

# Western Lakes Fire Board

## Budget Workshop

### August 15, 2018

#### **Call to Order**

- George Morris called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. Board members present were, George Morris, Kent Lorenz, Bill Riemenschneider, Jimi Hall, Mike Tompkins and Jeff Roemer. Also, in attendance were Chief Brad Bowen, Assistant Chief's Glenn Leidel and Tom Schuetz, Deputy Chief's Tim Meyer and Kami Warren, Director of Finance/Administrative Laurie Sullivan and Administrative Assistant Michael Krug. Mike Sauer was excused.

#### **Proof of Notice**

- Mike Krug announced that the notice was posted Tuesday August 14<sup>th</sup> at 1:20 pm

#### **Pledge of Allegiance**

- Mike Krug led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance

#### **Public Comment**

- George Morris opened the meeting to comments from the public, of which there was none.
- Chief Bowen announced that on August 8<sup>th</sup>, he and George Morris were invited to a meeting with the executive owners (City Mayor, Town Chairperson, Village President, and the municipal administrators) to go through operationally and capital wise where we were and give them a change to update us on their status. The meeting lasted about two hours. They talked extensively about the paid-on-call staff and are aware that the \$7.25 per hour is not competitive for a part-time job and that those wages have not been adjusted since they were implemented. The objective of the meeting was to get a better understanding of how the department operates. George said that the group had met previously without the districts participation. The municipalities were looking for more information on our operations. Brad said that they would like more information on the changes we have made over the past ten years since our consolidations.

#### **Discussion – Sustainable Staffing and Budget**

- Chief Bowen said that he and Mike Tompkins, Kent Lorenz and Jeff Roemer met to discuss our staffing needs. They were working on ways to phase in an increase to the part-time wages and phase out the bump-up pay. Currently the average part-time person is making \$10.30 per hour. The Waukesha County average for similar positions is \$15. In addition to the part-time staff, they looked at additional full-time positions to handle the increased call volume. In order to increase the pay and not impact the tax levy, they recommended a fire inspection fee. The plan for next year would bring the part time wage to \$13.50 and eliminate the bump-up. Each year after would be additional increases. A seven year plan was presented showing the pay and staffing increases. The seven year plan also includes adding more part-time staff to make up for a projected decrease in the number of paid-per-call staff being available to respond to car accident and fire calls.

#### **Discussion – 2019 Operational Budget**

- Three budget options were presented.
  - The first was a 3% increase on the tax levy and a 4.25% increase overall. It would change the part-time wage to \$11 per hour which does not address the current staffing challenges.

- The second was a 3% increase on the tax levy and an 8.63% overall increase. It included a fire inspection fee totaling \$148,000 and would bring part-time wages to \$13.85.
- The third option was a 9.88% increase on the tax levy with no fire inspection fee. It would also bring the part-time wage to \$13.85.
- Jimi Hall asked if the municipalities were aware of the plan to impose inspection fees. Chief Bowen said that the Fire Code, which is being reviewed by all of the municipalities, has a provision where the Fire District could impose an inspection fee. If the municipalities accept the code, we can impose the fees.
- Mike Tompkins asked why a proposed budget with a 3% levy increase if that is not going to be accepted by the municipalities. Brad said he was not going to just increase the revenues to make it work or cut things that were needed. Jimi Hall said last year was a nice honeymoon period, but this year we need to look a lot harder at personal and training records. Jimi is looking for a zero percent increase on the levy. A question was raised on the interest income and why we are only budgeting \$4500 in interest when we are projecting \$12,500 for interest this year. Brad said he questioned the interest received. Kent Lorenz said that we have much more in our account at the beginning of the year after consolidation and we are earning a higher interest rate. Brad said he would modify the budget to account for the increased interest. Jeff Roemer asked if we looked at selling any of our existing apparatus and Brad said that we are not planning on selling any. The Chief's fee we have the right amount of equipment. Jeff said that he feels we could reduce our apparatus and utilize MABAS more. We are providing equipment to other departments, but are not calling for resources. Jeff feels we don't need three tenders or three grass rigs, but should call MABAS resources. Mike Tompkins and Jimi Hall asked to show our budget and compare to both last year's budget and this years projected year end. Jimi Hall asked about the increase in intern wages compared to the projected year end. Brad said that next year the budget is based on having three interns at each station where this year we have nine, but not for the entire year. Jeff Roemer asked if we really need three interns at each station. Brad said that the interns fill many of the open EMS shifts beyond their normal scheduled shifts. This budget includes a bonus for inter-facility transport calls of \$25. Jeff Roemer disagrees with giving a bonus. We can't give both a bonus and an hourly increase.
- Jimi Hall asked if the proposed budgets have been presented to the general staff and what their feelings were. Chief said he has not yet presented it to the general staff, and was waiting for direction from the board on what direction they were going. Jimi asked Dylan Laue for his opinion and Dylan said that we are losing members due to the pay and that is tough on the rest of the staff trying to fill vacancies.

### **Discussion – 5 Year Capital Improvement Projects**

- The new 5 year capital will reflect about a \$250,000 higher than what was presented last year. This includes:
  - Cardiac monitors for \$150,000
  - Repairs needed to station 3 which were found when doing the remodel (roof, windows) (\$100,000)
  - Addition of a utility vehicle to be able to move staff from station to station (\$50,000).
- There was a question on the replacement of the Rehab unit. Jimi asked why we don't use the county Rehab and Chief Bowen said that the county rehab unit is not a NFPA Rehab unit, it is a canteen and is not always available. Our unit responds to trainings, grass fires and structure fires. Our new unit would include a bathroom and could also be used as a command post for larger incidents.
- Chief Bowen advised that the cost of the Ford Explorer will go up \$8,800 if we do not order by September 21<sup>st</sup>. Currently our budget meeting is not until September 26<sup>th</sup>. The capital budget

being presented is based on the old price. The recommendation is that we hold a special meeting to get the capital budget approved and still have the operational budget at the on the 26<sup>th</sup>. Brad will try to see what dates are available.

#### **Future Agenda Items and Meeting**

- The next monthly board meeting will be held on August 27<sup>th</sup> starting at 5:30 pm at the Pabst Farms station.
- The annual Fall Budget meeting will be held on Wednesday September 26<sup>th</sup>.

#### **Adjournment**

- A motion was made at 8:15 pm by Mike Tompkins and seconded by Bill Riemenschneider to adjourn. Motion carried.