

Carlos Area Fire Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) UNAPPROVED Meeting Minutes

Date: Monday, April 14, 2025

Start Time: 6:30 PM

Location: Carlos Event Center

1. Call to Order

- Roll Call / Members Present
 - Ronna Berghoff, City of Carlos
 - Colten Steidl, Carlos Fire Department
 - Bill Krivanek, Carlos Township
 - Dwayne Waldorf, Carlos Township
 - Andy Miller, Belle River Township (via phone)
 - Meagan McColloch-Vencil, Bolton and Menk
 - Adam Luckhart, Bolton and Menk
 - Jared Voge, City Engineer, Bolton and Menk
 - Attendance list

- Introduction of Board and welcoming statement

Good evening and thank you all for coming tonight. We truly appreciate your time and your interest in the Carlos Area Fire project. We understand that there are many questions and concerns, and we're here tonight to provide clarity, share information, and continue moving forward together as a community.

Throughout tonight's meeting, we'll be walking through many parts of the project in detail to hopefully answer many concerns about previous decisions made. We kindly ask that questions be held until the '**Township and Community Feedback**' section of the agenda. At that time, we will open the floor for comments and questions.

To ensure everyone has a chance to speak and that the meeting remains on track, we may be limiting individual comments to 2 minutes per person, if needed. We ask that everyone speak respectfully and allow others their turn. If your question isn't answered during the meeting, we'll be happy to follow up afterward.

Again, thank you for being here. Let's begin.

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes

- Review and approval of minutes from March 17, 2025

- Motion to approve minutes: **Kirvanek, second Miller – Passed**

3. Reports

a. Treasurer's Report

- Financial status update
 - \$9,967.16 ending balance 3/31/2025
 - Motion to approve: **Waldorf, second Berghoff - Passed**
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4. Old Business

a. Project Manager Update – Bolton and Menk

- Continued discussion on fire hall project design adjustments
 - Gave history of Fire Hall project dating back 20 years, 3-4 million at that time and voted down. More recently, within the last 6 years working on 99 year lease with school district, to obtain the land, and then the City of Carlos' efforts to build the fire hall on their own. City of Carlos, due to lack of tax base was recommended to create a JPA with the townships to gain funding. This prompted the JPA agreement with Carlos, Belle River and City of Carlos. As a board, we have worked towards current design concept with Bolton and Menk.
 - Bolton and Menk Presentation – see attached PDF
 - Clarification on parts of building, building materials, admin area, decon area and apparatus bay.
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5. New Business

a. Township & Community Feedback

- Summary of recent meetings, public input, and votes
 - Noted the public's frustration with lack of communication from the JPA, city and townships.
 - JPA acknowledged this could have been completed in a different way. Carlos Township offered an apology.
- Carlos Township – 4.10.2025 meeting
 - Overview of concerns that were brought up on 4.10.2025 meeting of Carlos Township, that was heavily attended.

- Questions that were asked by the public:
 - Why a 99-year lease, “So we are going to improve the property to give it back to the school?”
 1. Discussed that we don’t know what things will be like in 99 years, but mostly likely at that time there will be a solution. Example given what a difference the world is not compared to 1925 (100 years ago from today).
 2. Talked about the 5-year window that is written into the 99-year lease to get this project completed.
 - Would the school district extend this 5-year window?
 - JPA cannot speak for the school district, but we can certainly request an extension if needed.
 - What was the previous design when City of Carlos was attempting to build on their own?
 1. The building was going to cost approximately 3-4 million, it was only in concept design, and it was really stripped back in an attempt to make it affordable for the City of Carlos alone. Steel sided, with a different roof pattern, and posts throughout the apparatus bay in order to support the building. No hose tower, or wash bay. It was stripped back to far that although a new building didn’t have the accommodating features that make it easier for the fireman.
 - JPA asked attendees solutions they feel would make this project more favored:
 1. No kitchen
 2. “Don’t need it at all, put money into downtown”
 3. Get rid of trucks, decrease bays
 4. No meeting room
 5. Steel sided building
 6. Put money into the current building
 7. Decrease bays and keep lower usage trucks in current fire hall
 8. Complete a feasibility study
 - Structural design questions – style of beams?
 - How many trucks does the fire hall have and why?

1. The department has 13 trucks, in 3 different locations throughout the city of Carlos. The biggest goal of a new fire hall would be to get all of the trucks under one roof.
- What price feels more comfortable?
 1. “Cut it in half”
- Comparison to other fire departments built and price differences
 1. Forada and another surrounding area, and their costs were noted and significantly less than this project, “I know that’s not apples to apples, but another example of a significant lower costs”
- Are grants available?
 1. We have done research and had grant experts look into this, but we haven’t found anything that is for building a fire hall specifically only for gear or equipment.
 2. An attendee did a quick google search and showed JPA board that others have used grants based on the AI overview.
 - There is a bill at the senate that is specifically for funding to help with building fire halls, but it has not been passed. This senate bill is S.4690 and is still being considered.
 - If others were found to please send them to JPA to look into.
- Fire hall/Fire Department operation questions and questions about CIP for trucks and how they respond?
 1. Redirected this question and discussion back to building and structure only.
- The consensus from the public is that “most” are in agreement that a new hall needs to be built, but that cannot be 7 million.
- An attendee presented the JPA with a petition signed by many in attendance to reverse the decision. It was shared at this time more clarity about the bonding process and how to get an actual reverse referendum.
 - The annual meeting vote (from March 11th) still stands, and legally there cannot be another vote on June 3rd, as previously discussed at Carlos Township meeting on 4/10/2025.
 - The reverse referendum process was shared, and a personal acknowledgment from Krivanek to the attendee, that this will be made public, and that the attendee would personally be informed of when this will take place.

- Shared reverse referendum process, once bonding is approved, a publication would be posted in local newspapers and where meeting minutes are posted. There is then a 30-day window to create a petition for a “reverse referendum”. The petition needs to have at minimum 5% of voters that were registered at last election (which was the 2024 presidential election).
 - If we did our research correctly, there are about 1,900 registered voters, that is roughly 90 people to sign a petition to obtain a reverse referendum at that time.
 - There is still time for the JPA to go back to drawing board to see where costs can be cut in order to obtain a lower project cost in order to gain full approval and not need to have a reverse referendum.
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6. Miscellaneous

- None
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8. Next Meeting Date and Time

- Confirm: *Monday, April 28, 2025 – 6:30 PM at **Carlos Event Center***
 - Preliminary Agenda Items:
 - Treasurer’s Report
 - Continued Project Review with Bolton and Menk
 - Follow up with Jason Murray from Drown and Associates
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9. Adjournment

- Motion to adjourn: **Krivanek, second Waldorf – passed.**
- Adjournment time recorded: 8:05pm
- Notes completed by: Ronna Berghoff, Carlos Area Fire JPA, Secretary; City of Carlos Mayor

JPA BOARD CONTACT INFORMATION:

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ATTACHMENT: Bolton and Menk Presentation