

**FIRE OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF MEETING HELD FEBRUARY 1, 2010**

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The Fire Oversight Committee met in regular session on February 1, 2010 at 5:30 p.m. in the Municipal Building Council Chambers. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Benson.

ROLL CALL:

The following members were present at the Call to Order: Randy Benson, Ron Comer, Michael Kuhn, Richard Pettit and Scott Anding.

MEMBERS ABSENT:

None.

ALSO PRESENT:

Also present were Dan Alldred, Fire Chief, Anna M. Sizemore, Village Manager, Kelli R Novak, Clerk of Council and three visitors.

ORGANIZATION:

Mr. Comer moved to appoint Randy Benson as Chairperson, second by Mr. Pettit.

ROLL CALL: Mr. Anding, yes; Mr. Benson, yes; Mr. Comer, yes; Mr. Kuhn, yes; Mr. Pettit, yes. 5-yes, 0-no. MOTION CARRIED.

Mr. Anding volunteered to be Vice Chairperson, second by Mr. Benson.

ROLL CALL: Mr. Benson, yes; Mr. Comer, yes; Mr. Kuhn, yes; Mr. Pettit, yes; Mr. Anding, yes. 5-yes, 0-no. MOTION CARRIED.

All agreed that the meetings would be held the first Monday of each month at 5:30.

Mr. Benson stated that when it gets closer to the election we will need to meet more often to discuss the Levy.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Mr. Benson stated that on page three it reads Mr. Koogle and he was not at the meeting.

Chief Alldred stated that on two it should read "Medic #653", not "Medic # 63".

Mr. Anding questioned if Chief Alldred was planning to number the new Medic, Chief Alldred replied that he was not planning on numbering it.

Chief Alldred stated that they number the Medic's 1,2, and 3 just so the staff will be able to identify them.

Mr. Anding questioned what year is Medic #653, Chief Alldred replied that it is a 1993.

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Mr. Pettit stated it was time to retire Medic #653.

Mr. Benson questioned what would happen to the retired Medic, Chief Alldred replied he would consider putting it up on Gov Deals.

Mr. Pettit moved to accept the December 7, 2009 minutes as amended, second by Mr. Comer.

ROLL CALL: Mr. Comer, yes; Mr. Kuhn, abstain Mr. Pettit, yes; Mr. Anding, yes; Mr. Benson, yes. 4-yes, 1-abstention. MOTION CARRIED.

VILLAGE MANAGER'S REPORT:

None.

FIRE CHIEF'S REPORT:

Fire Chief Dan Alldred gave the January 2010 report. The total Fire and EMS calls year to date is 80.

Chief Alldred stated the department has taken delivery of the new Medic a 2009 Ford/McCoy Miller. This unit was purchased by GRS, Inc. and donated to the Germantown Fire/EMS. We are extremely grateful to GRS, Inc. for the new Medic.

Chief Alldred stated that the radio is being installed and the personnel are working on how to outfit the new Medic unit with equipment and supplies.

Chief Alldred stated the new Medic should be on the road within the next two weeks. There will be drivers training for the personnel before the Medic is on the road.

Chief Alldred stated that he submitted for reimbursement from the State Fire Marshall Office for the tuition and books for the 11 students who took the Firefighter 1 class in 2009.

He went on by saying that in 2009 we had 11 personnel take the FFI class, 4 take EMT-B class and 2 who upgraded their EMT-B to intermediate. There is currently 1 member in FF2 class and 1 member in EMT-B class at Sinclair.

He also stated that he applied for a equipment grant through the State Fire Marshall Office for turnout gear. Time will tell if we receive this \$10,000 grant.

Chief Alldred stated that he is still working on First Emergency First program. He has drawn up duties and responsibilities that the crews would be doing. He has also drawn up some cost to outfit the personnel. To outfit 12 personnel with PPE would be \$29,000 to \$30,000.

Mr. Benson questioned where we are at with the billing, Chief Alldred replied that we are on hold with the billing, until we can renegotiate the contract with GRS.

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Mr. Benson stated that after the meeting at the Library he was thinking that if we institute soft billing right now, before the election, it may hurt the election. He stated that we need to go after the people out of town people inform them about the Levy.

