

CASS COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT #1

MEETING MINUTES

August 1, 2018

Call to Order

The Cass County Fire District #1 (CCFD1) Board met at 6:30 p.m. at Cass County Fire District 1 Station at 1444 Holland Street, Logansport, Indiana. Meeting was called to order by Michael L. Sims, Chairman. Members present were: Michael L. Sims, Chairman; Dave Patty, Vice Chairman; Jeff Asselin, Member at Large; and Bridget Enyeart, Fiscal Officer/Secretary.

Minutes

Meeting Minutes of June 4, 2018 were reviewed. Dave Patty made a motion to accept the minutes. Jeff Asselin seconded the motion. **Motion passed 3-0.** Meeting Minutes of June 4, 2018 meeting to approve new Debt Levy were reviewed. Jeff Asselin made a motion to accept the minutes. David Patty seconded the motion. **Motion passed 3-0.**

TREASURER'S REPORT/PAYMENT OF CLAIMS

Treasurer's Report was given by Fiscal Officer, Bridget Enyeart. Rainy Day Fund \$98,764; Building Debt Fund \$0; County Emergency Loan Fund \$23,300.18; Fire General Fund \$669,592.74; Cumulative Fire Fund \$50,748.54. Checking Balance \$16,047.78. Savings Account Balance \$826,357.68. Total Claims submitted from 06/05/2018 to current was \$13,720.62. Dave Patty made a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report and all claims submitted for payment, Jeff Asselin seconded. **Motion passed 3-0**

FIRE CHIEF'S REPORT

1. Run report was given by Fire Chief Pat Bell.
2. Maintenance and service repairs needed were discussed. Floor drains completed. Painting completed in the bays.

Jeff Asselin made a motion to accept the Fire Chief's Report. Michael L. Sims seconded the motion. **Motion passed 3-0.**

CONTRACTS FOR 2019

All contracts have been received and signed by the Board.

INTERNAL CONTROL POLICY REVISION

Tabled until November 2017 meeting.

BUDGET

The DLGF Budget Workshop for the Cass County Fire District was held on Friday, July 20, 2018 @ 2:30pm. Budget was then submitted to the Cass County Auditor for publishing. First reading of the Cass County Council for our 2019 budget will be September 21, 2018 @ 9:00 am. Second reading of the Cass County Council will be October 19, 2018 @ 9:00 am.

OLD BUSINESS

Strategic Fiscal Plan and Analysis. Per request of board members, the Strategic Fiscal Plan and Analysis has been updated by Peters Municipal Consultants, LTD to include the loan and new debt levy for the new apparatuses the district will be purchasing. Board members were asked to review the Plan and let Fiscal Officer Bridget Enyeart know if there are any questions or concerns so that she can have the firm print the plan in final for Cass County Council review in time for budget hearings.

New Debt Levy/Fire Apparatus Loan. The Cass County Council approved the recommendation of the Cass County Fire District #1 Board of Trustees to incur a loan in the amount not to exceed \$400,000 for a repayment term not to exceed 15 years, which can be levied beginning with taxes payable in 2019. Taxpayers of Eel, Noble and Clay Townships has 30 days to file a petition with the Cass County Auditor objecting to the loan. If no taxpayers have objected by Sunday, September 2, 2018, then the Cass County Auditor can complete the Auditor's Certificate to the Department of Local Government & Finance stating that no remonstrances or objecting petitions have been filed and the Board can proceed with loan processing. (See Article #1 attached)

NEW BUSINESS

City of Logansport. The Cass County Fire District #1 Board members reviewed an article written by Mitchel Kirk in the Logansport Pharos Tribune on July 26, 2018 regarding the Mayor of Logansport addressing the Logansport City Council. (See attached Article #2). The Board was asked to give a formal response and directed fiscal officer to send a response to our constituents, the mayor and the newspaper, outlining that our 2019 contractual services were completed at the June 4, 2018 meeting. (See attached Article #3). They Mayor of Logansport then sent an email to the same constituents responding to our open letter. (See Mayor's Response Attached). Mayor Dave Kitchel passed out a presentation entitled: "Discussion Points for Shared Fire Protection in Logansport and Surrounding Clay, Eel, and Noble Townships, a presentation before the Cass County Fire District Board. August 1, 2018 (see attached presentation). The CCFD#1 Board allowed the Mayor to proceed with his presentation even though he did not request to be added to the Cass County Fire District #1 Boards agenda. The Mayor also brought with him Eric Walsh, a financial analyst with H.J. Umbaugh & Associates, Certified Public Accountants, LLP from 8365 Keystone Crossing, Suite 300, Indianapolis, IN

46240. The Mayor reiterated that Umbaugh has not been hired to further look into the information in the presentation but stated the Board owed it to their taxpayers to review the information and further look into the matter for future tax saving benefits. The Mayor wanted the Board to consider an interlocal agreement combining departments and proceeded with reviewing each stage of the proposal.

