

PENINSULA TOWNSHIP

13235 Center Road, Traverse City
MI 49686

www.peninsulatownship.com

Township Board Special Meeting May 23, 2024, 11:30 a.m. Township Conference Room Minutes

1. **Call to Order** by Wunsch at 11:33 a.m.

2. **Pledge**

3. **Roll Call**

Present: Wunsch, Achorn, Sanger, Chown

Absent: Rudolph, Sanders, Shanafelt

Chown: I want to apologize – while this meeting was properly posted according to legal requirements, we had a snafu in the clerk’s office and the customary email with the agenda and packet was not sent out to the regular email list. We learned this shortly before 10:00 this morning. Robin began calling board members to make sure we had a quorum, and we do, but that’s why several of our board members are unable to make this meeting. I do apologize.

Chief Gilstorff: Armen [Shanafelt] and Rudy [Rudolph] were on the negotiating team so they are fully aware of what’s in the contract.

4. **Citizen Comments:**

Nancy Heller, 3091 Blue Water Rd.: first, I want to talk about resolutions. Please be careful to always print the names of those signing beneath their signatures because when we look back, we can’t always read the handwriting or figure out who signed it. [The resolution in today’s packet does have the signatory’s name printed beneath it.]

I would have appreciated a copy of the original fire department contract in the packet. I’ve talked to the chief and know what’s changed, but it’s always a good idea.

5. **Approve Agenda**

Sanger moved to approve the agenda with a second by Achorn. Motion passed by consensus

6. **Conflict of Interest:** none

7. **Consent Agenda:** none

8. **Business:**

A. Discussion of Peninsula Township Firefighters Union Local 5096 tentative contract language to begin retroactively April 1, 2024–March 31, 2027, with expected action to occur (Wunsch)

Wunsch: have you all had a chance to review the contract?

Board members answered in the affirmative.

Wunsch: are there any big questions?

No.

Wunsch: for an overall summary, Peninsula Township wanted steady ALS service. We have had a hard time retaining paramedics, so we were open to increasing the compensation level. A wage scale is proposed on p. 9. Paramedic rates jumped up. The standard in the industry is to have a wage

differential, but we increased the steps for years of service more aggressively for paramedics than for basic EMTs.

Board discussion of basic wage rate.

Wunsch: we frontloaded the contract but gave slower increases over time. This was a good opportunity to catch up to inflation but give slower increases subsequently. We don't want to be way below the market or to make assumptions about inflation continuing. We kept the same structure – chief, lieutenant, and EMTs and paramedics.

Sanger: anyone hired after 1/5/18 must attain ALS licensure within a year. Do you expect pushback?

Chief Gilstorff: It's become the new standard because of a lack of paramedics. We want to recruit and retain. That's what the contract is geared towards. With my ability to do lateral hires, people can now jump into the tier they belong in. This makes it more appealing since we can recognize the time they've already invested.

Sanger: do we still have paid on-call people?

Chief Gilstorff: yes, but this contract does not apply to paid on-call or part-time people, only full time. We have two openings currently. I'm confident I can fill them quickly with this new contract in place.

Sanger: compared to working at McDonalds at \$22.00/hour, the salary increase isn't that big a jump.

Wunsch: there is a change in how fire personnel will be scheduled going forward.

Chief Gilstorff: before, they worked three of five days with four days off in 24-hour shifts. Now they'll work 48 hours in a row and have four days off. Lots of departments are doing this. It works with our call volume and with where people might live. Families like it, and it cuts down on their fuel consumption and time spent traveling to and from work. It makes us more attractive.

Wunsch: it helps with talent attraction.

Chief Gilstorff: it's a trend in the fire service.

Board discussion.

Wunsch: another change in this proposed contract is a shift from light duty if someone is injured to buying a short-term disability policy. It's more cost efficient and better from a management perspective, and it reduces the risk of someone trying to work with an injury.