Chief Alldred stated that the only problem with going after out of town people is that only a dozen or so people would be affected.

Mr. Benson questioned what would be involved in outfitting the new Medic; Chief Alldred replied that the radio is the main thing. Then moving the equipment from the old Medic to the new Medic. This Medic is set up a little different than the other Medics, so the staff is labeling where they would like the equipment to go. We need to have all the Medics fairly the same so there is continuity in all of them.

Chief Alldred stated that after the new Medic is equipped, there would be a training session with all the staff on how to drive the new Medic.

Mr. Benson questioned if this Medic was that much different from the other Medics in regards to driving, Chief Alldred replied the new Medic is six inches longer, and a little bit taller than the old one.

Chief Alldred stated he would like the staff to be familiar with the new Medic, so they are comfortable backing the Medic and each member will have to go thru a obstacle course.

Mr. Benson questioned if the new Medic would be outfitted like the other Medics, Chief Alldred replied yes, but this new Medic has a rear compartment has been changed to hold two (SCBA) Self Contained Breathing Apparatus units.

Mr. Comer questioned if Medic #653 is still running while the new Medic is having the radio installed, Chief Alldred replied yes, but it does not have a radio in it.

Chief Alldred stated that he is planning on discussing portable radios at the business meeting tonight to be used in the Medic.

Mr. Benson questioned what type of supplies are normally carried on the Medic, is there a certain amount of drugs, bandages and stuff, Chief Alldred replied yes there are drugs in the drug bag.

Chief Alldred stated that the new Medic has a curbside compartment so you cannot get to the drug bag. The drug bag is in a locked compartment with a touch pad that requires a code to gain access. There has been a problem across the Country with drug bags being stolen from Medics.

Mr. Benson questioned if all the Medics carry the same items and if they were all stocked, Chief Alldred replied yes.

Mr. Benson questioned if we could have everyone on the Committee do their own report during the meeting, Mrs. Sizemore replied we would add it to the next agenda.

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Mr. Benson stated that Laurie Rohrbach gave him the balance of the Fire/EMS Levy account of \$950.44.

Mr. Anding questioned what the \$950.44 was used for, Chief Alldred replied it was used for the Levy Committee.

Mr. Benson stated that we already have the signs for the upcoming Levy. We would be able to reuse the signs from the last attempt.

Mr. Pettit stated that wording and the date would have to be changed for this election on the sign at Mr. Mejia's office.

Mr. Anding questioned if we were going put the Fire/EMS Levy on for this coming May election, Mr. Benson replied it was on the ballot for May 4th.

Mr. Anding questioned how many times are we going to attempt to get this Levy passed, Mr. Benson replied that we are getting closer each time and hopefully we can hold off on the billing if we were to pass it in May.

Mr. Anding stated he does not know how many we can keep throwing it out there before we all get lynched.

Mr. Pettit stated that we need to tell people what we need and what is paid for.

Mr. Anding stated that Mr. Pettit was exactly right, but hasn't that already been done.

Mr. Benson stated that people still think the Levy is for a new firehouse.

Mr. Pettit stated that the people still do not know what is going on.

Mr. Anding stated that it is the responsibility of this group then to make sure that the word is getting out. It may take weekly meeting.

Mr. Pettit stated that there are a lot of people in the Township that have no idea of what is going on.

Mr. Benson stated that the Levy failed in the Township.

Mr. Kuhn stated that the Levy failed in the Township and Hillcrest.

Mr. Benson stated there is still a lot of confusion about GRS and Fire/EMS Inc, what exactly each of their rolls is.

Mr. Pettit stated that people do not understand that it takes money to become trained as a EMS.

Mr. Benson stated that there was an agreement signed between the Village and GRS, and we need to stick to that agreement unless changes are made.

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Mr. Comer stated that the times have changed over the years

Mr. Pettit stated that it used to only take a First Aid card and a little training and that was all it took to become a rescue member.

Mr. Pettit stated that the people do not understand how much it cost for all the schooling for the EMS personnel.

Mr. Benson stated that the citizens have been so used to the Rescue Squad for so many years that they just don't get it.

Mr. Benson added that the economy has a lot to do with the levy failing, but we are getting closer each time.