CCFD#1 Board of Trustee Chairman, Michael L. Sims stated that many of the men working for New Waverly Fire Department would not be eligible to be hired by the City of Logansport because they would not pass the PERF Boards/Exams. The Mayor responded by saying the City could offer a stipend for those individuals outside of the PERF Board.

Fiscal Officer, Bridget Enyeart indicated she has been with the Board almost since the beginning and has never seen the Mayor at a single meeting of the Cass County Fire District Board of Trustees. She asked the Mayor why he would not have discussed this desire with the Board prior to having open discussions with the Logansport City Council. The Mayor responded that he had not been a part of the creation of the District and it wasn't necessary for him to come to meetings as he was getting married and having babies when the District was being created. Fiscal Officer Bridget Enyeart then reviewed with the mayor the District's review of contractual services each year and assured the mayor that this Board did not violate Indiana Open Door Law as he had accused the board in his response to constituents email dated July 28, 2018, "In fact, I welcome open discussions, and I'll be glad to be part of one on Aug. 1, but judging by the comments in your statement, before any independent financial analysis is provided, the board's mind is made up, and not in a public session, which is a violation of the Indiana Open Door law."

Bridget Enyeart went on to point out that these discussions regarding current contractors for fire protection services and possible new contractors start and are discussed in public meetings of the CCFD#1 Board of Trustees in February and March each year. Contracts to contractors are drawn up and reviewed at the CCFD#1 Board of Trustees Meeting in April and mailed out. Contracts are asked to be sent back by the June meeting so that the Fiscal Officer can complete the draft of the next year's budget in final for Budget workshops with the Department of Local Government and Finance in July, which she stated was completed on Friday, July 20, 2018 and then submitted to the Cass County Auditor for publication for Cass County Budget Hearings starting in August. Mayor Kitchel responded that he is aware of our budget process.

Bridget Enyeart also indicated that she took issue with the Mayor's statement about purchasing a new aerial truck being, "an incredible waste of tax dollars." She stated saying something like that is like saying, "this town is not big enough for the two of us." Bridget Enyeart went on to remind the mayor of an incident when the City of Logansport's ladder truck was out of commission and a man was stuck in a grain elevator. Because Cass County Fire District had the ladder truck (aerial) both departments were able to work together to make sure this man was safe. She stated that she was glad he didn't have to wait for further assistance from a fire department in Peru or Monticello and she was sure this man didn't care about boundary lines or the fact there was a second duplicate fire apparatus in the county. (see article #4).

Bridget Enyeart also expressed concern with the Closson Lumber Fire that the Mayor discussed in his overview. She indicated that fire is an exact reason we need duplicate apparatuses in Cass County. She stated even though a the CCFD#1 had a ladder truck five minutes from the scene. Logansport Fire Department dispatched for Monticello Fire Department and Peru Fire Department's ladder and did not dispatch for the Districts. It took both departments over ½ hour to arrive on scene. Bridget Enyeart went on to say that if the man in the grain elevator had to wait ½ hour for response time, he might not be here today and there is a definite need for duplicate apparatuses in Cass County. (see Article #5)

CCFD#1 Board of Trustees Chairman Michael Sims indicated they Board was going to take time to review the Mayor's presentation. He stated the District does not have a scheduled meeting in September and will table the presentation for formal response at the regular October meeting. The Mayor thanked the board for taking the time to review his proposal and indicated if the Board had any questions, his door was open.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Eric, the financial analyst with H.J. Umbaugh & Associates, Certified Public Accountants, LLP reiterated that Umbaugh has not started on any analysis regarding the Mayor's proposal and possible tax savings and that no City of Logansport tax dollars have been spent on this proposal to date.

