

**MINUTES
TOWN OF MONTVERDE
REGULAR TOWN COUNCIL MEETING**

June 9, 2015

The Town of Montverde met in regular session on Tuesday, June 9, 2015 at 7:00 PM in the Town Hall Auditorium.

Council Present:

President Glenn Burns

Billy Bates

Arthur Nix

Jim Pierce

Joe Wynkoop

Staff Present:

Graham Wells, Town Clerk

Terry Burden, Public Works Director

Mary Gillis, Finance Director

Anita Geraci- Carver, Town Attorney

Mayor Bennett called the meeting to order at 7:03 and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll call was performed, and it was determined that a quorum was present.

MINUTE APPROVAL

MOTION by Councilman Wynkoop to approve the regular Council Meeting Minutes from May 12, 2015; SECONDED by Councilman Nix.

For: Burns, Bates, Nix, Pierce, Wynkoop

Against: None

CITIZEN QUESTION AND COMMENT

Sandy Smith, Vinola Gardens. Ms. Smith said that Montverde and its residents are very dear to her. She said that she is in a small committee, and she has come to talk about that this evening. Her committee's mission is to keep the Preserve, which is in the city of Minneola, but borders Montverde and Vinola Gardens. She said that everyone in Montverde lives here because they like living in the country, like seeing the animals, and enjoy the quiet. She said that the city of Minneola intends to turn that beautiful Preserve area into a manufacturing district. She said that her committee has been to the Planning and

Zoning meeting of Minneola, and the Council meeting where this development was discussed. She said that on June 16, there will be another Council meeting, and she wanted to get as many people to come to the meeting as possible to state their opposition to the manufacturing part of the development. She said that she is not intending to stop progress, but she does feel that Minneola needs to be sensible about it.

Mayor Bennett added that the developers never even approached Montverde or surrounding areas about their development project. He said that he put information on the Town's website about the industrial area of the development that borders Montverde. The industrial designation gives a maximum building height of about three stories.

He said the developers have acted as though they were Santa Claus, providing this great opportunity for the city of Minneola. He said that their regulations for the industrial zoning designation were a lot looser, until Councilman Pierce embarrassed them at the Council meeting regarding the buffer from the industrial area to the residential area of Montverde. The buffer was slated to be 1300 feet about ten years ago, but then they reduced it to 25 feet. With dissent from Mayor Bennett and Councilman Pierce, they agreed to increase the buffer to about 75 feet. So the back of an industrial area can be approximately 75 feet from the backyard of residents in The Trails of Montverde.

He said that the developers have acted as though they were so generous in donating some of the land for a turnpike exchange to be constructed. But let's face it, they donated the land not because they were generous, but because that created ingress/egress to their property and made it infinitely more valuable.

Mayor Bennett said that at the Council meeting, Councilman Pierce got them to increase the length of the buffer, as well as agree that the heavier industrial be located away from the residential area of Montverde.

Mayor Bennett said that so far, the voices of Montverde residents have meant nothing to them. He urged residents to come to the Minneola City Hall to make their voices heard.

Councilman Burns said that he could not believe that they counted green space as the area where the turnpike will be.

Mayor Bennett added that no traffic study has been done. Councilman Nix said that their answer probably was that they did one in 2004, which is irrelevant now.

Councilman Pierce asked how Minneola's government works regarding the adoption of ordinances. Anita Geraci-Carver stated that they usually have two readings, but they only allow for public comment at the second hearing.

Resident Allan Hartle stated that he was at the meeting, and he asked them to move the industrial area to the location where they had the water treatment plant, and they would not even consider it. He said that he also brought up the fact that there were most likely scrub jays in the area, and they stated that there were none. Mayor Bennett explained that it was the developer themselves who supposedly performed this study about the scrub jays.

Mayor Bennett said that he got the idea that the developers were running the show, and the Minneola City Council was just bowing down to everything they wanted.

