

## Odessa Hose & Chemical Company, Inc

### Meeting #2 – Public Hearing

The Public Hearing for the Odessa Hose & Chemical Company becoming a Fire District was held on Wednesday September 18<sup>th</sup>, 2024 at 6:00<sub>pm</sub> in the auditorium at Odessa-Montour Central School

**Present** were quorums from the Town's of Montour, Catharine, Hector, Cayuta, and Veteran, and the Village of Odessa. Also present were Attorney Mark Butler, Chief Adam Mahnke, members of the Fire Department, and multiple persons from the public.

**Absent** from the Town of Montour was Councilperson Robert Simpson

**At 6:05<sub>pm</sub>** Attorney Mark Butler introduced himself and suggested that all Supervisor's and Mayor call the meeting to order for their respective Town/Village

**At 6:09<sub>pm</sub>** Supervisor Scott called the meeting to order for the Town of Montour

**Present** for the Town of Montour was:

- David Scott – Town Supervisor
- Donna Taber – Councilperson
- Breana Yessman – Councilperson
- Brian Stamp – Councilperson
- Gloria Stigers – Town Clerk

**Absent** for the Town of Montour was:

- Robert Simpson – Councilperson

Attorney Butler started off by defining what a Fire District and explaining the boundaries for the proposed Fire District. With becoming a Fire District, nothing internally will change, only the board that they answer to. Becoming a Fire District will allow them more funding opportunities to help with purchasing gear and other necessities. The Fire District sets the budget and follows the same budget timeline that the Town's follow. They also have a Tax Cap on their budget. The proposed budget is higher than what everyone is used to paying but that is because prices have more than doubled in the last three to four years. With creating a Fire District, there will be a Board of Commissioners. They will have open meetings, provide annual financial reports which are filed accordingly with the State Comptroller, and will have an outside audit done which is filed with the Clerks. The treasurer will pay the bills by vouchers, which are approved at the Board of Commissioners meeting by resolution.

Attorney Butler then responded to public comments and questions.

**At 7:10<sub>pm</sub>** Fire Chief Adam Mahnke spoke about the history of the Odessa Fire Department, including in 1992 the Fire Department attempted to become a District and was unsuccessful. He then spoke about the different services that the Fire Department offers. These include, but are not limited to, fires, storm damage, car accidents, chemical leaks, mutual aid, and more and calls are only increasing.

Attorney Butler stated that if all Boards accept the resolution tonight, it will then be submissive to referendum for 30 days to file a petition with the Town/Village Clerk and then 45 days after the filing a special election is to be held.

Multiple questions were asked by the Boards and answered by Attorney Butler. Without repeating the questions, the answers are as follows:

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If a municipality wants to join after the District has been formed (refer to Article 11 of Town Law) this is done by a Public Hearing by the Town Board and a resolution to extend the boundary into said Town. The Fire Commissioners Board must also consent.

To dissolve a District please reference Article 17A of Town Law. However, it involves a resolution and public vote.

If one Town votes against the formation of the Fire District at this meeting, then the other Towns and Village will then convene again for a new Public Hearing with a new border and new equalization rate.

Village of Odessa Mayor Jerry Messmer spoke and stated that if the district is not formed the Village will not be able to support the Fire Department the way it has in the past and the budget for each Town will stand as it is presented to them today. He also stated that the Odessa Fire Department does not ever receive any grants that they apply for because the grants go to Fire Districts before they are given to a small Village owned Fire Department.

There was then a lot of talk between the Public and Boards regarding residents Homeowner's Insurance increasing if they were to contract with a different Company.

With Town of Cayuta pulling out and voting against the formation of the Fire District there was no reason to proceed with the meeting. Just to see where everyone's board was at each board was asked, unofficially, how they would vote.

**Motion** made by Supervisor Scott to close the Public Hearing, seconded by Councilperson Taber, with all-in-favor, the Public Hearing portion of this meeting was closed at 8:34<sub>pm</sub>

**Motion** made by Supervisor Scott, seconded by Councilperson Taber, with all-in-favor, all Towns and Village present, with the exclusion of Town of Cayuta, agree to the next Public Hearing date of Wednesday October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2024 at 6:30<sub>pm</sub> in the Odessa-Montour School auditorium.

**Motion** made by Councilperson Taber, seconded by Councilperson Stamp, with all-in-favor, the meeting be adjourned at 9:17<sub>pm</sub>

Respectfully Submitted: \_\_\_\_\_ Gloria Stigers, Town Clerk