

Harris City Council
Fire Department & Council Workshop Minutes
Thursday, February 27, 2025, at 3:30 p.m.

The Fire Department Workshop began at 3:30 p.m. Attending were Mayor Randy Carlson, Councilmember Craig Moline, Councilmember Chell Borash, Councilmember Al Siedow, Councilmember Garret Pearson, City Clerk Shannon Geier, City Treasurer Sue Riesing, Fire Chief Drew Chapeau, Chief 2 Gabi Streater, and Chief 3 Tim Morin and city resident Shari Denny

I. **Agenda:**

A. Fire Fighter's changing positions

- Probation to FF – Unless otherwise notified, all probationary members are promoted to firefighters at one year.
- Any promotions – Chapeau says this is his department and he does not need to tell anyone. Carlson said they are in the best position to make those decisions. Unless it is adding another position, the council does not need to know. There is no need for a motion unless it affects the budget. They may put the information in their monthly written report. The Clerk and Treasure felt strongly that a motion should be made regarding staffing changes so that the personal files and payroll is updated accordingly.
- Leave of absence will be in chiefs monthly updates to council and the FD will be taking care of all LOA
- Medical leaves will be in chiefs monthly updates to council and the FD will be taking care of all MLOA
- Military leaves will be in chiefs monthly updates to council and the FD will be taking care of all Military Leave of absence.
- Resignations will be in in chiefs monthly updates to council and the FD will be taking care of all resignations.
- Disciplinary Action – The City Council voted in SOP and that is what we follow.

B. Equipment list with expiration dates so we know when equipment grants – PPE has specific dates but if the items have not been used, we determine on a case-by-case basis. On equipment repairs, the FD members fix minor things like headlights and wipers. Certified repair services are used on major items to prevent liability issues. Rouse approves putting equipment into service.

C. Financial questions - if you can send them before council meetings so treasurer can research.

D. Year-end statistics (fire calls, EMS calls, training, and documentation) – EMS is extra credit bonus. They will update the SOP and bring to Council. Siedow says if the FD is responsible for HR, then they can be responsible for this also. The treasurer suggested proposing a new model for hours credit calculation, if needed, but recommended adding a percentage requirement for EMS which could be less than the 25% required for fire and rescue. She

suggested including EMS calls in the total available calls versus counting them as “extra credit”.

- E. Does training count if FF works at another FD – If an FF is full-time or part-time at another department, the training at the other department counts and should exempt them from the 80% rule if they are at 60% or more and have proof of other department. They will change SOP and bring to Council for approval. The Treasurer suggested a tracking mechanism to confirm that hours outside of Harris are tracked so we know that firefighters are meeting minimum training requirements.
- F. Good standings for PERA – Two FF are short on good standings for 2024 PERA. If city is not notified of a leave of absence, they would not know that it was part of the calculation. Carlson said the Council can approve them for good standings for 2024. Siedow said we should leave 2024 as 2024. Per Morin these two were working a lot, doing extra work. Moline said a policy is a policy and must live by that because exceptions open us to liabilities. People need to know what policy is. Chapeau stated we will leave as is until the policy is changed. *The Treasurer stated that she calculated statistics based upon payroll hours provided by Chief Chapeau and used an annualized method which is consistent with how it's been done in the past. If we change to a quarterly method it will impact other staff.*
- G. City Policy's and FD policy are contradictory is that ok? Two different policies are ok. Wyoming and North Branch are examples of cities with a policy for FD and another policy for city.
- H. City vs Relief – Streater is requesting event pay for situations such as a ball tournament where they are asked to stand-by in case of medical emergencies. Currently they receive \$9, and call it training, but when the event runs to a total of 32 hours the \$9 is just not enough. For example, North Branch receives \$50 per hour. Streater suggested \$50 per event per FF for Harris. Siedow said this is not a City of Harris expense but should be Harris Club. Carlson asked what is FD and what is Relief? Put this on the next meeting agenda.
- I. Morin brought up a situation where he had spent his own money, approved by Drew, turned into city hall on 1/6/23 and 3/30/23 for reimbursement, but was not paid. Streater stated she had also spent \$354 in 2022 of her own money for an escape room and was never reimbursed. Carlson said the city council should have been made aware, and why it was not paid. Riesing replied that the city could not legally pay it because it did not meet the “public purpose” expenditure requirement. She stated that she contacted the city's auditor, the OSA, and the LMC for clarification and documentation. She stated that the escape room and awards dinner had been addressed in the past, but she was not aware of the expense mentioned by Morin. She stated there are rules governing benefits, and that employees of the city need to be treated the same, and we aren't allowed to hold a dinner or team bonding specific to one department. Carlson said that it should be up to the city. Streater wants to know where the line is drawn. Carlson asked Riesing to provide the law, and we may get it interpreted by the new attorney. She stated that these issues had been presented to the council verbally and in writing and hashed out repeatedly in the past.

Adjourn: The workshop ended at 5:42 p.m.