Town Planner Sean Parks stated that he felt residents who are opposed to elements of the development should show up to the Council meeting. He said there are ways to work around some of the problems with the development, such as allowing greater density in areas that are not neighboring rural settings.

A resident said that all she cares about is the Preserve. She said that they are doing ecological studies on only a few acres of the entire preserve to justify their development extending into this beautiful area.

Councilman Pierce said that Minneola's form of government is very different from Montverde's. Mayor Bennett said that he has noticed that Minneola's staff is very close with the developers.

PROPOSAL FROM LAKE COUNTY TO REDUCE THE SPEED LIMIT ON CR 455 AND INSTALL NEW CROSSWALKS

Mayor Bennett introduced Lake County Public Works Director Jim Stivender, and said that he was here to discuss the speed limit on County Road 455.

Mr. Stivender said that three or four months ago when he addressed Montverde, Council was concerned about the speed limit through the school and the trucks speeding through Town in general. He stated that they have done some work and studied the area thoroughly since then. One thing that is very much needed is better signage throughout the school area. He said they are also recommending changing the speed limit on CR 455 near the school area to 25 miles per hour. It is currently 35 miles per hour. The change would mean that it would be 25 mph even when school is not in session. This change will have to go before the County Commission for approval.

Mr. Stivender then detailed where the new signs would be located on a map, and then indicated where the new speed zone would be. Mayor Bennett noted that the school zone would extend a few blocks down into the downtown area. Mr. Stivender noted that this was because there needed to be a slower approach to the walk where students cross the road.

Mayor Bennett asked if the reduction in speed limit should be extended all the way through Town. Mr. Stivender said that the school was the primary focus of this study, and the children crossing the road was the main priority. He said that making the speed limit 25 mph all through Town would not work.

Mayor Bennett said the intersection of CR 455 and Ridgewood was also a big concern for the Town. He said that there was an 80 foot right of way there, and he feels he has the developers of that land (Montverde Estates) pretty much in agreement to put in a road so that those on Ridgewood could make a right hand turn and go down Morningside. This would alleviate some of the bad traffic at that intersection.

Mayor Bennett asked if the County was going to be repaving Ridgewood. Mr. Stivender stated that right now, they are just doing patch work to fix the bad spots. He says that they have drawn plans to fix the road and recreate it, so that it is not an inverted crown road. He said there currently is no funding for this.

Mr. Stivender said that the Board of County Commissions voted today to move forward with the renewal of the Local Option Sales Tax. Right now, 50% of it goes to Lake County, and the cities and the School Board get their share. They are changing the distribution formula slightly, but it is very critical that the sales tax funding be used for improvement on roads in Lake County. The cost to fix Ridgewood, to crown it and correct the drainage, would be about \$700,000. Mr. Stivender said that the renewal sales tax money could be used to fund this project. The current sales tax money is already spoken for, but the renewal could be used for the Ridgewood project.

Mayor Bennett asked if the County determined the impact of the new Turnpike Exchange on Ridgewood Avenue. Mr. Stivender said that he understands that Montverde does not want any traffic from the Exchange to come this way, and they have been working to honor that. He said that the Hancock Road extension to the turnpike should be completed in late 2016. The developer would connect to 561A. He said that traffic in the new development is tied to their road system and the turnpike exchange. If there is any overflow of traffic, it will go west of Highway 27. Councilman Wynkoop said that because there are almost 4,000 homes proposed in the Hills of Minneola, that traffic is bound to extend into Montverde. He said that on weekends, people that live in that community are going to “wander” and drive around through Montverde’s rural landscape. He said that Sugarloaf development would also add a lot more traffic. He said that it is foolish to think that these developments would only create traffic at the Turnpike, and that these new residents would only drive the Turnpike every single day.

Mr. Stivender brought up the Mt. Plymouth/Sorrento area. He said they plan to put in a series of roundabouts to calm traffic in that area. He said that he could envision the same thing working in this area to calm the traffic and divert it away from Montverde. He said that roundabouts have been very effective in calming traffic, and he is anxious to see the effects on traffic of the roundabout south of Astatula.

