



## City of Mentor-on-the-Lake

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www.CityMOL.org

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### MINUTES VIRTUAL REGULAR MEETING OF COUNCIL CITY OF MENTOR-ON-THE-LAKE APRIL 13, 2021

The Virtual Regular Meeting of Council of April 13, 2021, for the City of Mentor-on-the-Lake, Ohio, was called to Order at 7:00 P.M. by Council President Desirea Thompson.

**CALL TO ORDER:** PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

**ROLL CALL:**

Aye:	At Large:	JIM LUNDER, Vice President	(Appeared in Person)
Aye:	Ward 3:	ROB JOHNSON	(Appeared Virtually)
Aye:	At Large:	KEVIN BITTNER	(Appeared in Person)
Aye:	At Large:	PRESTON WOLK	(Appeared Virtually)
Aye:	Ward 1:	DAVID CHABUT	(Appeared in Person)
Aye:	Ward 2:	PAUL MORRIS	(Appeared in Person)
Aye:	Ward 4:	DESIREA THOMPSON, President	(Appeared Virtually)

**READING OF MINUTES:** Virtual Regular Meeting of Council – March 23, 2021

**MOTION MADE BY MR. MORRIS,** Seconded by Mr. Chabut, for Approval of the Minutes of the March 23, 2021, Virtual Regular Meeting of Council. **ROLL CALL:** Ayes: Council Member Lunder, Johnson, Chabut, Morris, Thompson. Nays: None. Abstain: Council Member Bittner, Wolk.

**MOTION CARRIED: 5/0/2**

**CORRESPONDENCE:** (None)

**ADMINISTRATIVE AND DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS:**

**Mayor & Safety Director – Mr. Eva**

Mayor Eva advised he has sent Council an update from Wendy Zele at First Energy about the circuit inspection. They found two Priority One broken insulators which were repaired that day. Once he gets any other messages about repairs being completed, he will pass them on to Council.

Mayor Eva sent to Council an email he received from Safety.com which has ranked Mentor-on-the-Lake Number 17 as one of the safest Cities in Ohio for 2021. Once he gets more information on this, he will also pass it on to Council.

Mayor Eva read the Fire Department Report for March 2021 which has also been forwarded to Council. For the month of March there was a total of 124 calls for service: Rescue/EMS – 58 calls; Fire/Service – 30 calls; and Invalid Assist – 36 calls. The Fire Department is currently tracking 22 active COVID-19 cases in the City. For Fire Prevention, they completed sprinkler and hood tests during March. Training was as usual with shift drills. On Saturday, March 27, 2021, the Fire Department, with guidance from the Lake County General Health District, held its annual Easter Egg Hunt. The turnout was a little lower than what they were used to, but they did receive positive feedback from those that attended.

Chief Pechatsko received a letter from Chief Hunger, City of Willoughby, thanking him and his personnel for their response to the Congressional Lane incident in the early morning hours of March 24, 2021, with two family homes on fire. Mayor Eva read Chief Hunger's letter.

Mayor Eva went back to the Fire Department Report and read the First Quarter Report for 2021. There has been a total of 345 calls for service which is an increase of 57 calls from this time last year. The call breakdown is as follows: Rescue/EMS – 181 calls, three of which required Narcan; Fire/Service – 81 calls; and Invalid Assist – 83 calls.

Mayor Eva stated during New Business he would like to discuss reinstating open Council Meetings with limited seating for the public and also still have WebEx for those who do not want to attend in person. Also they have talked about opening the Community Room for parties and that will reopen on May 1, 2021.

**Administrative Director – Mrs. Bartone**

Mrs. Bartone stated on tonight's Agenda is the Resolution regarding the salt contract for next year. We still have 293 tons outstanding on the previous contract. They have agreed to allow the City to keep it on their site through the end of this year at an additional \$10.00 per ton, which is a lot cheaper than the storage fee, so the City is going to do this. The Resolution tonight is for an additional 100 tons for next year which should be sufficient to get the City through the season with what is on hand.

In reviewing the CCA Ordinance and the local Board of Tax Review required by the CCA and Ordinance on our books, the Board of Tax Review as established now is incorrect. The three people, herself, Mr. Lunder and Mr. Lyons, needs to be revisited and three different people assigned to the Tax Review Board. Additionally, the CRA positions are still open and if anyone has any thoughts or ideas for someone to volunteer for that, please let her know.

Mrs. Bartone stated Council has received packets from NOPEC as there has been requests from residents and other Community Council Members for items they can hand out to residents.

**Law Director – Mr. Lyons (No report)**

**Fire Chief – Mr. Pechatsko**

Chief Pechatsko advised each Member of Council has received the Fire Department's 5-Year Growth Plan. He would be happy to answer any questions. (A copy of the 5-Year Growth Plan will be attached to the original Minutes.)

