

**CLEARWATER FIRE COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
JANUARY 31, 2024**

1. Call to Order: 6:00 p.m. – Clearwater City Hall

Council Member Vazquez called the Clearwater Fire Commission to order Wednesday, January 31, 2024 at 6:01 p.m. at Clearwater City Hall. Members present were Santos Vazquez, City of Clearwater, Tom Plaggerman, Lynden Township, and Rose Thielen, Clearwater Township. Scott Miller, Clearwater Township, was absent. A quorum was present. Also present was City Administrator Annita Smythe and Fire Chief Mike Keller.

2. Approve Minutes from February 22, 2023 Meeting

MOTION by Plaggerman to approve the minutes as presented, seconded by Vazquez, all voted aye. **MOTION CARRIED.**

3. Review Annual Report

- Fire Chief Keller provided an overview of the annual report. There was one change to officers, as Harvey Doble has moved into the role of department Secretary. Calls have been trending upwards, driven primarily by medical calls. Members asked if there was a specific age group driving this. Chief Keller stated the calls were across the board and not attributed to a specific age group. Keller also outlined the training meetings and membership, noting that two members are part-time. The department has 24 members, including the part-timers, and is authorized for 30.
- Administrator Smythe explained the 2024 budget that was approved. Members asked if the year-end adjustments related to the contract payments were causing any operational issues, noting the swings from year to year. Smythe stated that the fund has some reserves, so no real issues have occurred so far. She suggested Member consider ways to address the swings for the next contract renewal.

4. Discuss 2025 Budget Draft

- Smythe explained that this is a preliminary budget. It is intended to provide a basis for the townships' annual meetings in March. The draft includes an increase of about 1% and is subject to change if conditions merit.
- Smythe also explained that there has been a shift in purchases due to pricing of gear. Turnout gear purchases used to run through operating supplies. Now, due to rapid price increases, these are often capital purchases, necessitating moving money from the operating fund to the capital fund to cover these purchases.
- Members did not have any further questions, but noted it is helpful to have the materials from this meeting as they plan their budgets.

5. Plan Review for Fire Access

- Keller explained that the department was looking for information on conducting plan reviews of commercial projects to ensure fire access. The city has been working recently to coordinate review of city projects. Members indicated that they each have a different process, but there doesn't appear to be a "fire review" as part of the process. Smythe suggested the city develop a fire checklist to bring to a future meeting that each entity could use when reviewing projects to ensure sufficient fire access.

6. Other Business

- Member Plaggerman explained that the Lynden Town Board decided to not go forward with the purchase of the dry hydrant, after receiving feedback that it would not really be used.

7. Adjournment

MOTION to adjourn by Plaggerman, seconded by Thielen, all voted aye. **MOTION CARRIED.**
Meeting adjourned at 6:33 p.m.

ATTEST

Annita M. Smythe, City Administrator

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