



VOT FIRE AND EMS COMMITTEE MEETING Minutes

VILLAGE OF TILTON

6/23/2026 5:30 PM

1001 TILTON RD, TILTON IL 61833

1. CALL TO ORDER

CHAIRMAN WEIDENBURNER CALLED MEETING TO ORDER AT 5:40PM

2. ROLL CALL

Attendance

Present:

Members: John Barnes - Board Trustee, Lori Fields - Village Clerk, Bob Finley - Board Trustee, Tiffany Jones-McClellan - Village Administrator, Mike Weidenburner - Board Trustee

Absent:

Members: Billy Wear - Village Mayor

Attendance

Present:

Members: Brian Dunavan - IT Director, Butch Fields - EMS Coordinator, Chris McMahon - Fire Chief

3. APPROVE OR AMEND AGENDA PRESENTED

Motion:

MOTION TO AMEND AGENDA TO ADD EMS HOUSE SECTION 11

Motion moved by Mike Weidenburner and motion seconded by Bob Finley. 3 AYES, 0 NAYES, MOTION PASSED

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – IF NEEDED

NONE NEEDED

5. EMS CALLS RESPONDER NUMBERS

Trustee Weidenburner opened a follow-up discussion on the issue of excess responders attending EMS calls—a matter raised at the previous meeting. The central concern was how to appropriately limit the number of responding personnel without discouraging volunteerism.

EMS Chief Fields reported that the problem of excessive responders had largely subsided, though certain higher-profile calls—particularly those involving police department interaction—still drew multiple responders. He expressed particular concern about psychiatric (psych) calls, noting that an increased number of people on scene can agitate mentally unstable patients and worsen outcomes. He suggested that for such calls, additional personnel should stand by at the station rather than respond to the scene.

Fire Chief McMahon agreed, drawing a comparison to Danville Fire Department's protocols, where units do not respond to certain call types—including psych calls—unless specifically requested. He suggested it would be more operationally efficient to simply not dispatch fire units to lower-acuity calls rather than having them stand by at the station, with the option to be called in if needed.

Trustee Weidenburner emphasized that the intent behind limiting responders is not cost savings, but rather patient care and dignity—particularly given that Tilton relies on volunteers rather than career

staff. EMS Chief Fields reinforced this point, noting that patients are often embarrassed when numerous bystanders are present during medical assessments, and that having untrained or unlicensed personnel standing around on scene without a role is counterproductive. Trustee Finley asked whether access to residential scenes could be limited so that only necessary personnel enter while others remain with the unit outside. EMS Chief Fields confirmed this could be addressed through policy, with the fire chief setting the parameters.

EMS Chief Fields also raised a concern about personnel operating outside the scope of their certification. He noted that an EMT who responds on the EMR (Emergency Medical Responder) unit cannot practice beyond EMR scope, regardless of their higher individual certification. He further raised a concern about younger or unlicensed cadets riding along on EMS calls and being exposed to traumatic scenes before they are developmentally ready.

The discussion turned to a potential on-call schedule for fire personnel responding to EMS calls. City Administrator McClellan suggested placing a small number of firefighters "on call" at a time—for a nominal stipend—so that the same personnel respond consistently without the full department turning out. Deputy Chief Dunavan referenced a similar model used by Bismarck Fire Department. This discussion pertained to EMR coverage for fire department and not full fire department response criteria.

EMS Chief Fields suggested that the call types to which the EMR unit should be dispatched could be derived from the medications and interventions EMRs are authorized to provide—such as allergic reactions, difficulty breathing, chest pain, and cardiac arrest—rather than a blanket policy.

The committee agreed on the following action items:

- Deputy Chief Dunavan will contact Vermilion County Public Safety Building (PSB) and research the call-type dispatch protocols used by Kickapoo, Westville, and Danville Fire Departments.
- The group will compile those protocols and use them as a starting framework for Tilton's own dispatch policy.

Trustee Weidenburner requested that this information be assembled and distributed within approximately one week.

6. MUTUAL AID

Trustee Weidenburner recounted the background for this agenda item: a recent incident in which the department self-dispatched to a call and then diverted to an Oakwood mutual aid request, as well as an instance where the aerial/ladder truck was dispatched to a mutual aid call but never deployed at a local structure fire on Hodge Street. These events prompted questions about what equipment should be committed to mutual aid, how many personnel should be sent, and what the department's mutual aid obligations actually are.