A resident asked about Hancock Road and Mr. Stivender said that there will be five new traffic signals along the new Hancock Road from the Turnpike Exchange to Highway 50.

Mayor Bennett said that he wanted to commend Public Works Director Jim Stivender and Engineer Fred Schneider for being so attentive to Montverde. He said that he has always worked well with the County, and they have been very helpful in allowing Montverde to retain its rural character.

Mayor Bennett opened the floor for public comment:

Lance Belcher. Mr. Belcher pointed out that the speed limit on CR 455 goes from 45 to 35 once you hit Montverde, and then down to 25 once you hit the school. He asked how the County came up with 25 mph for that section of road. Mr. Stivender said that 25 mph felt safe with children crossing the street, and that 35 mph was too high.

Jim Ley. Mr. Ley said that the problem is not just during the day; he said that students are trying to cross the road until 9:00 or 10:00 at night. He said that he has seen some close calls, including a few times where he felt like he was almost hit.

Debra Heathman. Mrs. Heathman said that since the main problem was with the Academy and its students, why doesn't the County require the Academy to install catwalks for the students. This way, the students will be completely safe, and the flow of traffic will not be impeded. She said that they are making all drivers go around Academy students. Mayor Bennett stated that that was a good idea.

A resident suggested the County put a four-way stop on the corner of Ridgewood and CR 455. He said that traffic problem would be solved, and it was a cheap solution. Mr. Stivender stated that the County needs to perform a study before that could occur. He said that there has to be an equal amount of traffic on all sides in order for a four-way stop to work.

Mayor Bennett stated that he thought Mrs. Heathman got cut off. He asked her if she was in favor of lowering the speed limit. She said that she did not think it would help, and that over the years, the speed limit would continue to be reduced and reduced.

Leslie Timmen. Mrs. Timmen said that she lives on CR 455 south of Ridgewood. She said that she supports the reduction in speed, and that she also supports a four-way stop. She said that it is a dangerous intersection, and at night, she hears what seems like drag racing going on around that intersection. Mr. Stivender said that in the traffic study that they performed, the high speed was occurring in the late hours of the evening. He said that the best way to handle the situation is to have the Sheriff's Office locate a vehicle there at night to give speeders tickets.

Another resident that lives on CR 455 asked whatever happened to the idea of putting in a roundabout at the intersection. Mayor Bennett said that it was a conceptual plan; there was never any funding for it. The resident said that the people speeding through that intersection is staggering. Mayor Bennett said that he and staff have been working on that problem. He said they have been hiring off-duty highway patrolmen to monitor speed when the Town Sheriff's deputy is not in the Town. He said that there have been roughly 47 tickets issued to speeders by these patrolmen.

A resident asked how often studies are performed in this area. Mr. Stivender replied four to six months. He said that they have seen that traffic picks up in the Fall when school is in session. He said the study they are working on now will take place in September to see how the truck traffic, the bus traffic, and the parent traffic all fit together.

A resident stated that there needs to be education for the students at the Academy as well. He said that he has had students walk out in front of him when he is thirty feet from the cross walk. Mayor Bennett said that some of the students are foreigners, and in other countries, pedestrians always have the right of way even when they step out in front of a bus. Mr. Stivender said that he thought that State law says that it is the responsibility of the driver to look out for the pedestrian. If he does not stop, you must stop.

A resident asked if the sidewalks on CR 455 were in the right of way. Mr. Stivender replied that he thought they were. The resident then said that there is a blind spot where the crepe myrtles and the Academy entry signs are. He said that he has almost hit students there near the sidewalk because he can't see around the Academy entry signs. Mr. Stivender said that it is the equivalent of going around a building. Mr. Stivender said that he would talk to the Academy about educating the walkers.

Councilman Nix said that he thinks it is a good idea to lower the speed limit through the school area. The other four Councilmen concurred. Mr. Stivender thanked Council for their participation and direction.

