

Rockland Fire Protection District  
Board of Trustees  
Minutes of Special Meeting  
Tuesday, August 21, 2018  
Gorton Community Center  
400 E. Illinois  
Lake Forest, Illinois

1. Call to Order and Roll Call. President Rogers called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Roll call was taken with the following in attendance:

Trustee/President Dan Rogers  
Trustee/Secretary Robert Grum  
Trustee Karl Snoblin

Attorney Brian O'Connor  
Attorney John Kelly

Quorum acknowledged.

Also present were approximately 135 members of the public and the Knollwood Fire Department and Chief Carani of the Libertyville Fire Department, Chief Siebert of the Lake Forest Fire Department and Lake Forest City Manager Kiely.

President Rogers lead all assembled in the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Motion to Amend Board Procedures Regarding Public Comment. Attorney O'Connor explained the Board procedures regarding public comment and indicated that the Board would suspend portions of paragraphs 4 and 5 of its policy on public comment for this meeting. This will allow individual speakers to speak longer than 3 minutes and allow the Board to respond to questions posed to them by the speakers. On a motion made by Trustee Grum and a second by Trustee Snoblin, the motion to suspend the policy was approved by a unanimous voice vote.
3. Board Discussion of Service Proposal. President Rogers opened the meeting by indicating that the Board was considering a proposal from the City of Lake Forest and the Village of Libertyville to jointly provide contract fire and ambulance service to the residents of the Rockland Fire Protection District. The Board also received a proposal from the Village of Lake Bluff to work with Rockland on joint ambulance service. President Rogers asked Chief Carani of the Libertyville Fire Department to present the basics of the Lake Forest/Libertyville contract proposal. Chief Carani reviewed the basics of the proposal which was initially made in June 2018. Trustee Snoblin stated that he prepared a list of concerns with the contract and that he would like those concerns addressed. He also said that he was disappointed his list of concerns had not been sent to Lake Forest and Libertyville. Trustee Snoblin's concerns included:

- a) Trustee Snoblin inquired as to the ambulance billing rate and process that Lake Forest and Libertyville would use to bill Rockland residents. Chief Carani indicated that both Lake Forest and Libertyville would bill Rockland residents at the same rates as their citizens are billed and that there would be one billing rate across all service areas and that the billing process would be the same as what is reflected in the current service agreement between the Village of Libertyville and the Rockland Fire Protection District. Chief Carani indicated that in 2017 the collection rate for Libertyville response to Rockland was about 45%.
- b) Trustee Snoblin expressed concerns regarding the splitting of Rockland into 2 response areas, with Lake Forest responding to the north and Libertyville responding to the south of the railroad tracks. Trustee Snoblin specifically was concerned with response times by Lake Forest to areas south of the railroad tracks. Chief Carani responded to this point by indicating that there will be a response from both Lake Forest and Libertyville, with one sending an ALS engine and the other an ambulance. Trustee Snoblin stated that this seemed to provide different levels of service to the residents of the Rockland Fire Protection District. Chief Carani said that the dispatch centers have dealt with this dual response in the past and are able to provide the necessary response to Rockland. Trustee Rogers indicated that this type of response has been used since 1976 when Lake Forest began providing ambulance service to the District and he is not aware of any problems. Both Chief Carani and Chief Siebert agreed that their departments will provide a high level of service to the residents of Rockland's district. Trustee Snoblin stressed the excellent service and response times currently enjoyed by the residents with the Knollwood Fire Department. Trustee Rogers said that he thought Lake Forest and Libertyville will provide as good if not better service. Trustee Grum felt that a volunteer fire department is not the wave of the future. Trustee Snoblin stated that he had not seen any data or numbers to suggest that the service IGA with Lake Forest and Libertyville should be approved. Trustee Snoblin said that the service levels from Lake Forest and Libertyville was good but not as good as the service provided by Knollwood Fire today.
- c) Trustee Snoblin questioned the ability of Rockland to terminate the contract in the event the service does not meet Rockland's expectations. Trustee Snoblin suggested that a one-year trial period be used to measure the performance of Lake Forest and Libertyville and that Rockland delay disposing of Rockland's equipment or station during that time, so that if the IGA did not work out, then Knollwood Fire could resume functioning as the fire department for the District. Trustee Rogers indicated that he doubted Lake Forest and Libertyville would want to employ a one-year trial. Trustee Snoblin asked that his list of concerns be given to Lake Forest and Libertyville. Chief Siebert said that he felt that the IGA presents a solid plan for all including the residents currently served by the Knollwood Fire Department. Trustee Grum agreed that these plans will serve the residents of the District well.
- d) Trustee Snoblin expressed that he would like to see the minimum staffing language from the current IGA with Libertyville incorporated in this agreement. Chief Carani responded that the residents of the Rockland Fire Protection District will receive the exact same service levels as the residents of Lake Forest and