**QUESTIONS TO ADMINISTRATION AND DEPARTMENT HEADS:**

Mr. Morris asked Mrs. Bartone why the Council Minutes have not been posted to the City Website since January. Mrs. Bartone said they are still going through a learning phase with the new Secretary and trying to get through the tasks that have not been addressed yet. Mr. Morris said he also has a lot of questions for Chief Pechatsko on the 5-Year Growth Plan and will wait until New Business to get to that.

**BOARD/COMMITTEE/COMMISSION REPORTS:**

**Parks and Recreation Board / March 24, 2021 / Mr. Chabut**

Mr. Chabut advised the Parks and Recreation Board met on Wednesday, March 24, 2021, at 7:00 P.M. Present were Michelle Moore, Cathy Roos, Carol Stafinski, Samantha Wolfe, Mayor Eva, and Council

Member Chabut. Michelle Moore was voted Committee Chairperson and Jennifer Jakosh was voted Vice-Chair. Mayor Eva reported on May 30, 2021, Amvets Post 109 will have their parade starting at 1:00 P.M. The route will be from City Hall to Mentor Beach Park. He also reported that the Pavilion was almost completed, and they were moving the playground equipment up next to the Pavilion and adding new equipment. The City-Wide Yard Sale will be June 3<sup>rd</sup> to June 5<sup>th</sup>, from 9:00 A.M. until 3:00 P.M. Fees have been waived for 2021. The Trunk Sale will probably be on August 14<sup>th</sup>, 2021, from 9:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M. The fee will be \$5.00 per spot. Registration needs to be done a month in advance for residents and non-residents. Fill the Cruiser, if decided by the Police, will probably be August 6<sup>th</sup> through August 8<sup>th</sup>. The Fall Festival has been cancelled The Holiday Lighting Contest will be from December 10<sup>th</sup> to enter, voting will be December 13<sup>th</sup> to December 17<sup>th</sup>. There was a discussion on the problems with voting on social media, and it was decided that further discussion was needed. Most of these activities could be stopped because of the pandemic. The meeting adjourned at 7:26 P.M.

Mrs. Thompson asked Mr. Chabut to amend his report to add that she and Mr. Lunder also attended the meeting. Mr. Chabut apologized.

**Planning and Zoning Commission / April 5, 2021 / Mr. Johnson**

Mr. Johnson advised the Planning and Zoning Commission met on April 5, 2021, at 7:00 P.M. The Mayor swore in Mr. Buescher as a Member of the Board. This was the last meeting for Adam Sheldon, and they appreciate all his work on the Commission. There were two lots that used to have houses and they approved new houses being built on these lots. One is at 7643 Manor Drive with a 50' frontage which was lower than technically required, but since there was a house there previously, the Commission allowed a new house to be constructed. The Commission also discussed the Tree Ordinance, 1036.04, looking at options for green space rather a specific number of trees or types of trees. That discussion will be continued at the next meeting.

**OPEN TO THE PUBLIC TO SPEAK: 7:13 P.M.**

**CLOSED OPEN TO THE PUBLIC SECTION: 7:13 P.M.**

**LEGISLATION BEFORE COUNCIL:**

**ORDINANCE NO. 2020-O-23 (THIRD READING) (TABLED) (REFERRED TO ORDINANCE COMMITTEE)**

**AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CODIFIED ORDINANCE 232.01 – COMPOSITION OF FIRE DEPARTMENT**

Mrs. Thompson asked Mr. Chabut if this was still tabled. Mr. Chabut thought this had been sent back to Council but there are a couple of items in the Ordinance that have to be taken care of. Mrs. Thompson asked if this was sent to the Clerk to put on the Agenda. Mr. Chabut said he would send it again. Mrs. Thompson said it would be put on the Agenda for the next meeting. Mr. Lyons said Mr. Chabut asked him to amend it and it was sent back to Mr. Chabut, and he thought it went to the Clerk. The Clerk advised she had received a proposed amendment that was sent to everyone, but had not heard anything back. After some discussion, Mr. Lyons suggested this Ordinance be put back on the table, amended per the proposed amendment, which would then be voted on, and that this be sent to everyone again to be reviewed for the next Meeting. Everyone agreed to do this.

**LEGISLATION BEFORE COUNCIL (Continued):**

**ORDINANCE NO. 2020-O-28 (REFERRED TO ORDINANCE COMMITTEE)**

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CRA ORDINANCE 2016-O-28 AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

Mr. Chabut said the Committee is still working on this Ordinance.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2021-R-11**

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTOR TO PARTICIPATE IN AN AGREEMENT WITH THE OHIO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION FOR THE PURCHASE OF SODIUM CHLORIDE (ROCK SALT) FOR THE 2021-2022 WINTER SEASON AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

Mrs. Thompson asked if there were any time limits on this Resolution. Mrs. Bartone advised it is due by the end of the month. Mr. Bittner had a question. He asked how many tons were left from last year. Mrs. Bartone said 293. Mr. Bittner asked if the order was lowered this year because they are required to order so much. Mrs. Bartone said, depending on what is left over from the previous season, they normally order between 400 and 700 tons per season, so last year they ordered 400, for next season she is only ordering 100 tons so they can get in on the price quote.

