spangler started the meeting and said that Mr. Paykoff had something unexpected
33 come up but would be at the meeting later.
34

35 **MOTION #FC-7; Approve Meeting Minutes from November 11, 2009**

36
37 Approve meeting minutes from November 11, 2009

38 Motion by: Mr. Korleski

39 Seconded by: Mr. Holehouse

40 Vote: Hahn-yea, Hall yea, Holehouse-yea, Kline-yea, Korleski-yea, Holehouse-yea

41 Motion Passed.

42 Comments: Mr. Spangler said to correct the sentence from 2 beds to 3 beds.
43

44 Mr. Spangler asked if there was any old business to discuss. All members in agreement
45 said no.

46 Mr. Spangler said he had put together an agenda to discuss some issues from previous

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47 meetings and then being a draft proposal for the Township Trustees. First item on the
48 agenda was going to be Mr. Paykoff on funding but with his absence Mr. Spangler
49 decided to move onto Mr. Holehouse's information about run information from other
50 township fire departments. Mr. Holehouse presented information from other fire
51 departments, Concord Township, BST & G Fire Department, Harlem Township, Genoa
52 Township, and Porter Kingston (8-pages). See **Handout #1** attached with minutes.
53 Mr. Holehouse said something unique that Concord Township used in their response
54 times were the first arriving apparatus regardless of the fire department because some
55 areas of their district neighboring fire stations are closer. Mr. Hahn commented by
56 saying we have that case here in the township as the Lieutenant has pointed out in the
57 Worthington Arms area. Mr. Hahn said he had learned at the last meeting that we had to
58 make sure we were comparing incident responses, to the same types of calls that Berlin
59 Township responds to. Lt. Pichert said that Concord Township has to staff a paramedic
60 unit and some departments that do this assign different numbers. For example Concord
61 Township had 875 incidents of those incidents --- were EMS calls with --- transports.
62 Subtract those from 875 incidents and you are left with a total of ---. This number should
63 be used to compare Berlin Township to Concord Township.
64 {Ch. Hall and Lt. Pichert left the meeting at 7:30 to assist the M-10 crew with a patient;
65 Minutes were taken by Ms. Elizabeth Kline}

66 Mr. Hahn asked why some fire departments only staffed 2 firefighters per shift. Chief
67 replied and said that we want to maintain 3. Mr. Hahn said it would be dangerous to do
68 with less than 3. Chief replied, "Yes it is we need 3". Mr. Panzarella said the fire
69 department needs 3 to make an interior fire attack. This department has made an attack
70 fire from the outside with 2 firefighters. All members agreed that we should keep 3
71 firefighters minimum during the staff planning. Mr. Panzarella said the rule of 3 came
72 into effect in 2006. Prior to that 1 firefighter would bring the truck and the others would
73 meet them there, policy was changed to that 3 had to be on the truck. There have been
74 times the fire department has not responded because there were not 3 firefighters on the
75 truck. Mr. Spangler said that response time is not everything that should be considered,
76 referencing a Columbus Dispatch article about City of Westerville not having a water
77 supply to operate. Mr. Hahn said that there should be 3 – 5 metrics not just response
78 times. The fire department should work on 3-5 metrics to measure. Mr. Korleski asked
79 if the fire department checks fire hydrants. Chief Bechstein said water pressure is not a
80 problem the problem is usually the volume of water. Some fires may need more than 500
81 gallons a minute. Delco water does not install hydrants or improve lines which are
82 usually developer driven; ultimately someone has to pay for them. Mr. Panzarella said it
83 would have cost \$2,500 for a hydrant on Gregory Road near the new school. Chief
84 Bechstein said some departments budget for hydrants in specific areas of their district.
85 Mr. Panzarella said response times are a factor in seeing how a department operates. He
86 referred to an article from the Columbus Dispatch that Mr. Holehouse had, (insert
87 handout #2 do not see this in the file). He said when he spoke to the Fire Chief in
88 Delaware the Chief told him that they have about 8,000 incidents a year and some
89 response times were 14 – 15 minutes from the dispatch time to the time a vehicle arrived
90 on scene. Orange Township went to a 24/7 operation when their response times reached
91 greater than 14 minutes. He continued to say that one area Worthington Arms/23 area
92 takes the department around 8 ½ minutes to respond to. When looking at response times

