

Powell Township Board
Special Board Meeting – Fire Dept. Unit #2109
PO Box 319, 101 Bensinger, Big Bay 49808
August 25, 2022 1PM
Draft Minutes APPROVED

1. Call to Order at 1:04 pm by Supervisor.
2. Roll Call of Officers: Darlene Turner (Supervisor) present; Kelli Santilli (Treasurer) present; Mitch Walker (Clerk) present, Karen December (Trustee) present; Denise Hudson (Trustee) absent.
3. General Discussion:
 - a. Walker: Requests Fire Chief Sutter to bring Board up to speed situation regarding Unit #2109
 - i. Sutter: Loaned from DNR in 2003, allows PTFD to fight fires off pavement, 6x6, carried 1,500 gal. of water, can go where our other trucks cannot go, 1963 military vehicle.
 - b. December: Requests Fire Dept Asst Chief Brian Roell to speak to DNR involvement in vehicle.
 - i. Roell: Current DNR employee. Problem is off pavement access with our current vehicles. #2109 is important to PTFD as it can transport 1,500 gals of water to incidents away from township fire hydrants. In addition, PTFD would like to apply for a replacement of #2109, a type 4, 4x4 truck. We should not be taking our current trucks off pavement, especially in the winter and some bridges are not safe for them. We should keep 2109 on the PT vehicle roll as if we apply for a Federal grant for a type 4, 4x4 truck, we can only replace a like kind existing unit. The grant does not apply to the addition of another vehicle to the fleet, and we would have to find other financing options other than a grant.
 - c. Walker: Would #2019 be able to cross the bridges in question?
 - i. Even #2109 would not be safe of some of these bridges. However, we should not be taking our existing trucks to these off-pavement locations due to the wear and tear and the expense to repair them.
 - d. James Mapes (Public): Is the issue disposal or whether to keep #2019.
 - i. Walker: To decide whether to keep and pay for associated maintenance.
 - ii. Turner: #2019 has been located at the HMC for many years. When R&R came to Big Bay to inspect PTFD vehicles, the Fire Chief had #2109 brought from the HMC to Big Bay for inspection. Very concerned about spending a lot of money on a 1963 vehicle. Agrees that we should keep for grant purposes, but the DNR has not had a problem with it just sitting at the HMC. HMC has done

some maintenance, but it has never cost the Township any money to maintain.

- e. Sutter: The Township was due for an ISO review and during the gathering of needed documents, the DNR was requested to provide PTFD with a list of what vehicles PT was responsible for. As #2109 was included in this list, I felt it necessary for it to be inspected with the rest of the fleet. It passed the DOT inspection, but it does have some needed repairs – generally minor, except for the air compressor.
- f. Turner: My goal has always been for the PTFD to maintain good equipment, although we may disagree on what funds are spent on.
- g. James Mapes (Public): What is the DNR process for disposing of vehicles?
 - i. Sutter: If we no longer have use for a vehicle, we can contact the DNR and they will reclaim it.
- h. Walker: What is the cost of the repairs needed on #2109?
 - i. Sutter: City of Marquette to come to Big Bay next week to provide PRFD with a cost estimate.
- i. Walker: Can we estimate the costs?
 - i. Sutter: Most repairs noted by R\$R are minor and will not take the unit out of service, except for the brake compressor.
- j. Walker: What will the repair costs be over the next 3 – 5 years?
 - i. Sutter: Would like to get something in writing from the HMC regarding what they are willing to contribute. Having #2109 located at the HMC is the ideal location for the PTFD as it gives us even placement for fire prevention in terms of water transportation availability.
- k. Santilli: Is it acceptable to the DNR for the HMC to carry the insurance on #2109, or does the Township need to provide that?
 - i. Sutter: Per the DNR, the Township should carry the insurance on \$2109. The HMC has been providing the insurance and the DNR is aware of that as they inspect #2109 every 2 years.
- l. Santilli: If the Township is going to expend additional funds to maintain #2109, should it not be more available to the whole Township, and not just the HMC where it is currently located? By keeping #2109 at the HMC, doesn't that require that we use the expensive vehicles not suited for off pavement to respond to off pavement incidents in central and southern Powell Township?
 - i. Sutter: The bonus to positioning #2109 at the HMC is that we have 4 firefighters available at the HMC and the HMC is the largest property in Powell Township.
 - ii. Roell: #2109 is not always the best vehicle to respond as it is very slow and probably should not be a primary response vehicle during the winter. It is difficult to drive and not all firefighters are