MEETING ADJOURNMENT

Jeff Asselin made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Dave Patty seconded. Meeting adjourned at 7:12 pm. **Motion passed 3-0.**

Respectfully submitted,

Bridget J. Enyeart, Fiscal Officer

Bridget I. Enyeart, Fiscal Officer

ARTICLE #1

Cass OKs \$400K loan to replace fire trucks Vehicles up for replacement are about 30 years old

Mitchell Kirk Staff reporter Jul 20, 2018

Cass County officials approved a \$400,000 loan Friday for the county's fire district to replace two fire trucks nearly 30 years old. Cass County Fire District Chief Pat Bell said at Friday's Cass County Council meeting that the district needs to replace its 1989 tanker truck and 1990 tower truck.

"It's next to impossible to find parts," Bell said. "Any one thing can take those trucks down and out of service permanently." The hydraulic system that raises the tower truck's ladder needs to be replaced to the tune of \$30,000. Bell went on to say, adding its windshield no longer passes Indiana Department of Transportation inspection. "The vehicles were bought in the beginning of the Cass County Fire District and were purchased with the idea of lasting at least five years to get the district up and running," Bell said. "We're eight years into it. We've been babying them as long as we can." Bridget Enyeart, the fire district's fiscal officer, said at the meeting that Security Federal Savings Bank offered a 4 percent, seven-year \$400,000 loan for the two trucks.

"Obviously we're not going to purchase brand new ones but ... when they're up for auction, you have to act on it now," she said. Enyeart also recalled how the district replaced a fire truck within the past couple years without having to borrow.

Citing increased cooperation between the Cass County Fire District and Logansport Fire Department, Cass County Council President George Stebbins asked why the district couldn't rely on the LFD's new tower truck when needed. Enyeart said the fire district's contract with Logansport State Hospital requires the district to have its own tower truck.

The Cass County Fire District is made up of Noble, Clay and parts of Eel townships. Stebbins explained after Friday's meeting that the loan won't cause taxes to go up for those in the district. The district recently paid off the loan for its building, he said, adding that fulfilled debt will be replaced by the new debt for the fire trucks.

Cass County Council members voted unanimously to approve the loan.

A public notice published in the Pharos-Tribune on July 10 indicates a notice of Friday's vote will be published. Affected taxpayers will have 30 days from the date of that publication to file objecting petitions with the Cass County Auditor's Office.

In other news, the council also unanimously approved \$70,000 within Cass/Pulaski Community Corrections' budget to pay unexpected costs for installing a new facility door lock system, replacing the facility's water heater, replacing a kitchen stove and electrical upgrades.

Reach Mitchell Kirk at mitchell.kirk@pharostribune.com or 574-732-5130.

Mayor pitches fire protection change

Mitchell Kirk Staff Reporter Jul 26, 2018

Logansport Mayor Dave Kitchell wants the city's fire department to go back to serving where the Cass County Fire District currently serves.

Cass County Commissioners created the fire district in 2010. It provides fire protection in Clay, Noble and part of Eel townships. The Logansport Fire Department served in that area until then.

Kitchell addressed the idea at a city council finance committee meeting Monday, citing the \$400,000 loan the Cass County Council recently approved that the fire district needs to get two new fire trucks, one of which with an aerial apparatus.

He elaborated in an interview on Wednesday that he'd like to see Clay, Eel and Noble townships go back to paying directly into Logansport's general fund for LFD fire protection.

The LFD currently has two openings that district firefighters could fill. Kitchell continued, should they qualify for Indiana's public employee retirement fund. Upcoming retirements would provide opportunities for more district firefighters, he went on to say.

Kitchell also referred to how the LFD already has an aerial truck. Doing away with the district would eliminate the duplicity of such a vehicle in Cass County, which Kitchell called "an incredible waste of tax dollars."

The time to explore the possibility is now, Kitchell said, with 2019 budget discussions upcoming. He's asked Umbaugh, which the city contracts with for financial advice, to look into it. While exact figures have yet to be determined, Kitchell said he thinks his idea would save the county the \$400,000 recently approved for the district's loan, save taxpayers money and give city coffers a boost against state-imposed property tax caps.

Kitchell said seeing the plan through would require multiple approvals, including from officials from the county, city and affected townships along with the fire district's board.

"Everybody's going to have to agree to sign off on it," he said.

Logansport City Councilwoman Teresa Popejoy said at Monday's meeting that she's not opposed to the idea but wants the fire district to approach the city about it rather than the other way around.

"I propose that they come to the table and meet with us and tell us that they are interested in talking about this before we go any further," she said.

Cass County Commissioners President Jim Sailors said Wednesday that disbanding the fire district would be up to the district's three-member board.