Fire Chief McMahon explained that mutual aid responses are governed by MABAS (Mutual Aid Box Alarm System) box cards, which are updated annually and define what apparatus each department sends in response to another's request. He clarified that the ladder truck (Truck 2) is only automatically dispatched on the first alarm to Catlin—because Catlin already has engines and tankers responding and requests Tilton's aerial as a backup. For all other departments, the ladder truck is only dispatched if a

box alarm is struck for an active structure fire. He noted that without a water supply infrastructure like Tilton's, rural departments rely on tankers to supply an aerial, which is standard practice. Trustee Weidenburner questioned whether Tilton's ladder truck—purchased primarily to protect local businesses and structures—should be the first apparatus sent out of town, especially to incidents that are already largely under control. He noted that Danville's ladder truck leaves the city only approximately five or six times per year by comparison.

Fire Chief McMahon ran an ESO report on-the-spot, which showed that Truck 2 had been assigned to 21 incidents in the past 181 days (approximately six months). Of those, nine were structure fires; the remaining incidents included canceled calls, smoke alarms, odor investigations, gas leaks, power lines down, a rubbish fire, and a law enforcement assist. Several of those responses were within Tilton's own district.

The committee acknowledged that mutual aid is a reciprocal relationship—removing the ladder truck from other departments' box cards could result in those departments declining to send their tankers to support Tilton's aerial in return. No formal policy change was proposed at this meeting, but the committee agreed to continue monitoring usage and work toward a more selective deployment standard for the ladder truck on mutual aid responses.

7. DEPARTMENT POLICY ON RESPONDING TO EMERGENCIES

Trustee Weidenburner introduced the topic of establishing a formal speed policy for emergency vehicle responses. The discussion had been prompted in part by observed instances of excessive speed by certain personnel.

EMS Chief Fields reported that complaints within his department had been limited and addressed internally. His primary issue was not speed per se, but the forces experienced in the patient compartment of an ambulance during cornering—crew members may feel they are driving smoothly while patients in the back are being thrown around. That concern had been corrected. He nonetheless supported formalizing a written policy so that no personnel could claim ignorance of the standard. EMS Chief Fields noted that Illinois law requires only "due regard" for the safety of others, but that the definition of due regard varies by individual. He stressed that proper emergency vehicle operation includes coming to a complete stop at all stop signs and red lights, clearing the intersection before proceeding, even with lights and sirens active. He recently completed an EVOS (Emergency Vehicle Operations) online course through IFSI and expressed interest in also completing the hands-on driving component, noting that the classroom portion is free but the driving portion carries a per-person cost. Fire Chief McMahon explained that fire department drivers are currently required to complete the FSVO (Fire Service Vehicle Operations) course, which includes an annual hands-on driving component in each wheel base. Drivers who miss the annual session are not permitted to drive until they complete it.

City Administrator McClellan noted that the village's insurance carrier (IML) offers a driving course for emergency vehicles that includes video instruction and test booklets, and may come on-site. She agreed to obtain more information and booklets to share with both departments, with a view to determining whether their existing certifications could be submitted to the insurer for a possible rate benefit.

The committee discussed the difficulty of setting a numerical speed limit in policy, noting that specifying a maximum speed (e.g., 80 mph) could create legal liability if a vehicle's black box data showed even a slight exceedance at the time of an accident. Fire Chief McMahon favored using "due regard" language with illustrative examples rather than hard speed limits, and noted that the appropriate speed varies significantly by vehicle type, road conditions, and call acuity—a fire alarm at a commercial building does not warrant the same urgency as a child trapped in a burning structure. Additional specific concerns raised included: adherence to speed limits through school zones, appropriate caution at all intersections regardless of signal status, and the behavior of personnel driving personal vehicles to the station in response to a page (who are not operating as official emergency responders and must obey all traffic laws).

The committee agreed that each key party—EMS Chief Fields, Fire Chief McMahon, and Deputy Chief Dunavan—would draft their own thoughts on a speed and emergency vehicle operation policy. These drafts would be compiled and reviewed collectively, with the goal of producing a working policy draft within approximately 30 days.

8. ESO AND FIRST DUE UPDATES

EMS Chief Fields reported that he had spent approximately an hour on hold with ESO that day in an attempt to clarify pricing, and had sent multiple emails requesting a response before the meeting—none of which were answered in time. He presented a breakdown of current ESO costs, noting that the actual annual expenditure is approximately \$13,333—slightly higher than the previously understood figure of \$12,000. He noted that this figure reflects only the modules needed by the ambulance service; several fire-specific modules have been or are proposed to be removed.

City Administrator McClellan pulled up payment records and confirmed a total paid to ESO of approximately \$13,409.86 from March 2026 forward, noting that some invoices may overlap. She also identified that ESO charges a 3% card processing fee on payments, which added several hundred dollars to at least one billing cycle.

The committee discussed the timing of a potential transition to First Due software. Fire Chief McMahon confirmed that First Due requires approximately 90 days to implement from the date a contract is signed, including coordination meetings with the PSB/911 communication center for CAD integration. City Administrator McClellan noted that certain ESO modules are contracted through dates ranging from early 2026 to March 2027. The committee determined that in order to avoid overlapping payments, a decision to proceed with First Due should be made by approximately October 2026—allowing 90 days to go live by the time current ESO contracts expire in January 2027.