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93 we should look at the first arriving vehicle as it pertains to us. (Ch. Hall and Lt. Pichert
94 returned to the meeting 8:00) Mr. Holehouse would like to point out page 23 of the
95 Genoa, Harlem, & Delaware County, Fire/Rescue/EMS Consolidation Feasibility study
96 (53-pages). See **Handout #2** attached behind minutes. Mr. Spangler asked Mr.
97 Panzarella for an update on the TIFF areas of the Township. Mr. Panzarella spoke with
98 Mr. Kaitz and they said that their were no TIFF areas in this township. The only areas
99 that could be TIFF would be in the City of Delaware. If they do not conform the
100 boundaries we are still responsible. There are two types of annexation.
101 Mr. Spangler continued with the meeting and presented the next item on the agenda
102 which was an incentive program for the part time firefighters. Mr. Spangler presented the
103 committee with his plan. Mr. Spangler asked who would be responsible for keeping track
104 of this. Chief Bechstein said that the database he uses for payroll could keep track of this
105 information. Mr. Panzarella commented as long as it is easy and does not cause
106 confusion for the fiscal officer or the fire chief. Lt. Pichert commented and said to be
107 careful on how it was paid to the firefighters. Lt. Pichert continued and said that when he
108 started he received one hourly rate for working day time staff and then another hourly
109 rate for training. It was discovered that an individual cannot be paid two different rates
110 for the same job as when all members of the department were given an hourly rate and
111 paid every two weeks. Mr. Hahn said that he liked the bonus incentive package that Lt.
112 Pichert had spoke about in previous meetings a once a year bonus. Lt. Pichert said when
113 they were doing research for the fire department's plan that Concord Township uses a
114 similar plan and has had very good success with it and it is based on the number of hours
115 worked. Mr. Spangler said the reason for this was to try and get firefighters to come in
116 on runs after hours. Mr. Hahn replied and said these hours should be the total hours that
117 the firefighters work. Lt. Pichert commented he agreed with Mr. Hahn that this bonus
118 should be made to all part time firefighters and should include all hours that they may
119 work in a year. The fire department needs firefighters to attend other functions such as
120 staffing, Open House, and other department functions, along with responding to calls.
121 Mr. Korleski asked Lt. Pichert what Concord Township was paying for bonuses. Lt.
122 Pichert replied at the time that the information was collected Concord Township was in
123 the process of updating this program. Mr. Hahn asked if there where any other programs
124 that other departments provide their part time staff. Lt. Pichert replied and said that he
125 thought Harlem Township provides their staff with some type of bonus. Genoa
126 Township and Concord Township pay their part time firefighters 1 ½ hourly rate on
127 holidays. Mr. Spangler asked what Orange Township did. Lt. Pichert said that Orange
128 Township does not rely on their part time firefighters as heavily as Genoa and Concord
129 Township. He continued to say that their minimum manpower is so many full time
130 firefighters a day, so if a part time firefighter called off it would not lower their minimum
131 manpower levels. Mr. Hahn said it is important over the growth of the department to try
132 and stay as competitive if not better than the other communities on compensation. Chief
133 Bechstein said that some of the part time staff works 2 or 3 other fire department jobs and
134 using these programs may provide them a better incentive to work at Berlin Township as
135 compared to another fire department. Mr. Spangler asked if everyone was in favor of the
136 draft incentive pay bonus; all members agreed. Mr. Hahn, Mr. Korleski, and Ms. Kline
137 said the amounts for the bonus seemed low. Lt. Pichert said they had just used the
138 amounts to try and budget, those amounts could be changed. Mr. Hahn said to add \$50