A resident asked if the Town or the County was responsible for the sidewalks along CR 455. Mayor Bennett replied that the Town was. The resident stated the crossings are in bad shape, specifically, the brick crosswalks in front of the school.

Roy Patterson asked if the Town could put up signs in Town saying "No Jake Brakes". Mayor Bennett said that those signs are definitely needed in Town.

ORDINANCE AMENDING SECTION 20-87 IN ARTICLE IV OF CHAPTER 20 IN THE CODE OF ORDINANCES

Anita Geraci-Carver read the Ordinance in title only.

Mayor Bennett explained that this ordinance was just a clean-up of administrative functions.

Mayor Bennett opened the floor for public comment. Seeing none, he closed public comment.

MOTION by Councilman Pierce to approve the Ordinance amending Section 20-87 of the Code of Ordinances; SECONDED by Councilman Nix.

For: Burns, Bates, Nix, Pierce, Wynkoop

Against: None

**PUBLIC HEARING FOR THE PURPOSE OF RECEIVING PUBLIC COMMENT CONCERNING RESOLUTION
2015-16 SETTING THE RATE FOR THE FIRE SERVICES ASSESSMENT**

Mayor Bennett explained that in his tenure as Mayor, there have been two significant issues with the Fire Department. The first issue is the collection of fire assessment fees. He said that fire assessment fees generate about \$45,000 each year. Of that amount, about \$4,000 to \$5,000 is uncollectible each year. Staff tries to take the non-payers to court to collect, but it ends up being a long drawn-out process. He said the whole objective to this project is to get the fire assessment fee on the tax bill so that these fees can be collected. In putting the fees on the tax bill, it became apparent that a fire assessment fee study should be performed to determine where the department should be headed. He said that all cities really should have a study performed to determine the right amount to charge.

Mayor Bennett said that the group that performed the study took an inventory of everything the Town Fire department has: all personnel, equipment, trucks, hydrants, etc. Then they determined the square footage that the Town department is available to service. Based on these factors, they used an equation to come up with an assessment fee. With the equipment that we have, we have determined that the Fire Department cannot service anything over 17,000 square feet. There are four buildings in Montverde that are larger than 17,000 square feet. If the Town wishes to service these buildings, more equipment would be needed, which means the assessment fee would have to increase. He said that this is not necessarily where we are going.

Mayor Bennett said that they were required to notice residents the maximum amount that they would be charging for fire assessment fee services. It is not the amount that they intend to charge.

He said that he would like to address some rumors that seem to be rampant:

1. The Town is not buying a ladder truck.
2. The Town is not going to full-time service. The Town is a long way from that.

Mayor Bennett said that the Town Fire Department does not get very many fire calls. Most of the calls are medical. He said that residents already pay for medical ambulance service to the County.

Mayor Bennett said that the second issue with the Fire Department is that the Town has been billing for fire services in arrears, and it should be billing forward. Because of this, Council would have to make a decision as to whether to "forgive" one year of the fire assessment so that it is not paid twice in one year.

Anita Geraci-Carver read the Resolution in title only.

Mayor Bennett introduced Sandy with GSG, who performed the fire assessment fee study. Sandy stated that her group began working with the Town in December, and she wanted to give an overview of how we got to where we are.

She stated that GSG has performed studies for many municipalities and counties in Florida. She said they were hired to review the current level of services of the Town and any enhanced services. The group then determined the full cost of providing those services in Town, and then developed an appropriate methodology for allocating rates.

Sandy said that a fire assessment is a charge that goes against real property to pay for fire services. The assessment must have a benefit to the property, and it must be fairly and reasonably apportioned. The Town's goal initially was to fully fund the fire department through the assessment program. Currently, the assessment funds about 30% of the fire department. In fully funding the fire department, Council was looking at possibly reducing the millage rate.

Sandy stated that the department is a first-responder department, and is staffed by volunteers only. She said they examined the water flow, and according to NFPA Standards, the Town has enough flow to fight a fire in a 17,400 square feet building. This means that the Town cannot charge for any building that is over 17,400 square feet.