Dave Patty, a member of that board, said he would not support a disbandment. "The fire district ought to stand on its own," he said. "I want cooperation, working back and forth of course. It's been a few years getting this established. It's solvent. Why change?"

Mike Fincher, who was Logansport's mayor when the fire district was created, said Wednesday that the amount of money the townships paid the city for fire protection before the district came to be barely covered the cost of one firefighter. Now he forms his view both as a Logansport resident and Eel Township trustee. "I felt as mayor that they should not pay any less for fire protection than citizens of Logansport," he said. "Now as Eel Township trustee and a citizen of Logansport, I'm kind of in the middle here because as a citizen of Logansport I don't think that those folks should pay any less than we are, than our taxpayers pay."

Fincher added it's difficult to have a more distinct stance on the matter until more details are determined and he's had an opportunity to discuss it with the township's board.

Noble Township Trustee Diann Sedam declined to comment and Clay Township Trustee Jennifer Nies did not return a request for comment.

Reach Mitchell Kirk at mitchell.kirk@pharostribune.com or 574-732-5130.

Fire District has no intention to dissolve ARTICLE #3

Guest Column Jul 30, 2018

The Cass County Fire District Board of Trustees has been asked to make a public statement regarding the events that transpired at the Logansport City Council meeting last week. Since the Fire District was not a part of this meeting, we can only comment on information we have received from others.

It was brought to our attention that the Mayor announced at the meeting that he wants to rehash the issue of dissolving our Cass County Fire District #1. Further, the Mayor reportedly indicated in that same meeting that the Township Trustees of Noble and Eel were on board regarding discussions to join the City of Logansport.

The Mayor has never approached us or had any dialogue with the Cass County Fire District Board of Trustees regarding this issue. The Township Trustees and their advisory board members have not communicated any problems regarding fire protection or emergency services with our board. We have had no public complaints or comments at our meetings that any of our taxpayers are unhappy with their fire and emergency services.

The trustees of the townships no longer have control or a say as to fire protection in their townships. The Cass County Fire District #1 Board of Trustees do not have any intentions of dissolving our taxing unit and are not interested in a continuing dialogue with the City of Logansport regarding this issue.

We currently have signed contracts with all of our contractors for 2019 and our budget is now completed and submitted to the Cass County Council and DLGF for their review. We are excited to report that we are currently on track with our five-year plan of replacement equipment. As of 2016, we no longer need to obtain advanced funding for our budget. Last month, we finish paying the mortgage on our fire station. In the next two years, we will begin developing and planning two long term projects that we hope will help all volunteer fire departments in Cass County. Finally, we are in the last stages of creating our new 501(c)3, which will work hand-in-hand with future projects.

The Cass County Fire District Board of Trustees, through its contractors and volunteer fire departments, has continued to provide Eel, Noble and Clay townships with excellent fire service and emergency response. In 2010, our constituents were given an "all or nothing" option. The Trustees at that time chose to break away and give their fire protection control over to the Cass County Commissioners and the Cass County Fire District Board of Trustees. Our constituents are satisfied with our results.

If the Mayor wanted to have open discussions with our board, it would have been in his best interest to have discussions with us first, before wasting taxpayer money to hire Umbaugh and Associates to continue to fish in an empty barrel. The City of Logansport has better ways to spend taxpayer money. We consider this issue closed and we refuse to constantly play political games with the Mayor of the City of Logansport through the media.

Please know that, as a taxing unit, we are not financially in trouble. We are right on track. We invite you to attend our Aug. 1, 2018 meeting at 6:30 p.m. should you have further questions or concerns. Until then, we will not be making any further public comments regarding this issue. We look forward to continuing to serve on behalf of the citizens of Eel, Noble and Clay townships.

Cass County Fire District #1 Board of Trustees: Mike Sims, chairman; David Patty, vice chairman; Jeff Asselin, member; Bridget Enyeart, fiscal officer

ARTICLE #4

Worker rescued from grain silo by Caitlin Huston
Pharos-Tribune Aug 21, 2012

Emergency personnel used ropes and a large vacuum to pull a Clymers farmworker from a grain elevator Monday afternoon. The Logansport Fire Department responded to the accident at the 18th Street elevator about 1 p.m. Monday, finding Juan Cadillo, a worker at Duane Dietrich's farm in Clymers, chin-deep in corn.

Through a system of ropes and the use of a Vactor truck from Logansport Municipal Utilities, the multiple agencies vacuumed up the grain while keeping the man secure, and he was later able to crawl to safety.