**MOTION MADE BY MR. JOHNSON**, Seconded by Mr. Wolk, for Suspension of the Rules. ROLL CALL: Ayes: Council Member Lunder, Johnson, Bittner, Wolk, Chabut, Morris, Thompson. Nays: None.

**MOTION CARRIED: 7/0**

**MOTION MADE BY MR. JOHNSON**, Seconded by Mr. Morris, for Passage of Resolution No. 2021-R-11. ROLL CALL: Ayes: Council Member Lunder, Johnson, Bittner, Wolk, Chabut, Morris, Thompson. Nays: None.

**MOTION CARRIED: 7/0**

**ORDINANCE NO. 2021-O-09 (SECOND READING)**

AN ORDINANCE TO APPROVE THE EDITING AND INCLUSION OF CERTAIN ORDINANCES AS PARTS OF THE VARIOUS COMPONENT CODES OF THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES; TO PROVIDE FOR THE ADOPTION OF NEW MATTER IN THE UPDATED AND REVISED CODIFIED ORDINANCES; REPEALING ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS IN CONFLICT THEREWITH; AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

There was no Motion for Suspension of the Rules. Ordinance No. 2021-O-09 is placed on Third Reading.

**ORDINANCE NO. 2021-O-10 (SECOND READING)**

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 1444 – FLOOD DAMAGE PREVENTION AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

Mrs. Thompson asked Mrs. Bartone if she needed this passed tonight. Mrs. Bartone advised this has to be amended at Section 1.6(A) and asked the Clerk to read the amendment. Mr. Morris asked if everyone has had a chance to review the amendment. Mrs. Bartone said they had the wrong description in Section 1.6(A) which needed to be restated with our City maps. The Clerk read the amendment. Mr. Morris asked Mrs. Bartone if this needed to be passed tonight. Mrs. Bartone said it does need to be passed tonight as the State needs it by the end of the month. Mr. Morris said Council could wait until the next meeting to pass this Ordinance.

**LEGISLATION BEFORE COUNCIL (Continued):**

**ORDINANCE NO. 2021-O-10 (SECOND READING) (Continued):**

**MOTION MADE BY MR. MORRIS**, Seconded by Mr. Chabut, to amend Section 1.6(A). ROLL CALL: Ayes: Council Member Lunder, Johnson, Bittner, Wolk, Chabut, Morris, Thompson. Nays: None.

**MOTION CARRIED: 7/0**

Mr. Wolk asked for discussion. Just out of curiosity, he asked what would happen if this did not get passed at all. Mrs. Bartone said the City would not be in compliance with FEMA's regulations. Mr. Wolk asked what the consequences of that would be. Mrs. Bartone said that she could not say. Mrs. Thompson asked Mr. Lyons to comment. Mr. Lyons said the people by the lake who needed flood insurance would not be able to get flood insurance. This is a requirement in order to get Federal flood insurance. He asked Mrs. Bartone who contacted the City about making that amendment. Mrs. Bartone said Danielle Cook from ODNR sent her the update this afternoon that was required and said they missed it in the initial review. Mr. Lyons said he and Jim Sayles worked on the Ordinance that had been provided and Mr. Sayles had submitted to ODNR for approval. It has to be approved by ODNR. Mr. Wolk thanked Mr. Lyons for his remarks on the consequences of not passing this Ordinance. He wanted to ask the question as he is not a fan of the City just blindly doing what the Federal Government tells us to do without understanding it a little better. Mr. Lyons said he asked the same question of Mr. Sayles and Mr. Sayles is the one who told him this was necessary in order to be eligible for flood insurance. Mr. Lyons also asked someone at CT why they don't just pass a State law requiring all of the municipalities to amend this, and this also applies to rivers, and he was told that there are some communities that are not affected by this because they do not have flood zones. Since the City does have flood zones, in order to have new construction you have to meet these requirements. Mr. Wolk asked if there were other options for flood insurance. Mr. Lyons said there may be some policies out there, but because floods can be so devastating, the only game in town is the Federal people.

**MOTION MADE BY MR. BITTNER**, Seconded by Mr. Chabut, for Suspension of the Rules. ROLL CALL: Ayes: Council Member Lunder, Johnson, Bittner, Wolk, Chabut, Morris, Thompson. Nays: None.

**MOTION CARRIED: 7/0**

**MOTION MADE BY MR. MORRIS**, Seconded by Mr. Lunder, for Passage of Ordinance No. 2021-O-10. ROLL CALL: Ayes: Council Member Lunder, Johnson, Bittner, Wolk, Chabut, Morris, Thompson. Nays: None.

**MOTION CARRIED: 7/0**

**ORDINANCE NO. 2021-O-11 (SECOND READING)**

**AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 1466 – INSPECTION OF VACANT BUILDINGS IN ITS ENTIRETY**

There was no Motion for Suspension of the Rules. Ordinance No. 2021-O-11 is placed on Third Reading.

