

LODI AREA FIRE DISTRICT
FIRE COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES

MEETING DATE & TIME:

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 12, 2017 5:00 PM

MEETING LOCATION:

Lodi Fire Station
115 N. Main St.
Lodi, WI 53555

1. **Call meeting to order and Roll Call:** Meeting called to order at 5:00 p.m. by President Nelson.
Commission members present: Doug Nelson, Mikel Bilkey, James Brooks, Matthew Davies, Nick Cable.
Also, present: Fire Chief Bobby Annen.
2. **Public Input:** None
3. **2016 Firefighter Taxes**

Eric Hardel, can refile – file amended return.

Chad Wolter – with the 2016 taxes I was extremely upset with how they turned out. I talked with my tax lady and asked her what I can do next year to avoid this. I was told if I wouldn't have had my baby maybe in December of last year I would've been paying into State Taxes. I have the most taxes taken out of my paycheck so I can get a larger return at the end of the year. I asked, what do I need to change so this doesn't happen next year? She told me these small jobs that didn't take any taxes out, quit them. Her answer was for me to quit the fire department and EMS. I then get a check that is supposed to be for the difference of the of the taxes that should've been taken out, she said that will take care of FICA and Medicare but not to enough to cover the State and Federal taxes that needed to be taken out. I now have to pay taxes on that too. My concern is what's going to be done so it doesn't happen again? We have a lot of checks and balances between the board and Brokish who is I suppose a certified CPA. Bilkey – Yep, lets go back. To start with, there's two problems here, one is this used to be a manual process so when every year they have the points, how much where going to pay for points a percentage was taken off and then that went into paying taxes for everyone. This was based on the W-4 you've given us not based on the other job or any of that because we have no real knowledge of that. Because of this there has been a flat percentage that gets paid. If you make \$25,000.00 a year the percentage has probably been ok, but you don't make that so I'm not saying you make to much money so you getting messed over but in a way that is true. So now, what cane we do to fix it? In the first place, what happened was this year, we did this last year Steve knew what he had to do, we took the taxes off the top and then we paid the taxes and it was a done deal. What happened was Steve got bought out and the payroll stuff got put into a computer and the computer now says this guy made \$500.00 this year and so he shouldn't pay taxes, although they didn't take them out of anybody's. If this was your only income only the Chief makes enough that he would have to pay

