A meeting of the Mendon Citizens Advisory Committee for Town of Mendon Fire Service was held on Wednesday, October 12, 2022 at the Mendon Community Center, 167 North Main Street, Honeoye Falls, NY 14472.

PRESENT: Muffy Meisenzahl; Karen Jenkins; Mendon Supervisor, John Moffitt; Ryan Wilsey; Mike Arman; Robin Stewart Ha; Gerald Lonthair; David Smith; Steve Tschiderer (Zoom).

ABSENT: Anthony Militello, Chief Peter Kester

OTHERS: Jackie Main, Village Board; Mary Scanlon, Village Resident; Danny Bassette, IT support.

Minutes were taken by Bonnie Toomey.

Ms. Meisenzahl opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m. Mr. Wilsey led the Pledge of Allegiance.

HOUSEKEEPING

Ms. Meisenzahl pointed out the exits and restrooms.

INTRODUCTONS

Ms. Meisenzahl acknowledged others present.

MINUTES for the September 14, 2022 and September 28, 2022 meetings were approved as submitted.

COMMITTEE ORGANIZATION

Ms. Meisenzahl stated the meeting records posted on the Town website on Tuesday because of the Holiday so within the 24-hour requirement of New York State Open Meetings Law. The three-hole punch is here for your notebooks.

The only communication that has come in to Ms. Zimmer is an Equipment Roster handout from the Mendon Fire Department.

There were no questions or other communications.

COMMITTEE CHARGE

Task#1

Ms. Meisenzahl stated the Committee is still working on Governance and Jurisdiction. One of the assignments was the subscriber agreement and asked Mr. Wilsey if he had a report. He replied that it was still being worked on and he will reach out to Administrator Dale Sweet. Ms. Meisenzahl state that this is a document they will need.

Current Capacities:

Ms. Meisenzahl asked for an update on the Tanker Task Force from both Honeoye Falls Fire Department and Mendon Fire Department. Chief Trewer had nothing to report. Mr. Tschiderer stated that Chief Kester was working on that piece that he had nothing new to report. To be continued next meeting.

Regarding the desired capacity size fuel tanks, the Departments would like to track, both departments are still deciding.

Mutual Assistance Agreements:

Ms. Meisenzahl removed Mumford at the request of Chief Kester.

With reference to the Mutual Assistance Agreements Chart, Ms. Meisenzahl will add the Tank Task Force information when provided.

Ms. Meisenzahl moved on to review the Equipment Roster from Chief Kester labeled Mendon Fire Department Fleet. Mr. Wilsey stated he had one correction to the expected life of Trucks 3C-26, 367 and 3C-16 should be five years. Ms. Meisenzahl noted in the first column, there are trucks listed as “Retired”. She asked if these trucks are no long in service. Mr. Wilsey stated that was correct. She asked if there was any objection to her taking them off the chart to avoid confusion. Mr. Wilsey and Mr. Tschiderer did not object. Ms. Meisenzahl asked if there was value in the “Retired” information being in the report. Mr. Tschiderer stated it showed Taxpayers that there is a plan in place for replacements involving planning and forward thought. Ms. Meisenzahl stated it might be better putting that pattern in a narrative that is summarized in a couple paragraphs to simplify. Mr. Tschiderer said he would pass along to Chief Kester.

Chief Trewer asked, if in full disclosure do you think it is beneficial to show the resale value. Ms. Meisenzahl stated that if the Fire Departments feel that is of value. Mr. Wilsey stated it is because it shows there is still quite a bit of value after a number of years because it was originally purchased on State bid. Ms. Meisenzahl asked if that is something they can provide and how far back do they want to go with it, and she suggested adding another column to the chart.

Mr. Moffitt asked if they replace vehicle for vehicle and if the replacements serve the same functions. Mr. Wilsey answered it is not necessarily replacing vehicle for vehicle but in most cases serves the same function. Mr. Smith offered that the numbers assigned to the vehicles have meaning. There was discussion of the meaning and value to fire personnel to know what equipment responds by those assigned numbers.

Task#2

Needs Assessment

Ms. Meisenzahl reviewed the Natural Features Table explaining the changes she has made to build it out. This chart is a work in progress. This will include equipment and staffing. She would like to meet with Fire Departments offline to add the appropriate equipment. The table will be a tool to show what the risks and exposures are to the Community, and identify the equipment and staffing needed to answer that call. As the table builds out it will help show the needs. Ms. Meisenzahl asked Chief Trewer, Mr. Arman and Mr. Tschiderer to meet offline in an effort to build the table out with the information in simple, but accurate language. Ms. Meisenzahl reminded the Committee Members that this is the seventh meeting, there are seven to go, at the end the charge is to produce a report to meet the February deadline. She asked if this is a reasonable approach. She received positive feedback.

