

New Carlisle Town Council Work Session Memorandum, February 28, 2017 6:15 PM

Present were President Carter, Vice President Vojtko, Council Member Rypma, Council Member Vermillion and Clerk-Treasurer Susan Moffitt. Council Member Budreau was absent.

Also in attendance were Paige Sansone, Jill Doll, Josh Schweizer, Joyce Forbes, Nick Zarate, Bob Middlebrook, Carol Middlebrook and Marcy Kauffman.

Paige Sansone of Umbaugh was in attendance to present updated information regarding fire territories. Paige distributed a handout and spoke about the procedures involved in the process of starting a fire territory, determining financial impacts, structure and governing of a fire territory. She explained the difference between fire territories and fire districts with the main difference being that districts are governed by the county.

One of the main reasons for establishing fire territories is to develop a new funding source. With the Town currently at our limit in our general fund, this is the only alternative provided in the statute to generate additional dollars for the fire and ambulance departments. They are also popular right now because rural departments are not able get the volunteers like in the past and there is a need for part-time or full time firefighters. Another benefit is that it spreads the burden evenly across the governing bodies. There is a single rate tax on everyone throughout the area to be served with each paying equally. In addition, a few years ago there was proposed legislation which would eliminate local fire departments unless they were part of a territory. This did not pass the legislation but could be introduced again in the future.

There is a specific process involved that makes it extremely difficult to establish a fire territory and basically impossible without a financial advisor. Circuit breaker analysis for the entire county, not just area included, is required parcel by parcel. The DLGF would not approve the fiscal analysis without the circuit breaker analysis. Three public hearings are required with basically the same information presented and each, allowing the public to express their opinion. Taxpayer impact to determine the effect on different homes, ag land and commercial properties is also required.

The process would need to begin in September or October for submission in March of the following year. The territory would then go into effect the first of the following year. One of the entities involved would need to be the provider unit, responsible for collecting the taxes and paying bills.

Josh stated that he has been gathering information on a master fire plan and will be bringing this to the Council for approval soon. Paige feels that this is an excellent way to begin and shows that the governing bodies are committed to developing a plan that will include input from outside sources.

The work session adjourned at 7:19 PM.

Ken Carter, Council President

Susan I. Moffitt, Clerk-Treasurer