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139 per step. Ms. Kline asked when the firefighters would receive this incentive pay bonus.
140 Ch. Hall suggested at the end of the year. Ch. Hall said his full time department, City of
141 Worthington, gives their bonuses around Thanksgiving. The onetime payment would
142 make it easier on the fiscal office. {Mr. Paykoff arrived at 8:20PM}.
143 Mr. Korleski asked what the plan was for the levy and what should be done; one or two
144 levies. He suggested going for a renewal of the current levy and then going after a
145 second levy later for staffing. He was worried of single large levy failing and the fire
146 department was not able to operate. Mr. Paykoff said he had spoken to the Auditor's
147 office and they told him they did not have all the information ready yet. Mr. Paykoff said
148 he is not sure what the property valuations are going to be for this next levy and another
149 issue with the levies is the Olentangy School District Levies. Mr. Hahn asked what the
150 progression to a 24/7 operation was. Mr. Panzarella replied that starting in 2010 the fire
151 department was going to be adding weekend and holiday day time coverage, since the
152 payment on the station was not as much as it had been in year's past. In 2011, the fire
153 department would have about \$300,000 additional to operate off of. He thought the fire
154 department would recommend or go to extended shifts and hiring of a second full time
155 firefighter to work an A and B shift rotation. Mr. Hahn thought maybe 12 hour shifts.
156 Mr. Panzarella said something needs to happen in May 2010 for the department to
157 continue to operate it could be a replacement or renewal. He continued to say that a
158 renewal could bring in less because it would be based on the old levy valuation whereas a
159 replacement levy of the same amount would be at the same rate now and then collect of
160 the new valuations. Mr. Paykoff said we have only one shot to pass a levy for the fire
161 department to operate and it needs to pass. Mr. Spangler suggested that the committee
162 figure out a dollar amount the levy should be collecting and recommends that amount to
163 the Board of Trustees. The current collection is \$671,000 dollars from the levy.
164 Chief Bechstein said the reason he recommended that the fire department should be
165 staffed 24/7 is that the fire department could respond an engine company with no less
166 than 3 firefighters to an emergency call in a quick response time. He said the residents
167 have that service during the day time staff hours and he felt that the residents should be
168 entitled to that same service 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. He said he would
169 recommend putting on an additional 1 mil staffing levy and let the residents decide if
170 they want to pay for the staff. It's the right of the residents to have the opportunity to
171 vote if they would like this service or not.
172 Mr. Hahn said a good executive does not look at one issue, they look at several issues.
173 The problem with looking at one issue is that an organization's resources are then
174 focused towards that area and could be negligent other issues that need addressed. In
175 economic times like this the Township needs to be finically responsible to the residents.
176 He continued that the fire department has shown progression from starting by putting
177 firefighters on Monday – Friday, then starting in 2010 putting on firefighters weekends
178 and holidays. Once the money is available go to 12 hours shifts. Then go to 24 hour
179 shifts and ask for an additional levy. That way you have shown the residents you have
180 fiscal responsibility. Mr. Hahn said at this time he could not support the fire department
181 going 24/7 without showing progression.
182 Mr. Paykoff asked Chief Bechstein why he was not in favor of keeping the current levy
183 and then adding an additional levy. Chief Bechstein said it did not matter to him. He just
184 wanted to make sure the department could still operate. He said the residents decide what

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185 level of service the fire department provides. Mr. Paykoff said the levy should be
186 extended longer for a period of 4 to 6 years, that way the department would be able to
187 operate and improve staffing levels from the current levels, then if an additional levy was
188 needed it could be added later. Ms. Kline asked how many levies could be put on. Chief
189 Bechstein said many departments run several different levies. For example Harlem
190 Township runs a operating and staffing levy in addition some departments put on an
191 equipment levy or building levy. Mr. Paykoff said at one time he thought Berlin had 2 or
192 3 different levies collecting at the same time. He said he holds officials more responsible
193 if that money collected from a staffing levy goes towards staffing. If the money is
194 collected for a building it goes towards a new building.

195 Mr. Hahn said the Township does not have enough roof tops, incidents, or growth to
196 justify full time 24/7 operations. He said the fire department should develop 3 – 5
197 metrics to measure how the department is doing. Mr. Panzarella said the department is
198 doing that in their monthly reports which Lt. Pichert is familiar with. He did see the need
199 in the future for depending on the results of these metrics

200 Mr. Spangler said that he would like to figure out what type of levy and what amount
201 would be needed. Mr. Hahn said he and Ms. Kline would take the information that Lt.
202 Pichert gave them and develop the cost for the department. Mr. Spangler said there are
203 pros and cons to each levy. Two levies can run the risk of one passing and the other
204 failing. For example, a 1 mil staffing levy may pass and then a 2.98 operating levy may
205 fail because the voters see the 1 mil, but the department needs the 2.98 to operate. Where
206 as a 3.98 mil levy would combine the two levies, but if this failed the fire department
207 would not collect any money. The 2 levy system would allow for the department to
208 operate and then add an additional levy if needed. Mr. Korleski and Mr. Holehouse said
209 that one levy could risk the chance of failure especially in these economic times. Mr.
210 Paykoff said that we have one chance to pass a levy. He said we need to pass a levy that
211 will stabilize the department so that they can continue to operate at the level and then
212 expand the coverage as the money becomes available. If more money was needed for
213 staffing then place another smaller levy on the ballot. All members were in agreement to
214 go for a levy generating the same amount as now to stabilize the department funding and
215 then if needed add an additional levy for staffing if it is needed. Ms. Kline asked if a fire
216 levy had ever failed. Mr. Spangler, Mr. Panzarella, Mr. Paykoff, and Ch. Hall said to the
217 best of their knowledge no. Mr. Spangler said look at the Delaware County tornado siren
218 levies. They both failed. Ms. Kline asked how the public would be informed. Mr.
219 Panzarella said firefighters cannot campaign for it while on duty. Mr. Paykoff said that
220 information could be put out by newsletter articles, newspaper stories, informational
221 meetings, and citizen groups. Mr. Spangler said individual residents could campaign for
222 the levy. Mr. Spangler showed his draft proposal, and reminded the committee members
223 that the draft was just a tool to start with and it can be changed. Draft of
224 Recommendations to Trustees (2-pages), Progression to 24/7 Department (1-page),
225 Recommendations to Trustees, Revised (2-pages), See **Handout #3** attached to minutes.
226 The following items were decided to be changed in the section “2009 Fire Committee”:
227 Duration of levy 6 years