**OLD BUSINESS: (None)**

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Mayor Eva asked about reinstating open Council Meetings. There would be a limit on the number of residents, but he thinks they can be spaced out based on past attendance at Council Meetings, and also keep the WebEx/Virtual option open. Mrs. Thompson asked if capacity would follow Governor DeWine's rule of 40%. Mayor Eva said yes, for instance, normally we would be able to have 50 people in the Community Room, and if we get 20 people to a Council Meeting, that would be our capacity and that would be ok. Mr. Morris asked if Mayor Eva had a time frame to do this. Mayor Eva said by the next Council Meeting. Mrs. Thompson said that would be April 27, 2021. Mr. Lunder asked if the 20 included the seven Members of Council. Mrs. Bartone said the normal capacity of the room is 60. Mr. Morris said he is all for it, as did Mrs. Thompson. There was no one against this.

Mr. Morris said he went through the 5-Year Plan submitted by Chief Pechatsko. In the call history, he noticed there was a jump in 2014 in EMS, Rescue and Fire Service calls. He knows at one time there was a motion by the officers in the Department for the Department to log MVA's as two separate calls, one EMS, one as a fire response, and asked if that was ever changed or is that still the way they do it. Chief Pechatsko that is still currently the way they are doing it. Mr. Morris commended Chief Pechatsko in a way on recent accomplishments, it was interesting but feels it did not have a whole lot to do with the subject matter at hand. On Page 8, Chief Pechatsko said continuing education to maintain certification was easily obtained at no cost to the employee. Is he saying now the City doesn't pay for that, or the employee has to pay for it themselves. Chief Pechatsko said there are places where they can get con-ed that they have to pay for, although the Department continues to provide them the opportunity for continuing education at no cost to them. Mr. Morris asked, they do not need to pay anything out of pocket to get the con-ed they need. Chief Pechatsko said basically no. Mr. Morris asked if the hospital still paid for ems con-ed. Chief Pechatsko said to the best of his knowledge he believes they do, although it is not ems anymore, it is Fire Rescue 1. Mr. Morris said he was not sure they do or not; Chief Pechatsko said he is not 100% sure, but knows they have access to the website and do not pay any money to have that subscription. Mr. Morris asked if it also included fire training. Chief Pechatsko said yes. Continuing, Mr. Morris said in the paragraph where it says this takes a small pool of possible candidates and further restricts them through testing and residency requirements. He does not believe this is necessarily true because most of the new hires are paramedics but not all of them, correct. Chief Pechatsko said no, not really. The last four new hires, one was a paramedic, three were basics. Mr. Morris asked if the three basics had to be civil service tested. Chief Pechatsko said no test has been given yet but they are within the civil service restrictions. Mr. Morris asked how did they get hired if they did not pass a civil service test, that is contrary to our Civil Service Rules. Mayor Eva said, as the Chief said, we have not given a civil service test because we have not had a need to. Mr. Morris said the only way to get employed by the Fire Department without the civil service test was to be a provisional paramedic, has something changed? Mr. Lunder asked if that was changed with the Charter in 2014. Mayor Eva said he would have to look. Mr. Lunder said he was on that Committee and that was one of the things Chief Mahoney wanted taken out of the Charter, that he can hire people off the street without them having to take the civil service test. Mr. Morris said he personally disagrees with a lot of the stuff, like the disadvantage of part-time staffing is they tend to be transient and may lack dedication and loyalty, yet Chief Pechatsko states in the document many part-timers are dedicated and loyal. Mr. Morris finds this to be contradictory. On Page 9, Chief Pechatsko said there is no down-side to the change except the current part-time personnel will not be able to achieve an officer rank, but Mr. Morris said when he asked for this 5-Year Plan, he asked for things such as under the proposed organization, who would be in charge of the different shifts, what rank would they hold, what training would they receive to make them qualified to run the shift, and he did not find that in the plan yet. Mayor Eva said it is there, he thinks Chief Pechatsko has laid out a very well . . . Mr. Morris asked if he minded if the Chief answered this, he would appreciate it. Mayor Eva said he was just telling Mr. Morris it is there, what Chief Pechatsko has talked about leadership training is there, Mr. Morris said he saw that. Mayor Eva said Mr. Morris was saying it is not there. Mr. Morris asked what leadership training? Mayor Eva said leadership training for them to run shifts. Mr. Morris asked what training is that. Chief Pechatsko directed Mr. Morris to Page 14, at the top of the page, where it states officer leadership training, training classes are listed on the left.