Fire Chief McMahon also noted that First Due's pricing includes ambulance unit tracking and drug check records at no additional cost once the system is live, which would be an added benefit for the EMS side.

Deputy Chief Dunavan noted that the transition to the newer ESO reporting interface has made certain data queries more difficult than the previous system, limiting the department's ability to easily run custom reports by unit or district.

No formal action was taken; staff were directed to continue clarifying ESO contract end dates and prepare documentation for a potential October board action on First Due.

9. FARNSWORTH UPDATE STATION DRAWING

Trustee Weidenburner noted that Farnsworth Group had been paid \$12,600 and had committed to delivering final design deliverables during the week of June 29. As of the meeting date, nothing had been received.

City Administrator McClellan mentioned that the property previously identified in connection with the station drawing is no longer an available acquisition target, as the delinquent taxes on that parcel have been redeemed and a mortgage has now been recorded against it.

EMS Chief Fields expressed concern that a conceptual drawing was developed over an existing private business without the owner's knowledge, noting that even though the drawing is a public record, it was an uncomfortable position to be in.

Trustee Weidenburner clarified that the intent of commissioning the drawing was to use that parcel's footprint as a planning tool to evaluate what could fit in a given space, not to signal an intent to acquire the property.

The broader discussion evolved into a conversation about the practical path forward for addressing the village's fire and EMS facility needs. Trustee Weidenburner advocated for a near-term, lower-cost solution: constructing a pole barn structure near the existing EMS house to house ambulance units, freeing up space in the fire station. He expressed frustration with the ongoing cycle of studying options without taking action, and noted that dedicating commercially valuable parcels—particularly along the Georgetown Road corridor—to a public facility would forfeit potential tax revenue at a time when the village is actively attracting commercial development.

EMS Chief Fields expressed support for the concept of building between or behind the existing fire station and EMS house, and noted that the cost of doing nothing compounds over time. City Administrator McClellan indicated she has engaged the village's grant consultant, Nicole Van Hyfte, to begin identifying grants applicable to a fire/EMS facility project.

Trustee Barnes and Trustee Finley both expressed support for a building designed with future expansion in mind, even if the immediate structure is modest. The committee discussed the idea of a structure with a concrete floor, adequate overhead clearance, utilities (heat, electricity, water for vehicle washing), and enough width to allow for supply storage along the walls—without the need for restroom facilities or full insulation, as personnel would not be stationed there.

City Administrator McClellan noted that the village's current bond is set to be paid off in 2027, which she identified as an optimal window for bonding a larger facility project if the village chooses to pursue one. She cautioned against over-building, suggesting the appropriate square footage should be scaled to demonstrated need rather than long-range projections. EMS Chief Fields pushed back, noting that planning for a facility of insufficient size would result in a more expensive correction in just a few years.

Deputy Chief Dunavan raised the issue of backup power at the EMS house, noting that the existing generator does not cover it. If a storm were to knock out power for an extended period, EMS personnel living and working at the house would be without power entirely. He suggested that any near-term construction project include or prompt the acquisition of a generator for the EMS house. Trustee Weidenburner proposed reaching out to a local contractor (referred to as "Ribbe") to get an informal concept and rough cost estimate for a pole barn structure. The committee indicated consensus support for this approach.

10. I&I MEETING JULY 28 - TILTON

It was noted that the countywide I&I/Communications meeting is scheduled for July 28 and will be hosted by Tilton at the Community Center. Trustee Weidenburner indicated his intention to attend. Food arrangements were briefly discussed by fire department personnel.

11. EMS HOUSE ROOF

EMS Chief Fields raised concerns about the condition of the EMS house roof, noting that deterioration has been observed and that there may be underlying structural damage to the decking. Photographic documentation of the roof was reviewed by the committee, which showed signs of possible hail damage and deteriorated sheathing. It was noted that the damage may date to a hail event in 2017 or 2019 that was never properly addressed.

Deputy Chief Dunavan recalled inspecting the attic space but could not confirm from memory whether the underlying structure was slat or sheet decking. City Administrator McClellan suggested obtaining a bid for repairs and indicated the roof may require tear-off rather than overlay. A rough estimate of \$20,000–\$25,000 was floated informally.

Fire Chief McMahon noted that a metal roof overlay was discussed as a potential option, which could extend the life of the structure without a full tear-off if the underlying decking is sound.

12. ADJOURN

Motion:

MOTION TO ADJOURN AT 7:37PM

Motion moved by Bob Finley and motion seconded by John Barnes. 3 AYES, 0 NAYES, MOTION PASSED

LORI FIELDS-CLERK

7-16-2026
APPROVED