

Sidney Township Board Minutes
Special Meeting Sheridan Fire Authority
December 20, 2023

The Sidney Township Board special meeting held at the Sidney Township Hall at 3019 S Grow Road Sidney, Michigan on December 20, 2023 was called to order by Supervisor Peterman at 7:00 p.m. followed by the pledge of allegiance.

ATTENDANCE: Supervisor: Terry Peterman, Treasurer: Corinda Stover, Clerk: Carrie Wills, Trustees: Ray Leyrer, Erik Benko, Sheridan Fire Chief: Brandon Stowell, Evergreen Township Supervisor: Andy Ross

AGENDA:

Agenda for the meeting was presented by Brandon.

PURPOSE OF THE SPECIAL MEETING:

The purpose of the special meeting is to discuss and review the Sheridan Community Fire Department Authority Agreement and discuss the possible merger between Stanton Fire Department and Sheridan Fire Authority.

Discussion regarding the Sheridan Community Fire Department Authority Agreement.

The name of the authority will be changed and Sidney Township will be added if we merge into the authority.

The authority is its own entity but the township will appoint one person and one alternate to sit on the authority board to represent Sidney Township.

Any ordinance passed by the Authority Board has to be approved by the township board or it will be invalid.

By statute the Authority Board can assess a very high millage. However, that will never happen as it would never be approved by township boards or voters. A full authority board must be present at the meeting when voting to approve the millage levy. Then the millage will have to pass by a majority of the townships in the authority. If just our township doesn't approve it, the millage will still be spread on everyone within the authority.

A one mill assessment may be assessed for a four-year term when the agreement has been approved and merges are complete probably not until 2025. One mill should be enough to get the fire department caught up with improvements so the millage can hopefully then be rolled back to a lesser amount that will keep the department running adequately. Sidney township's millage will no longer be assessed when that happens.

If the millage is passed, we will no longer have to pay the annual fire fees taken from the general fund. We can let voters know that if the 1 mill is passed, they will no longer have the .5 township millage and we won't have to pay the large amounts from the general fund.

Brandon is trying to get the department caught up with needed equipment and training. If Stanton merges, it will mean more manpower and more income from a millage. Right now, the budget is not enough to buy equipment, pay for the required training for fire fighters, or give fire fighters the rate of pay they deserve.

Once in the authority, the township gives up all claim to any assets within the fire department. The assets will depreciate so if at some point the township decides to withdraw from the authority there would be very little value left. The township would have nothing to fall back on at that point.

The other townships within the authority were required to pay \$8000 to cover attorney fees for processing the authority agreement. Sidney Township will need to pay an equal portion of \$8000 plus an additional \$500 for the attorney to revise and update the agreement. The money can be funded by the fire bond as the fire department will be using the funds to purchase new fire equipment.

A special meeting of the authority board will be called to bring Sidney Township up to date on authority proceedings. Meeting of the authority are normally held quarterly.

A motion was made by Benko and seconded by Stover to approve joining the Sheridan Community Fire Department Authority and accepting the Authority Agreement.

Roll Call Vote: Stover: yes, Benko: yes, Leyrer: yes, Peterman: yes, Will: yes. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Stover and seconded by Leyrer to pay \$8500 to the authority with payment to come from the fire bond fund to be used for purchasing fire equipment. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Stover and seconded by Leyrer to appoint Benko as the township representative on the authority board and Leyrer as the alternate. Motion carried.

Stanton Fire Department Merge With Sheridan Fire Authority

The Stanton Fire Department includes Douglass and Day Townships and the City of Stanton. Brandon asked if Sidney Township would agree to having the Stanton Fire Department merge into the Sheridan Community Fire Department Authority. The board agreed that it was a good idea and approved moving forward with the merge.

The three fire stations will remain in place with a fire chief and deputy chief to oversee the operations of the stations. The authority will oversee the budgets, combine all departments for training purposes and upgrading equipment as well as hiring any new employees needed to keep up with the increased responsibilities. Brandon will act as the administrator over all operations being responsible for all billings, payments etc. Any bills over \$5000 will be approved by the authority before payment is made.

Brandon wants to keep everything transparent. He presented the board with a digital copy of the policy and procedures of the authority.

ADJOURNMENT:

A motion was made by Stover and seconded by Leyrer to adjourn the meeting at 7:48 p.m. Motion carried.

Carrie Wills
Clerk