Mr. Morris asked where are the Fire Officer 1 and 2 training classes given. Chief Pechatsko said those are given in several different institutions; he knows Cuyahoga Community College holds Fire Officer 1 and 2 classes; Bowling Green does a State Fire School as well as the Ohio Fire Academy. Mr. Morris said he appreciates the clarification. Mr. Morris said on Page 10, Chief Pechatsko mentions this change is not new to the fire service as other fire departments in Lake County faced with the same issues have already successfully made these changes. Mr. Morris said he checked with Willowick and Fairport. They are still running part-timers quite heavily, they are not having that problem, so what Departments have made these changes, other than maybe Mentor, Willoughby, Eastlake, which are much larger, much more financially supported departments. Chief Pechatsko said Kirtland has made changes as well, they are similar to us in call volume. Mr. Morris said the other statement in that paragraph, Chief Pechatsko said in the last six months since they changed (in reference to 24/48) we have provided our citizens with a 4-person shift that offers faster service and more protections for our firefighters. Mr. Morris said he has gone by the station and seen one vehicle in the driveway. He was told some guys get dropped off for work, and some walk to work, he finds that amazing and finds that statement to be misleading. Chief Pechatsko himself told Mr. Morris at one time he has a 3-man shift minimum, yet Mr. Morris knows there have been times when there has been two men there and possibly one man.

Mr. Johnson stated his questions are really regarding shifts in the future, 2 additional firefighters, and the costs associated with that, and where this money would be coming from. He understands part would be using a S.A.F.E.R Grant for a short period of time, but after that the City would be responsible for those costs. Where would all this money be coming from because he is not seeing it. Mrs. Bartone asked who is that questions directed to. Mr. Johnson said the question is directed to the Chief. Chief Pechatsko said as he listed in the 5-Year Plan, the first three years would be covered under the S.A.F.E.R. Grant. We would have to probably do a possible levy. Mr. Chabut said possibly Mrs. Bartone would be better to answer that questions. Mr. Johnson said it sounds like a non-starter with him. Mr. Morris said he has another problem with all this, which he has previously brought this up, where we got the citizens to renew the Charter Amendment monies to keep things from sliding down any further than they were when we were losing money. He does not view this as stopping things from sliding. He views this as well as the 24-hour shift as being a giant jump forward and an improvement in services, which is not what we told the voters this was going to be for. He likes the fact that they are on 24 off 48, that is a great thing to have and he thinks there is benefit there to be had, but this plan, he thinks we should wait until we are done with the Charter Amendment and see where that goes, and if we have to renew the Charter Amendment money, this be added to it at that point. Mayor Eva started to ask did we not at one time . . . Mr. Wolk said he had a question. Mayor Eva asked to finish his question first, did we not at one time have five full-time guys working during the day. Mr. Bittner and Mr. Morris said yes. How many at night. Mr. Morris said 3. Mayor Eva said now we have four and four, which is better. Mr. Morris stated he said that was better, he acknowledged that, but now you are asking to improve the Department . . . Mayor Eva said it was not improving, he is going from five to four, how is this improving? Mayor Eva said he is maintaining. Mr. Morris said at the time the Chief was not considered line personnel, so it was four and four. Mr. Bittner said he disagrees with that. Mr. Morris said he can disagree all he wants. Mr. Bittner said he ran calls. Mr. Morris said he wanted to, but he was not considered part of that. Mr. Bittner said he disagrees with Mr. Morris; and told Chief Pechatsko he commends him on the 5-Year Plan, he has ambitions, this is what you want to do in the future, you are not saying this is what you are going to do. Mr. Bittner said this is what he respects; it says you would like to hire two more; you are looking at ways that we possibly could do that, and he appreciates that; we, as Council, can look at that and say there would be help from the S.A.F.E.R. Grant, do we have the funds to support those for the extra years, no we don't. This is what he wants to do. Mr. Morris said this is why he proposed letting the Charter Amendments run out, and when they come up for renewal, assuming Council is going to do that, that this be proposed to the residents and say this is what we need to do. Mr. Bittner agreed. Mr. Morris said that way everything is up front and to him, doing this without doing that is like pulling the wool over people's eyes. Mr. Bittner said he did not think they were doing that.

Chief Pechatsko wanted to remind everyone that in 2002, there were five full-time personnel during the time and three part-time personnel working when our call volume was just over 800 calls a year. Now that we are over 1200 calls a year, you are thinking that five during the day and four at night is over-staffing? Mr. Morris asked who Chief Pechatsko was addressing that to. Chief Pechatsko said any one on Council. Mr. Morris said no, he thinks four and four as the Mayor said is very fair. He supported a four man shift around the clock for awhile, even while he was working there. Mayor Eva asked him what he is saying is the levy was only meant to maintain. Mr. Morris said yes. Mayor Eva said his comments are contradictory, and Mr. Morris said he did not see it.

Mr. Wolk asked where are we at with response times compared to acceptable industry standard. Chief Pechatsko said their response times are quicker than the industry standard. Mr. Wolk said we are providing a quicker response time with the current staffing then what is typically accepted industry wide. Chief Pechatsko said yes. The discussion ended.

**OPEN TO THE PUBLIC TO SPEAK: 7:49 P.M.**

**CLOSED OPEN TO THE PUBLIC SECTION: 7:49 P.M.**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS AND SETTING OF MEETINGS:**

Ordinance Committee	Monday, April 19, 2021, at 6:00 P.M.
Planning and Zoning Commission	Monday, May 3, 2021, at 7:00 P.M.
Regular Agenda Meeting	Thursday, April 22, 2021, at 6:00 P.M.
Regular Council Meeting	Tuesday, April 27, 2021, at 7:00 P.M.

