CITY OF BURTON
LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
FEBRUARY 12, 1998, 10:30 A.M., COUNCIL CHAMBERS

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER BY Charles Cross, Chairman, at 10:32 A.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Cross, Cox, Centilli

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT: J. Major, DPW Director, D. Halsted, Fire Chief, D. Lacey, Asst. Fire Chief, J. Adams, Clerks Office.

PURPOSE OF THE MEETING: DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING THE FOLLOWING ITEMS:

1. Fire Department Cost Recovery Ordinance.
2. Ordinance No. 6 re/requirement of new construction to connect to public water.
3. Graffiti Ordinance

PRESENTATION:

Mr. Halsted said there has been a lack of, or mis-information in the community regarding the Fire Department Cost Recovery Ordinance. The foremost job of the fire department is 1st fire prevention which is done through education and training, and 2nd is saving lives and property. He just hired 18 new firefighters, we have 68 firefighters at this time. Mr. Halsted discussed the following areas of maintaining the fire stations, equipment, replacing fire trucks that range in age from 7 to 24 yrs. old, complying with OSHA.

Mr. Halsted indicated each station is required by OSHA to have exhaust systems for diesel exhaust for the trucks. The approximate cost is $70,000 to put in their stations. At some point, OSHA is going to demand that we do this. Mr. Halsted said his proposal was based on ordinances from all over the state of Michigan that he has copies of. His purpose for upgrading and obtaining new equipment, is that we are rated a 6 with insurance underwriters. Our goal is to get the rating down. He stated further, that even if we had zero fires in Burton, it would still cost the same amount of dollars in his budget to operate and maintain the fire stations. He would like to see the support for this ordinance and believes it is important for the City of Burton.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION:

Mr. Darrell Johnson, Farm Bureau Insurance agent located on Center Rd. in Burton. He indicated that he was not at the meeting to represent his company, but was here to provide general information regarding the proposed fire ordinance. He indicated most homeowners insurance policies have fire coverage. As an example, if a homeowner has a fire, the $500.00 charge is part of the loss and not an extra claim. False alarms and arson are not covered. This coverage, if enacted, is part of the claim and will not raise insurance premiums. The $500.00 is their standard coverage, along with other insurance carriers.

Mr. Cox said the #6 rating Burton has, he thought we increased the rating with the addition of the water lines which should have had an impact on this.

Mr. Halsted said when Jane Nimcheski was mayor, the ISO at that time rated Burton a partial 9 and a partial 6, with the use of new watermains and hydrants.

Mr. Darrell Johnson from Farm Bureau Insurance indicated 10 would be the highest, 9-10 would be communities, especially up north that are 5 miles or farther from a fire department and normally where they have fire departments with volunteers and there is no water. Burton is now a 6 with a small pocket area that is a 9.

Mrs. Pauline Dargel, 6119 Hugh St., Burton, MI, spoke regarding some residents that feel the insurance companies would not pay the deductible if the City bills them, and also spoke on fines/penalties for illegal burns. She feels the perception would be best if people are aware that there could be some enforcement.

Mr. Halsted indicated this ordinance would also give more enforcement in this area. In 1997, approximately $37,600 was spent to respond to open burns.

Mr. Warren Nimcheski, 2429 N. Genesee Rd., Burton, MI, stated he has been on the fire department for 20 yrs. and there has been tremendous bills to repair the old trucks. In 1982, the truck at Fire Station 2, was used in the Department of Public Works 7 yrs. before the fire station received it. It was a temporary fix and built as a maintenance truck and not a rescue rig, which is what they are using it for. They need new equipment.

Mrs. Leona Stevens, 3049 Vineland, Burton, MI asked who has the cost recovery on bomb threats.

Mr Halsted responded that it is similar to false alarms. If a neighbor called in a false alarm using your name, you would never be charged unless the call originated in your home.

Mr. John Stapish, 5160 E. Atherton, Burton, MI, said there are some good points but no reference has been made for homeowners with rental properties. He said you cannot control the actions of the tenant.

Mr. Halsted said he thinks of rental properties as a business and you accept certain responsibilities and risks. The ordinance does have the option written in for an appeals process.

Mr. Darrell Johnson from Farm Bureau Insurance spoke on insurance companies covering rental properties.

Mrs. Jane Liebman, 4147 Leith St., Burton, MI asked if the City responds to carbon monoxide calls, and what other avenues of revenue have we looked at to possibly cover replacing equipment.

Mr. Cross said a millage was proposed awhile back and was defeated.

Mr. Halsted indicated there are CD funds which is only available to Station 1 in the south end of Burton and the truck purchased must be kept in that station, it is very restrictive, we must report to the Government how many runs it makes in a year.

Mrs. Jane Liebman asked if the old trucks are re-sold and funds from that re-invested.

Mr. Halsted indicated in some cases yes, but that it is very difficult to recoup your losses with old trucks. They are in need of constant repair and there are certain standards that must be maintained as they are constantly changing year by year.

Mr. Cox said in the last few years the fire department has made efforts and watched their budget closely and they have been innovative.

COMMITTEE DISCUSSION:

Mr. Cross said they need to educate a little more before we make a final decision.

Mr. Cox said he is totally in favor of the ordinance, the articles from The Journal was a mis-representation. Municipalities all over the state do this and I believe we are a city with a township tax base. He thanked Mr. Johnson for clarifying items with them. It is covered by insurance and we are paying for it already and does not see this as a burden on the resident. Mr. Cox said he would like one more session, he thinks it is a viable, good ordinance and something we need.

Mr. Cross thanked Mr. Johnson from Farm Bureau Insurance for attending the meeting. Mr. Cross stated they were not able to discuss the other items on the agenda and for the graffiti ordinance, they may have to do a session on that.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS:

None at this time.

MEETING ADJOURNED AT 11:50 A.M.

Julie Adams
Clerks Office