Ms. Meisenzahl will give the Committee pieces of the report. She referred to the Target Features Chart, page two. Under Business and Manufacturing, she added Solar Farms and Agriculture and on page three, changed potable water to potable supple (as potable means consumable water). She noted that they talked about building out page one so next meeting we will see a significant change to the chart.

Chief Trewer asked where information of flight paths is obtained. Ms. Meisenzahl answered the Federal Aviation Administration. The information will confirm flight paths, number of flights over us and presence of National Guard. Ms. Meisenzahl will talk to Mr. Tschiderer regarding the National Guard.

There were no questions.

Ms. Meisenzahl referred to the Forecast Agenda noting the Committee is behind but accuracy is important. She has been working on financial data which includes: Fire Contracts, Village to Town process, Assessed Values, Budgets, Personnel (Building and Highway overlap), the relationship of Debt. The goal is to get this information so it is understandable and usable for the next meeting.

If the Committee decides to make a recommendation, we have to know how it affects the structure of the Fire Service, the finances and how you do business on the ground. We are looking at a lot of pieces, it will all come together as a whole based on what you want and where you want to go with it. Modeling has to start in December to be able to come to a consensus on a report by the end of January. If you feel you need more time, we will have to go to the Town Board and request an extension.

Mr. Smith asked what Ms. Meisenzahl sees the recommendation to be? What are we hitting on; Fire House, Equipment, Personnel, Compensation? It is so broad. Ms. Meisenzahl stated she understood the question. Her guess is that from the Fire Service we will say they need more people. This Committee is here because the Fire Chiefs went to Supervisor Moffitt and said they need more people. Mr. Smith continued the discussion asking how recommendations can be made outside of personnel without seeing the equipment and fire house for example so we can say what is good or bad. Ms. Meisenzahl explained that the information provided by the Fire Departments will be the tool to determine what are the possible recommendations. As data is built out it will show the areas lacking such as manpower, equipment and finances. Mr. Smith asked if the Committee recommends the fixes. Ms. Meisenzahl answered that the Committee makes the recommendation and it is up to the Town Board to figure it out. Ms. Meisenzahl also added that there is a Fire and EMS study the Town did, there is a Fire House study the Village did, the 2016 report Ms. Meisenzahl did and the Comprehensive Plan. There is a lot of information and hopefully over the next couple of meetings it will begin to take shape and to make sense. She went on further to say whatever the Committee recommends to change; we have to be sure it can further evolve with needs and requirements. Many communities are doing studies and everyone including Fire Service, EMS, hospitals even Departments of Transportation are feeling the need for people. This is not an exercise in futility.

Ms. Stewart Ha added that if you look at some of the past reports you can see what we are doing now and how it grows and how previous Committees have made their suggestions. It really opened her eyes.

Chief Trewer asked to what detail the Committee’s recommendation will be. Ms. Meisenzahl stated that the recommendation will be on Fire Service and how it is structured. Mr. Smith acknowledged that this is step one. Ms. Meisenzahl said yes and that what we are doing will help with the next step. Chief Trewer answered Mr. Smith’s question on recruitment stating that the emphasis isn’t on that until the recommendation is made from this Committee and we know what is happening from there.

Mr. Moffitt added that whatever this Committee recommends, there still has to be agreement from the Town, Village and District.

Mr. Lonthair added that he sees the Committee’s recommendation will have to be agreed upon by the Town and Village and then a Committee would be formed to figure out how to make it happen. This Committee will give them everything they need. As a resident, he feels the need is so publicized that something has to be done. People want to know if the Fire Department is going to show and how much the cost is. Putting people in the trucks is the single most important aspect.

Chief Trewer added that this need is happening more and more Countywide. It is already too late when we are down to two credible people to man and get a truck on the road. Addressing a comment that it comes down to personnel, he said that financing is equally important.

Mr. Moffitt added to the discussion on the need to fulfill the Fire Service needs stating that when the Fire Chiefs came to him saying they have a problem, he couldn’t just sit on his hands and wait for a tragedy, that is why we are here. He gave the example of when the school came to him regarding children walking on Quaker Meeting House Road and they couldn’t obtain a grant for sidewalks, the Town put sidewalks from Middle School to Old Falls Village for their safety.

Chief Trewer questioned how it is other Town’s responsibility to fill the needs of our Town when we don’t have the personnel. He added that the Honeoye Falls Fire Department and Mendon Fire Department have been working together the past couple years and it has been beneficial but they are both bleeding manpower every year and that shortly it is not going to work anymore.

Ms. Meisenzahl wrapped up the discussion by stating this is critical work. She stressed again she would like to meet with the Fire Departments offline to fill in the information and keep moving so, we can give the Committee an understanding of where we are, what’s not working, where we need to be and how we get there.

Mr. Tschiderer felt this was good conversation and had nothing more to add. There were no other comments.

Next Meeting October 26, 2022. Ms. Meisenzahl expects to have financial information and data at the next meeting and will get as much Fire Department information out as she can in a format that will continue us on our path.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:11 pm.