taxes on, so the computer says there's no taxes due. How do we fix that, I'm not sure how we really fix that? We can go back and say let's take a percentage off of everybody's and pay that towards the taxes, but I know there is certain people that make more jobs out of here that were not going to be paying enough taxes for, to be truthful you've always been getting messed over, we just showed it to you this year, that's our fault but the way we've always paid the taxes we take a percentage off of everybody's and that's how it's been paid. The guy that makes nothing for a wage but the guy that makes 30 40 50 thousand dollars is all of a sudden needing to pay taxes on it. I'm not sure what the right answer is, paying enough taxes so it's not a liability. Wolter – My concern, I'm one of the top point getters in the department ok, plus my officers pay, so now I think my check was \$2500.00 last year vs. the person doing the minimum making \$300.00. Bilkey - so yah it doesn't matter so much. Wolter – Why is more not being taken out of these checks more along the lines of a regular working job? Bilkey – In the past it was easier for you because the City took care of the payroll and they knew what was going on with your other job. The lady at Brokish's office has no idea what you make elsewhere, she thinks this is your only job, or at least that's what the computer thinks so that's really the problem. Where going to have to go back to the system before which by your argument isn't necessarily fair but everybody would be getting the same percentage paid, I don't like the solution, I don't like this solution we had but it was certainly worse this year. Chief – can't we deem it a gift forget this tax nonsense. Eric Hardel – Not anymore because everyone has filed there taxes already. Wolter – What about this coming year as a reimbursement. Brooks – I'd like to know why Mr. Brokish isn't here at the meeting, I'm not satisfied with this at all. Bilkey – I said that already. Brooks – He called you and said he's not going to be here. Bilkey - No I didn't even get to talk to him. Brooks – so another word you called and left a message and he didn't respond back. Bilkey – that's correct. I'm going to recommend this is the way its going to be at the next meeting that we should go with a new accountant. Bilkey – trying to get Steve Brokish to come to a meeting tonight is like trying to get Chief away from a fire. It's his busy time. I can understand that but next month its not, its gonna go back on the agenda for next month as well and I expect Mr. Brokish to come to our meeting. Bilkey – I will put a call into him. Brooks – If he's not going to be here I will make a motion to go with a different accountant. Eric Hardel – I think another thing that didn't help us is we got 10-99's. When you put a 10-99 into the system your self-employed and you pay that tax which is the other half of Medicaid and social security that the employer is supposed to pay. Instead of 6% tax your paying 12.4 percent. I put that 10-99 in last and it took \$700.00 off of my taxes for the \$2600.00 I made. Wolter – I was about the same total as you. Bilkey – realistically there are 3 things that went wrong. First, I didn't remind Steve this is how we do it. _Worthy yes but has he been the one doing it for the last couple of years. Bilkey – This is only the second year. Last year he did it manually and this year he got put into a big payroll system and someone else did it, so first I didn't remind Steve that we need to take taxes off the top, second Steve didn't remember he was supposed to take the taxes off the top and when we got the checks I didn't notice we didn't take the taxes of the top and so if we would've stopped there we could've recut the checks. We figured it out after checks where cased. Brooks – Correct me if I'm wrong, so this is still not fixed because they've gotten checks that they still have to pay taxes on that check, so this is still not fixed, Mr. Brokish needs to come here and tell us how this gets fix. Bilkey – Alright. Brooks – this is his responsibility. Bilkey – They proposed he and his partners proposed three solutions and one of them was that we just not call the pay this year pay and call it an advance and then next year it would get taxed, I said that sounds good today but then your doubling everyone's income so that not going to work so where going to need to talk about it today, tomorrow or next week and the end of next year, lets try to find a solution that makes this done as best as we can. Bottom line is we didn't pay enough when we wrote out those checks to be able to cover your taxes. Again, it depends on your taxes. Wolter – we still have to pay on the checks that we got paid to cover the taxes that didn't get taken out. It still doesn't help because some day you have to pay the taxes. Bilkey – it was definitely a cluster, I will take some of the blame for it because I should've noticed to. Wolter – That was another one of my concerns, the second I looked at my check I noticed taxes where not taken out of my check. Bilkey – What I did was look at Chief's and he had taxes taken out and called it good. I should've looked at each check but I didn't do that but that's my problem. There are three other people that should tripped over this along the way. I will ask Steve to come to the meeting next month. Hardel – maybe a way forward, the not taking taxes out, I can understand that as long as we know that so we can set X amount aside to pay taxes. Bilkey – If we would've

done it the way we did it 2 years ago they would've been 10 to 15 percent less. Hardel the 10-99 is what killed us because it doubles the taxes you pay. Bilke – I understand I don't know that there is a way to fix it for this year. We have a plan for next year but really that plan is not really right. I'm only paying 15 % for you but you should be paying more than that because of your other income. Do we just go back to that and smile and walk away? Hardel – you could put this amount on your W-4 to have taken out. You can claim x and take this amount extra out. It is then on the person that fills out the W-4. Dan Marquardt – Let me add to that, when we filled out our W-4's for the first time we couldn't take out a deduction, we couldn't do anything because the board said all we have to do is a flat some a flat percentage. That's the way the board wanted to do it. That's not the correct way its suppose to be done. We've been stuck with it since then. Bilke- I groused about that when it got done because it was wrong then. Brooks – Its your taxes, what right does the board have to tell you what to do with your taxes. Bilkey – right. Marquardt – right. The board said a flat percentage and that's going to be it. Bilkey – to clarify, it used to be people didn't pay taxes on this. Jon Lehr - It was of a sty pin, this is to cover your gas clothing and such. Bilkey - a few years ago they changed the rules to make it taxable. When they change the rules, the people that were in charge at the time, good news none of them are us, although I was the mayor at the time or right after that. Said well just take the amount off the top. If your getting \$2500.0 they should be different than the guy getting the \$500.00. Davies – It sounds like an accountant that only wants to do the math once. Cable – when do it by hand they can see that but when its done by computer you can't. Have all the guys fill out W-4's and they fill it out like Eric said. If they don't do it right then its on them. You can pull it out and go this is what you wrote. These guys also know what their other income is outside of this fire department so they can adjust it. Bilkey – Steve can help use with that and to get it right for the future. That part I don't understand. Again, that was a decision that was made a while ago and we just pointed out. Hardel – you can file an amended return if this gets straightened out. If we get a W-2 that says no taxes were taken out instead of a 10-99 at least that says I didn't pay my share but I don't want to pay taxes that I wasn't supposed to pay. Wolter - The problem I have with that is I don't do my taxes and now I have to go and pay my tax lady again. Bilkey – that's right. Cable – Depending who it is you might not have to pay again. Bilkey – I'll have Steve come. I will give him some Ideas so he's not coming to the meeting blind. I'll see if he can also pose a solution for going forward with it because I believe he agreed the system we used wasn't the right way to do it. Chief – What I would like to see him do is not only come here but he also gets the W-2's that say they paid zero taxes and then I would like to see him file the amendments for everyone because it was him that screwed it up. Bilkey – Ok, I'll ask. No should have to pay there accounted again when he screwed it up. He's an accounted he can do it. At the very least for this hard ship. I don't mean to sound mean but this is bad. Bilkey – They agreed to waive their fee's but that really helps the board and not the firefighters.