Dietrich said he was with Cadillo at the elevator when the grain stopped flowing and Cadillo crawled in to fix the problem. Dietrich said the grain suddenly began flowing again, but too quickly. "It just broke loose, and all at once I realized I had to shut things down," Dietrich said. Dietrich shut off the grain bin and called 9-1-1. "I knew we needed some help," Dietrich said. Logansport Fire Chief Mark Strong said that when firefighters arrived, they could see only the man's head above the corn. Though the fire department had the option of cutting open the silo, Strong said, they feared an explosion of grain dust. They were also afraid the man would suffocate while they waited.

As they contemplated the options, the Cass County Fire District arrived with a ladder truck, and members from both fire departments secured the man with ropes from the side and from above. "The two of us worked together to keep him from going any further," said Lt. Rex Danely at the county fire district. Then they decided to call LMU, which quickly dispatched its truck to help siphon the grain away from Cadillo. "It was a life saver," Strong said.

Strong added that rescuers were helped by the fact that the 70-foot silo was only about a third filled with corn. Once the corn was cleared, the man was able to crawl out at 2:11 p.m., and the first thing he did was shake hands with Strong. The Walton Fire Department, Lucerne Fire Department, Cass County Sheriff's Department, Logansport Police Department and Cass County Emergency Management Agency were also on scene. "They all worked well together in assessing what they needed and getting the gentleman out of the grain bin," said Sheriff Randy Pryor.

Throughout the rescue, the man was breathing and talking with the rescuers. "He was able to keep his cool," Strong said. Though firefighters are trained on grain silo rescues, Danely said this was the first time he'd had to use that training. "I've been in the fire service for almost 25 years, and I've heard of them, I've trained for it, but I've never been on the scene for something like this," Danely said. Danely said he was glad Cadillo was able to make it out alive. "Any time there's somebody stuck in a corn or bean silo, there's rarely a good turnout," he said.

• Caitlin Huston is a staff reporter of the Pharos-Tribune. She can be reached at 574-732-5148 or caitlin.huston@pharostribune.com.

ARTICLE #5

July 8, 2016 Cause indeterminate in blaze which destroyed Closson Lumber

A Logansport city block was ablaze early Friday as flames tore through a lumberyard that had been in town for more than 100 years.

Firefighters responded to Closson Lumber, 815 Erie Ave., at about 4:30 a.m. July 8.

Much of the property was engulfed in flames upon first responders' arrival. Loud bursts erupted on nearby utility poles. The blaze billowed out of structures on the grounds, at times creating a heat so intense it drove firefighters back.

Firefighters attacked with hoses from multiple angles, including from above with a tower truck.

Logansport Assistant Fire Chief Mike Woolington said the circumstances called for battling the fire from the outside.

"Exterior firefighting only," Woolington said. "Our chief objective was to try to protect exposures and keep the fire from extending to the other buildings."

Fire departments from the surrounding area were called in to assist. Logansport Fire Chief Bernie Mittica estimated about 70 firefighters were at the scene.

Much of the fire had been extinguished by about 6 a.m., leaving less intense flames for the firefighters through the hours that followed.

Woolington said no injuries were reported to him.

Jason Miller, investigator with the LFD, said the cause of the fire could not be determined. He added its area of origin was in the southeast corner of the basement of the showroom building, which stood in the middle of the property along Erie Avenue.

"We couldn't rule out all reasonable accidental ignition sources, so therefore it is an undetermined fire," Miller said Friday evening.

He went on to say the amount of destruction in the fire's area of origin contributed to the inability to determine a cause.

A building at Galbreath Industrial Services west of Closson Lumber and an apartment east of the lumberyard across Ninth Street were scorched by the fire as well.

Ed Closson, who owns the lumberyard, said his great-grandfather moved the business to Erie Avenue in 1902.

He said "how I'm going to take care of my family" was at the front of his mind as he stood across the street from where the flames raged.

Closson had been in the process of closing down the lumberyard and an antique shop he ran on the property.

Because Closson was going out of business, he said the property didn't have a lot of inventory. There were cedar boards, veneers and moldings in the lumberyard, he added.

Those and other products helped him build up a large clientele over the years, Closson said.

"I knew them all," he added.

Grant Putnam Jr. worked at Closson Lumber from 1976 to 2004. He recalled his and his wife's reaction to news of the destruction by phone Friday afternoon.

"We were physically shaken, it was just startling," Putnam said. "It was just unbelievable."

The lumberyard provided a fulfilling job for almost three decades, Putnam continued, going on to express his admiration of the Clossons.