228
229 New Levy commence collection January 1, 2011

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231 Mr. Hahn asked if the dead line for full time 24/7 operation could be removed instead of
232 saying 2013 just leave open this would allow flexibility if the department found it needed
233 the staff sooner. Ms. Kline agreed this would allow better flexibility and maybe should
234 be reworded. Following changes were made to "Public to Expect":
235 #1 Progression to a 24/7 fire service by the end of 2013 depending on the growth and
236 future service depends needed by the Township.
237 Delete item #2: staff combination, Keep item #3: mutual aid agreement,
238 #4 County EMS is a benefit to the Township and should maintain as is currently, or
239 expand as needed
240 #5 Ways should be explored to minimize costs and increase levels of service as much as
241 possible
242 #6 That long – term trustees and Fire Chief explore ways that additional services might
243 be added to current facilities or Township properties that could add or enhance residents
244 current services and perhaps help with the costs of Township operations similar to the
245 agreement with Delaware County EMS.
246 #7 The bonuses for part time firefighters should be adopted and will some way say thank
247 you for their service
248 #8 Pay levels should remain to be competitive
249 #9 Equipment: The committee believes current equipment is up to standards and be
250 maintained as required
251 #10 Trustees should meet with the fire department and determine a matrix to measure
252 items such as response times that would measure the department and the need for future
253 growth.

254
255 Discussion

256 Mr. Panzarella said that the Township should look at working out an agreement with
257 other agencies such as 2 local training facilities to hire the students they are producing.
258 Mr. Panzarella said that township may be able to save on employee cost and the students
259 would be able to gain experience at a fire department. Mr. Panzarella said that he
260 estimated that the turn over rate would be every 3 years. Lt. Pichert said to be careful
261 with this scenario in that the department could be rebuilding every 3 years by the time the
262 employees would become familiar with operations they would leave. Lt. Pichert said this
263 would not be fair to the residents, that the service provided to them would reflect this
264 turnover. He also said that you would still need to retain the senior part time firefighters
265 and full time firefighters to mentor the incoming firefighters. Mr. Hahn commented that
266 this is where it is important to have competitive pay, benefits, and bonuses. Lt. Pichert
267 said if the Township were able to create this environment that the turnover rate may not
268 be so high. Mr. Panzarella said that the students have their tickets that they are certified.
269 They could use Berlin Township as a training ground for another department. Mr.
270 Paykoff said he has had some of his best employees for over 20 years because he worked
271 with them when they first started. Lt. Pichert said that Ch. Hall took a chance on hiring
272 him and understood that everyone has to start somewhere. Lt. Pichert continued and said
273 that if it had not been for members of the Berlin Township Fire Department and City of
274 Worthington Division of Fire working with him he would not be in the position he is
275 now. His goal was to have a balance of experienced firefighters and some firefighters
276 with little experience. He asked the members of the committee would you like to have a

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277 fire truck show up with 3 brand new firefighters that just graduated or 2 experienced fire
278 fighters and 1 new fire fighter? Ms. Kline replied the experienced ones. Ch. Hall said
279 that the department has been working on a training program that has worked out very
280 well, so far firefighters with not a lot of experience, but the reason for this success is that
281 the department is blessed to have some very talented experienced fire fighters.
282

283 Late Items

284 Mr. Panzarella said it was brought to his attention that the cost of the Grille Report was a
285 total of \$19,400; report cost \$12,000 and process to hire the fire chief was \$7,400.
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287

288

289 **MOTION #FC-8, Approve to adjourn meeting at 10:20 p.m.**

290 Motion by Mr. Holehouse

291 Seconded by Ms. Kline

292 Vote: Spangler – yea, Hahn-yea, Hall-yea, Holehouse-yea, Kline-yea, Korleski-yea,
293 Paykoff- yea

294 Motion Passed.

295 Comments: Next meeting Wednesday, January 6, 2009 at 6:00PM
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Steve Spangler, Chairperson

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Jim Hahn, member

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Joe Holehouse, member

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Joe Korleski, member

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Elizabeth Kline, member

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Pat Paykoff, member

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Attest: _____

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Craig Hall, member

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