

JOINT MEETING MINUTES
Somerset Fire/Rescue Commission
Somerset Town Board
Somerset Village Board
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 22, 2026 | 7:00 PM

Village President Donald Kern called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm at the Village Hall. Village trustees present: Chris Dubak, Caleb Garn, Donald Kern, Brandon Krohn, Jessica Plourde, Janna Stewart, and David Wolner. Town Chairs present: Jason Crotty, Shane Demulling, Lenny Germain, Doug Plourde, and Tim Witzmann. Members of the Fire/Rescue Commission present: Rita Lawson; Absent was: Aaron Morrison. Travis Belisle and Sarah Kobs, from the Fire Department, were also present. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Approval of Agenda

Motion by Garn, second by J. Plourde to approve the agenda. Motion carried.

Public Comment

No one from the public spoke.

Minutes from the January 28, 2026 Joint Meeting (Village Hall)

Motion by Garn, second by Dubak to approve the minutes from the January 28, 2026 Joint Meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

Budget/Financial Report

The group reviewed the year-to-date budget-to-actual report for fire department operations, along with a separate budget-specific document and quarterly balance sheet. Overall, no significant issues were noted for the first quarter.

Payroll expenses were in line with expectations. Vehicle maintenance costs appeared higher than usual; however, this was attributed to annual servicing and oil changes completed on all vehicles, including higher-cost maintenance for larger trucks. These services are performed once per year by external providers rather than staff.

Discussion also covered tracking and accounting practices. The department maintains certain items, such as 2% dues, through internal spreadsheets rather than separate budget line items. Grant funding (e.g., DNR and FAF grants) is tracked through designated or adjusted line items depending on the type of expense and reimbursement structure.

Workers' compensation and life insurance expenses were reviewed. Workers' compensation is estimated in advance due to timing of billing and is funded through 2% dues, minimizing concern over minor budget variances. Life insurance is paid annually at year-end.

No major concerns were raised, and the department's financial position for the quarter appears stable.

Motion by Garn, second by D. Plourde to approve the updated budget and financial report. Motion carried.

Membership Update

Two new members are scheduled to begin at the end of the month. There are four pending candidates, and one additional application has been received. If all pending candidates move forward, staffing levels would reach the current cap of 30 members, which aligns with

department limits based on available space and operational considerations. There is interest in adding more personnel if feasible, but constraints such as space and distribution planning must be considered. Clarification was made that administrative staff are counted as part of the department for staffing purposes.

Old Business

Strategic Plan Progress/5 Bugle

Bruce Fuerbringer, 5 Bugle, reviewed the Somerset Fire Department's 2026-2046 Strategic Plan. Discussion focused on long-term planning considerations for both the Town and Village. Both communities' comprehensive plans establish a clear vision for their distinct futures, outlining priorities, growth expectations, and community values that guide decision-making and development over time. Proactive planning was viewed as preferable to reacting to unforeseen changes or crises. Addressing potential challenges in advance can help avoid higher costs, service disruptions, and difficult decisions made under pressure.

Motion by Witzman, second by Garn to adopt the Somerset Fire Department 2026-2046 Strategic Plan as presented. Motion carried. Crotty abstained.

Fire Truck Committee Update

Typically, the Fire-Rescue Commission is made up of one board member from each municipality and two members at-large. The Village has one opening on the Fire-Rescue Commission. Kern stated that the Village will advertise for committee openings and will be appointing a member at the May village board meeting. Once all appointments are filled on the Fire-Rescue Commission, a member can be appointed to the Fire Truck Committee.

Parent St/180th Ave Update

A legal description was initiated by the Town of Somerset and created by Auth Consulting. The Jurisdictional Transfer will be reviewed to possibly include that description.

Water Run-Off/Development Update - Pine Vale

The Village will monitor the completion of yards in the Pine Vale development. It was noted that no adverse flooding occurred on the Ryan & Erin Vanasse property after a 15" rain/snowfall event. This topic will be reviewed again at the July 2026 Joint Meeting.

New Business

Village Ordinance on Assessment for Structural Fires Consistent with Township of Somerset Ordinance

The Village will review the Town of Somersets Article IV: Fire Protection Charges and potentially mirror and/or adopt an ordinance of their own.

Renewal of Fire Hall Lease

The current lease expired on 12/31/2025.

Motion by D. Plourde, second by Garn to extend the current lease until the end of 2026 and review at the July board meeting. Motion carried.

Department Activities Update/Grants

Chief Belisle reviewed grants that have been applied for and said that they are expecting a grant from the DNR to be completed soon.

Date & Time of Next Joint Meeting

The next Joint Meeting will be held on Wednesday, July 22, 2026 at the Village Hall. The next Fire/Rescue Commission meeting will be held on Wednesday, July 15, 2026 at the Fire Hall.

Adjourn

Motion by Germain, second by Krohn to adjourn. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 9:26 pm.

Jessica Lehman, Village Clerk/Deputy Treasurer
(Minutes are not official until approved at the next meeting.)