- qualified to drive it. This is why we should be applying for a grant to replace #2109. In addition, the HMC can store #2109 indoors.
- m. Santilli/Walker: If we do no or minimal service on #2109 can it still be used for the grant?
- i. Sutter: Yes
- n. J. Gertz (Public): How much grant money is available/needed to replace #2109?
- i. Sutter: \$250,000 - \$280,000. In addition, we are working with the DNR to swap for #2109 a vehicle they have available in Menominee. B. Roell has been working on this.
- o. N. Korstad: Should the Township be allowing zoned properties off roads that cannot be serviced by PTFD vehicles.
- i. Turner: This question should be directed to the Planning and Zoning Commission.
- p. Walker: Is there a cost associated with applying for this grant?
- i. Sutter: The current submitted grant request is for #2105. We would need to write a new grant request for #2109.
 - ii. Turner: This can be time consuming and expensive.
- q. J. Gertz (Public). What percentage of fire calls are on pavement vs. off pavement.
- i. Sutter: 20% of calls over the last 10 years were off pavement, brush fires.
- r. D. Butler (Public): My business experience has been that these older vehicles are more simply built and thus easier and cheaper to maintain and repair. Her mechanic estimates the compressor repairs to #2109 would be \$600 to \$1000.
- s. P Bakken (Public): How long does it take to take to get a grant approved?
- i. Sutter: At least 1 year and it make take a couple of tries.
- t. Turner: Why do we keep #2103 and #2104 on the Township roster if they are out of service?
- i. Sutter: #2103 is on the roster so we could use if for a grant – and we found that it cannot be used and it requires \$15,000 in repairs. #2104 was kept for grant purposes and it is in very bad shape.
 - ii. Turner: The Township is still paying minimal insurance on these units.
 - iii. B. Roell: Recommends that we take #2103 and #2104 off the rolls.
 - iv. Sutter: Keep them until the end of the ISO review as we get credit for vehicles “in reserve”. The better the ISO score we have will benefit the Township and homeowners’ insurance ratings.
- u. Walker: How much is the HMC paying for insurance on #2109?
- i. Sutter: Approximately \$500 per year.
- v. Santilli: Have we spoken with the HMC?
- i. Turner: They have not responded.

- ii. Santilli: A board member should be negotiating with the HMC
 - w. Walker: Is there a strategic plan for fleet maintenance and upgrades?
 - i. Sutter: This is in process
 - ii. J. Mapes (Public): A 10-year strategic plan is necessary to make these decisions.
 - x. B. Brown (Public): Do we save on homeowners insurance premiums if better fire department or higher ISO reviews?
 - i. Various inputs: Yes. ISO review is every 5 years.
- 4. **Motion:** “Keep #2109 on roster with repairs as needed” (December/Santilli).
 - a. Board discussion regarding need for cost limit, strategic plan, and agreement with HMC.
 - b. **Motion amended** to “keep #2019 on the fleet roster”. **All yes, motion carried.**
- 5. **Motion:** “That the Fire Chief present an estimate of the cost of repairs needed for #2109 at the next Board meeting” (Walker/Santilli). **All yes, motion carried.**
- 6. Santilli: Discussed that when vehicles are taken to City of Marquette for repairs, the Fire Chief does have spending authority to approve repairs until the cost is brought before the board. This is not very cost effective as it then requires two trips and extra time to get repairs done.
 - a. Turner: Fire Chief can get emergency approval via phone call to the Supervisor.
- 7. **Motion:** “That the Fire Department work with the Township Board to develop a preliminary strategic fleet plan within the next 6 months” (Walker/????) **All yes, motion carried.**
- 8. C. Moran (Public): As member of the PTFD for 20+ years, spoke to the need to keep #2109 and the damage to using on pavement trucks for off pavement incidents and their access to remote locations. In addition, there are alternate off-pavement roads in the HMC that would allow an off-pavement truck to respond faster from the HMC. Spoke to the history and purpose of the PTFD and its management.

Adjourn: 2:20pm

Minutes prepared by
Mitch Walker
Powell Township Clerk