Sandy said that they looked at the cost to run the department annually. Right now it costs between \$105,000 and \$110,000. They projected a five year average of \$120,000 annually. They looked at adding a \$20,000 annual reserve for future replacement of capital items.

The call data was also examined. 67.33% of the calls were for residential. Therefore, 67.33% of the budget needs to be funding by the residential class. Non-residential calls represent 6.67%, while Educational represents 23.33%, and land is 2.67%.

The rates are then determined using simple math percentages against the budget. To fund the current budget, the residential rate would be \$120 per residential unit.

Mayor Bennett explained that right now, the fire department is being funded by the General Fund. The assessment goes into the General Fund, which could present some legal issues. The Water Department has its own fund, and the goal is to get the Fire Department its own fund. This is why the residential rates seem so high, because the assessments would now be 100% funding the Fire Department, with no help from the General Fund. So if Council charges the rates that would provide 100% funding, they could lower the millage, but this would not mean a fair reduction for everyone. Mayor Bennett said that they would go into that further later. So, Council may wish to go with a lower rate, and have the millage continue to contribute to the Fire Department.

Mayor Bennett explained that the millage only represents about one third of the Town's total budget.

Councilman Pierce asked if everyone understood why lowering the millage would not be fair to everyone. He explained that if they decide to reduce the millage by \$60,000, each person would get a different amount back based on the value of their home. So those with larger value-homes would see a greater reduction than those with smaller-value homes.

Mayor Bennett stated that if they funded the Fire Department at \$160 per residential unit, and then gave back .5 of the millage rate, he himself would pay the \$160 in fire assessment fees, and the reduction in millage would mean his taxes drop by \$71.82. So he would really pay \$88.18 for the fire assessment. But someone else with a lesser value-home, they would pay \$160 in fire assessment fee, but they would only get \$12.50 in tax reduction, so they would be paying \$147.50 for fire services.

Councilman Pierce said that even though the Town would be getting the same amount of money as in prior years, the way the millage would be distributed would not be fair. The only way to credit the millage back to the citizens is based on the millage percentage of value, which would mean the credit would not be given back equally.

Councilman Wynkoop said that he called other cities, and what he found was that the Town needs to bill by the square footage. Sandy stated that we could do it that way, but that is not the methodology that they worked with.

Sandy explained that on the 23rd of June, there will be a hearing to make a final decision as to what the rates will be. This timing is necessary to get the rates on the tax bills, mailed in November.

Mayor Bennett explained that currently, residents pay \$40 per residential unit. The Academy pays \$11,860. If the Town increased the rate to \$60, the Academy would pay \$15,241. If it increased to \$80, the Academy would pay \$20,324.

Mayor Bennett reiterated that the initial goal of this entire project was to get the assessment on the tax bill. He said the study clarified so many things for Council and staff.

Mayor Bennett opened the floor for public comment.

Glen Brecheen, former Fire Chief: Glen said that the fire assessment exists because Mayor Franklin Pearce, Councilman Joe Morrin, and he himself talked the Town into it, with the understanding that the assessment would never be used for the day-to-day budget of the Fire Department. It was to be for capital improvements only. When it came time to vote, it did not state this purpose on the ballot. Mayor Bennett asked what the ballot was. Glen stated that the assessment had to be voted on during the regular Election in November. Mayor Bennett said that he has wondered about this for years and even contacted the Supervisor of Elections to see if it was ever on a ballot. Councilman Nix asked if the ballot came from the Elections Office or from the Town. A resident replied from the Town.

Glen said that the assessment had been used to buy turnout gear, trucks, etc. He does not know what it is being used for now. Glen asked what the County charges its residents for fire services. Mayor Bennett replied \$181. Councilman Pierce said that residents really are paying \$120 now: \$40 for the fire assessment and \$80 in property taxes from the General Fund.

