



## **3<sup>RD</sup> WARD MEETING MINUTES – ALDERMAN DENISE RODD**

**March 12, 2014**

### **AGENDA**

- Compensation for Elected Officials
- New Ambulance
- Other City Topics

### **WELCOME**

Thank you for coming and welcome to our guests, Alderman Michael Charewicz and Chief Alan Wax.

Note of interest: Resident in attendance at the March 12 meeting mentioned the sighting of an eagle soaring above the Des Plaines River. She commented that the eagle knows Des Plaines is “open for Business.”

### **COMPENSATION FOR ELECTED OFFICIALS**

Denise and 7th Ward Alderman Joanna Sojka worked on a memo that was sent to the city manager regarding ending the practice of offering medical and dental benefits to elected officials. This is being proposed for the 2015 fiscal year and would only affect newly elected officials. Three options are being proposed:

1. Benefits will not be offered.
2. Benefits will no longer be provided to newly elected officials but would be grandfathered to those elected prior to the ordinance.
3. Benefits offered to elected officers but at 100% cost to the individual.

Elected Officials are allowed to receive health and dental insurance through the City. There is no record that we are aware of on how or who started this practice. There is no code in city records. Aldermen receive a stipend of \$3,000 plus \$1,800 expense account. Mayor receives \$9,600 plus \$2,400 in expenses. City Clerk receives \$6,000 and no expenses. Salary stipend has not increased since the '80s. The medical benefits offered are the same that a full-time City employee receives. Medical benefit costs for 2014 are \$116K for the Council total; 2 elected officials opted not to take the medical benefits. Medical benefits are available to the individual, spouse and family. Medical plan offered by the City is Blue Cross/Blue Shield. Medical Benefit expenses continue to go up each year.

Elected officials are not classified as full-time employees; there is no interview, drug testing, set-hours, employment manual, employee review or supervisor. Only as a protocol, Council members will talk with Mayor and/or City Manager on questions of protocol. One meeting attendee remarked that reviews are done by the citizens at election time.

- How many hours does Council/Alderman put into job? Hours can vary with each Alderman and each Ward.
- Do members of the Council have outside jobs? Mayor has a full time job. Denise is a contract employee. Don't really know on all Council members.
- Are any of the Council members retired or on Medicare? Don't know.
- If we don't offer benefits, would we get anyone interested in running for the Council? Yes. Denise ran because it is what she wanted to do for Des Plaines community and the benefits were not a factor.
- By offering benefits would the City get more people interested in running? That would be a personal decision.
- Can Council vote for their benefits? Yes. City of Des Plaines is a City Manager form of government.
- Do other part-time City employees get Medical/Dental benefits? No. Should we offer the same medical/dental benefits to the other part time employees? Up for discussion.

A survey of 19 surrounding suburban cities (e.g. Arlington Heights, Schaumburg, Park Ridge, Mount Prospect) only 2 offer medical benefits. Schaumburg offers medical but at 100% paid by official. A survey was requested by NW Suburban organization for more information on other compensation.

Council is required to direct staff to draft this ordinance in an upcoming meeting scheduled in April. If you are interested in voicing your opinion we ask for you to come to the meeting. Denise will email when ordinance will be on agenda.

Citizen from the 4<sup>th</sup> Ward did his own survey back in 2012 and discovered Des Plaines is comparable in salary to many of the surrounding suburban cities.

## **NEW AMBULANCE – EXHAUST SYSTEM**

City ordered a new ambulance in October 2013 with an option to purchase a 2<sup>nd</sup> ambulance in 2014. Cost of new ambulance is \$226K. Chassis is a Freightliner. Most current ambulance is a 2007 with city's oldest ambulance a 2000. City runs approximate 22-25 calls a day with this year up by 8% on calls in just the first 3 months due to weather and crashes on toll roads. The plan is to get vehicles on a set schedule and stagger the purchasing costs so as not to replace all vehicles at one time.

Current ambulances in City's fleet have the horizontal exhaust which comes out the bottom of the vehicle. Each fire station and reserve bays are hooked up to a system that collects the exhaust and vents it outside the station. Each station requires the hook up because of vehicles moving between stations for training or busy times.

Last Council Meeting, Alderman Brookman proposed that the city move to a vertical exhaust system for the ambulances to protect firefighters and civilians from breathing in exhaust. Alderman Brookman believes that a former firefighter contracted cancer because of the exhaust fumes and is passionate about this system.

Cost to retrofit a vertical exhaust on an existing vehicle is \$26K. The added cost to a new chassis is \$1500 for the exhaust pipe. Since the 2<sup>nd</sup> horizontal exhaust ambulance was originally ordered in 2013, and now needs to be rebuilt. An additional cost of \$5,100 is added since vehicle is being ordered after January 2014. Vertical exhaust vehicle will run approximately \$381,100. Additionally all 3 stations with need to be fitted with a vertical exhaust venting system at a cost of \$15,000 per station or \$45,000, and an additional \$30,000 for reserve bays. Current horizontal system will not be eliminated.

From a Fire Department point of view, is there an issue with the horizontal exhaust system on our vehicles? "We are solving a problem that doesn't exist..." EPA has created rigid exhaust standards, that what comes out is near 0 emissions. The vehicle purchased last October meets the 2015 standards.

*[You are welcome to contact an Alderman that voted for the vertical exhaust vehicle to voice your opinion.]*

## **TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION**

- Metra Station: Coffee Shop – City issued an open-ended request for proposals. Information hasn't been released. Ticket Agent is open...was closed during construction.
- Vehicle Registration: Thank you to the city for allowing \$5 vehicle sticker for all vehicles in one household owned by seniors 65 and over. To take advantage of the \$5 sticker, resident needs to show vehicle registration, and date of birth by showing a driver's license, state ID, or passport.
- Senior Garbage Discount: Republic is giving residents 65 and over a discount on service. Senior residents need to go to City Hall with proof of residence (Tax Bill). Discounts will be in arrears and show on water bill.

## **NEXT MEETING**

Wednesday, April 9, at Prairie Lakes, 7:00 p.m.

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## **TO CONTACT DENISE**

- Please contact Denise at [drodd@desplaines.org](mailto:drodd@desplaines.org) or call/text (847) 514-6318
- Facebook is set up for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Ward: [www.Facebook.com/DP3rdWard](http://www.Facebook.com/DP3rdWard) (or search DP3)
  - Twitter: @Denise Rodd
  - Web Site: [www.3rdWard.org](http://www.3rdWard.org)