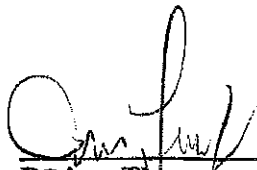
**ADJOURNMENT:**

**MOTION MADE BY MR. MORRIS**, Seconded by Mr. Lunder, for Adjournment. **ROLL CALL:**  
Ayes: Council Member Lunder, Johnson, Bittner, Wolk, Chabut, Morris, Thompson. Nays: None.  
**MOTION CARRIED: 7/0**

The Virtual Regular Meeting of Council adjourned at 7:51 P.M.

**APPROVED:**

April 27, 2021  
Date

  
Desirea Thompson Jim Lunder  
Vice President of Council

Attest: Joyce M. Sage  
Clerk of Council



# Mentor-on-the-Lake Fire Department



## 5 Year Growth Plan

2022 – 2026

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## Introduction

As the fire service changes and the hazards we face change, so must the fire department evolve. The Mentor-on-the-Lake Fire Department must proactively respond to the challenges it is faced with in order to maintain and improve upon the excellent service the residents, business owners, and visitors have come to expect. These challenges we face are not unique to the Mentor-on-the-Lake Fire Department but are the same challenges faced by fire departments all over Lake County. I understand that change is difficult because we fear what is unfamiliar however, to get somewhere we have never been, we have to do something we've never done. The Mentor-on-the-Lake Fire Department cannot continue to operate in the past. We need to forge ahead and make the difficult but necessary changes that a full time progressive fire department like ours would make in order to continue to fulfill our mission of providing the best service possible to our stakeholders. In closing, I acknowledge that the process outlined in this growth plan will take time to accomplish and is subject to change do to unforeseen circumstances however, it is my hope that this document serves as a road map to reach and fulfill the short term and future goals of the Mentor-on-the-Lake Fire Department.

James A. Pechatsko, Fire Chief

Mentor-on-the-Lake Fire Department

## Department History

The Mentor-on-the-Lake Fire Department has seen many changes over of the years. One of the most significant changes occurred in 1977 when the City hired its first full time career firefighters. This was in response to the need of day time coverage. The full time staff worked Monday through Friday during the day and the part time staff worked the nights and weekends responding from home. This staffing model continued for 21 years until the department saw its next significant change in 1998 when the department began manning the station 24/7 by bringing the part time staff in house at night and on the weekends. 22 years later, in 2020 the department saw its next staffing model change when the full time staff switched to a 24 hour on duty and 48 hour off duty schedule which is the standard full time firefighters schedule throughout Lake County. This change has been successful and I completely anticipate it being the normal full time schedule far into the future of the Mentor-on-the-Lake Fire Department.

# Call History

<u>Type of Call</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>2004</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>
Fire/Service	138	183	282	238	241	242	246	229	220	221
EMS/Rescue	671	659	616	676	691	637	702	677	745	755
Total	809	842	898	914	932	879	948	906	965	976

<u>Type of Call</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>2013</u>	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021-1<sup>st</sup> Qtr.</u>
Fire/Service	151	253	254	319	351	320	331	422	453	81
EMS/Rescue	896	722	796	822	855	896	798	847	782	264
Total	1047	975	1050	1141	1206	1216	1129	1269	1235	345

## Recent Accomplishments

### 2018

- Replaced Rescue Squad
- Installed Power Load System in both Squads
- Replaced aging gear washer
- Replaced three (3) sets of turn out gear
- Replaced three (3) firefighter helmets
- Fire Officer II Class (B.C. Paduano)
- Clean, paint, and replace ceiling tiles in the station dayroom
- Renovate the front station bathroom

### 2019

- Replace Chief vehicle
- Replace aging SCBA units including masks
- Replace four (4) sets of turn out gear
- Replace ten (10) firefighter helmets
- Replace aging station bay door openers
- Fire Instructor Class (Brian Sedmak)

**2020**

- Hire new full time firefighter
- New Rescue Squad
- Replace ten (10) sets of turn out gear
- Replace aging and damaged station bay doors
- New Lifepak 15 monitor/defibrillator
- Two (2) new automatic chest compressor devises
- Add six (6) new portable radios
- Add six (6) new SCBA masks
- Replace station dishwasher
- Replace aging clothes washer and dryer in the station and dorm
- Replace broken back door in dorm.

