

# WESTFIELD FIRE AND RESCUE DISTRICT

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## Special-Joint Work Session

### Minutes

December 4, 2014 @ 7:00 pm

Trustee Likley called the meeting to order with roll call;  
Trustees Schmidt, Thombs, Likley present.

Self-introductions were made with the following present;

<u>Harrisville Twp.</u>	<u>Chatham Twp.</u>	<u>Westfield Fire and Rescue</u>
Tom Packard	Charles Simon	Chief Richard Fletcher
	Asst. Chief Tim Vaughn	

<u>Lafayette Twp.</u>	<u>Canaan Twp.</u>	<u>Town and Country Fire District</u>
Mike Costello	Chief Brandon Smith	Bill Cletzer
Chief Jeff Hall		

Trustee Likley stated, this meeting has been properly noticed in the Gazette identifying all entities present as an open meeting and work session. Approved meeting minutes will be provided to all boards and an audio of this evening can also be provided if requested.

### Purpose of work session

To discuss and finalize billing rates, when billing for "no response calls" will be implemented and billing procedures. To ensure consistency between WFRD, Lafayette, Chatham, Canaan and Town and Country Fire District when responding to the Lodi Fire and Rescue service areas when they don't respond.

This does not include or impact the county wide mutual aid agreement that all of the entities have signed and agreed to.

**Trustee Likley** stated that WFRD have responded to (3) mutual aid calls to the Lodi area since October. That we've not had any "no response" calls and asked the others their call status. Lafayette, Town and Country, Chatham had not received any "no response" calls. Canaan Fire had (3) "no response" calls and 3 or 4 mutual aid calls.

**Trustee Tom Packard** stated that Lodi Village is hiring a full time Chief to the department and next fall the Harrisville Township will place a fire levy on the ballot to increase operation revenue. The present fire levy generates approximately \$73,000.00 annually.

**Trustee Mike Costello** asked if they were soft billing for services of residents and or non-residents, as an additional revenue source. It was believed they were. Lodi is also implementing an at home "on call" to help ensure members are available to respond. Everyone present recognizes the challenges to get volunteer active into the department, train and retain. Several of the department had implemented cadet programs that brought high school students into the department to mentor. This has been very productive in each department to gain new members.

**Trustee Likley** thanked Chief Fletcher for communicating with each of the department chiefs to develop a consistent billing rate and standard for billing. This draft is open for discussion, suggestion and improvements.

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**Chief Fletcher** presented the proposal.

**Proposal:** In the event a call for service in the Lodi Fire Department area goes unanswered and one of the surrounding departments are toned out to respond, the responding department has the option to charge Lodi Fire Department \$625.00 for an EMS response and/or \$725.00 for a fire apparatus response. This charge will go directly to the Lodi Fire Department to be paid within 30 days. If there is no payment in 30 days a second invoice will be sent with a copy going to the address or individual that initiated the call for service, i.e. the resident in most cases. There will be a grace allowance of two calls per quarter of the year. This allowance will be two calls unanswered by the Lodi Fire Department, not two calls per mutual aid department.

Reasoning behind the proposal: The residence of the Lodi Fire Department coverage area are paying a tax for this service. It is unfair to collect this tax and then allow other departments to respond at no cost. There is a cost for the service whether it be personnel cost, supplies used, or wear and tear on the vehicles responding. The two calls per quarter allowance is to recognize that at times a volunteer department may not have the available members to respond, but there should be a limit to the number of times that occurs. Again, there is a cost to the responding department. The second bill going to the resident is to make them aware of the lack of response and to allow them to question the department as to who will pay the bill.

Once again to clarify, a true mutual aid run is welcomed and follows the county wide agreement. What we are addressing is a "no response" call for service. Knowing that no department is perfect and once in a while a call could go unanswered, there is an allowance for two calls per quarter to be missed, but after that the proposal will read as an option to the responding department.

**Chief Hall** agreed that consistency is needed in this issue and complimented the Lodi Fire Department in their recent service improvements.

**Trustee Costello** agreed that a consistent flat rate for an EMS run and not breaking that down a specific level of service "basic, or advance" was right way.

**Trustee Thombs** want to ensure that any billing would be sent not only to the fire department but also to the Lodi Village Council through their Fiscal Officer.

**Trustee Costello** question the billing rate if that was for each vehicle, it was agreed that it was per vehicle or apparatus that was dispatched.

**Chief Smith** question if billing the residents insurance for transport to the hospital or billing through Cost Recover the insurance for a MVA that we don't also bill the Village of Lodi. That we could bill the difference of insurance payment and actual bill. If no transport or Cost Recovery option the bill would be sent to Lodi.

**Trustee Simon** questioned Medicare patients and the billing process. It was agreed and understood that you cannot bill a Medicare patient beyond what Medicare pays for a service (transport). But we do have ability to bill the Village of Lodi for the remainder of that bill.

**Example;** transport bill of \$625.00 Medicare pays \$225.00, the remaining \$400. Is billed to Lodi.

**Trustee Cletzer** asked what communication has been made to Lodi Village Council and or the Mayor.

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It was explained that Village Council representatives were invited to participate at the October 2nd meeting that was held on this issue. They were directed to not attend as a possible Sunshine Law violation. That meeting like tonight was properly noticed in the Gazette identifying each of the entities for a special, joint work session on the topic. The received communication from Lodi was that they don't have an issue and that any problem that we have is ours. And invited any to attend their safety committee meetings to discuss.

**Trustee Cletzer** stated they had a resent call that they (Town and Country) responded to and Lodi only had an engine on scene with 2 people. T and C responded with an EMS squad for the call, they did not transport, do you bill?

It was discussed and agreed that showing up on scene was not sufficient to wave a "no response" charge.

It was discussed and agreed that these efforts are not to criticize Lodi Fire or Village Council and we recognize the improvements made recently in their service. That this group is willing to assist in any way we can.

**Chief Smith** supported the consistent billing rate and procedures.

**Trustee Thombs** recommended a tracking procedure of the "no response" calls, it was agreed that the Chiefs communicate as this occurs.

It was agreed that a common Resolution will be prepared and provided to each entity to adopt at their respective Boards. This resolution will support the billing rate and procedures and the solidarity of this group regarding this issue. Once all entities have adopted, copies of the same will be present to the Lodi Village Council.

**Trustee Likley** will prepare and send out to each entity by mid January.

With nothing further to discuss.

Trustee Likley made motion to adjourn at 7:50 pm

Trustee Thombs seconded.

Roll call unanimous.

Date approved Dec 15, 2014

William Thombs William N Thombs

Michael Schmidt Michael Schmidt

James Likley James Likley