Arthur Nix said he thought that Engine 85 was purchased out of General Fund dollars.

Councilman Pierce said that one thing he has learned is that the Town cannot continue to operate the Fire Department like it used to. For instance, hoses are going to have to be replaced regularly to meet NFPA requirements. It is a liability that the Town can no longer incur. Therefore, the costs to run the Department are going to go up.

Mayor Bennett said that he has had deep conversations with the County for the Town to take care of Bella Collina's fire service, which could provide additional funding for the Fire Department.

Glen stated that he did not have a problem with Lake County collecting the fee, and he said that he did not object to the increase in the fee, because as former Fire Chief, he knows how expensive it is to operate a good department.

A resident asked if residents get taxed by the County for fire services. Mayor Bennett replied no. He said that residents get charged for medical services through an MSTU on their property tax bill. The resident said that he is in favor of increasing the rate, because he feels Montverde has a first rate department, and they provide good medical services.

Joe Morrin. Joe said that he was on Council for many years. He said that he understood that the wish list is to have two hired firefighters, not counting the Chief, and that wish list would mean \$240 per residential unit. Mayor Bennett replied that the model of having hired firefighters was a maximum basis from which to work from. Joe stated that he thought that if the Town has a fire assessment, that it cannot augment the Fire budget with General Fund dollars. Anita Geraci-Carver replied that if expenditures exceed the amount collected from the Fire Assessment Fee revenue, there is no law that prohibits you from other funding sources. Sandy stated that it would be a policy decision on how much to fund the Department with assessments versus millage. Joe stated that he understands that fees need to be increased, but as he looks down the budget list, it seems excessive. Mayor Bennett said that he thinks the list Joe is looking at is "blue-sky" budget that was created in the beginning, not the real budget that is being proposed.

Joe said that in looking at the types of calls coming to the Town (mostly medical), would it make more sense in having the County service Montverde, since they provide Advanced Life Support services. He said that right now, if someone has a heart attack in Montverde, they have to wait until EMS from Clermont gets here. Joe asked what the qualifications are of the Town's firefighters. Chief Kevin Rausch responded that they can provide BLS; they only thing they cannot provide is drugs. However, the Town has a mutual aid agreement with Lake County to provide ALS. It would cost a lot of money to have Montverde provide ALS service.

Leslie Timmen. Leslie said that she would like to thank the volunteers, as she has had to obtain their services, and she is very appreciative of them. She said that she thought it was a good idea to improve the collectability of the fire assessment fee. She said that she thinks most people can understand the

increase in costs; it's just that people want to see the money properly managed, and they don't want increases every year.

Councilman Pierce said that he feels this plan is going to force all entities to pay their fair share, including those entities that come into Montverde later. Therefore, the burden will be on future developments. If Bella Collina decides to come on board, the residents will not be on the hook for funding it. He said this new plan will mean that each entity is paying their fair share.

A resident asked how the Town is charging those homes outside the Montverde area. Councilman Pierce said that those homes are not serviced by Montverde, therefore, they are not charged. But, the Town could respond to a fire there through a Mutual Aid Agreement.

A resident asked what if there was a fire at one of the buildings that is greater than 17,400 square feet. Councilman Pierce said that the Town is not required to be able to service these buildings. Councilman Wynkoop said that the fire would then be responded to by other cities through a Mutual Aid Agreement.

A resident said that due to some health problems, he is having financial difficulty. He said that he hears everyone saying that an increase is necessary, but he does not know how he will be able to pay \$160 a year. He asked that Council consider those who cannot afford the increase.

A resident asked if all residents pay \$40 per year. Mayor Bennett said yes. The resident said that he is paying \$55. Mayor Bennett said that under the current methodology, the Town charges for outbuildings. This would be eliminated with the new study.

Judy Smith, Neal Drive. Judy stated that she is confused about the assessment being on the tax bill. She asked if the assessment increase would also increase her escrow. Mayor Bennett replied yes. She asked if Council was going to make a decision as to what the assessment fee will be. Mayor Bennett replied that the decision will be made by Council on June 23.

