

EAST BETHEL CITY COUNCIL WORK MEETING

April 28, 2025

The East Bethel City Council met on April 28, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. for the regular City Council Work meeting at City Hall.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Ardie Anderson Suzanne Erkel Brian Mundle
 Tim Miller Jim Smith

ALSO PRESENT: Matt Look, City Administrator
 Mike Jeziorski, Deputy City Administrator/Finance Director
 Nate Ayshford, Public Work Director

1.0 – Duty Crew Discussion

Streich stated that the Fire Department was created in 1959, when a local group got together and formed their own Fire Department. Streich stated that East Bethel has a volunteer model, which is the least expensive model.

Streich stated that because the volunteer firefighters are not full-time, they typically have another full-time job, meaning they are only able to respond to calls during a certain time frame.

Streich noted that their volunteer model pays an hourly rate and is also paid a pension.

Streich stated that a full-time chief was added in 2007, and at the time, there were 3 stations, 570 calls, and 35 firefighters. Today, there are 3 stations, 2 full-time positions - Fire Chief and Fire Inspector, and 27 on-call firefighters. Streich stated they need at least 40, maybe even 50 firefighters.

Streich stated that they start out at a \$16/hour rate.

Streich stated that most of the costs in the budget are for personnel.

Streich stated that in the daytime, he is concerned about the safety of the firefighters and providing the needed staffing.

Streich stated that his number one response regarding the daytime response would be to create a staffing model during the daytime, called a duty crew model.

Streich stated that with the staffing model, he proposes 8 hours per day and offering it to the volunteers, but it would not be mandatory right away.

Streich stated that they have come up with enough money in the current budget, where a daytime staffing model for East Bethel would cost \$15,452. Streich outlined other duties the daytime staff would be assigned.

Streich asked to move the Fire Inspector position to an assistant position.

Streich gave an overview of his recommendations, including reclassifying a job position into operations mode, responding to calls 24/7, and introducing the duty crew model.

Smith asked how long it could take to put everything together to reduce the calls. Streich stated he would begin to work with the Chiefs right away, and in a month or two, it would be set up.

Smith stated that he is in favor of this and would like this topic to be added to tonight's City Council meeting agenda to get it moving forward as soon as possible.

Erkel stated that she agrees with what was presented. Erkel asked if the 8-hour daytime would help the firefighters hit their 30% requirement easier or harder. Streich stated that the daytime firefighters would go to an hourly type of good standing rather than a percentage to hit their requirements.

Erkel asked if there is enough work for both the Fire Chief and the assistant if the number of calls is cut back, and they are not responding to those calls. Streich stated that there is still work for both positions to do and things to address in the community.

Miller stated that residents might ask about their safety if the non-emergency calls are not responded to anymore. Streich stated that the telecommunicators are professionals and they get transferred to Alina.

Mundle asked what the feelings of the current Fire Inspector were regarding the position potentially changing to an assistant Fire Chief position.

Mundle asked if Streich had discussed the potential of the changes in calls to the firefighters. Streich stated that they are aware that this change is being discussed, but they do not have all the information that has been presented tonight.

Anderson stated that he opposes the idea of an Assistant Fire Chief based on his experience and thinks there is plenty of work and responsibilities for the two positions.

2.0 – Level of Service Discussion

Streich stated that when discussing Levels of Service, it should be thought of as an incident type, either fire incidents or medical incidents.

Streich referenced a sheet regarding the level of service, and discussed non-emergent calls such as fever, back pain, dizziness, etc., and noted the highlighted events that would be in the best interest of East Bethel to either respond to or not respond to.

Streich stated that the Fire incidents are the responsibility of the City, and the firefighters are the only people who can do that work.

Streich stated that medicals by law are under the medical director of Alina; Alina is responsible for all the medical calls in the community. Alina is stationed in Station 1 off Bunker Lake Boulevard.

Streich stated that his proposal is to look at reducing the non-emergent incidents, but continue to go to the calls where they can make a difference. Streich stated that a reduction in the non-emergent calls could reduce the calls by 50-60%, according to the numbers provided by Alina.

3.0 – Duties and Responsibilities of the Fire Department

Streich discussed the list he created that includes everything that the City believes the Fire Department does and highlighted some of the requirements, like responding to calls and managing 30-45 employees and their safety and OSHA rules.

Streich referenced the sheet given to the Council, which discusses the Fire Chief, Fire Inspector, District Chief, and firefighter's roles.

4.0 – Fee Schedule Review

Not discussed.

5.0 – Business Advisory Council

Not discussed.

6.0 – Adjourn

Erkel stated I'll make a motion to adjourn. Miller stated I'll second. To the motion, all in favor say aye. **All in favor.** Anderson asked any opposed? That motion passes. **Motion passes unanimously.**

Work Meeting adjourned at 6:54 p.m.

Submitted by:

Lilian Rokosz

TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.