

**JANUARY 8, 2020**

A special meeting of the Common Council of the City of Angola, Indiana was convened at 6:30 p.m. at City Hall, Council Chambers, 210 North Public Square, with Mayor Richard M. Hickman presiding. Attending were Council Members Gary L. Crum, David A. Olson, Kathleen G. Armstrong, David B. Martin, and Jerold D. McDermid. No Council Member was absent. Clerk-Treasurer Debra A. Twitchell recorded the minutes.

Present were Chief of Police Stu Hamblen, City Engineer Amanda Cope, Deputy AP Clerk Ryan Herbert, Firefighter Brian Bowden, Fire Lieutenant Kevin Mory, Firefighter Paul Thiel, Firefighter Hillary Cope, PT Firefighter Lee Greenamyer, Human Resources Administrator Sue Essman, Fire Captain Jason Meek, and Fire Captain Pete Decker IV.

Also present were Mike Wilbur and Nick Wilbur with Emergency Vehicle Response, Pleasant Township Board Members George Gilbert, James Wyatt, and Lance Krebs, Pleasant Township Trustee Mike McClelland, Jennifer Hagerty, Wade Stiefken, Frank Persechino, Fremont Clerk-Treasurer Kathy Parsons, Fremont Town Council Member Steve Brown, York Township Trustee Linda Bidlack, and York Township Trustee Clerk Matt Bidlack.

The purpose of the meeting was a review of the Angola Fire Department Fire Protection Analysis prepared by Emergency Vehicle Response, LLC (EVR). Mayor Hickman explained last year, the City and Pleasant Township hired EVR for a two-phase study of the Fire Department. Phase I was a fleet review presented in November. Presented tonight is Phase II which is a review of staffing, station location, and water supply. Mayor Hickman then introduced Mike Wilbur and Nick Wilbur with EVR and asked township and Town of Fremont officials to introduce themselves.

Mike Wilbur began by stating that townships have a legal obligation to provide fire protection services and that is what will be discussed. For decades, townships and other units of government relied on volunteer firefighters. As an educational point and warning, the day of volunteer firefighters is going away. The City, the Town of Fremont, and townships must decide what kind of fire protection and EMS services should be provided. A 'C' service as it is now with volunteers that may show up or not or pay the City what they need to provide reliable service with career firefighters that will show up. The amount of moneys paid to the City by the townships is not sustainable or fair and it's unrealistic. Somebody needs to provide fire and EMS protection and the City of Angola is well placed to provide those services with career staffing and part-time firefighters. When it comes to providing fire protection services in Steuben County, all of you are in this together.

Wilbur then reviewed ISO (Insurance Services Office) rules for fire protection and the ratings. If the property is not within five miles of a station, then the rating is '10' or no coverage. There is a Steuben County township that pays \$12.31 per year per household for fire protection and pays \$30 per month or \$360 per year for garbage pickup. There are areas in the City's contracted area that are over distance. Distances to various points in the

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coverage area were indicated on a map. On medical calls, the City with four firefighters is responding with a fire engine which leaves the entire City without coverage. The limited coverage is dangerous for firefighters and the public. Discussion followed including the cost of fire apparatus from \$700,000 to \$1.2 million and fire stations from \$4 to \$6 million. Paying \$12.31 per year does not cut it.

Wilbur suggested forming public/private partnerships and working with Trine University in a cost share program to build a firefighter training facility. The City and townships could partner with Trine University on a fire science program. A recent City call with eight firefighters responding to a vehicle in a commercial building with a gas leak is not safe. If no Steuben County volunteer fire department responds, the Angola Fire Department picks up the call and student staffing could support those calls.

A station is needed by the lakes and staffed with four career firefighters, and a training facility could be part of that. EVR recommended a station at the northwest corner of 200 West and 275 North in Pleasant Township. A third station is needed at the Jackson Township line along US Highway 20. A fourth station is needed to serve Scott and York Townships in the area of 100 North and 475 East. All of these stations would be career staffed with a coverage radius of five miles which is adequate. With the Pleasant Township station, the multi-million-dollar lake homes, businesses that house the boats, Steuben County fairgrounds, and Pokagon State Park would have adequate fire protection. A long-range strategic plan is needed which will take time and resources.

Nick Wilbur addressed fire protection funding. Angola presently contracts with Pleasant Township, the Town of Fremont for Jamestown Township coverage, Scott Township, and York Township. Based on the 2010 census, Pleasant Township is paying about \$64 per household per year, Jamestown \$100.45, Scott \$22.20, and York \$29.02. This does not account for any commercial or industrial coverage. Not all of the fire protection moneys go to the Angola Fire Department as they are shared with other Steuben County fire departments that split or share jurisdiction. Adequate funding would be \$100 to \$120 per year per household. Funding is relative. What kind of fire protection do you want and what kind of coverage do you want...that determination needs to be made by the City and all of the townships.