Mr. Comer stated that we will need to concentrate in the Township and do some door-to-door knocking.

Mr. Kuhn stated that according to the election results we could get the 25 votes just from Hillcrest, which is a easier area to hit door-to-door. He is a believer that door-to-door affects people more than a mailer, because people get so used to just tossing things. Mailers are going to definitely be needed, but doing some door-to-door work will need to be done also. He spoke with Chief Alldred about going door-to-door and saying he is with the Village Council. He may get thrown out of a few yards, but it may be worth it to get the 25 votes we need. Another thing that may work would be to go the local churches and do some evacuation planning, because there are a lot of people there, and they tend to vote. We show up and show them things about their building, plus it gives the guys on Fire/EMS a chance to be in church's and buildings that may catch on fire one day that they have never been in and see some of the oddities.

Mr. Benson stated that GRS has put a shock device in almost every church in Germantown.

Laurie Rohrbach stated that there are two women in Town that are willing to make phone calls to support the Levy.

Mr. Benson stated that we need to call houses in the phone book and if we don't talk to someone leave a message on the answering machine.

Mr. Kuhn stated that a customer came into the hardware store the other day and spoke with a gentlemen who voted for the Levy, but thought it was for a new firehouse.

Mr. Kuhn stated they he does not think we are out of the game yet; we only need 25 votes, that's about as tight as we can get.

Mr. Anding questioned how far away are we from being able to bill, if we said tomorrow, how long would it take, Mrs. Sizemore replied that Council currently does not want us to pursue it until after we see what happens with the Levy.

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Chief Alldred stated that if the levy fails in May we will not be ready to go the day after.

Mr. Benson questioned if we are going to run it again in November.

Mr. Comer questioned if we were going to forget about the levy, and stay with the billing.

Mr. Kuhn stated that the billing couldn't cover the operations, so we have to have both. The thing with billing is that every Municipality, from what he has been told, is billing and we are not. That was because we were lucky enough to have GRS. Eventually billing will have to be done.

Chief Alldred stated the best thing we can do now is to approach GRS to give an extension on the current agreement which may be four more months in this year and possibly another year on top of that, a total of a 16 month extension. And we will also work as hard as we can to pass the levy.

Mr. Benson questioned if a extension of the agreement was out of the question, Laurie Rohrbach replied we are just waiting to talk.

Jenifer Shyrigh questioned if the billing company in the Village would be able to do the billing for the Fire/EMS, Chief Alldred replied no.

Mr. Kuhn stated that the medical billing company in town is a patient type billing, but he will contact her and ask.

Mr. Pettit questioned if someone wanted to donate to the Fire/EMS can it be done anonymously, Mrs. Sizemore replied it would have to be announced during the Council meeting but she could say it was made anonymously.

Mr. Benson stated that he has noticed in the obituaries the last several months that a lot of people who die in Germantown that are asking donations to be given to the Germantown Fire/EMS.

Mr. Comer stated he would think we are going to get some press off the new Medic, it may be a good way to explain it was a donation from GRS and that they are separate from Fire/EMS.

Mr. Anding questioned why Council decided not to pursue the Fire/EMS billing right now, Mr. Kuhn replied because there is a legality between the Village and GRS. Their lawyer says no and our lawyer says yes. So we either start it and we get sued or we take it to Court as a civil issue. Those are our two options. If we are not ready to do it until after the Levy anyway, because of worries it may affect the vote, and we need to implement it.

Mr. Anding stated that we need to be implementing it right now, because we need the money.

Mr. Kuhn stated he that he agreed with Mr. Anding but that is what was discussed in the retreat.

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Mr. Anding questioned if it had been approved, or was it just discussed during the retreat, Mr. Kuhn replied yes.

Mr. Anding stated that someone needs to step up to the plate and get the department the money it needs. If that means we start billing now then so be it. We are totally hinging everything on something that is going to happen four months from now. The Levy may not pass again, and then what are we going to do. How long are we going to wait folks?

Mrs. Sizemore stated that Mr. Anding needs to have the Council Liaison make that presentation to the Council tonight. She stated she agreed with Mr. Anding 100 percent.

