

## **COOK COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

Called Meeting 10:00 a.m.

January 31, 2020

Present: Jeff Lane, Chairman  
Audie Rowe, Vice-Chairman  
Lindsey Parrish, Commissioner  
Dwight E. Purvis, Commissioner

Staff Present: Faye Hughes, County Administrator  
Vicki Parrish, County Clerk  
Daniel Connell, County Attorney  
Johnny West, Fire Chief

City of Lenox: Mayor Henry Baker  
Billy Mauldin, Councilman  
Teresa Barber, City Clerk

Chairman Lane called the work session to order. Chairman Lane explained that the meeting was requested by Mayor Baker to discuss fire services.

Commissioner Rowe gave the invocation.

Several issues were raised during the meeting regarding the consolidation of fire services.

Mayor Baker began the discussion by stating that he had inquired at State level regarding the standing of the City's ISO rating should they move forward with consolidation. According to the information he received, the City of Lenox's ISO rating would increase should they consolidate with the county, adding approximately \$200 annually to his citizens' homeowner's policy. Mayor Baker added that he felt as though that would be too big of a sacrifice to ask of his citizens. The Mayor added, he wasn't against progress, but he had asked around and the majority of his citizens did not want to consolidate.

Mayor Baker further cited that during the recent fire in the City of Lenox, the County Fire Dept. did nothing to assist. Chief West offered video and photos that showed county firefighters on the scene fighting fire, and Chief West verified a total of 21 members were onsite. Chief West made the group aware that, the county department did pull off the fire scene when a department chief disabled the meter box. Chief West made the decision to move county firefighters off the scene, deeming conditions unsafe.

Another issue stated by Chief West was other department firefighters were on scene fighting fire without proper gear. He stated that the house involved in the fire was wrapped in asbestos. He added that asbestos was a main contributor of cancer cases in fire fighters. Chairman Lane instructed Chief West to make a report to the respective mayor anytime a fire fighter was on site fighting fire without proper equipment.

Mayor Baker presented a concern that air packs that belonged to the county had been removed off the city truck, leaving the city truck without proper equipment.

Fire Chief, Johnny West, stated that the city truck which the equipment was removed from was reported to have been out of order from both Dustin Howell and Brandon Rutland.

Chairman Lane directed that the equipment would be put back on the truck until the City of Lenox obtains such equipment. Ms. Barber, City Clerk, stated that the equipment had been ordered.

Mayor Baker discussed the Brad Street Station, recently the city wasn't able to access the building to check fire extinguishers. The City wasn't aware that the station was locked. Chairman Lane requested that the building be made available to the city. Mayor Baker agreed for the county to continue to use the building but requested access to the building.

Mutual/Auto Aid Agreement was discussed. City Attorney, Mark Sandiford, requested a map that went "road to road" showing coverage area before the Mutual/Auto Aid. Once the City receives the map, he would request the Mayor and Council to enter into the agreement. Chief West stated he would forward the City a copy of the map. Chief West made the group aware that "road to road" coverage maps are posted in all fire stations.

Mayor Baker further stated that the City will be purchasing a new fire truck to be housed in the station. However, the County currently is housing two trucks in the station. According to the Mayor, the City was not aware of the county having two trucks in the station. Chairman Lane apologized for the City of Lenox not being aware of the issues of the equipment and the building. Mayor Baker stated if they (the city) has been informed, they would comply, of course once he takes it before the City Council.

Chief West apologized that the City was not informed of the two trucks being housed in the Brad Street station. He stated that the discussion on the county side was to have two trucks in Lenox and he assumed everyone involved was aware of the two trucks being housed in the Brad Street station.

Commissioner Parrish reminded the Commission that Chief West was following instructions provided to the county in the consolidation plan drafted by the county consultant when he removed the air packs from the city truck.

With all business concluded, meeting adjourned.

COOK COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

This 17th day of February 2020.

---

/s/Jeff Lane, Chairman

---

/s/ Vicki S. Parrish, County Clerk