"We sold quality materials, that's what they were known for — having that quality lumber and good service. They're a respectful family."

He went on to recall the showroom and offices in the building in the middle of the property along Erie Avenue, the basement wood shop and the buildings on the grounds used to store various woods and materials.

The building on the west side of the property that bears the company name was the only one that didn't collapse in Friday's fire.

Robert Dunderman, manager of Logansport Municipal Utilities' electric distribution department, said the fire led to power outages near Closson Lumber and on the city's south side.

Between 350 and 400 customers were affected for about a half hour, he continued, adding it took a little longer to restore power to about 20 who live near where the fire occurred.

LMU workers carried out temporary repairs to maintain power over the weekend and will return Monday for permanent fixes, Dunderman continued.

It was the LFD's second fire of the day. Firefighters were clearing the scene of a small blaze at a former downtown dry cleaner when they were dispatched to the lumberyard.

Reach Mitchell Kirk at mitchell.kirk@pharostribune.com or 574-732-5130

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Fire District Board members, constituents and township officials,

Mayor Hesinger

First, there were erroneous statements made in this e-mail without any contact with me or my office. With regard to this statement: If the Mayor wanted to have open discussions with our Board, it would have been in his best interest to have discussions with us first, before wasting taxpayer money to hire Umbaugh and Associates to continue to fish in an empty barrel. No money – repeat no money -- has been spent on anything from our end. I'd be glad to entertain open discussions with the council, the board of works and safety, the county commissioners and county council, the fire district board, the township boards and township trustees. But we have to start somewhere. This meeting was just the first step. The county council has approved a \$400,000 loan to purchase an additional aerial truck, though the county council president has indicated, and I agree, that it is redundant to have two aerial trucks within a few miles. There is no acknowledgment of that in your comments.

Second, at no point did I say or did any council member as you implied that there were any problems or complaints with any call involving the fire district. Let's start by being honest about what was said, what was done and what actually happened and not comment on what other people heard. In fact, I welcome open discussions, and I'll be glad to be part of one on Aug. 1, but judging by the comments in your statement, before any independent financial analysis is provided, the board's mind is made up, and not in a public session, which is a violation of the Indiana Open Door law. Specifically, this is what you communicated: The Cass County Fire District Board of Trustees consider this issue closed and we refuse to constantly play political games with the Mayor of the City of Logansport through the media.

The city doesn't have the authority to dissolve anything, though if we work together, we can help each other. I don't engage in political games and I'd appreciate an explanation of what game you think was played, but I was paid to write the truth for 25 years or be sued for libel, and I value accuracy above gossip and personal attacks. Let's save that for the beauty parlors and barber shops. If you value the oath you took and I think you do or you wouldn't be in your capacities, then you and I and the respective councils owe it to taxpayers to find out what we're talking about. Imagine what would have happened if school consolidation would have been approached like this issue is now. We would never have Lewis Cass, Caston or Pioneer, or many other schools.


I was not a party to any previous discussions that led to the fire district or the problems between the city and outlying townships. That said, whether we're talking about city/county, county/state or state/federal relations in government, everyone responsible, regardless of party affiliation, who is paying them or where they reside, owes it to taxpayers to provide the best value for the tax dollar. To that end, all of us on this e-mail owe it to constituents to let them know that we can and do work together. In the case of LFD and CCFD, they have worked together well. The city and county have worked together for years to streamline costs and services in animal control, E-911, emergency management, comprehensive planning, economic development, a shared clinic for city and county employees and even maintaining roads. It makes sense to work together, and sometimes it saves cents, too.

I'm sorry the fire district board did not attend the meeting, but there was no intention of making any decision at a council committee meeting. By law, the council can't decide anything at a committee meeting because no votes can be taken. Prior to the meeting, I was asked to contact township officials before we approved funding for a financial analysis, and that's all that has been done. I did not receive a returned call from Jennifer Nies, though I left a message with her. I attempted to contact Dave Patty at the courthouse yesterday and left a message on his phone.

The reason why no one has ever been approached is that we don't know what savings there are yet – if there are any – until someone independent of the process who knows how to do this tells us. In this case Umbaugh, which is used by the city and county – tells us there are potential savings for both sides, but they have not run the official numbers, and won't until they are paid. If those numbers are enough to save the county \$400,000 in a loan, then great. That's something for you to vote on up or down, but if you choose to crucify me personally for that which is apparently your intent, then so be it. I did what I did for both sides in the interest of helping both and I don't think anyone in this office has ever accused anyone in the fire district of playing political games or wasting money.