Libertyville. Chief Siebert stated that the City of Lake Forest is actively seeking to hire paid-on-premise firefighters to supplement their current staff and encouraged current Knollwood Department members to apply.

4. Public Comment and Questions. President Rogers invited the public present to address the Board or the Fire Chiefs. The following people addressed the Board:
  - a. Lynette Foss – Knollwood resident. Ms. Foss questioned the Board as to what hard data on response times was considered by the Board in reviewing the proposal. Trustee Rogers responded that both Lake Forest and Libertyville had supplied charts and graphs documenting response times. Trustee Grum also stated that the Board considered data supplied by Libertyville at the time Rockland entered into the ambulance agreement with the Village. Ms. Foss went on to recommend that the Board continue the status quo and wondered what the rush was to enter into the agreement with Lake Forest and Libertyville. She asked if there was an expiration date to the offer from Lake Forest and Libertyville. Trustee Rogers responded that it was unknown if there was an expiration date but that this process has been on-going for more than 1 ½ years and that the proposed IGA will be a benefit to the residents. Lake Forest City Manager Kiely stated that there was no hard and fast expiration date but that Lake Forest has also offered the same kind of agreement to the Village of Lake Bluff and that if Rockland does not act on the offer, then Lake Forest will turn its attention to negotiating with Lake Bluff. He also indicated that Lake Forest would not want to wait 6 months, one year or two years and that the City would have other considerations if that were the case.
  - b. Matt Nielsen – Lake Bluff resident. Mr. Nielsen stated that he thought it was a breach of the duty of loyalty for Trustee Rogers to state that he was going to do what he thought was best. Mr. Nielsen also said that he felt that it was important to view a response time chart based on the proposed split of the District. He also inquired if there were national standards regarding response times. Chief Carani responded that the American Heart Association (AHA) suggests a 4 to 6-minute response when a person is not breathing. The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) has developed a number of standards for the fire service and among those standards is Section 1710. That standard provides that the Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) should set response time guidelines based on local considerations. Chief Siebert added that the response times are reasonable and that a 6 minute and 10 second response time to Rte. 43 and Rte. 176 was appropriate. Chief Carani noted that the response time includes the 9-1-1 call being answered, the toning out of the fire units and the unit driving time. Mr. Nielsen said that a best practice for a board like the Rockland Board to use a request for proposal (RFP) for this type of contract. He stated that the RFP process would allow for the establishment of criteria, scoring and timelines for proposals. The process also affords the opportunity for structured evaluation of the any proposals received. He inquired from the Board as to what criteria were used to evaluate the proposals for service received by the Board. Trustee Rogers answered that the RFP process really did not fit the service proposal search because there are very few if any other entities that can provide the service the District is seeking. The Board did send out letters to Lake Bluff, Lake Forest and Libertyville 2 years ago soliciting their interest in serving Rockland. Trustee Rogers

