



# Monroe Fire Protection District



## MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Monroe Fire Protection Board of Trustees met on October 20, 2020 as part of the Monroe County Council Budget Adoption. These minutes are the portion of the Council's session concerning the Monroe Fire Protection District. Monroe Fire Protection District began our presentation at 5:31pm.

Those present were as follows: Joel Bomgardner, Chairman  
C. Ed Brown, Fiscal Officer  
Vicky Sorensen, Vice-Chairman

Those absent were as follows:

Others present were as follows: Dustin Dillard, Chief, MFD  
George Cornwell, Deputy Chief MFD  
Tammy Bovenschen, Administrative Assistant MFD  
Lorie Robinson, Financial Assistant MFD  
David Ferguson, Attorney, Ferguson Law  
Christine Bartlett, Attorney, Ferguson Law

County Council members present: Mr. Spoonmore, Mr. Deckard, Mrs. Hawk, Mrs. Munson,  
Mr. McKim, Mr. Iverson and Mrs. Wiltz.

### 2021 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading and Budget Adoption

Mrs. Wiltz read the MFPD 2021 Budget. Mr. Spoonmore opened the floor for discussion. Mr. Steve Volan read the letter he had sent to the Council listing his concerns about the budget presented. He did state that he did not expect the Council to take any action concerning his letter. Some of his concerns include the number of fire fighters that Monroe plans to hire compared to how many Bloomington City Fire Department has. Chief Dillard explained each position in the budget. Chief Dillard also noted that our salaries also include administrative personnel that City of Bloomington Fire does not have, such as human resources, accounting and an IT personnel.

Chief Dillard noted that our 1<sup>st</sup> class starting salary for 2021 is \$60,000. This is based on a salary study of similar department our size within the State of Indiana. Chief Dillard

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noted that at \$60,000 we are still 3% behind the state average for a department our size and noted that City of Bloomington Fire Fighter salaries are almost 13% below the state average.

Chief Dillard noted that beginning January 1, 2021 the Monroe Fire Protection District will service 77% of Monroe County with fire protection. Chief Dillard noted that we are combining three departments with this budget.

Mr. Volan asked if the Monroe County Council had considered contracting with Bloomington City Fire for fire protection in the Districts area. It was noted that although the Monroe County Council has binding authority over the budget, the Monroe Fire Protection District Board would have the only authority to contract with other departments for fire service.

Chief Dillard explained again the process of how the initial mergers began, when Indian Creek Township went before the Commissioners asking to join the District in 2019. Since then, other townships have gone through the process, Van Buren and Bloomington Township unincorporated. Currently Benton Township and Washington Township are working toward joining the District in January 2022 and January 2023 respectively.

Mr. Volan referred to the number of boots on the ground in this budget. Chief Dillard explained that with this budget we will have 88 full time equivalent fire fighters (boots on the ground) however, all of our Administrative Chief positions can and will fight fire if needed, and all are qualified to do so. Chief Dillard noted that we base our numbers on minimum staffing set by NFPA standards.

Mrs. Hawk thank Mr. Volan for his concerns. She also stated that she appreciates that Chief Dillard was available to answer the questions the public had this evening. Mr. Deckard stated that it is not as simple as comparing the MFPD budget to the City of Bloomington Fire budget, it is not an apples to apples comparison. Mr. Deckard stated that as public officials they have to be on the lookout for the residents in their community and that the MFPD has been very professional concerning this expansion.

Mr. McKim stated he appreciated Chief Dillard's explanation of the number of front line fire fighters. He stated that it appears to him the budget differences between City Of Bloomington Fire and Monroe Fire Protection District is salaries paid to MFPD is higher than that of the MFPD. He will not apologize for paying our guys appropriately.

Mrs. Munson thanked Mr. Volan for bringing these questions to the Council. Mrs. Munson did state that as the Council we should be asking questions as to why rural fire departments are not receiving any LIT money in 2021. She stated that the PSLIT committee and City Council are patently unfair in distributing the LIT money. Mr. Volan asked why the county doesn't take money off the top to give to these rural departments. Mrs. Sorensen stated that when she was a township trustee were allowed to ask for funding, the City of Bloomington dispatch received most of the funding.

Mr. Brown mentioned that while we are a combination department, volunteer and career, we hire from our ranks generally. Many of our part-time fire fighters started out as a volunteer with our department. Mr. Brown noted that Volunteers are the background for the fire service.


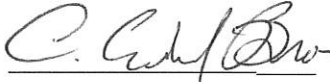
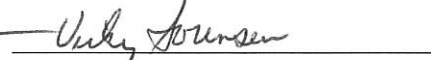
Mr. Bomgardner wanted to express the Monroe Fire Protection District's board support for Chief Dustin Dillard. He explained that Chief Dillard had met with the board and went line by line through the budget to be sure that the board understood the increases. We have worked with the budgets from both departments joining to be sure that we have covered everything. Monroe Fire Protection District will meet or exceed NFPA standards.

Mrs. Wiltz motioned to approve the Monroe Fire Protection District as presented.

Mr. McKim 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Motion passed 7-0

There being no further business concerning the Monroe Fire Protection District, the County Council thanked Chief Dillard for his presentation. We concluded at 6:30pm.

  
Joel Bomgardner, Chairman  
Ed Brown, Fiscal Officer  
Vicky Sorensen, Vice-Chairman

Copy furnished:

Mr. Bomgardner, Chairman  
Mrs. Sorensen, Vice-Chairman  
Mr. Cornwell, Deputy Chief  
Mr. Ferguson, Legal Counsel  
Station No.11, Bulletin Board

Mr. Brown, Fiscal Officer  
Mr. Dillard, Fire Chief  
Station No. 23, Bulletin Board  
Station No. 21, Bulletin Board