Nick Wilbur then addressed staffing. Partnering with Trine University could provide student staffing. There could be a student bunk-in program which would be a ready-made pool of in-house firefighters. Career staff coverage would be scheduled during the week and student staff covers weekends. Trine is an untapped potential of two to four firefighters. After a four-year degree, there could be eight to sixteen firefighters ready for a career. This is an opportunity that if the City and townships take the time to develop, it could provide a long-term solution to supplement career staffing. The cost sharing between contracted entities should be addressed which would provide the necessary funding for additional staffing. The process will take time and effort but will eventually supplement career staffing.

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If the City and townships choose to provide EMS services, those services could be a funding source and provide better EMS service to contracted areas.

Mayor Hickman then explained that when EVR was hired, they were hired to make an independent assessment of the services provided to City and township residents. Nothing was directed by the City. The City is not necessarily happy with everything that came out of the fleet assessment or fire protection analysis, but we have learned a lot. Mayor Hickman then invited questions.

An inquiry was made as to how much Angola households pay per year per household. In 2019, Angola households paid \$522.91 per year.

Staffing levels were then questioned. If the only station is in Angola, then there should be eight firefighters with various officers who could also respond if needed. When the Pleasant Township station is up and running, there should be another four for a total of twelve in addition to officers.

EVR is working for Valparaiso and they have a fire territory which is something the City and townships should consider thereby relieving the funding discrepancy between the City and townships. Valparaiso is similar because of their university and right now they have 14 firefighters per shift and Angola has four. Between 2016 and 2019, there has been a 50% drop in the number of part-time firefighters responding to calls. So, that resource is drying up just like the volunteers.

Mike Wilbur then explained the standards outlined in the fleet assessment (Phase I) and fire protection analysis (Phase II). Those standards are supported by OSHA, ISO, and the National Fire Protection Association. NFPA standards are written based on expert analysis and then national consensus. NFPA 1710 Standard outlines staffing requirements for career departments and the 1720 Standard for volunteer fire departments. Minimum staffing for a career department is four per truck. Angola should roll out two trucks, an engine/tanker and ladder truck, on each call.

An inquiry was made about using the Pleasant Township office building as the fire station. Wilbur explained with the swamp at the back of the property, there is not enough property to build a proper station and it would cost far more money to house equipment than it would with a new station.

Pleasant Township call volume was addressed. There were over 300 calls in 2018 with about 900 in the City. There were seven fire responses. A discussion was had regarding medical assist calls. When there is an accident, Steuben County Emergency dispatches fire departments first and then Steuben County EMS is dispatched. When there is a medical call, the EMS and fire departments are dispatched simultaneously. Discussion followed.

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Firefighter down time while on duty was addressed. There is significant ongoing training. Firefighters are not paid for what they are doing but for what they might have to do. Fire, police, and EMS are the first line of protection for the community. Based on the observations of the Angola Fire Department staff, the community is getting far more than their money's worth.

ISO grades were explained. The rating is one to 10 with one being the best. There are very few "1's" nationwide. If a property is within 1,000 feet of a fire hydrant, there is a lower rating. If you are in any of the townships and there are no hydrants, and the fire department can provide 150 GPM continuously for two hours by tanker shuttle or drafting from one of the lakes, then there will be a little bit better rating. Half of the ISO point system is water supply and the other half is fire trucks, firefighters, response times, and distance. Discussion followed. The ISO rating lowers insurance rates for residential a little and for commercial/industrial properties significantly more.

The Trine University student bunk-in program was then discussed. Presently, there are none in Indiana. The student does not need to be a part of a fire science program. Nick Wilbur then described a student who participated in the program, developed several software programs for the department, and now works for the Federal Aviation Administration as a computer engineer. He provided four years of service to the department and still assists the department when needed with information technology issues. Discussion followed. Trine University is short beds for students so housing students is the key. The students would have flex time to do their studies and the option of having a vehicle which may not be an option at Trine. College housing is \$1,000 to \$1,200 per month. Providing housing is the incentive to participate in the program. More discussion followed. The student training program is accelerated compared to a volunteer program. And, the program could provide a pool of firefighters for future full-time hires. Council Member Armstrong stated it is exciting that Angola could be a model site for firefighter training in the Midwest. Mayor Hickman believes Trine would be more than willing to partner with the City for the program. More discussion followed.

The student program could also provide training for those students seeking a medical degree. If managed properly, ambulance service could provide funding for the department. Discussion followed.

A discussion was had regarding the Steuben County EMS and local fire departments providing lift assists. Discussion followed. Mike Wilbur stated Steuben County EMS runs slow which is why the departments have more calls. Fire departments are doing calls and providing aid that should be done by ambulances. So, when the ambulance shows up, they load the patient and take them to the hospital and getting paid for it. The fire departments get basically nothing. Discussion followed. The cost in providing ambulance service is in the paramedic certification and recertification and the cost of drugs. Ambulance service done correctly could be a money maker or break even. More discussion followed.

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Providing EMS basic life support ambulance service by the fire departments and leaving the advanced life support service to Steuben County were discussed.

Questions and discussion followed.