added that the criteria the Board used to judge the proposals was who was going to provide an improved level of service. Trustee Grum indicated that there was a limited number of agencies that could provide the service sought by Rockland. He also said that the Board could have written an RFP or criteria in such a way as to eliminate an agency. Mr. Nielsen asked if any contacts have been made with the Village of Lake Bluff regarding their May 8<sup>th</sup> proposal. Trustee Rogers responded that he had no contacts were made because the idea of a joint volunteer ambulance service with Lake Bluff was not one that would best serve the District. Trustee Rogers said that he spoke to Chief Kirschhoffer of the Newport Fire District and Chief Steingart of the Countryside Fire District who both indicated that it would be very difficult to find enough volunteers to properly staff the service and that the costs of two ambulances and staffing would be high. Trustee Snoblin said that he had some conversations with the Village Manager in Lake Bluff and that on August 20<sup>th</sup> the Village had extended a revised offer which would pay the Rockland Fire Protection District \$38,000 per year for service to Lake Bluff. Trustee Grum stated that he met with the Lake Bluff Fire Chief and Village Administrator after the May 8<sup>th</sup> proposal. Trustee Grum questioned the accuracy of the volunteer staffing costs provided by Lake Bluff but that Chief Graf felt that the proposal made by Lake Bluff was accurate. Mr. Nielsen asked if the Board had killed the Lake Bluff proposal. Trustee Rogers responded that he personally was not interested in the Lake Bluff proposal because of the volunteer component of staffing the ambulance. Trustee Grum that because the Lake Bluff proposal continues to include starting a joint ambulance service, that he is not in favor of the Lake Bluff proposal. Trustee Snoblin stated that he was open to continuing discussions with Lake Bluff. He also said that the District should obtain more information before making any decision and did not see any need to rush the decision. He said that he was not ready to make any decision at this time.

- c. Nicki Snoblin – Rockland Fire District resident. Ms. Snoblin advocated for the Board using the RFP process to seek creative proposals to solve the problems of the District. She said that the District Board had not yet adequately defined the problem. She felt that when County Board Chair Lawlor announced his priority of consolidating governmental units in Lake County that the focus was put on Rockland. She also questioned whether Trustee Grum was appointed by Chairman Lawlor for the express purpose of consolidating Rockland. Ms. Snoblin asked how the Board could reconcile evidence that at least one member of the Board was appointed solely for the purpose of dissolving the Knollwood Fire Department? She stated that there was incontrovertible evidence in a video tape that showed Chairman Lawlor naming Trustee Grum as the “right man for the job” of dissolving the Knollwood Fire Department. Ms. Snoblin offered to make the video clip available and that Trustee Grum was engaged in discussions of the consolidation of the Rockland Fire Protection District before he was appointed to the Board. Trustee Rogers stated that he was not appointed by Chairman Lawlor but by the entire County Board and that there was never any expectation that he would close down the District. His concern is the continue financial viability of the District. Trustee Grum answered that the first time he heard of his wanting to do away with the District was after the last meeting and that he was not present when Chairman Lawlor made the statement that Ms. Snoblin referred to.