What we do have are openings on our fire department with expected retirements in the coming years. I think it is possible to merge the departments, keeping all the full-time firefighters, possibly keeping the CCFD station and returning to the way we were before the fire district when payments were made from townships to the city. If we can do that and save money, then I think we owe it to people in the city and fire district 1 to let them know how much, it either will cost or save.

But if we're the only people who care about the discussion, then all this doesn't matter because you want to decide an issue without a discussion or consideration from the public. My phone works, my door is open and I can be reached any time at (765) 427-3927.

Dave Kitchel 

Have a great weekend.

Sincerely,

Dave

Email from Mayor Dave Kitchel on Saturday, July 28, 2018 @ 5:10 pm.

**MAYOR'S
RESPONSE**

PRESENTATION

Discussion Points for
Shared Fire Protection
In Logansport and surrounding
Clay, Eel and Noble townships

A presentation before the
CASS COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT BOARD

August 1, 2018

Overview

Cass County Fire District 1 and the Logansport Fire Department have worked cooperatively since the district's creation about a decade ago. Mutual aid agreements have worked well and the two departments fought side by side in the largest fire in the past 10 years, the Closson Lumber Fire, in 2016.

This analysis is offered as a starting point to begin discussions on how to reduce costs to both departments and the citizens they protect and is possible to use the savings to improve fire protection for them. The goal is to consider what, if any agreement or arrangement, can profit both departments.

Issue One:

Personnel

With the goal of ensuring no firefighter loses a job, the Logansport Fire Department would initially absorb two members of the Cass County Fire District from the existing CCFD roster to fill its current vacancies, pending approval of the Public Employees Retirement Fund (PERF). Priority would be based on seniority. Those chosen could continue to serve as the CCFD station as members of LFD. CCFD firefighters would have first priority for all future openings on LFD if they pass PERF testing.

LFD currently has two firefighters eligible for early retirement and a third next year. Additionally, one member is seeking political office this fall. If an interlocal agreement between the city and the district is reached, CCFD could continue to pay firefighters who aren't absorbed until the current roster is depleted. The agreement could be three, four or five years, allowing time for retirements, resignations or other departures from LFD and adequate time to absorb all CCFD firefighters. If the district does not want to continue to employ firefighters, any members would be immediately eligible for the LFD Reserve program.

In the event a CCFD firefighter does not qualify for PERF retirement because of previous LFD employment would qualify for employment otherwise after PERF exams, the city would pay a stipend for a retirement account.

LFD also would absorb all training costs.

Issue Two:

Fire trucks and equipment

If an interlocal agreement is reached, LFD would absorb all costs of providing fire trucks and fire equipment. The district could retain its existing fleet and equipment until it is replaced by LFD or opt to sell the equipment to pay off outstanding debt obligation and LFD will be responsible for providing replacements from its existing fleet.

The district would be able to house the LFD aerial truck at its Holland Street station to service any potential calls at Logansport State Hospital, per its existing contract.

Issue Three:

The Stations

The district could retain its current agreement and/or ownership of the Holland Street station, sell it, or work with city officials to establish a new LFD satellite station in the district service area. Potential locations could include Aim-Hi Park, Huston Park, Dykeman Park, Mount Hope Cemetery and Chase Road.

Central Fire Station would remain.

Issue Four:

Cost savings

The district currently has a budget of about \$600,000 annually. The City of Logansport currently has no fund specifically designated for the purchase of new fire trucks. A Capital Improvement Plan is reviewed and adopted annually to address ongoing needs to replace fire trucks with new trucks.

If an interlocal agreement is adopted, the district could pay the city \$150,000 annually to a designated fire truck and equipment account for the sole use of equipping the department. Money from the fund could not be transferred to other department funds.

The immediate savings to the district would include the \$400,000 recently approved for a loan for the department. At the completion of the transition for the firefighters, the agreement would save approximately \$450,000 a year.

Issue Five:

Ambulance Service

LFD is now equipped with its first new ambulance in the history of the department. If an agreement is reached, the ambulance could be housed at the fire district station, either at Holland Street or another location determined by the district board.

Ambulance service could be stationed strategically inside and outside the city to reduce response times outside the city.

Issue Six:

The Board and District

As a safety valve, the agreement would only be in effect for a maximum of five years, renewable after review by the board. At that time, the board could negotiate a new agreement with either LFD or other departments, or return to having its own, free-standing department. Retaining the board would allow the district to maintain accountability of its assets and the agreement.