Laurie Rohrbach stated that GRS was just winging it off the old budget and construction numbers. We knew the amount was going to have to change. If the Village needs more money they need to come and ask for it. Look at what you need and ask us for it.

Mr. Anding stated that billing would off set some of the cost that they would be requesting from GRS. If we started billing and would get \$600,000 from billing a year, or whatever the amount may be, we may not need to ask for \$250,000.

Laurie Rohrbach stated that GRS promised everyone that the billing would not be done for three years.

Mr. Anding stated that we are letting free money go out the door here and he cannot believe that he is the only one that sees that.

All agreed that they see the free money going out the door.

Mr. Anding stated that we are either billing the residents or we are billing the insurance companies. He stated he knows what the contract reads between GRS, he helped create it. He stated he was pretty sure the contract reads that we would be billing the insurance companies not the residents.

Mr. Kuhn stated that if the two lawyers disagree, it doesn't matter what either party believes.

Mr. Comer stated maybe he is not seeing something here, but why is it legal for some Municipalities to bill.

Mr. Kuhn stated that other Municipalities do not have a contract with a third party that is currently funding their operation. In the contract there is a discrepancy between both parties and what their terminology is in the contract.

Mr. Benson stated that we have a very unique situation here.

Mr. Kuhn stated that we have a one of a kind situation.

Mr. Comer stated that if the third party is not fully funding the operation how can they say what we do.

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Mr. Kuhn stated that it all comes down to the written agreement.

Mrs. Sizemore stated that she would like for Chief Alldred, Laurie Rohrbach and herself to sit down and discuss the contract.

Chief Alldred questioned what was the possibility of getting GRS to not pursue any legal action toward the Village if we do start billing; Laurie Rohrbach replied GRS will not sue you.

Chief Alldred stated that no one in this room ever thought we would have this much difficulty getting the Levy to pass. Had the Levy passed, we would not be sitting here in this boat. Now every day that goes by that we are not collecting money, we are just getting that much closer to cutting our throat. We may have to stop the Fire/EMS services totally. He stated he would rather see the billing get underway as soon as possible without stepping on anybody's toes. It will make GRS's money last longer, and it will improve service. Whether or not it hurts the levy, he is not even sure we can even be concerned at that point. If they vote no again, it is a very good possibility that a Fire truck will roll up to your door and the Medic will come from EMT, Inc., or wherever they may be coming from. If you are suffering a heart attack when your Medic is 20 minutes away, because everyone one in the community voted no, that's a hard pill to swallow.

Mr. Benson questioned the billing bringing in \$600,000 a year; Mr. Kuhn replied it should be between \$125,000 to \$250,000.

Chief Alldred stated that we will not be able to survive on just what the billing brings in, we have to do something.

Mr. Benson stated that we need the Levy, whatever we can bring in on soft-billing we just help pay for the extras.

Mr. Anding stated he did not know where we go from here, but if we need to make a motion that we pursue starting the billing process now then he is willing to make that motion. Because it is the right thing to do. We cannot wait.

Mr. Pettit questioned who we will bill, Mr. Anding replied that we would be billing the insurance companies just like the document says.

Mr. Pettit stated that his own insurance only pays \$150.00; Chief Alldred replied that is \$150.00 we didn't have.

Mr. Benson stated according to the agreement that we entered into with GRS, if we start billing now they can cut off all the funding.

Chief Alldred stated that he hopes it wouldn't come down to that.

Mr. Kuhn stated that Laurie Rohrbach just stated that they would not do that.

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Laurie Rohrbach stated that GRS made a promise and she asked that the Village wait to start billing after September 1st. Please just respect GRS and wait.

Mrs. Sizemore stated that it would take that long to get the billing up and running.

Mr. Anding stated that he agreed with Laurie Rohrbach, but that doesn't mean we can't stick to the contract, because the contract says we can bill insurance companies not the individual resident.

Mrs. Sizemore stated that we need a second to Mr. Anding's motion before you continue to discuss it.

Mr. Comer seconded Mr. Anding's motion.

Mr. Anding stated that he totally understood, and that it will take months before we will see revenue coming in.

Mr. Kuhn stated that this vote for a recommendation to Council to start doing the billing, and not start the billing right now.

Mr. Anding replied absolutely.

