

The Town of Champion Town Board met in special session on Friday, June 19, 2020 by video conference due to the restrictions on public gatherings. Present were Supervisor Ferguson, Councilmen Stewart, Watkins, Waite and Gump.

Supervisor Ferguson called the meeting to order at 7:00pm and asked Councilmen Stewart and Gump, members on the fire department dissolution committee, to remark on the inventory conducted in coordination with the Village of West Carthage and Village of Copenhagen fire departments and their position on the final dissolution plan.

M. Gump stated that he supports the final plan and asked about the mayors' responses to the fire department requests. Supervisor Ferguson advised that the mayors' positions were consistent with the department requests. M. Gump added that since the Village of West Carthage is willing to operate a second fire station that sufficiently equipping the station is necessary.

T. Stewart stated that the inventory went very well. The building has been secured with new locks. He supported the dissolution final plan as presented.

L. Waite questioned why a copy of the resolution had not been sent with the agenda. Supervisor Ferguson responded that the resolution for the final plan was emailed after it was approved to form by the attorney as stated on the agenda.

Supervisor Ferguson reminded meeting attendees that this was not a public hearing. K. Clarke, Copenhagen Mayor, asked why he had received personal notice of the meeting.

Supervisor Ferguson read the resolution for the benefit of L. Waite. L. Waite insisted that Copenhagen Fire Department should receive the tanker. K. Clarke stated that he thought the mayors would have a say in the final plan. Supervisor Ferguson responded that each village was part of the inventory process and were invited to submit requests. Both Villages requested the 2006 tanker.

L. Waite reiterated his position that Copenhagen should get the tanker. Supervisor Ferguson responded that West Carthage will need equipment to set up a substation.

H. Watkins confirmed the position of the other Councilmen and stated his support for the resolution as recommended and prepared since the Village of West Carthage is willing to establish a substation and also has rural areas that need protection.

RESOLUTION offered by Councilman Stewart; seconded by Councilman Watkins;

WHEREAS, the Town of Champion, under a Memorandum Decision and Order from the New York State Supreme Court dated April 23, 2020, was ordered to submit for review and approval, a plan of dissolution outlining the proposed transfer of assets, including real property, of the Champion Volunteer Fire Company, Inc., and;

WHEREAS, the Town of Champion, under an Order on Application for Approval of Preliminary Plan of Dissolution/Distribution dated May 21, 2020, received authorization to preserve the assets and to conduct an inventory in anticipation of a final plan of distribution, and;

WHEREAS, such inventory was conducted in coordination with representatives of the Village of West Carthage Fire Department and the Village of Copenhagen Volunteer Fire Department and a consolidated Champion Volunteer Fire Company, Inc. assets inventory list prepared, and;

WHEREAS, the Village of West Carthage Fire Department and the Village of Copenhagen Volunteer Fire Department, with the concurrence of the Village Mayors, have reviewed the inventory list and submitted requests for equipment and utilization of the facility.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town of Champion approves the final plan for distribution of Champion Volunteer Fire Company, Inc. assets as follows:

1. Pending Jefferson County's transfer of property and waiver of past due property taxes, Town of Champion accepts ownership of the facility for the purpose of allowing the Village of West Carthage Fire Department's use as a second station as outlined in the Village's May 28, 2020 letter. Benefits include potential increase in volunteer membership, improved fire protection for all residents, and provides that all residents would be located within five (5) miles of a fire station for home owner's insurance purposes.
2. After obtaining necessary title to all vehicles, vehicles and equipment will be distributed consistent with each fire department's request. Regarding request by both Village Fire Departments for the 2006 Sterling 3500 gallon tank, the Town recommends distribution of this tanker to the Village of West Carthage Fire Department for stationing at their second station along with the 1988 FMC 1,000 gallon Pumper/Tanker vehicle requested. The Town also recommends any remaining equipment or fire fighting items not specifically requested by Village fire departments become property of the West Carthage Fire Department for determination to recycle, donate to other fire departments in need or to discard if no further value exists.
3. After completion of the review of the five-year accounting of all assets, liabilities, income and expenses of the Champion Volunteer Fire Company by the NYS Attorney General, the Town recommends any fire protection funds recovered be distributed as follows:
 - Reimbursement of Town funds used to implement approved Court ordered preliminary plan.
 - Remainder of funds distributed to the Village of West Carthage and Village of Copenhagen consistent with the terms of their current Fire Protection Contracts with the Town of Champion.

Supervisor Ferguson.....aye
Councilman Stewart.....aye
Councilman Watkins.....aye
Councilman Waite.....nay
Council Gump.....aye

Resolution adopted.

References

1. Slye Law Offices, P. C. letter dated May 4, 2020
re: Champion Volunteer Fire Company, Inc. to Town of Champion
2. Court Decision and Order approving Town of Champion's preliminary plan allowing immediate action to preserve assets and to conduct an inventory in anticipation of final plan of distribution.
3. Village of West Carthage letter dated May 28, 2020 to Town of Champion
re: Champion Fire Department equipment. Includes request from fire department for vehicles and equipment from inventory and request by both the fire department and the Village asking to utilize the former fire station as a second station.
4. Copenhagen Volunteer Fire Department, Inc. letter dated May 22, 2020 to Town of Champion
re: Champion Fire Equipment - includes request from fire department for vehicle and equipment from inventory.
5. Village of Copenhagen letter dated June 8, 2020 supporting their fire department's request for vehicle and equipment as put forth in the fire department's May 22, 2020 letter to the Town of Champion.

6. Deferiet Fire Department's request received on May 11, 2020 by the Town of Champion for a Champion Fire Department Spartan engine.
7. Consolidated Champion Volunteer Fire Company, Inc. inventory list reflecting requested vehicles and equipment by the Village of West Carthage Fire Department, Village of Copenhagen Fire Department, and Deferiet Fire Department.

Motion by T. Stewart, seconded by Supervisor Ferguson to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 7:15pm.

Christina Vargulick

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Town Clerk