

**SANDSTONE CITY COUNCIL  
SPECIAL MEETING  
December 29, 2021**

**CALL TO ORDER:** 7:00 p.m.

**ROLL CALL:** Pete Spartz, Val Palmer, Cassie Gaede, Julena Rahier

Members absent: Randy Riley

Staff present: Administrator Kathy George

Others present: City Attorney Sam Ketchum, Jen Yocum with the *Pine County Courier*

**SPECIAL ITEMS OF BUSINESS:**

Sandstone Township – Fire Service Contract

At the December 2<sup>nd</sup> joint meeting between the Sandstone Town Board and the Sandstone City Council, the Sandstone Town Board voted against having a fire service contract with the Sandstone Fire Department, or any other Fire Department, for 2022. Since that time, the City has learned of some concerns with providing fire protection when a contract is not in place.

In speaking with the State Fire Marshall Division representatives, concerns were raised regarding on whose authority the Sandstone Fire Department would respond to a call in Sandstone Township. Without a contract, the Fire Department has no duty to respond. If the Fire Department does respond, without being asked by the Township, and has to call for Mutual Aid, on whose authority is the Fire Department calling for Mutual Aid? This can lead to issues after an incident has cleared, depending on how long the Mutual Aid was used.

The City Attorney had raised concerns about liability insurance and workers compensation insurance if the Fire Department responds without a contract. In checking with the League of Minnesota Cities Insurance Trust, Administrator George was told that there would be no issues with coverage. The only exception could be if an individual firefighter responded without being assigned to go, it is possible that the individual firefighter may not be covered; however, the fire equipment would still be covered.

Other questions related to who would be responsible to submit the MFIRS reports and who would be responsible for investigating fires; which would normally be the Fire Chief. Council Members stated concerns that Township property owners are not aware of the Town Board's decision and of the consequences of that decision.

Council Members stated concerns for Sandstone Township property owners not having fire service coverage. With the various questions that have arisen, and January 1<sup>st</sup> occurring this weekend, they discussed extending fire service to allow the Township time to put a system in place to address calls for service. The Town Board is meeting on January 6<sup>th</sup>. Council Members plan to attend; therefore, a Special Meeting will be posted. The meeting will take place at 7:00 p.m. at the North Pine Government Center. The next City Council meeting will be on January 19<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m.

Council Members noted that the offer of a one-year contract for 2022 at the revised fire formula amount of \$20,044.44 is still available to Sandstone Township.

**Motion Palmer, second Gaede to extend the 2021 Fire Service agreement with Sandstone Township until January 20, 2022. Motion passed 4-0.**

Administrator George was asked to draft a letter to the Sandstone Town Board relaying the stated concerns and informing them of the extension of coverage. The City Attorney will review the letter prior to it being sent out. Administrator George will also notify the Fire Department and the Sheriff's Department about this action.

**ADJOURN**

**Motion Palmer, second Rahier to adjourn at 8:00 p.m. Motion passed 4-0.**

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Peter Spartz, Mayor

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Kathy George, City Administrator