- d. David Anderson – Lake Bluff resident. Mr. Anderson asked if the Board had any cost projections for the costs to Rockland if the Board entered into the contract with Lake Forest and Libertyville for the next 5 years. Trustee Rogers responded that the Board looked at a 10-year projection that indicated that the District would have a positive cash flow of \$300,000 at the end of 10 years. Trustee Snoblin said that the District would have a negative cash flow at year 8 of the agreement. Trustee Rogers suggested that the difference is what rental value the current station might bring if it is no longer used as a fire station. Trustee Snoblin stated that the last five years of the IGA with Lake Forest and Libertyville would generate negative cash flow and use District reserves.
- e. Jon Harlow – Rockland resident and Fire Chief of the Knollwood Fire Department. Mr. Harlow indicated that last year the Fire Department returned to the District \$85,000 unspent from the budget. He also stated that the revised IGA is more expensive in years 2, 3 and 4 than the original quote of \$470,000 with annual 3% increases. Mr. Harlow also expressed his concerns over the prior problems the District had with Lake Forest and the accuracy of ambulance billing. He wondered why the District would want to enter into a contract with a provider that had not been honest in the past. City Manager Kiely responded that the past contracts between the City and the District for ambulance service contained “true up” language which functioned to measure the contract against the actual prior year service. He said that this process resulted in money being returned to the District in some years. He also said that this is the same language the City had with the Village of Lake Bluff. Mr. Harlow stated that as recently as this past week there was an ambulance response in which Knollwood was on the scene within 2 minutes while the ambulance response from Libertyville Station 1 was 8 minutes. Mr. Harlow asked what the transport rates for Rockland District residents would be? Trustee Grum indicated that there would be different rates depending on the level of service. Chief Siebert responded that the rates will be the same for residents whether they live in Lake Forest, Libertyville or Rockland and that Libertyville is in the process of revising its rates to do this. Mr. Harlow inquired as to any guarantee of the manpower on the Lake Forest and Libertyville ambulances remaining at current levels. Chief Siebert answered that manpower will remain the same.
- f. Mr. Fontana – Knollwood resident. Mr. Fontana stated that this is all about money and asked if there will be a state law requiring consolidation of fire departments like the law which forced 9-1-1 centers to consolidate.
- g. Bruce Mack – Knollwood resident. – Mr. Mack asked if on an ALS ambulance call would the ambulance respond from the closest station? Chief Carani responded that Lake Forest and Libertyville would respond with an ALS engine and ambulance from the appropriate station. Mr. Mack’s concern was if the response would be faster if the Knollwood Fire Department station remained open. Chief Carani indicated that every day in Lake County fire departments must deal with the fact that the closest station or piece of equipment may be busy and that plans have been formulated to deal with these situations. Mr. Mack commented that closing the Knollwood station would remove a company of trained responders from County response.

- h. Theresa Caragello – Lake Forest resident. Ms. Caragello asked Chief Siebert if he could guarantee that the response to Knollwood residents will not jeopardize the response to Lake Forest residents by increasing those response times? Chief Siebert stated that the prepared response plans are 8 levels deep to anticipate these issues. Chief Siebert believed they could guarantee that response times to Lake Forest calls will not be jeopardized with this contract. Ms. Caragello then asked if the increased calls to Rockland will put additional strain on the Lake Forest Firefighters/Paramedics. Chief Siebert responded that the estimate for the number of additional calls generated by the IGA is 125, or less than 1 call every 3 days. He does not believe this will affect the Lake Forest resources. The City is also working to hire additional firefighters to supplement its staff. Ms. Caragello stated her concern that this contract with Rockland was being entered into solely to help fund the Lake Forest Firefighter Pension Fund. City Manager Kiely answered this by saying that the Lake Forest Firefighters Pension Fund is in better financial shape than many other funds and that the City has been specifically allocating funds for the Pension Fund and that the contract money would not be allocated to the Pension Fund. Ms. Caragello suggested that the offer of Lake Bluff to pay \$38,000 to Rockland was something the Board should consider. Trustee Rogers responded that if Lake Bluff wanted to pay their fair share for the Knollwood response, the Board would consider that. If Lake Forest and Lake Bluff want to negotiate a contract for service, that would be up to them.
- i. Tim Johnston – does not reside in the District. Mr. Johnston stated that it was well known that accidents happen at the same time. He stated that 28% of the time calls are concurrent. He asked if the Fire Chiefs could verify this number. Mr. Johnston also pointed out the Section 12(b) of the IGA is a “poison pill” penalty provision that would force Rockland to pay the entire value of the contract if a payment is 60 days late. Attorney O’Connor responded that several concerns regarding the contract language have been raised with Lake Forest and Libertyville and that this concern would also be raised. Mr. Johnston questioned the fact that no performance standards are included in the contract. Trustee Grum answered that it is very difficult to establish guidelines for the kind of service the IGA will provide. Chief Carani advised Mr. Johnston that his numbers also indicate that 28-33% of calls are concurrent. Chief Carani stated that Libertyville’s experience with Mundelein and the use of the Libertyville tower to respond to Mundelein have indicated that there has been no degradation of service. Chief Carani also said that there are too many variables to develop performance standards. Chief Carani stated that the contract that the Village of Libertyville has with the Libertyville Fire Protection District does not contain any performance metrics and there have been no issues with service. Mr. Johnston stated that it was his opinion that this contract was entirely one-sided toward Lake Forest and Libertyville and that the Rockland Fire Protection District had no real bargaining power.
- j. Ed Whitehead – Knollwood resident. Mr. Whitehead questioned whether or not Lake Forest would work with the new Rockland Board when it is elected in 2019? City Manager Kiely responded that if this proposal from Lake Forest and Libertyville is not approved, Lake Forest would begin negotiations with Lake Bluff and would be happy to talk to the new Rockland Board if they were still interested. Mr. Whitehead