Chief – From my perspective, I don't want people to leave over this. Where going in the right direction I don't want it to go south. I have talk of people leaving the department because they can't afford to do it. I've already heard that if this is the way it's going to be I'm gonna have to quit.

Wolter - I would like Chief updated so he can come to the firefighters.

4. **Air Compressor**

Chief – Compressor died. I talked with a rep from Paul Conway Shields. They service the eagle air compressors like the one we have and the 3rd and 4 stage valves need to be replaced at the very minimum. He can't guarantee it's going to correctly run smoothly after that. The cost of that is a minimum of \$1500.00. The issue where having for this is we applied for AFG for air packs and for a new compressor. If we go buy a new compressor we can't get reimbursed if we get the grant. Until we get the grant we can't buy a new one unless we pay out of pocket. Bilkey – If we buy the compressor because if we don't get the grant we have to by the packs and the compressor, so if we buy the compressor out of the equipment fund can we use the money if we get the grant. Chief – no we can't replenish ourselves from the grant. A new compressor is anywhere from \$25,000.00 to 40,000.00 for a new one. We have a cascade system that we

can use to fill but we can only fill a certain amount of bottles. In the meantime, we've been filling at Arlington. They have been very nice letting use their system. If we get a big fire would need to call in someone's air trailer. We could rent a cascade system from air gas for the short term and do it that way as well. I'm working on getting the prices for that. Brooks – How long before we hear anything on the grant. Chief – They've started and we could hear next week, we may not hear anything until the end of summer. There is no time table. Bilkey. To me, if we leased one it could be cheaper than fixing the old one. Chief – I don't want to put a lot of money into something we are getting rid of. That's just a waste. Bilkey - Need more information. I don't know if it cost \$500.00 a month or 5,000.00. If its \$1500.00 for 3 months it could be more cost effective. Chief - Will need a new compressor for the new air packs. I will call Air Gas to find out. Guessing it will be cheaper but unsure. I will find out. There is an option of paying per bottle used as well. Davies – If your leasing the bottles you don't need to worry about the core they test the bottles because air gas owns them and they will do that. Chief - Alternative is to buy now. Davies – I would not buy a system now. Bilkey seems fool hardy. I would hold off.

Bilkey/Davises Motion to go with cascade system if the cost of getting bottles for two months is less than cost of fixing the compressor is less than the cost of the compressor than we should just do that. Amendment – go with cascade system no matter what until we figure out if we get the grant or not.

5. Fire Department – Call Billing

Brooks – The Town of Lodi would like the Fire Board to look at changing the Cost of the \$425.00 bill per call. As it stands now the it is \$425.00 for a crash, house fire, CO2 alarms or a smoke alarm. The Town of Lodi would like to see the bill change and the cost for smoke alarms and CO2 alarms go to a much lower cost than the \$425.00. Bilkey – This is a Town of Lodi issue, the Town could subsidize the ones they feel they should subsidize to get the amount down. That may make sense for them, that would be a legal way to do it. This would change it for all the municipalities where not going to bill a call different for each. This would make us raise other rates so we could back down on those rates and realistically it costs a lot of money to send the trucks out the door no matter what where doing. Chief – A teared billing system is what they want us to do. The problem with that is if they want to do that it's a gamble to guess how many calls where going to have up front and the Town is going to supplement more in tax payer money because they're going to have to pay more money to compensate for the reduced billing.

6. Treasurer:

A. Financials reports

Bilkey - Town will be upset cause it's not in long term CD but that's because we thought we are going to need to spend it. \$30,00.00 should go into savings account since we got paid. Got both towns but not city yet.

B. Payment of bills

Davies/Cable motion to approve payments/bills for march and April. March is already paid. Check numbers 544 through an unknown number and checks listed along with automatic utility payment.

Budget Vs. Actuals I didn't put in last years.