Chown: this is a vastly improved contract in many ways.

Chief Gilstorff: yes, and it's somewhat costly but we knew we had to do something to be competitive. Payment in lieu of health care is covered on p. 10.

Chown: I support payment in lieu of health care. For the record, I've been trying for five years, since I became clerk, to implement payment in lieu of health care for staff. I've not been successful.

Board discussion.

Sanger: And we need a short-term disability policy for the office as well.

Chown: should we mention this to Maner Costerian?

Sanger: yes – it's time.

Chief Gilstorff: we are also increasing the retirement benefits from 13 percent to 15 percent and employees will be required to contribute three percent of their compensation to their retirement account instead of three percent of their base salary, as was the case before.

Sanger: police and fire staff, their bodies are pretty beat up by age 50 or so. They don't have as much time to work and save money before they retire. They can be pretty beat up both physically and mentally. The emotional and physical stress is intense.

Chown: thank you for that. It's significant.

Chief Gilstorff: there are more suicides than in-the-line-of-duty deaths in this field, and it's a physically demanding job.

One more thing we did for new hires is give them 72 hours of sick time because they weren't getting leave until after a year. We also added buybacks for vacation time, sick time, and so on. We also added parental leave in the new contract.

Chown: may I put into the minutes that if residents have any questions about the new contract, they may reach out directly to you?

Chief Gilstorff: absolutely. This new staffing will give us a minimum of two people at the south station and keep it at the ALS level. This was a more challenging part of the contract from the union perspective.

Chown: why was that the case?

Chief Gilstorff: because no one wants to be told they have to come into work if someone calls in sick.

Chown: I see. And you expect this won't be a problem once you hire the two new people that this improved contract will attract?

Chief Gilstorff: that's correct.

Sanger moved to approve Resolution 2024-05-23 #1, Update to Class 2 Peninsula Township Firefighters' Group Pension Plan, with a second by Achorn.

Roll call vote: yes – Wunsch, Achorn, Sanger, Chown

Passed unan

B. Resolution 2024-05-23 #1, Update to Class 2 Peninsula Township Firefighters' Group Pension Plan (Wunsch)

Chown: it's important to note that the resolution says these changes are retroactive to April 1, 2024. Also, I have a quick question about the snow plowing at the office and spreading salt on the sidewalks. We didn't need much of that this winter, but the department no longer does that, correct? KLM does this work?

Wunsch: that's correct.

Chief Gilstorff: with shift changes, we couldn't get over here and also get ourselves ready for the day. We still keep things plowed and shoveled next door prior to meetings at the township hall.

Sanger moved to approve Resolution 2024-05-23 #1, Update to Class 2 Peninsula Township Firefighters' Group Pension Plan, with a second by Chown.

Roll call vote: yes – Achorn, Sanger, Chown, Wunsch

Passed unan

Chief Gilstorff: I want to thank Isaiah [Wunsch], Armen [Shanafelt], and Rudy [Rudolph] – they spent a lot of time in meetings to make this happen and listening to me explain why these changes were needed. All the numbers in the budget are based off this new contract.

Chown: and being fully staffed.

Chief Gilstorff: correct.

9. Citizen Comments

Nancy Heller, 3091 Blue Water Rd.: regarding the contract, is this a living wage? I don't expect an answer. Second, are any of the perks in the new contract going to extend to township staff? Both parking lots need work. What happened to the salt spreader? Please post the final fire contract on the website after it's signed.

10. Board Comments

Sanger: I'd like the minutes to reflect my thanks to Chief Gilstorff and the township board reps who worked on the negotiation committee, Isaiah, Armen, and Rudy. Great work.

Board agreement.

Peninsula Township
Township Board Regular Meeting
Laura Martin, Recording Secretary

11. Adjournment

**Achorn moved to adjourn with a second by Sanger.
Adjourned at 12:23 p.m.**

Motion approved by consensus