## Strategic Plan

Strategically the Mentor-on-the-Lake Fire Department has been lucky to be supported by many part time personnel who were able to serve our community at night and weekends because they worked a Monday through Friday day job. The training was affordable and in some cases the city covered the cost. Continuing education to maintain your certification was easily achievable and at no cost to them (city paid). As the fire service has evolved and the training and continuing education has increased in complexity as well as cost, it has made it extremely difficult for those types of personnel to enter the fire service. The time and financial commitments required to achieve the necessary training to enter the fire service has created a situation that only those looking for a career in the fire service are enrolling in these classes. The increasing technical nature of the firefighter's job reflected in the increase state requirements for certification for firefighting and especially for EMS is another explanation for the decreased availability of part time personnel. As the majority of the fire departments in Lake County utilize part time personal, the already reduced pool of qualified candidates is stretched even thinner. The Mentor-on-the- Lake charter puts the part time firefighter in the classified service which places them under civil service. This takes a small pool of possible candidates and further restricts them through testing and residency requirements.

The primary benefits of the part time staffing are to provide adequate manning levels at a lower cost in salaries and fringe benefits. However, as multiple agencies continue to try and attract the limited amount of personnel to fill their available part time openings, salaries for part time personnel are on the rise. With that being said, even the highest paying department in the county still has trouble consistently covering all of their shifts. The disadvantage of part time staffing is they tend to be transient and may lack dedication and loyalty. If faced with the choice



of working their scheduled part time shift or working overtime at their full time job, they will choose their full time job. Seasonal shortages are another problem in regards to part time staff. Summer time and weekends are harder to cover.

Because of these facts, our department has been understaffed for some time in the part time ranks. These facts are also the reason we need to move forward to have access to the largest candidate pool. The recent change to 24/48 shifts, has allowed for part time personnel to work during the day. This has provided an opportunity for part time personnel that do not want to work nights and weekends and has resulted in a few new hires. This brings me to the current proposal of changing the Ordinance and Charter. By changing Ordinance 232.01 to read: "The Fire Department shall be composed of the Chief of Fire and such other officers and employees as provided by Council from time to time" and to move the part time members of the fire department to the unclassified service within the City Charter. This would allow the fire administration to establish the appropriate complement of staffing without the strict guidelines presented in the current language of the Ordinance and Charter. This will allow our department access to the largest pool of candidates in the area to be considered for hire. We will be able to advertise/solicited candidates to work part time days/evenings and weekends that we do not currently have access to. There is no downside to the change except for the current part time personnel will not be able to achieve an officer ranking. Current officers would not lose their rank due to this change. I have not found that the slim opportunity of obtaining a part time officer rank at our department has attracted new qualified candidates. To attract the current pool of part time candidates we need to continue to offer a variety of shift times and remove the residency and civil service requirements.

The need to hire more part time personnel outweighs the need for more officers in a department of our size. Under the old staffing model when the full time personnel only worked Monday through Friday during the day, the part time Officers were the shift leaders at night and the weekends. With the schedule change to 24/48, with a full-time firefighter on duty 24/7 there is no longer a need for a part time officer. Again, this is not new to the fire service as other departments in Lake County faced with the same issues have already successfully made these same changes. As I mentioned, we have been understaffed at our department for quite awhile. People leave the department for a variety of reasons just like they do at any other job. We are and have been lucky to have some dedicated part time personnel that are here because they love what they do and stay through the changes and rough times. I wish we could hire more like them. But the facts are the facts and we need to catch up with the current standard in the fire service. The change in shifts to 24/48 was a huge move that caused some uncertainty, but the switch went smooth and has been working very well. Any concerns with losing shift hours available to part time firefighters was null. During the last 6 months since we changed, we have provided our citizens with a 4 personnel shift that offers faster service and more protection for our firefighters. It has also reduced the need for additional personnel to be called in for back up rescues. We are now at a point where we need to hire more qualified part time firefighters. The fire service is continuing to change and this will allow us to catch up for now. In the near future we need to plan on hiring more full time firefighters as candidates taking the classes want to have a career in the fire service. Below is my 5 year plan to increase our full time staff. I will discuss the financial portion in the next section.

## Staffing Plan

The most important part of any organization is its personnel. Unfortunately, it's also the most expensive with staffing comprising around 80% of the budget. The Mentor-on-the-Lake Fire Department has historically had a unique staffing model. Until recently the full time staff worked Monday through Friday days for a 50 hour work week. In 2020, that was changed to the traditional schedule of on duty 24 hours and off duty for 48 hours. The full time staffing is set by City Ordinance and comprised of 1- Chief, 1- Officer, and 3 firefighters for a total of 5 full time personnel. These numbers have fluctuated over the past 10 years as illustrated in the chart below. (This chart is meant to demonstrate the years a change occurred and intentionally skips certain years.)