Erin Brecheen. Erin said that if her house caught fire, the Department will not be able to save her house, as her house is a small, wooden structure. She said that she is paying for protection for everyone else, and not herself. She also said that she is paying for a secondary structure on her lot so she is looking at a \$320 bill. She stated that it is a free standing garage with an upstairs apartment. Sandy said that if it is being used as an apartment, then she would be charged twice. Erin said that the fee is a large sum that people on a fixed income or low income cannot pay.

Steve Church. Steve said that with inflation, he is not for any tax increases. He said he feels the Fire Department needs to be funded more by the General Fund. Steve said that nobody can tell us what this rate is, and that frustrates him. Mayor Bennett said that he thinks Council can give everyone a rough idea before the meeting is over. Councilman Nix said that the Mayor and Sandy has done a great job in explaining the process and the study to residents.

Allan Hartle. Allan asked if Minneola has their own fire department. Chief Rausch replied that they do. He then said asked if this study and new collection method would lower the ISO rating. Councilman Pierce said probably not, but the Town does have a good ISO rating. Allan then asked if the early payment discount that you get for paying your taxes early would apply for the fire assessment, if the assessment is put on the tax bill. Sandy replied yes.

Dale Heathman. Dale asked what the current ISO rating is. Mayor Bennett responded 3. He asked what the County is. Chief Rausch responded 9, in some areas. Dale said that a 3 means the Town has very good equipment. So how come it costs \$120,000 a year to operate. Mayor Bennett says it costs about \$100,000 to operate, with nothing being put into Reserves. Dale asked how come the Town is advertising \$160 as the assessment fee. Mayor Bennett replied that the State makes the Town advertise the absolute maximum that they could charge, even if they have no intention of charging it. Dale said that he thought \$160 is too large of an increase.

Mayor Bennett said that after having conversations with Council, his gut is telling him that the fee will be between \$60 and \$80, with the General Fund making up the rest. He said that at the June 23 meeting, Council will decide this and whether to “forgive” last year’s fire assessment, levied under the old system.

A resident said that an increase would be palatable if the increase occurred over each month. Mayor Bennett responded that most people escrow their taxes and insurance, so their monthly mortgage would increase slightly each month, achieving the same effect.

Mayor Bennett asked Council to express their opinions about the Fire Assessment Fee:
Councilman Pierce said that he is all about getting each entity to pay their fair share. He thinks that this new plan will help get the burden off the residents and onto the people who need to pay their fair share. He said that he felt that \$120 rate would mean that each entity is paying their fair share.

Councilman Nix asked if the rate could be increased every year with inflation. Sandy said that could be done.

Councilman Bates said that he feels the Fire Department needs to have a budget set up so that they don’t have to come to the General Fund every time they need something. He said that a budget for the Fire Department is always hard to establish because equipment is always breaking down, and it is difficult to guess what the needs will be each year.

Councilman Burns said that he is ok with the process of putting the bills on the tax roll.

Councilman Wynkoop said that a rate of \$60 to \$80 would still mean that the General Fund would have to contribute \$30 to \$35. He said that he didn’t think residents realize that they are paying \$110 right

now for fire service (\$40 from fire assessment and \$70 through property taxes). He said that on the 23rd, he would like to discuss using the square footage methodology to charge for fire assessment fees.

MOTION by Councilman Pierce to table this Resolution to June 23rd at 7:00pm; SECONDED by Councilman Bates

For: Burns, Bates, Nix, Pierce, Wynkoop


Against: None

Mayor Bennett read a proclamation that August 11 will be this year's Caucus. Up for election is the Mayor's position, as well as three Councilman's positions.

ADJOURN

MOTION to Adjourn by Councilman Bates; SECONDED by Councilman Nix at 9:45pm. Passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,




Troy A. Bennett, Mayor



Glenn Burns, Council President

ATTEST:



Graham Wells, Town Clerk