7. Secretary:

A. Meeting Minutes

A1. December 14th, 2016

A2. January 11th, 2017

A3. February 8th, 2017

Bilke/Cable motion to approve minutes

8. Fire Chief Reports:

(a) SCBA updates

John Lehr – I am in charge of committee to review air packs. We looked at 4 vendors - Dragger, Scotts, MSA, interspiro. The firemen used some of the equipment during drills and decided the two that should continue in the process were Scotts and interspiro. Monday night the membership took a paper ballot vote and they have elected to go with interspiro. There is an intercom system that allows you to talk to fellow firemen while on a call. They have a 15-year bumper to bumper warranty which is how long they will last and how long the bottles can be hydrotested. The new packs have lumbar support which the current packs do not. By the time, you're done wearing the current pack it hurts your back and shoulders. The new one is more on your hips which is ergonomically correct and more safe. The current bid mostly set for the grant. When we sit down with them it will be more accurate. Currently the price is \$5500.00 per unit but it could go down. We need 22 to 25 packs, 50 bottles and 36 masks. The bottles last 45 and the voice system is an extra \$610.00. Chief – This is a no brainer. People that tried the packs on loved them. They fit well and have more features than what we have now. Waiting to see if we get the grant. Chief – We have applied for the AFG Grant and that is for \$225,000.00. We won't know if we are getting it until we get it. The cut off is around November. If we don't have the grant they will need to be ordered in December and there is a 6 to 8-week lead time. The bottles we currently have on trucks have to be off of the trucks by March 2018. Arlington Fire is interested in the packs that we currently have. They can't use bottles but can use the other equipment. Board will need to determine a sale price on them. Brooks - We need to wait as long as we can until we can't because we can't reimburse ourselves if we go and purchase the new packs and then get awarded the grant.

Bilkey/Brooks motion to get quotes on packs but not make any purchases.

(b) Building updates

Chief – I sat down with 5 Bugles Design from Eau Claire WI. For several hours. They toured the fire department and the EMS building. 5 Bugel's is going to come to the joint municipality meeting at this time for free. They will touch on many aspects of the process. The cost for them to move forward will be between \$15000.00 to 20,000.00 for initial assessment/Study.

(c) Fire call report

10 Total

City of Lodi 3

Call# 27 Dumpster Fire behind Lloyds

Call# 29 Fire Alarm on Strange way. Happened 3 times

Call# 33 Gas spill at Kwik Trip 30 to 50 Gallons. Tanker Truck malfunctioned.

Town of Lodi 5

Call# 26 Gluth Rd - Dog house fire.

Call# 28 Trailer Fire Smokey Hollow campground.

Call# 32 1:15 AM 60 and Kahn Rd. Motor Vehicle Crash –

Call# 34 Smoke alarm activation – Back 40 Rd. Nothing found

Call# 35 Natural Gas Leak Harmony Grove.

West Point

None

Mutual Aide

Call# 30 Arlington – Structure Fire

Call# 31 Merrimack - Structure Fire

(d) Other status reports

Chief - We have 35 Members and the max is 36, I'm trying to figure out ways not to turn people away but I don't have space for them in the fire department, gear for them or money to buy gear for them. There will come a time where we must pay for day shift people to respond to calls.

(e) Upcoming events

Chief - Calendar

(e) Other issues the Fire Chief wishes to bring to the attention of the Fire Commission **

Bilkey - Good job and getting us up to this staffing level.

Chief - Working on getting a website going. Need to get a credit card for this.

Chief - I have something called 2 tone Detect. It runs through computer and it's also hooked into a scanner. When there is a call it sends a text message and a recording of the call on your cell phone. I don't see pagers ever going away but this is a good 2nd tool. Harmony Grove is having problems getting paged. I've talked with the radio shop and they don't know what the problem is.

(f) Other questions from Commission members **

Bilkey - Agenda item for next month. Someone else needs to have access to quick books and ability to access the Bank accounts.

9. Adjourn

Bilkey/Davies motioned to adjourn at 7:03 PM.

Prepared by:

Town of Lodi Supervisor I

James P. Brooks

- * The Fire Commission welcomes public input on any agenda or non-agenda topic, but will not discuss or take action on any topic that is not on the agenda. The Fire Commission reserves the right to limit the duration of citizen statements and will not engage in debate with a citizen presenter. At the sole discretion of the Commission Chair, a citizen or a member of the Fire Department may be recognized for a brief statement during discussion on an agenda topic. Fire Department members who wish to speak on an agenda topic should speak with the Fire Chief in advance and must be called upon by the Fire Chief. The Fire Commission Chair may or may not decide to recognize a member of the Fire Department who has been called upon by the Fire Chief.

- ** No action by the Fire Commission can be taken on any issue or question brought up. If action is needed it will be placed on a future agenda.