Mike Wilbur went on to talk about the fire service as it is now compared to sixty years ago. Volunteers were abundant because dad worked at the farm or in town and mom stayed home with the kids. There were no vacations, and everyone stayed home or close to home. There were very few hazards, very few firefighting standards, and very little in the way of training and all the fire department did was fight fires. Two things happened almost simultaneously over the last four decades. Their available time to volunteer is limited because their wives need to work, or they are not here either traveling for work or on vacation or they are volunteering for little league or football or girl scouts or boy scouts with their children. Fire service is succumbing because fires have changed dramatically. Thirty years ago, fires were wood, and paper and that fire produced a wispy smoke. The apartment windows were single pane. Fires then were a cake walk. Today's fires are petrochemical...plastics. Windows are triple pane. Homes are built to withstand tornadoes and hurricanes. So, now training is required for all of that. Other changes include auto extrication, dive team, technical rescue skills for plants in the City that use chemicals, blood borne pathogens, and hazardous materials. So, the volunteer time for training is diminished. Training now includes active shooter training. Yet, public and government expectations are when you dial '911' a bunch of well-trained people show up and everything is going to be okay. Discussion followed.

A question was posed why Pleasant Township is concerned about fire protection. Pleasant Township Trustee McClelland explained lake homes are now occupied year-round. The population has grown and each one of the lakes is like its own city. There is a need for emergency services closer to the population. Discussion followed.

Angola's ISO rating is currently a '4'. Pleasant Township Trustee McClelland asked if Pleasant Township can get the amount of water and manpower in the township does that lower the rating. Mike Wilbur explained if ISO will certify lake drafting hydrants and those hydrants are accessible and maintained twice a year they will count towards the rating. Any home within a thousand feet of that hydrant would get the rating. Discussion followed regarding ISO rating reviews.

Discussion regarding volunteers ensued.

More discussion followed regarding the cost of fire stations. Mike Wilbur explained the new station in Pleasant Township should eventually have a ladder truck for the homes that are being built on the lakes that are three and four stories tall. Brick and mortar are about \$4 million. More discussion followed. Nick Wilbur stated all of this is not something that has to happen today but planned for in the years to come. Station first, manpower, apparatus, and then the training facility. The existing Pleasant Township building would

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require bathrooms, bunk-in facilities, a kitchen, living spaces, and offices. The recommendation is spending money on that building doesn't make sense. That decision is up to the City and Pleasant Township. Mike Wilbur stated there are two ways to do the station, right or again and the City nor the townships have the money or the time or the inclination to do that. Building stations is a five-year ordeal by the time you purchase the property, design the station, and construction.

EVR has provided a long-range plan. Angola and the townships got behind a little bit and with some help and outside the box thinking and using some of the resources around, the City and townships can get ahead of the curve. But the time is now to act. Volunteers are going away, and the City and townships need to provide fire and ambulance services so how do you do it. The fire protection analysis presented tonight provides a pretty good road map.

Council Member Armstrong stated the analysis is great, but the City and townships need a strategic plan because the analysis is broad. Collectively, the City and townships may not be able to determine the next step. Mike Wilbur suggested that the City needs an indication from the townships if they want to continue on this path, then EVR could develop that plan. One of the things noted in the analysis is to hire an EVT, emergency vehicle technician. As a group that is something to look at to save money. It's not about taxing everyone to death, it's about finding alternative ways to fund the big-ticket items.

Discussion was had regarding providing ambulance service and whether or not those synergies would be income producing. Nick Wilbur reiterated that EVR was not charged to look at the ambulance service specifically. Discussion followed regarding the cost-effectiveness of basic life support versus advanced life support. Manpower synergies could be realized for those needing medical hours for degrees or paramedic certifications.

Mike Wilbur concluded by stating EVR tried to offer suggestions and think out of the box. The stark reality is this...township response times are too long. There is not enough staff. The City and townships are asking too much of the full-time firefighters. And frankly, the volunteers around the City and townships are quite frankly lame. And that's the reality. This was a really interesting project and learned a lot about the state of Indiana and some of the rules that the City and townships have to adhere to.

Mayor Hickman pointed out that within the next five or six years, most of Angola's firefighters will retire so the City and townships need to get succession line going. Discussion followed. Mike Wilbur reiterated that the staff firefighters are doing yeoman's work, and everyone should thank them. Their work was key in getting the fleet review and fire protection analysis completed.

Discussion was had regarding the water pressure on the Trine University campus. Mike Wilbur explained some of the hydrants did not produce as much pressure as others. The solution is larger water mains. Discussion followed. One of the recommendations is

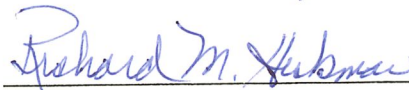
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purchasing an engine/tanker which would be useful for the area. Another is acquiring a humat valve that can take water from the hydrant and push it. It's not the lack of water, it's the lack of pressure. Discussion followed.

Funding fire stations and apparatus with TIF (tax increment financing) was discussed. Developer contributions and grants were mentioned as well.

Mike Wilbur offered with the relationship formed here, EVR is available so feel free to call and reach out. The company commitment is long term.

The meeting was considered adjourned at 8:23 p.m.



Richard M. Hickman, Mayor  
Presiding Officer

Attest:



Debra A. Twitchell, Clerk-Treasurer