<u>F.T. Staff</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2013</u>	<u>1/2014</u>	<u>8/2014</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>2020</u>
Chief	1	1	0	0	0	1	1
Officer	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Firefighter	2	1	1	2	3	2	3
Total	4	3	2	3	4	4	5

According to the International City Managers' Association, the average American city now has 1.52 full-time Fire Department employees for every 1,000 in population. With Mentor-on-the-Lake's population estimated at 7,390, our fire department should have at least 7 full time personnel. I would like to hire 2 more full time firefighters right now, but understand the budget restrictions. As stated earlier in regards to part time personnel, we need to have a bigger pool of candidates to support the turnover that is a constant in the fire service in order to get us in a good

place to cover the shifts needed. In the next couple of years we need to continue to actively recruit part time personnel and facts have shown the opportunity for a full time job is an excellent recruitment tool for attracting new candidates to the department. The opportunity for a full time job along with the changes to the Charter and Ordinance will give us a good pool of internal and external candidates in preparation for replacing the anticipated retirement of one full time firefighter and the addition of two new full time firefighters in 2024. The department staffing would then be in a more stable situation with two full time personnel and two part time personnel per shift. The Mentor-on-the-Lake Fire Department can no longer be viewed as a part time department as the landscape of the fire service continues to shift and part time personnel become increasingly difficult to recruit. Our department has always depended on part time personnel and will continue to need them to support our staffing needs however; we have passed the tipping point where we need to invest more in our full time personnel as we strive to provide the best service we possibly can. In review, the 5 year staffing plan for the department is:

- 2021, changes to the City Charter and Ordinance.
- 2022, 2023, continue to recruit part time personnel
- 2024, replace full time firefighter (anticipated retirement) and add two new full time fighters (utilizing the S.A.F.E.R. grant).

## Financial Plan

- 2021, changes to the City Charter and Ordinance.
  - No cost to the city, savings will come in not having a civil service test to hire part time employees or for part time promotion test/salary
  - Cost for training already in the budget will be used for full time personnel to take shift leader/officer training.
- 2022, 2023, continue to recruit part time personnel
  - No cost to the city, savings will come in not having a civil service test to hire part time employee or for part time promotion test/salary
  - Cost for training already in the budget will be used for full time personnel to take shift leader/officer training.
  - Apply for S.A.F.E.R. grant (2023)
- 2024, replace full time firefighter (anticipated retirement) and add two new full time fighters (utilizing the S.A.F.E.R. grant).
  - Replacement/hire of new full time firefighters (tests, background).
  - S.A.F.E.R. grant will cover 75% of the 2 new full time firefighter's salaries and benefits for the first two (2) years. It will then cover 35% of the 2 new full time firefighter's salaries and benefits for year three (3).
  - Training needed for shift leader/officer training will be in the budget
- 2025, have 1 full time Officer, 1 full time firefighter, 2 part time firefighters per shift.
  - Cost of Officer's promotional test, any training will already be achieved or already budgeted in the training budget.
  - Salary for 3 Officers.(difference between firefighter and officer salary)

**Training:**

**Officer/Leadership Training**

Training Class	FF taking class	Cost	Total
Blue Card Command	3	\$ 385	\$ 1,155
Fire Investigator	2	\$ 250	\$ 500
Fire Instructor	4	\$ 100	\$ 400
Fire Officer I	4	\$ 50	\$ 200
Fire Officer II	4	\$ 25	\$ 100

**Capital Expenditures:** (Suggestion: by 2024/2025 when S.A.F.E.R. grant is paying a portion of F/T FF salary)

Replace heavy rescue truck 2517

- 1993 International
- Estimated cost \$300,000.00 to \$500,000.00

Replace aerial truck 2519

- 1993 Pierce Arrow 50' telesquirt
- Estimated cost \$750,000.00 to \$1,000,000.00

**Department Budget:**

**Department budget (estimated salaries and benefits)**

Year	Training	FF Salary	FF Benefits	Totals
2021	\$ 3,500.00	\$ 693,285.00	\$ 272,036.00	\$ 965,321.00
2022	\$ 3,500.00	\$ 707,150.70	\$ 277,476.72	\$ 984,627.42
2023	\$ 3,500.00	\$ 721,293.71	\$ 283,026.25	\$ 1,004,319.97
2024	\$ 3,500.00	\$ 897,719.59	\$ 378,686.78	\$ 1,276,406.37
2025	\$ 3,500.00	\$ 915,673.98	\$ 386,260.52	\$ 1,301,934.50
2026	\$ 3,500.00	\$ 933,987.46	\$ 393,985.73	\$ 1,327,973.19
2027	\$ 3,500.00	\$ 952,667.21	\$ 401,865.44	\$ 1,354,532.65

\*Salaries/Benefits estimate based on a 2% increase per year

\*2024 transition year, 1 replacement F/T FF and 2 new hire F/T FF (total of 3 F/T FF and 3 F/T officers)

**1 F/T FF Salary/ Benefits S.A.F.E.R grant breakdown**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Salary / Benefits</b>	<b>S.A.F.E.R. Grant portion</b>	<b>City portion</b>
2024	\$ 115,000.00	\$ 86,250.00	\$ 28,750.00
2025	\$ 117,300.00	\$ 87,975.00	\$ 29,325.00
2026	\$ 119,646.00	\$ 41,876.10	\$ 77,769.90
2027	\$ 122,038.92		\$ 122,038.92

\*Salaries/Benefits estimate based on a 2% increase per year

\* In 2027 city responsible for all of salary/benefits