then asked if there was a “string” tying member of the Rockland Board to the Lake County Board? Trustee Rogers denied that there was any relationship with the Lake County Board or Board Member Rummell.

- k. David Brown – Lake Bluff resident. Mr. Brown quoted a statement from former President Eisenhower regarding the duties of officials. He asked that the Board slow down the process to allow for all proposals to be more thoroughly vetted. There are deeper concerns than just service levels.
- l. Tom Wilson – Knollwood resident and 30-year Firefighter/Paramedic. Mr. Wilson believes the proposal from Lake Forest/Libertyville is a good one and controls costs going forward. He stated his concern with the Lake Bluff proposal was with the ability to attract sufficient manpower to staff the ambulances on a daily basis. He felt that the relationship with Lake Forest and Libertyville will benefit all of the residents of the Rockland Fire Protection District and that consolidation is the wave of the future.
- m. Robert Wayne – Lake Forest resident and past resident of the District. He indicated he liked the idea of the contract. He also stated that he did not agree with the statement that the majority of the District’s residents are against the proposed IGA. Mr. Wayne also felt that using 2 professional fire departments to serve the residents of the District will be a benefit to them.
- n. Matt Nielsen – Lake Bluff resident. – Mr. Nielsen asked how the City of Lake Forest and the Village of Libertyville will allocate the revenue from the Rockland IGA? Attorney O’Connor indicated that decision will be made by the elected boards of those communities. City Manager Kiely said that the revenue to the City of Lake Forest from the Rockland IGA will be allocated to the City’s general fund and there will be no specific allocation to pension funding. Mr. Nielsen believes it is a conflict of interest for Trustee Grum, who is receiving a pension from the City of Lake Forest, to vote on the approval of the IGA as that vote could impact the funding of the pension fund. Attorney O’Connor stated that there would be no conflict for Trustee Grum to vote on the agreement.
- o. Janice Wolter – Knollwood resident. Ms. Wolter asked how much money the District will save by entering into this contract? Trustee Rogers answered that they do not have a firm number on the savings. Ms. Wolter urged the Board to table the vote on the IGA until the Board gets real numbers on how much the contract will save the District. Trustee Grum indicated that the station building may be attractive to commercial users because of its location.
- p. Chris Brager – Knollwood resident and a 30-year Firefighter/Paramedic. Mr. Brager expressed his concern that if the District Board approves the contract, District residents will lose their authority to control the services provided to the District residents. There will be no ability to backtrack once the Knollwood Fire Department is closed and the equipment is sold. He also shared his concern regarding the ability of Lake Forest and Libertyville to respond with their current levels of staffing.

Public Comment was closed at 8:57 p. m.

- 5. Board Consideration of Services Proposal/IGA. Trustee Rogers moved to recess the meeting and reconvene on Thursday, August 23, 2018 at 3:00 p.m. in the training room

of the Knollwood Fire Station. Trustee Grum seconded the motion. The motion was adopted on a unanimous voice vote.

6. The meeting was recessed at 8:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John H. Kelly  
District Attorney

Approved \_\_\_\_\_, 2018

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Dan Rogers, Board President

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Robert Grum, Board Secretary