

## SPECIAL TOWN BOARD MEETING

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### Joint EMS/Fire Meeting for 2021 Budget

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Town of Ulysses

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September 10, 2020

The meeting was held via Zoom videoconference and was recorded on YouTube. It can be viewed at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4ktap1RcQuc>.

Notice of Town Board meetings are posted on the town's website and clerk's board.

#### **ATTENDANCE:**

##### TOWN OFFICIALS PRESENT:

Supervisor- Nancy Zahler

Board members- Michael Boggs, Katelin Olson, Rich Goldman

Town Clerk- Carissa Parlato

Deputy Supervisor- Michelle Wright

##### EXCUSED:

Board member- Marc Devokaitis

OTHERS PRESENT: Trustees of the Village of Trumansburg (Rordan Hart, Ben Darfler, Keith Hannon (6:15pm), Matt Taylor, Chris Fox, representatives from the Towns of Covert (Deb Nottke, Mike Reynolds (6:15pm)) and Hector (Alvin White, Jessica Rodgers).

#### **CALL TO ORDER:**

Ms. Zahler called the Ulysses Town Board to order at 6:06pm.

#### **DISCUSSION on the PROPOSED FIRE BUDGET:**

Fire Chief Taylor and Mr. Darfler presented the proposed 2021 fire budget expenses, noting that a 2% decrease has been built in to help with COVID-19 financial hardships. They highlighted the areas where costs have changed from last year (adding to radio system replacement reserve), and responded to questions from board members.

Chief Taylor also noted that COVID has not activated a change in fire calls so far this year.

Mr. Hart asked the towns whether they wanted to reduce the reserve contribution for fire apparatus for 2021 and contribute more in the future. The joint towns agreed that they would prefer to stay on track with the current contribution schedule.

The Village asked for and received feedback from municipalities about the financial and philosophical value of boats and ladder trucks. Mayor Hart made it clear that no decision has been made on purchasing a boat to assist with fire suppression along the lakeshore in Ulysses and Covert. The Town of Ulysses will need local follow up discussion on this.

Mr. Darfler discussed alternative cost-sharing models for the fire budget. A working group considered factors of fixed/variable costs, call volume, assessed value, and a phased approach if they decide to switch a new model.

**DISCUSSION on the PROPOSED EMS BUDGET:**

Mr. Carver gave a brief overview of the 2021 EMS budget.

Mr. Fox shared information regarding the time-consuming nature of calls from Five Points Correctional Facility. Trumansburg is the mutual aid back up for them.

Mr. Hart noted that the demand for local EMS services will continue to grow in the future and more equipment and staff will be needed.

Mr. Fox added that Trumansburg is also a back-up for Bang's in Ithaca.

Mr. Hart said that many local governments are reaching out to the state for assistance to deal with increasing geographical and cost demands. The Village has made no commitments to provide services to a wider geographic area and would discuss cost-sharing approaches with current municipalities before doing so.

The group discussed beginning to explore alternate EMS cost-sharing models.

Ms. Zahler inquired about EMS staff salary increases and response times.

Mr. Boggs asked about the increased health insurance costs and reserves.

Ms. Olson asked about legal requirements for expanding the district. Mr. Hart responded that municipalities are under no obligation to provide ambulance (but are required to provide fire protection).

There was a brief discussion about mutual aid and the Ulysses' concern that There was a brief discussion about mutual aid and how helping other districts may result in less availability for local calls.

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Ms. Olson expressed concern that taxpayers are paying for the service but may not be able to access it when needed if the team is pulled away to a farther location.

The group further discussed billing, contracting with other areas and a new facility.

Mr. Hart said that there are no new developments with regards to a new facility. He is seeking funding to assist as it will not be a shared cost among the joint district.

**ADJOURN:**

Mr. Goldman moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:11pm; seconded by Ms. Olson and passed unanimously.

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*Respectfully submitted by Carissa Parlato on 9/18/20.*