Issue Seven:

Upfront costs

The city and District would agree to split the costs of analysis by Umbaugh and any necessary legal opinions on the continued use of the District's 501c-3 wing to raise money for the district.

Issue Eight:

Coverage area

While the departments respond to mutual aid calls, the District Board, the Logansport Board of Public Works and Safety and the Logansport City Council Public Safety Committee would meet with the advice of the Cass County Emergency Management Agency Council, to discuss and determine any changes in coverage area.

KITCHELL: CCFD, LFD can benefit from collaboration

Dave Kitchell Guest Columnist Aug 7, 2018

“Support Our Local Firefighters.”

That phrase and others like it were seen on yard signs in our community and others in Indiana after the recession in 2008. In Muncie, 40 firefighters were laid off. It was a sad time when people who saved lives and put theirs on the line for others in their communities were left without a job because local government didn't have the funding to keep them.

A decade later, our economy has rebounded, but budget concerns in Indiana remain. In Logansport in particular, property tax caps imposed by the state are projected to cost us 31 percent of our general fund next year. When the next recession inevitably arrives, we could be seeing those signs again in Logansport and other communities unless we proactively plan for that day.

Last week, I presented an initial proposal to the Cass County Fire District Board. After some discussion, the board took it under advisement for action at its Oct. 3 meeting.

To be clear, this proposal wasn't made because the board or its financial officer have done a poor job. On the contrary, they've done the best they could possibly do and they probably haven't been recognized enough publicly for it. The Logansport Fire Department has hired some of its firefighters, and members of both departments have worked well together in tackling some of the worst blazes inside and outside the city limits during the last decade, including the Closson Lumber fire.

Part of the responsibility of being a public official at any level is working to ensure public safety, to save tax dollars and to advance the quality of life for everyone. In that spirit, this proposal would not have been presented at all if there wasn't a potential win-win situation for the district and LFD.

Why make it now? With current openings on LFD and more projected in the next few years — and with the district seeking a loan from the county to purchase equipment — it's a good time to step back and determine if we can come up with more than a mutual aid agreement to help both departments. No city funding has been spent on a proposal, but based on an initial review, both sides could benefit without annexation or the creation of a fire territory.

If the district board and the city can agree on an interlocal agreement, we can accomplish these goals:

1. The district would continue and the Holland Street station would continue to be staffed and equipped as is — even with the same firefighters. Everyone currently employed with CCFD

would keep their job. As openings occur at LFD, CCFD firefighters would be hired at LFD, based on seniority, pending approval by the Public Employee Retirement Fund (PERF), the state's pension fund. Firefighters who are PERF-exempt because they previously worked for LFD would receive a stipend for a pension equivalent. CCFD would continue to pay employees who are not absorbed by LFD until there are no more. The estimated eventual savings to the district — \$450,000 annually.

2. The city would receive \$150,000 from the district annually. That money would be deposited in a special fund designated solely for the purchase of new fire trucks and equipment. If the district disposes of any fire trucks, LFD would be required to house fire trucks at the district station.

3. Aerial truck and ambulance. The district has a contract with Logansport State Hospital that reportedly requires that it have an aerial truck. LFD's aerial truck could be moved to Holland Street to fill that need. Additionally, LFD's new ambulance also could be stationed there, if the district board approves, to spread out the locations of ambulances in the community.

4. Potential additional savings. The district would have the option of retaining or selling its existing fire trucks or canceling a \$400,000 loan to purchase more.

5. Accountability. If after the term of an agreement the district board members elect to terminate the agreement, they can. At worst, at the end of a term agreement, enough funds would be accrued to purchase new equipment.

Umbaugh, the Indiana-based accounting firm that provides financial advice to the city, county and school corporations, has been approached to perform a more exact, detailed analysis of what the financial savings to both sides are. Before any decision is made by the board, that would be a logical next step in making an informed decision on the future of the relationship between CCFD and LFD.

Finally, we're fortunate in Cass County to enjoy many public services which have been made possible by collaboration between the city and county — E-911, an airport, comprehensive planning and zoning, animal control, an ambulance service and our largest industrial park to name several examples. It's this kind of cooperation that makes our community great, regardless of where we vote, where our children go to school or where we worship. If we can forge an agreement both sides can accept, we can add that to the list and do what we can to prevent those yard signs from 10 years ago from ever appearing again in our community.

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