Chief Alldred stated that the next step would be to meet with GRS and get an extension on the contract.

Laurie Rohrbach stated that if you anticipate that you are loosing \$200,000 between now and September 1st, then by golly ask us for it. It would be worth it to the older members of GRS.

Mr. Anding questioned how many more years or quarters GRS can fund, the money will run out eventually, Laurie Rohrbach replied yes it will.

Mr. Sizemore questioned if Mr. Anding could amend his motion to say that the billing would start after September 1st, Mr. Anding replied that that would defeat the purpose.

Mr. Kuhn stated that we could make an official motion or he would bring it up in work session and we can discuss it. He questioned Mrs. Sizemore if that would be okay, or do they need to make a motion and then he could bring it up in work session.

Mrs. Sizemore replied that Fire Oversight needs to make the motion, have a roll call and then recommend that it be brought up to Council.

Mr. Kuhn stated that the recommendation be that Council look into billing immediately and how they feel about that. Right now we just have what we discussed during the retreat. If we actually get some sort of actual minutes of discussion that we could read we may be able to see where we are at better.

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Mr. Anding amended his motion to a recommendation to Council to start billing insurance companies for the Fire/EMS immediately.

Mr. Anding stated that we are just letting money fly out the door. He has been saying that since the day he was Fire Chief and he does not understand why we are not taking advantage of this free money. Not one person in this entire community will ever see a bill, not one person. It is the insurance companies that we are going after. Everyone's insurance premiums have this built into it. We are just letting it go right out the door.

Chief Alldred stated that he attended a Alliance Meeting in Dayton, with other Fire Chiefs around him questioning why Germantown is still not billing insurance companies and Medicare. These elderly people who use the Medic's have paid into Medicare their whole life, and that is a truckload of Government money. The patient will never get the bill; it would go straight to the insurance companies.

Mr. Benson stated that a motion has been made and we need to vote on it. He asked Mrs. Sizemore to read the motion that Mr. Anding made.

Mrs. Sizemore stated that Mr. Anding motion was, a recommendation to Council that we begin EMS soft billing immediately, upon their approval.

Mr. Anding stated even if we were to start the billing tomorrow it will be months down the road before anything happens, contracts and fees will still need to be negotiated.

ROLL CALL: Mr. Kuhn, yes; Mr. Pettit, yes Mr. Anding, yes; Mr. Benson, no; Mr. Comer, yes. 4=yes, 1=no. MOTION CARRIED.

OLD BUSINESS:

None.

NEW BUSINESS:

Mr. Benson asked if anyone in the audience would like to make any comments.

Dave Herbst stated he keeps hearing the term, "we are out of money, and we are out of money". GRS has offered \$250,000 a year and has not been billed that money.

Mr. Kuhn stated the way it is set up it is very hard to explain; Mrs. Sizemore would you like to explain it.

Mrs. Sizemore stated that if we do not spend the entire \$250,000 then we do not get that. We have to spend the money to get the entire amount, and we don't spend all of it.

Chief Alldred stated that the fact that we never spent the full \$250,000 is because we never wanted to waste the money, we bought what we needed, what we had to have. Somehow we

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have gotten into a pinch the first quarter of this year, and he is still baffled about how it worked. We are in a tight spot right now.

Dave Herbst questioned if it was a quarter behind, Mrs. Sizemore replied no. She went on by saying that is where the confusion comes in. The contract year is different then the calendar year, so it makes it more difficult.

Mrs. Sizemore stated that what happened is our expenses up through November are given to Laurie Rohrbach, so she knows where we are, and then the money they have paid us so far, if they have over paid or under paid that amount. If they have overpaid us and we did not spend all of that amount they take that money from the next payment. If they would still owe us money they would add it to the next payment. Last time they paid us \$6,000, and that was for December –February. We were expecting \$64,000 and we received \$6,000.

Mrs. Sizemore stated that when Chief Alldred and she sit down with GRS, they would like to change the contract date to a calendar year.

Mrs. Sizemore stated that the \$250,000 has never been spent. We are not spending money just to blow it.

Chief Alldred stated we could have easily spent the money and been wasteful and bought toys and everything else.

Mr. Benson stated that we have been frugal.

Mr. Anding questioned Dave Herbst what his solution would be, do you want to see if the Levy will pass for the fourth time and then take advantage of GRS and their \$250,000 until that money is all gone. If that's the case why doesn't someone from the department just ask for all of GRS's money?

Dave Herbst stated that if we do soft billing that is billing period. We will bill the resident three time after the insurance is billed.

Mr. Anding stated that we have no intention to bill the patient, just the insurance company. We will have the right to set up the billing the way we want it to be done.

Chief Alldred stated we can tell the billing company who we want billed. If we only want to bill the insurance company, then that is the only person who will receive the bill.

A brief discussion took place on soft billing.

Mr. Kuhn stated that we can call the billing what ever we want to, we will be able to bill the way we want to.

Mr. Kuhn stated that Council is not against billing, when we were in the last meeting with GRS, they were not telling us anything, door slammed shut. So we backed off and we have to

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find a way around this. We are trying to do everything not to aggravate them, because it is one pen stroke away from see ya. Everyone in this room agrees we need to bill.

Mr. Anding stated that if that does happen then we will tell the people that GRS is the reason why you are now being billed from an outside company.

Mr. Kuhn stated that he had a well informed gentlemen come into the store the other day to talk to him and he still thinks the Levy is for a new building even though he voted yes.

Mr. Kuhn stated that Council would rather play it in a way that is hospitable to them.

Mr. Anding questioned Mr. Kuhn if Council is willing to be subsidiary to a private organization, Mr. Kuhn replied when that's all we got.

Mr. Anding stated that is not all we have; Council has the authority because they are the ones who oversee the Fire/EMS to start billing.

Mr. Kuhn stated that except when we are under a contractual agreement with GRS, and they have the potential to sue us. We need to work with them, because they are all we have.

Mr. Kuhn stated that during the Council retreat it was discussed that we have a potential voting block in GRS, we think that we have a majority in their organization, so it is a possibility that if organized correctly they could vote to amend the contract so we can vote. GRS just wants respect.

Mr. Anding stated that we are talking over a couple of words in that contract, a contract that they created, and their attorney signed off on, and so did we. If it goes to arbitration great, let it go to court, it is pretty cut and dry.

Mr. Kuhn stated they may be nice now, but you never know when they will just say see ya.

Chief Alldred stated he is all for the billing. But it sounds like our best course of action right now is to get everything we can in place and start billing as soon as possible, renegotiate the contract with GRS to at least bill the last four months that we are short this year, and maybe go for another year extension and as of September 1st, start billing.

Mr. Kuhn stated that the members of GRS have given a large amount of their lives to this thing and if they are willing to give us \$200,000, we will probably make out better than if we were billing.

Mr. Anding stated that he agreed with Mr. Kuhn, but he would like to see a second option for their support.

Mr. Comer stated that we may want to amend our motion to read that we recommend to Council and GRS immediately work together to solve a billing solution.

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Mr. Anding stated that he would be able to live with that. He is not trying to be hard on this issue, but we have go to be planning ahead. We cannot wait until May to see if we can get another Levy to pass. It has failed three times and it was very close this last time. It only takes one vote, and if we loose it again we have got to be prepared.

Chief Alldred stated if we wait until September 1st, it's going to take months before we will get any money.

Mr. Comer stated that maybe Council and GRS need to work together and work out the situation.

Mr. Anding stated that if we just take a stab at it, as an average 670 calls and billed \$400.00 for each call, we would have made \$268,000 last year in billing.

Mr. Benson stated that everyone is aware of that, but we cannot go against the agreement.

Chief Alldred stated that hopefully the people who were in audience tonight will take the information back to the GRS meeting tonight and hopefully some of the language be brought up. Maybe we will get an extension on the agreement and reword the agreement.

Mr. Kuhn stated that we ask them donate some funds to the Levy committee so we can run a broader Levy.

Chief Alldred stated they want their money to last as long as they can, but the faster we can get a Levy to pass the longer their money will last.

Mr. Benson moved to excuse Chief Alldred, second by Mr. Kuhn.

VOICE VOTE ON MOTION. ALL IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business to come before the Committee, Mr. Kuhn moved to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 6:20 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kelli R. Sanders-Novak
Clerk of Council